

AN OUTLINED COMMENTARY ON

2 SAMUEL

BOB WINTON



**GOSPEL
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Preface and Acknowledgment

These various commentaries and other Biblical studies were developed through many years of hard and close study of the Bible. I have had an insatiable appetite to learn all of God's Word possible. I grew up in the Beans Creek Community of Coffee County Tennessee. My family started attending the Lord's church at Beans Creek in 1949, where I was privileged to have sister Ethel Croft as an outstanding Bible class teacher. All seven member of my father's family were baptized into Christ, plus my wife, Marie. Each of our five children also obeyed the gospel.

Sister Croft greatly encouraged me to study the Bible and to become a good worker for the Lord. I tried not to cause her any disappointment. In 1978, after preaching for many years, the brethren at Beans Creek invited me to conduct a gospel meeting. Sister Croft, though she was in advanced years and had to drive a good distance, did not miss any of the services.

Since first becoming acquainted with the gospel more than seventy years ago, I have had the honor to hear some of the greatest gospel preachers of the time. Some of these well-known to most members of the Lord's church, but some of them labored in the shadows, learning and dispensing the truth of God quietly and effectively. Not so many people in the brotherhood today knew such preachers as Luke Gibbs. I have learned much and have been profited greatly from many gospel preachers and teachers through these many years. I am fully appreciative also to those many sound brethren who have published books which I have had the privilege to study. I began preaching in July of 1961 in Italy.

A debt of gratitude is owed by many to the instructors of Memphis School of Preaching for the tremendous work they did through the years, patiently teaching their students the wonderful word of life. I am especially grateful to these great men who were serving in this capacity during 1970-72, when I attended the school: Roy Hearn

Frank Young, Richard Curry, Charles Pledge, and E.L. Whitaker.

I claim no originality for all of the material presented in the material included in my books. There is no way to give proper credit to all who have contributed to the information I have learned, but in every case possible, acknowledgment is cited. I have attempted to be as accurate, clear and concise as my finite knowledge allows, but, as with all human productions, there will doubtless be imperfections. Our grasp of the infinite will of God is not absolute in every detail, despite the diligence of our efforts; there is always more to learn.

Some have incorrectly thought that my books are merely expansions of the notes I took while studying at MSOP. But those notes were skimpy at best, and were not in my possession when I wrote my material. The notes were put together in connection with Bible classes I have taught over much time. For several years, a hundred or more hours weekly were required as I prepared to teach two different Bible books each week, Sunday morning and Wednesday evening, while at the same time, during full-time work as a gospel preacher. These notes became the "Outlined Bible Commentaries" that have been made available to countless people.

It has not been my aim to make money through these efforts—indeed, we barely cover our expenses. Many of my books have been given away without charge to the recipients. An uncounted numbers of books and compact discs were ordered and shipped out, for which no payment was ever received. A good many of these non-paying costumers were gospel preachers. I have learned from brethren who operated Bible Bookstores that they have had the same problem. One of these brethren reported that he had to secure his supply of Bibles, in locked cases, to prevent their being stolen by preachers. How sad! "Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth" (Eph. 4:28). *Don't steal but give!*

The Bible quotations in my books are from the King James Version, unless noted otherwise. These books were intentionally put on 8.5 by 11 inch pages, to make the outline format easier to view. A normal hardback book contains about 800 words per page; my pages contain twice that number of words. The spiral-bound or wire-bound books are much less expensive to produce. My wife and I have done all the manual labor required to produce the books. The supplies, software and equipment are very costly. Marie still helps as much as she can despite the dementia she has had for several years— and her many surgeries and broken bones and heartaches. *I thank God whenever I think of her.*"

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INTRODUCTION TO 2 SAMUEL

A. Author and Date of Writing.

1. This information also fits 1 Samuel.
2. Jewish tradition assigned the material of the books of Samuel to the great judge and prophet whose name the books bear. However, since Samuel died at the time described in 1 Samuel 25, he could not have written the details of history prior to their occurrence. Many particulars are given about events and people who lived after the death of Samuel.
3. It is likely that Samuel penned the books of Judges and Ruth, plus the events of 1 Samuel up to the time of his death, and later prophets completed the writing of 1 and 2 Samuel.
 - a. 1 Chronicles 29:29-30: "Now the acts of David the king, first and last, behold, they *are* written in the book of Samuel the seer, and in the book of Nathan the prophet, and in the book of Gad the seer, With all his reign and his might, and the times that went over him, and over Israel, and over all the kingdoms of the countries."
 - b. It certainly appears this passage identifies the writers of the two books of Samuel as Samuel, Nathan, and Gad. Gad the prophet is named in 1 Samuel 22:5 and 24:11-19. Nathan was the prophet who worked closely with David; he is named thirteen times in 2 Samuel.
4. Samuel was a great man, serving his people both as a judge and a prophet.
 - a. He is considered to be the most important man in Israel between Moses and David. Moses was the founder of the nation, and Samuel was its savior.
 - b. His work bridged the time between the judges and the kings. He served Israel as its last judge and anointed its first two kings.

B. The Purpose of 1 and 2 Samuel.

1. "The purpose of the books of Samuel is to relate the account of the establishment of the monarchy, and of Samuel's part therein. Samuel was both a judge (1 Sa. 7:6, 15-17) and a prophet (1 Sa. 3:20). He serves, therefore, to connect the period of the Judges with the early monarchy" (Young, p.179).
 - a. 1 Samuel 3:20: "And all Israel from Dan even to Beersheba knew that Samuel *was* established *to be* a prophet of the LORD."
 - b. 1 Samuel 7:6: "And they gathered together to Mizpeh, and drew water, and poured *it* out before the LORD, and fasted on that day, and said there, We have sinned against the LORD. And Samuel judged the children of Israel in Mizpeh."
 - c. 1 Samuel 7:15-17: "And Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life. And he went from year to year in circuit to Bethel, and Gilgal, and Mizpeh, and judged Israel in all those places. And his return *was* to Ramah; for there *was* his house; and there he judged Israel; and there he built an altar unto the LORD."
2. Charles Pledge gives the following as some of the purposes served by the book of Samuel (p.47):
 - a. To describe the founding of the Hebrew monarchy.
 - b. Serves as the connecting link between the period of the judges and the early monarchy.
 - c. Tells us that the gloom of despair characteristic of the book of Judges is not rectified by the ministry of the prophet but that Israel is still a rebellious son who must be chastened for his own welfare.
 - d. Shows that the monarchy was contrary to the desire of God but that he overruled the sinful actions of men to his own glory and to accomplish his purpose on earth—the redemption of man (Gen. 3:15).

C. Outline of 2 Samuel.

1. David Becomes King of Israel: 2 Samuel 1-5.
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- a. Chapter 1: David mourns for Saul and Jonathan.
 - b. Chapter 2: David is made king.
 - c. Chapter 3: War between house of Saul and house of David.
 - d. Chapter 4: Ishbosheth is slain.
 - e. Chapter 5: David acknowledged by all the tribes.
2. Prosperous Period of David's Reign: 2 Samuel 6-12.
- a. Chapter 6: Ark of the Covenant moved.
 - b. Chapter 7: Prophecy of eternal kingdom.
 - c. Chapter 8: Successful wars.
 - d. Chapter 9: Kindness shown Mephibosheth.
 - e. Chapter 10: War with Ammon.
 - f. Chapter 11: David sins.
 - g. Chapter 12: David rebuked by Nathan.
3. Troublous Period of David's Reign: 2 Samuel 13-24.
- a. Chapter 13: David's children.
 - b. Chapter 14: Joab and the woman of Tekoah.
 - c. Chapter 15: Absalom's Rebellion.
 - d. Chapter 16: David is cursed by Shimei.
 - e. Chapter 17: Ahithophel's plan to smite David.
 - f. Chapter 18: Absalom is slain.
 - g. Chapter 19: David is restored to power.
 - h. Chapter 20: The rebellion of Sheba.
 - i. Chapter 21: The Gibeonites avenged.
 - j. Chapter 22: A Psalm of David.
 - k. Chapter 23: The list of David's great men.
 - l. Chapter 24: David numbers Israel and the plague that ensues.
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2 SAMUEL 1

A. 2 Samuel 1:1-12: David Learns of Saul's Death.

1. Verse 1: "Now it came to pass after the death of Saul, when David was returned from the slaughter of the Amalekites, and David had abode two days in Ziklag."
 - a. The close connection between First and Second Samuel is seen in the opening episode in this chapter. In the closing chapters of the previous book, we were told of David's rescue of the families of his band which the Amalekites had captured, and the destruction of the Amalekite army. Also, the death of Saul and three of his sons was reported at the end of First Samuel.
 - b. Reference is made to the slaughter of the Amalekites and the death of Saul in this first verse of Second Samuel. After David and his men had returned to Ziklag with their rescued families, they abode two days in their city, resting up from their ordeal.
 - c. The Amalekites had sacked and burned Ziklag, but there remained enough of the city for them to find some shelter.
 2. Verses 2-3: "It came even to pass on the third day, that, behold, a man came out of the camp from Saul with his clothes rent, and earth upon his head: and so it was, when he came to David, that he fell to the earth, and did obeisance. And David said unto him, From whence comest thou? And he said unto him, Out of the camp of Israel am I escaped."
 - a. On the third day, a man came to Ziklag from the Saul's camp. His clothes were torn and he had earth upon his head; ostensibly, these were evidences of mourning (1 Sam. 4:12). He bowed before David, prostrating himself on the ground.
 - b. David inquired about where he come from; the man responded that he had escaped from the camp of Israel. David knew that Saul and the Philistines were about to do battle, but he had heard no news of the outcome. His own operation against the Amalekites had taken several days. "Whether the battle at Gilboa, in which Saul fell, occurred before or after the return of David, it is impossible to determine. All that follows from the juxtaposition of the two events in verse 1, is that they were nearly contemporaneous. The man '*came from the army from with Saul,*' and therefore appears to have kept near to Saul during the battle" (Keil, p.285).
 3. Verses 4-5: "And David said unto him, How went the matter? I pray thee, tell me. And he answered, That the people are fled from the battle, and many of the people also are fallen and dead; and Saul and Jonathan his son are dead also. And David said unto the young man that told him, How knowest thou that Saul and Jonathan his son be dead?"
 - a. David asked him how the battle went. The young man stated that the Israelites had fled before the Philistines, that many of them were slain, and that Saul and Jonathan were both dead.
 - b. David was willing to believe that Israel had been routed, since he knew the size of the Philistine forces, but he demanded evidence that Saul and Jonathan were dead. How did the young man know they were dead?
 4. Verses 6-10: "And the young man that told him said, As I happened by chance upon mount Gilboa, behold, Saul leaned upon his spear; and, lo, the chariots and horsemen followed hard after him. And when he looked behind him, he saw me, and called unto me. And I answered, Here *am* I. And he said unto me, Who *art* thou? And I answered him, I *am* an Amalekite. He said unto me again, Stand, I pray thee, upon me, and slay me: for anguish is come upon me, because my life *is* yet whole in me. So I stood upon him, and slew him, because I was sure that he could not live after that he was fallen: and I took the crown that *was* upon his head, and the bracelet that *was* on his arm, and have brought them hither unto my lord."
 - a. The young man reported that he had by chance been on Mount Gilboa, and saw Saul lean upon his spear. To lean on the spear is thought by some scholars to refer to an attempt to kill himself, but since
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the spear would be too long for such a purpose, the young Amalekite was mistaken or was lying; it seems more likely that Saul was exhausted and was leaning on the spear to keep himself erect. The chariots and horsemen were about to overtake him.

- b. The young man said that the king called on him to slay him, before the Philistines got there. Saul said that he was still alive, although he was in anguish. The Amalekite reported further that he slew Saul as he was ordered to do, and that he had with him the royal diadem and arm bracelet that belonged to the king as evidence. If this report was true, the account of 1 Samuel 31 is in error; both cannot be right.
 - 1) Some might see a way of reconciling the accounts by having the Amalekite appear on the scene after Saul had fallen on his sword. In this case, Saul was not dead; his “anguish is come upon me, because my life is yet whole in me.” When the young man saw him, Saul had only wounded himself by falling on the sword, had arisen and was leaning on his spear, when he ordered the Amalekite to “finish him off.”
 - 2) That explanation seems plausible, but we were told plainly in the first description that Saul died by falling on his sword.
 - c. Clearly the previous report of Saul’s death (1 Sam. 31) is the inspired account; the present report is only the word of the young Amalekite. His entire presentation was invented to “ingratiate himself with David, the presumptive successor to the throne. David’s question, ‘How went the matter?’ evinces the deep interest he took in the war—an interest that sprang from feelings of high and generous patriotism, not from views of ambition. The Amalekite, however, judging him to be actuated by a selfish principle, fabricated a story improbable and inconsistent, which he thought would procure him a reward” (JFB, p.217).
 - d. The man had seen Saul kill himself by falling on his sword, or else he came along shortly afterwards; seeing the king was dead, and assuming that David would be the successor, he took Saul’s crown and armlet, thinking he could “get in good” with the future king by fabricating the story he told. He knew that David had been pursued by Saul for a long time, and assumed that David would be glad to learn that his antagonist was dead. His miscalculation cost him his life.
5. Verses 11-12: “Then David took hold on his clothes, and rent them; and likewise all the men that *were* with him: And they mourned, and wept, and fasted until even, for Saul, and for Jonathan his son, and for the people of the LORD, and for the house of Israel; because they were fallen by the sword.”
- a. The effect of the report was entirely different from what the Amalekite expected. Instead of rejoicing over the death of Saul, David and his men rent their garments and mourned, fasted, and wept the rest of the day.
 - b. The defeat of Israel at the hands of the Philistines was a personal blow to them; it was their kinsmen and fellow-countrymen who had fallen in battle and who were now at the mercy of a merciless enemy. More important, it was the people of God who had suffered the disaster. There was good reason for them to mourn.

B. 2 Samuel 1:13-16: David Slays the Young Amalekite.

1. Verse 13: “And David said unto the young man that told him, Whence *art* thou? And he answered, *I am* the son of a stranger, an Amalekite.”
 - a. Instead of obtaining a reward for claiming to have killed Saul, the Amalekite is about to taste the wrath of David. David could know that the man was not an Israelite; he asked him where he came from, to which the man admitted that he was an Amalekite.
 - b. That he was an Amalekite did not exalt him in David’s favor! He had just had some harsh experiences with the Amalekites. What was an Amalekite doing in Israel? He possibly was a mercenary soldier. Saul was ever on the lookout for outstanding fighting men, and this man may have been one of them.

- 1) 1 Samuel 14:52: "And there was sore war against the Philistines all the days of Saul: and when Saul saw any strong man, or any valiant man, he took him unto him."
 - 2) Possibly he was the son of one of the valiant men Saul had found. It could be that he had become a proselyte to the Hebrew religion.
2. Verse 14: "And David said unto him, How wast thou not afraid to stretch forth thine hand to destroy the LORD'S anointed?"
 - a. He could see in David's question a premonition of what was to come: "Why were you not afraid to destroy the life of God's anointed?"
 - b. David had accepted the man's story; this is indicated by the question. By his own story, he admitted (openly and without shame) to killing Saul. He found out later that the man had told his story in order to obtain a reward: "When one told me, saying, Behold, Saul is dead, thinking to have brought good tidings, I took hold of him, and slew him in Ziklag, who *thought* that I would have given him a reward for his tidings" (2 Sam. 4:10).
 3. Verse 15: "And David called one of the young men, and said, Go near, *and* fall upon him. And he smote him that he died."
 - a. David ordered one of his young fighters to go near the Amalekite, and fall upon him. "To fall upon" someone was to make an attack.
 - b. This summary sentence was immediately carried out. The fact that David ordered the execution of this man for admitting that he had killed Saul would show the nation that David had nothing to do with Saul's death, that he did not wish for his death.
 4. Verse 16: "And David said unto him, Thy blood *be* upon thy head; for thy mouth hath testified against thee, saying, I have slain the LORD'S anointed."
 - a. This statement logically would have been spoken before the sentence was carried out; it revealed to the Amalekite that he should not have acted against "God's anointed" (the king of Israel).
 - b. David speaks of his having slain this man, but he did so through the soldier he directed to fall on him. "When one told me, saying, Behold, Saul is dead, thinking to have brought good tidings, I took hold of him, and slew him in Ziklag, who *thought* that I would have given him a reward for his tidings" (2 Sam. 4:10). What one does through an agent, he is responsible for doing himself.

C. 2 Samuel 1:17-27: A Hymn of Lamentation.

1. Verses 17-18: "And David lamented with this lamentation over Saul and over Jonathan his son: (Also he bade them teach the children of Judah *the use of* the bow: behold, *it is* written in the book of Jasher)."
 - a. "An eloquent testimony to the depth and sincerity of David's grief for the death of Saul is handed down to us in the elegy which he composed upon Saul and his noble son Jonathan, and which he had taught to the children of Israel. It is one of the finest odes in the Old Testament; full of lofty sentiment, and springing from deep and sanctified emotion, in which, without the slightest allusion to his own relation to the fallen king, David celebrates without envy the bravery and virtues of Saul and his son Jonathan, and bitterly laments their loss" (Keil, p.288).
 - b. "And David lamented with this lamentation over Saul and over Jonathan his son (and he bade them teach the children of Judah *the song of* the bow: behold, it is written in the book of Jasher)" (ASV).
 - 1) In the KJV, *the use of* [the bow] is added by the translators; in the ASV, *the song of* is added. "The Bow" may be the title of the song of lamentation which is given in the following verses.
 - 2) The song was taught to Israel (ASV); the use of the bow was taught to Israel (KJV). "Although the words 'use of' are a supplement by our translators, they may be rightly introduced; for the natural sense of this parenthetical verse is, that David took immediate measures for instructing the

people in the knowledge and practice of archery, their great inferiority to the enemy in this military arm having been the main cause of the late national disaster” (JFB, p.218). Nevertheless, Jamieson thinks the view suggested in the ASV to be the more likely understanding.

- 3) The Pulpit Commentary offers this more in-depth appraisal of verse 18:
 - a) “Also he bade them teach the children of Judah [the use of] the bow. The old view is that given by the inserted words, and is well put by Ephrem Syrus in his commentary upon the passage. He says that, as Israel's defeat at Gilboa was the presage of a long struggle, and as the Philistines had gained the victory there by their skill in archery, David used his utmost authority with his own tribe to get them to practise this art for their protection in future wars.
 - b) “This explanation would be plausible were it not that we have reason for believing that the Israelites were already skilful in the use both of the sling and the bow, in both of which the Benjamites especially excelled (1 Chron 12:2). The modern view is that given in the Revised Version, where the inserted words are ‘the song of’ the bow. ‘The Bow’ is thus the name of the elegy, taken from the allusion to Jonathan's skill in the use of that weapon (ver. 22; comp. 1 Sam 18:4; 20:36); and the meaning is that David made his own tribesmen, who were probably ill disposed to Saul and his family, learn this dirge, not so much for its preservation, as to make them give the fallen king due honour. Similarly Ex 3. is called ‘The Bush’ in Mark 12:26.
 - c) “The book of Jasher. See on this book Josh 10:13, where the Syriac Version calls it ‘The Book of Canticles,’ and understands by it a collection of national ballads commemorative of the brave deeds of Israelite heroes. Jasher literally means ‘upright,’ and the Book of Jasher would be equivalent to ‘Hero book,’ the Hebrews always looking to the moral rather than the physical prowess of their great men” [Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 2001 by BibleSoft].
 - d) 2 Samuel 1:22: “From the blood of the slain, from the fat of the mighty, the bow of Jonathan turned not back, and the sword of Saul returned not empty.”
 - e) 1 Samuel 18:4: “And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle.”
 - f) 1 Samuel 20:36: “And he said unto his lad, Run, find out now the arrows which I shoot. And as the lad ran, he shot an arrow beyond him.”
- c. The book of Jasher is named only here and Joshua 10:13. "And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. *Is* not this written in the book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day" (Josh. 10:13).
 - 1) The book of Jasher, at least by that name, is not extant. There was no need for its being preserved or its contents are included elsewhere in the sacred record.
 - 2) Uninspired sources of the ancient past have alleged that the book of Jasher was a reference to the book of the Law, or to the book of Genesis, or to the book of Deuteronomy, or to the book of Judges. Others have thought that the book was an uninspired writing that perished when the temple was destroyed by the Babylonians.
 - 3) *Jasher* means “the upright.” Or as Keil translates it, “The Book of the Righteous.” It is clear that we do not know the actual identity of this book, and that we do not need to know.
2. Verse 19: “The beauty of Israel is slain upon thy high places: how are the mighty fallen!” “Thy glory, O Israel, is slain upon thy high places! How are the mighty fallen!” (ASV).
 - a. David speaks here of Saul and Jonathan as the beauty (glory; ornament) of Israel. The description of

- Saul excludes, of course, all of his evil acts and vengeful disposition. Despite the many weaknesses and sins of the former king, there was much that was praiseworthy about Saul.
- b. The lamentation contains the expression, “The mighty are fallen,” three times, in each case reference is made to Saul and Jonathan.
3. Verses 20-21: “Tell *it* not in Gath, publish *it* not in the streets of Askelon; lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph. Ye mountains of Gilboa, *let there be* no dew, neither *let there be* rain, upon you, nor fields of offerings: for there the shield of the mighty is vilely cast away, the shield of Saul, *as though he had* not been anointed with oil.”
- a. In poetic language, David pleads that the report of the death of Saul and Jonathan not be made in Gath or Askelon, which represent the five cities of Philistia. Why? So that the evil Philistines would not rejoice. The daughters of the Philistines and the daughters of the uncircumcised are references to the same people. He bemoans the fact that the report of Israel’s great defeat would arouse rejoicing in Philistia.
 - b. Using figurative language, he calls on the mountains of Gilboa to have no dew, thus join in mourning for the fallen heroes. “May God withdraw his blessing from the mountains upon which the heroes have fallen, that they may not be moistened by the dew and rain of heaven, but, remaining in eternal barrenness, be memorials of the horrible occurrence that has taken place upon them” (Keil, p.290). Instead of bountiful harvests which could be used as offerings, let the fields there be barren of crops, in keeping with the mourning which the right-thinking people in Israel were now experiencing.
 - c. “The reason for this cursing of the mountains of Gilboa was, that there the shield of the heroes, particularly of Saul, had been defiled with blood, namely the blood of those whom the shield ought to defend” (Keil, p.290).
 - d. Moffatt renders this passage in these words: “Tell it not in Gath, proclaim it not in Ashkelon’s streets, let the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised exult. Dew never fall on you, hills of Gilboa, rain never reach you, O death’s own field! For there a hero dropped his shield, Saul’s shield, the armour of the anointed.”
4. Verses 22: “From the blood of the slain, from the fat of the mighty, the bow of Jonathan turned not back, and the sword of Saul returned not empty.”
- a. Paying a tribute to the fighting ability and courage of Saul and Jonathan, David personifies their weapons, saying that the Jonathan’s bow and Saul’s sword did not turn back from the blood and flesh of the enemy until all that could be done had been accomplished.
 - b. “From the blood of the slain, from the flesh of the mighty, never did Jonathan’s bow turn back, nor the sword of Saul unsated” (Moffatt).
 - c. “Such was the ignominy experienced upon Gilboa by those who had always fought so bravely, that their bow and sword did not turn back until it was satisfied with the blood and fat of the slain. The figure upon which the passage is founded is, that arrows drink the blood of the enemy, and a sword devours their flesh (vid., Deut 32:42; Isa 34:5-6; Jer 46:10). The two principal weapons are divided between Saul and Jonathan, so that the bow is assigned to the latter and the sword to the former” [Keil & Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament: New Updated Edition, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1996 by Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.].
 - 1) Deuteronomy 32:42: "I will make mine arrows drunk with blood, and my sword shall devour flesh; *and that* with the blood of the slain and of the captives, from the beginning of revenges upon the enemy."
 - 2) Isaiah 34:5-6: "For my sword shall be bathed in heaven: behold, it shall come down upon Idumea, and upon the people of my curse, to judgment. The sword of the LORD is filled with blood, it is made fat with fatness, *and* with the blood of lambs and goats, with the fat of the kidneys of rams:

- for the LORD hath a sacrifice in Bozrah, and a great slaughter in the land of Idumea."
- 3) Jeremiah 46:10: "For this *is* the day of the Lord GOD of hosts, a day of vengeance, that he may avenge him of his adversaries: and the sword shall devour, and it shall be satiate and made drunk with their blood: for the Lord GOD of hosts hath a sacrifice in the north country by the river Euphrates."
5. Verse 23: "Saul and Jonathan *were* lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their death they were not divided: they were swifter than eagles, they were stronger than lions."
- NKJ: "Saul and Jonathan were beloved and pleasant in their lives, And in their death they were not divided; They were swifter than eagles, They were stronger than lions."
 - "Saul and Jonathan, loved and lovely, never divided in life or in death!—swifter than eagles, stronger than lions!" (Moffatt).
 - There were notable differences between Jonathan and Saul, but the son never deserted the father, and the father did not turn from the son. They fought and died together on the same battlefield.
 - Mighty men of ancient days had their best qualities equated to favored animals. The strength of Saul and his son is likened to that of lions, and their swiftness to that of eagles who soar without effort high above the earth.
6. Verse 24: "Ye daughters of Israel, weep over Saul, who clothed you in scarlet, with *other* delights, who put on ornaments of gold upon your apparel."
- NKJ: "O daughters of Israel, weep over Saul, Who clothed you in scarlet, with luxury; Who put ornaments of gold on your apparel."
 - "The reference is to the bands of young women, belonging to the cities of Israel, who flocked in great numbers to meet the general and his victorious army on their return from a war, and celebrated his gallant deeds in jubilant strains, receiving as their rewards part of the spoil, in the form of gay dresses and various ornaments" (JFB, p.219).
 - Saul had brought home many treasures from his successful ventures in war. But now his victories were all in the past; there would be no more triumphs in battle for Saul. Therefore, the daughters of Israel are admonished to weep for this loss. Despite his sinful actions, Saul's reign had had many good successes.
 - "Daughters of Israel, wail for Saul, who decked you in scarlet and jewels, who adorned your robes with gold!" (Moffatt).
7. Verses 25-27: "How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle! O Jonathan, *thou wast* slain in thine high places. I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan: very pleasant hast thou been unto me: thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women. How are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war perished!"
- NKJ: "How the mighty have fallen in the midst of the battle! Jonathan was slain in your high places. 26 I am distressed for you, my brother Jonathan; You have been very pleasant to me; Your love to me was wonderful, Surpassing the love of women. 27 "How the mighty have fallen, And the weapons of war perished!"
 - The mighty fell in the midst of battle; they fell, but their greatness is remembered and praised. David directly addresses the remarks of verses 25,26 to his good friend, Jonathan, who fell in the high places of Mount Gilboa.
 - The closeness of David and Jonathan was wonderful and pure, surpassing the devotion of a woman. Only a perverted mind would try to read into this relationship anything impure.
 - A man of war was inseparably connected to the weapons of his trade. So the weapons of Jonathan
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and Saul, the bow and the sword, are lamented for having perished in the battle. The “expression is a figurative one, referring to the heroes by whom war was carried on...” (Keil, p.292).

- e. “Alas for heroes fallen low in the thick of the fray! my heart is sore for you, O Jonathan, my brother! You were my dear delight, your love for me was a wonder, far beyond a woman’s love. Alas for heroes fallen low, for weapons that once felled the foe” (Moffatt).
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2 SAMUEL 2

A. 2 Samuel 2:1-4: David Anointed and Reigns at Hebron.

1. Verse 1: "And it came to pass after this, that David inquired of the LORD, saying, Shall I go up into any of the cities of Judah? And the LORD said unto him, Go up. And David said, Whither shall I go up? And he said, Unto Hebron."
 - a. David had learned to depend on the Lord's guidance and help. He had inquired of the Lord whether he should pursue the Amalekites who had carried his people off as captives from Ziklag; God had assured him that he ought to go and that he would meet with success.
 - b. He now asks God whether he ought to leave Ziklag and go into the land of Israel. He was directed to go to Hebron, a city in the southern part of the land.
2. Verses 2-3: "So David went up thither, and his two wives also, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail Nabal's wife the Carmelite. And his men that *were* with him did David bring up, every man with his household: and they dwelt in the cities of Hebron."
 - a. Consequently, he made arrangements to move to Hebron, to take up residence there, taking his two wives with him. His wives are identified as Ahinoam and Abigail.
 - b. David brought his men and their families with him; these took up residence in the cities that pertained to Hebron, i.e., the villages that were near the city. The people of Hebron were kindly inclined toward David. He had shared the spoils with them which he had taken from the Amalekites: "And when David came to Ziklag, he sent of the spoil unto the elders of Judah, *even* to his friends, saying, Behold a present for you of the spoil of the enemies of the LORD....And to *them* which *were* in Hebron, and to all the places where David himself and his men were wont to haunt" (1 Sam.30:26,31)
3. Verse 4: "And the men of Judah came, and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah. And they told David, saying, *That* the men of Jabeshgilead *were they* that buried Saul."
 - a. "Moreover, the inhabitants of Hebron were strongly attached to him, both from sympathy with his cause, ever since the massacre at Nob, and from the prospect of realizing in his person their promised pre-eminence among the tribes. The princes or elders, representatives of Judah, therefore, offered him the crown, to reign over their tribe, and it was accepted; so that forthwith he was 'anointed king over the house of Judah,' whether by the instrumentality of Abiathar, or of some other..." (JFB, p.219).
 - b. Psalm 27 is thought to be descriptive of this period of David's life. At this point, David learns that the men of Jabesh-gilead had buried Saul.
 - 1) This information could be very significant in that it would indicate a source of possible opposition to his reign over Israel. He used it, however, as a means to gain their allegiance.
 - 2) Compare: "The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? When the wicked, even mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell. Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident. One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in his temple. For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock. And now shall mine head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me: therefore will I offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy; I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the LORD. Hear, O LORD, when I cry with my voice: have mercy also upon me, and answer me. When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, LORD, will I seek. Hide not thy face far from me; put not thy servant away in anger: thou hast been my help; leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation. When my father and my mother forsake

me, then the LORD will take me up. Teach me thy way, O LORD, and lead me in a plain path, because of mine enemies. Deliver me not over unto the will of mine enemies: for false witnesses are risen up against me, and such as breathe out cruelty. I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living. Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD” (Ps. 27).

B. 2 Samuel 2:5-7: David Compliments the Men of Jabesh-gilead.

1. Verse 5: “And David sent messengers unto the men of Jabeshgilead, and said unto them, Blessed *be* ye of the LORD, that ye have showed this kindness unto your lord, *even* unto Saul, and have buried him.”
 - a. David used good judgment in sending this message to Jabesh-gilead. This was not political posturing; he had shown his sincerity in following Saul himself, and had never lifted a hand against him. Most everyone was aware of how Saul had tried to kill David, and the story of his sparing Saul’s life on those two occasions (1 Sam. 24, 26) was doubtless spread far and wide.
 - b. David compliments the men of Jabesh-gilead for having buried the body of Saul and his sons. The last few verses of 1 Samuel 31 give the report of this. These men repaid a debt of gratitude to Saul in this benevolent action, which David honors.
 - c. “There can be no doubt that this message of thanks for their bold and dangerous enterprise in rescuing the bodies of Saul and his sons was an expression of David’s personal and genuine feeling of satisfaction. At the same time it was a stroke of sound and timely policy” (JFB, p.219).
2. Verse 6: “And now the LORD show kindness and truth unto you: and I also will requite you this kindness, because ye have done this thing.”
 - a. David expressed his desire that the Lord would show kindness and truth to these men for their kindness to Saul. “And now Jehovah show lovingkindness and truth unto you: and I also will requite you this kindness, because ye have done this thing” (2 Sam. 2:6, ASV). Grace and truth go together.
 - 1) John 1:14: "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."
 - 2) John 1:17: "For the law was given by Moses, *but* grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."
 - b. David promised to “ requite ” them for the kindness they showed to Saul; he would show kindness to them on this account. He would be able to do good to them as king.
3. Verse 7: “Therefore now let your hands be strengthened, and be ye valiant: for your master Saul is dead, and also the house of Judah have anointed me king over them.”
 - a. “...Now that Saul their lord was dead, and the Judaeans had anointed him (David) king, they would show themselves valiant, namely valiant in their reverence and fidelity towards David, who had become their king since the death of Saul” (Keil, p.294).
 - b. “It needed some resolution and courage to recognise David as king, because Saul’s army had fled to Gilead, and there was good ground for apprehending opposition to David on the part of Abner. Ishbosheth, however, does not appear to have been proclaimed king yet; or at any rate the fact was not yet known to David” (Keil, p.294).

C. 2 Samuel 2:8-11: Abner Appoints Ishbosheth King over all Israel.

1. Verses 8-9: “But Abner the son of Ner, captain of Saul’s host, took Ishbosheth the son of Saul, and brought him over to Mahanaim; And made him king over Gilead, and over the Ashurites, and over Jezreel, and over Ephraim, and over Benjamin, and over all Israel.”
 - a. Abner, seeking to fill the vacuum left by Saul’s death, having the strength of the military behind him, appointed Ishbosheth as king in Israel. His actions here are set forth as a contrast to the foregoing. Ishbosheth was another of Saul’s sons.

- b. "Ishbosheth had probably been in the battle at Gilboa, and fled with Abner across the Jordan after the battle had been lost. *Ishbosheth* (*i.e.*, man of shame) was the fourth son of Saul (according to 1 Chron. 8:33; 9:39); his proper name was *Esh-baal* (*i.e.*, fire of Baal, probably equivalent to destroyer of Baal). This name was afterwards changed into Ishbosheth..." (Keil, p.294).
 - c. Abner was the source of power behind this maneuver; his action was in opposition to God's plan to exalt David to the throne, and was doomed to failure. The place where this coronation took place is called Mahanaim, which was located on the east side of Jordan, near the river Jabbok.
 - d. Ishbosheth was made king over the tribes of Asher, Ephraim, and Benjamin; his authority also was asserted over the territories of Jezreel and Gilead.
2. Verse 10: "Ishbosheth Saul's son *was* forty years old when he began to reign over Israel, and reigned two years. But the house of Judah followed David."
 - a. For the next two years, Ishbosheth reigned over much of the nation, while David ruled over a portion of the nation from Hebron. It was not until seven years after Saul's death that David gained control over the whole nation. "David *was* thirty years old when he began to reign, *and* he reigned forty years. In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months: and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty and three years over all Israel and Judah" (2 Sam. 5:4-5).
 - b. Acts 13:21: "And afterward they desired a king: and God gave unto them Saul the son of Cis, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, by the space of forty years." Saul reigned for forty years, and Ishbosheth was forty years old when he began his short-lived rule, which places his birth at about the time his father came to the throne.
 3. Verse 11: "And the time that David was king in Hebron over the house of Judah was seven years and six months."
 - a. Here we are told that David reigned at Hebron over the house of Judah for seven and one-half years, a statement which is repeated in chapter 5:4-5.
 - b. "It was not till seven years and a half after Saul's death that the way was paved for David's elevation to the throne of Israel (v.11). So that if Ish-bosheth had succeeded immediately on the death of his father, his reign in Israel must have been commensurate with that of David in Hebron. The statement, therefore, that 'Ish-bosheth reigned two years' must refer either to the time that elapsed after he was made king, before the war broke out between him and David, or to an interregnum of five years and a half in Israel, when, through the great influence of Abner, he was raised to the throne of his father, and had occupied it two years when he was cut off" (JFB, p.220).
 - c. Clarke offers another explanation of this supposed difficulty. "Perhaps the meaning of the writer is this: Ish-bosheth reigned two years before any but the tribe of Judah had attached themselves to the interest of David. Some think that Abner in effect reigned the last five years of Ish-bosheth, who had only the name of king after the first two years" (p.312).
 - d. "The age of Ishbosheth is given, as is generally the case at the commencement of a reign. He was forty years old when he began to reign, and reigned two years; whereas David was king at Hebron over the house of Judah seven years and a half. We are struck with this difference in the length of the two reigns; and it cannot be explained, as Seb. Schmidt, Clericus, and others suppose, on the simple assumption that David reigned two years at Hebron over Judah, namely up to the time of the murder of Ishbosheth, and then five years and a half over Israel, namely up to the time of the conquest of Jerusalem: for this is at variance with the plain statement in the text, that 'David was king in Hebron over the house of Judah seven years and a half.'
 - 1) "The opinion that the two years of Ishbosheth's reign are to be reckoned up to the time of the war with David, because Abner played the principal part during the other five years and a half that David continued to reign at Hebron, is equally untenable. We may see very clearly from ch. 3-5

not only that Ishbosheth was king to the time of his death, which took place after that of Abner, but also that after both these events David was anointed king over Israel in Hebron by all the tribes, and that he then went directly to attack Jerusalem, and after conquering the citadel of Zion, chose that city as his own capital.

- 2) "The short duration of Ishbosheth's reign can only be explained, therefore, on the supposition that he was not made king, as David was, immediately after the death of Saul, but after the recovery by Abner of the land which the Philistines had taken on this side the Jordan, which may have occupied five years" [Keil & Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament: New Updated Edition, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1996 by Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.].

D. 2 Samuel 2:12-17: David Defeats Abner.

1. Verse 12: "And Abner the son of Ner, and the servants of Ishbosheth the son of Saul, went out from Mahanaim to Gibeon."
 - a. Abner, taking the servants of Ishbosheth with him, went out from Mahanaim to Gibeon. The obvious intent of this move was to exert military pressure on Judah. He had already brought the rest of Israel under his control, and now sought to put Judah under his banner. That Abner initiated this operation is indicative of his aggressive nature.
 - b. "This town [Gibeon] was near the confines of Judah; and as the force with which Abner encamped there seemed to have some aggressive design, David sent an army of observation, under the command of Joab, to watch his movements" (JFB, p.220).
2. Verse 13: "And Joab the son of Zeruiah, and the servants of David, went out, and met together by the pool of Gibeon: and they sat down, the one on the one side of the pool, and the other on the other side of the pool."
 - a. "Immediately to the north of Neby Sam'wil, with a smooth and beautiful valley lying like a basin between, rises the hill of El Jib, the ancient Gibeon. The hill is not so high as that of Neby Sam'wil, yet it is a lofty eminence, with a steep but smooth slope in every direction. The stone village is built of ruins, and in the midst of it are the remains of what appears to have been an ancient castle.
 - 1) "On the northeastern slope of the hill is a copious fountain of fine water in a shallow cavern, which is reached by descending a few stone steps. Below the fountain are two reservoirs, a larger and a smaller.
 - 2) "Not feeling satisfied that either of these appeared sufficiently ancient to be the pool of Gibeon mentioned in the account of the battle between Abner and Joab, the author made search for another; and by the guidance of an old man of the village, after riding through vineyards and over stone fences, and at last dismounting, we reached a more ancient pool on the southeast slope of the hill, which is now nearly filled up and cultivated in vegetables.
 - 3) "A feeble spring above it once supplied it with water, and now used to irrigate the garden of vegetables. The smoother and broader plain below it makes this a more suitable place for the battle" (J.W. McGarvey, *Lands of the Bible*, p.242).
 - b. Joab was David's nephew, being the son of Zeruiah, who was David's sister (1 Chron. 2:16). Joab was David's strong right hand, and along with Asahel and Abishai (his brothers), were a formidable fighting force. "Ozem the sixth, David the seventh: Whose sisters were Zeruiah, and Abigail. And the sons of Zeruiah; Abishai, and Joab, and Asahel, three" (1 Chron. 2:16).
 - c. ZERUIAH: "According to 1 Chron 2:16 a sister of David and mother of Joab, Abishai and Asahel, the two former being always referred to as sons of Zeruiah. This latter fact is explained by some as pointing to a type of marriage by which the children belonged to their mother's clan (compare Abimelech, Judg 8:31; 9:1 ff); by others as being due to her husband's early death; and again as a proof of the mother in this case being the stronger personality. Either of the last two reasons may be

the correct one, and plenty of parallels from the village names of boys today can be produced to illustrate both explanations. According to 2 Sam 2:32, her husband was buried at Bethlehem. In 2 Sam 17:25, "Abigail the daughter of Nahash" is said to be her sister" [International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, Electronic Database Copyright © 1996, 2003, 2006 by Biblesoft, Inc. All rights reserved.)

- d. Coffman quotes sources which describe the pool as being 11.3 meters in diameter and 10.8 meters in depth. The opposing companies encamped on either sides of this pool.
3. Verses 14-15: "And Abner said to Joab, Let the young men now arise, and play before us. And Joab said, Let them arise. Then there arose and went over by number twelve of Benjamin, which *pertained* to Ishbosheth the son of Saul, and twelve of the servants of David."
 - a. Abner suggested to Joab that they should let a small number of their young charges meet for "play." "This was diabolical play, where each man thrust his sword into the body of the other, so that the twenty-four (twelve on each side) fell down dead together! But this was the signal for that sanguinary skirmish which immediately took place" (Clarke, p.312).
 - b. "Some think that the proposal was only for an exhibition of a little tilting match, a skirmishing or mock fight, for diversion....others suppose that both parties being reluctant to commence a civil war, Abner proposed to leave the contest to the decision of twelve picked men on either side. This fight by championship, instead of terminating the matter, inflamed the fiercest passions of the two rival parties; a general engagement ensued, in which Abner and his forces were defeated and put to flight" (JFB, pp.220f).
 4. Verses 16-17: "And they caught every one his fellow by the head, and *thrust* his sword in his fellow's side; so they fell down together: wherefore that place was called Helkathhazzurim, which *is* in Gibeon. And there was a very sore battle that day; and Abner was beaten, and the men of Israel, before the servants of David."
 - a. The twenty-four combatants engaged each other in a ferocious battle in which they all were slain. Each man seized his opponent by the head and thrust his sword into him. So, apparently in a few short moments of struggle, both "teams" were slain.
 - b. A few generations ago in the back country of Tennessee, on occasion men settled their differences by personal combat with knives. My great-uncle described one such encounter in which the two old men locked their left hands and tried to cut each other to ribbons with knives held in their right hands.
 - c. The place where these twenty-four brave but foolhardy young men fell was appropriately named Helkath-hazzurim, which means "the field of strong men."
 - d. The disastrous and unexpected outcome of this miniature battle precipitated a general engagement by the entire forces of both camps. Abner's company was defeated, and put to flight.

E. 2 Samuel 2:18-24: Abner Slays Asahel.

1. Verse 18: "And there were three sons of Zeruiah there, Joab, and Abishai, and Asahel: and Asahel *was* as light of foot as a wild roe."
 - a. Three sons of Zeruiah were with David's forces, Joab, Abishai, and Asahel. The latter is described as swift as a wild deer.
 - b. Asahel ran after Abner, seeking to take his armor, which is indicated by Abner's statement in verse twenty-one.
 2. Verses 19-20: "And Asahel pursued after Abner; and in going he turned not to the right hand nor to the left from following Abner. Then Abner looked behind him, and said, *Art* thou Asahel? And he answered, *I am.*"
 - a. Abner was unable to out-distance or shake-off Asahel; the young man refused to turn to the right hand
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or to the left, but doggedly pursued Abner.

- b. Abner must have recognized Asahel by sight or by his running ability; more likely the latter. He called out whether he was Asahel, and got an affirmative reply.
3. Verses 21-22: "And Abner said to him, Turn thee aside to thy right hand or to thy left, and lay thee hold on one of the young men, and take thee his armour. But Asahel would not turn aside from following of him. And Abner said again to Asahel, Turn thee aside from following me: wherefore should I smite thee to the ground? how then should I hold up my face to Joab thy brother?"
 - a. "To gain the general's armour was deemed the grandest trophy. Asahel, ambitious of securing Abner's, had outstripped all other pursuers, and was fast making on the retreating commander, who, conscious of possessing more physical power, and unwilling that there should be 'blood' between himself and Joab, Asahel's brother, twice urged him to desist" (JFB, p.221).
 - b. Abner suggested that if he wanted someone's armor, he ought to turn to one side or another, and take the armor from some young man. He was implying that Asahel would not be able to take Abner's. He did not want to kill Asahel because of his previous connections with Joab, Asahel's brother.
 4. Verses 23-24: "Howbeit he refused to turn aside: wherefore Abner with the hinder end of the spear smote him under the fifth *rib*, that the spear came out behind him; and he fell down there, and died in the same place: and it came to pass, *that* as many as came to the place where Asahel fell down and died stood still. Joab also and Abishai pursued after Abner: and the sun went down when they were come to the hill of Ammah, that *lieth* before Giah by the way of the wilderness of Gibeon."
 - a. "The impetuous young soldier being deaf to the generous remonstrance, the veteran raised the pointed butt of his lance...and with a sudden back-thrust transfixed him on the spot, so that he fell, and lay weltering in his own blood" (JFB, p.221). The butt-end of the spear was sharpened so that it could be stuck into the ground (cf. 1 Sam. 26:7).
 - b. The young man was so popular with those who knew him that those who came to the place where he fell, stood still in silent mourning for his loss.
 - c. Joab and Abishai continued their pursuit of Abner until sundown. By this time, they had reached the hill of Ammah, which was adjacent to Giah, on the road to the wilderness of Gibeon.
 - d. "Under the fifth rib" is an expression used several times in 2 Samuel. The reference is to the abdomen area of the body.
 - 1) 2 Samuel 3:27: "And when Abner was returned to Hebron, Joab took him aside in the gate to speak with him quietly, and smote him there under the fifth *rib*, that he died, for the blood of Asahel his brother."
 - 2) 2 Samuel 4:6: "And they came thither into the midst of the house, *as though* they would have fetched wheat; and they smote him under the fifth *rib*: and Rechab and Baanah his brother escaped."
 - 3) 2 Samuel 20:10: "But Amasa took no heed to the sword that *was* in Joab's hand: so he smote him therewith in the fifth *rib*, and shed out his bowels to the ground, and struck him not again; and he died. So Joab and Abishai his brother pursued after Sheba the son of Bichri."

F. 2 Samuel 2:25-32: Joab Defeats Abner.

1. Verses 25-26: "And the children of Benjamin gathered themselves together after Abner, and became one troop, and stood on the top of an hill. Then Abner called to Joab, and said, Shall the sword devour for ever? knowest thou not that it will be bitterness in the latter end? how long shall it be then, ere thou bid the people return from following their brethren?"
 - a. "On reaching a rising ground, and receiving a fresh reinforcement of some Benjamites, Abner rallied his scattered troops, and earnestly appealed to Joab's better feelings to stop the further effusion of

- bloodshed, which, if continued, would lead to more serious consequences—a destructive civil war” (JFB, p.221).
- b. Abner probably had two purposes in his appeal; one was in the interest of the nation, and the other in preserving his own life. He had been decisively defeated the previous day, and could expect the same result again.
2. Verses 27-28: “And Joab said, *As* God liveth, unless thou hadst spoken, surely then in the morning the people had gone up every one from following his brother. So Joab blew a trumpet, and all the people stood still, and pursued after Israel no more, neither fought they any more.”
 - a. The ASV gives this rendering: “And Joab said, *As* God liveth, if thou hadst not spoken, surely then in the morning the people had gone away, nor followed every one his brother. So Joab blew the trumpet; and all the people stood still, and pursued after Israel no more, neither fought they any more.”
 - b. Joab, in accepting the proposal, stated that if Abner had not made the offer, he and his men would not have stopped pursuing them unto the morning; in other words, Abner and his band would have been destroyed.
 - c. Jamieson has a different interpretation of Joab’s words: “Had you not proposed a trial of strength by championship, there would have been no fighting at all” (p.221). Clarke agrees: “The meaning of this verse appears to be this: If Abner had not provoked the battle, (see ver. 14), Joab would not have attacked the Israelites that day; as his orders were probably to act on the defensive. Therefore, the blame fell upon Israel” (p.313).
 - d. “David would under no circumstances have attacked Ishbosheth, and Joab with his men had marched to the tank of Gibeon simply to repel an invading force. When there, Joab, doubtless by David's orders, had remained strictly on the defensive, and so unwilling were both armies to fight, that Abner had to resort to a most cruel scene of butchery in order to inflame their passions and force them to begin a conflict of brother against brother. But for Abner's challenge, both armies would have separated as friends. And Joab still acts upon the same principle of forbearance, and gives the signal for stopping the pursuit. He was not a man of a tender heart, but he was wise and sensible, and fully aware that the slaughter of Abner and his men, even if he could have destroyed them all, would only have rankled in the minds of all Israel, and set them against David and his rule” [The Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 2001 by BibleSoft].
 - e. Joab sounded the trumpet, calling an end to the attack. The civil war was averted; the present battle came to an end. However, the animosity that Joab and Abishai had for Abner was not over.
 3. Verse 29: “And Abner and his men walked all that night through the plain, and passed over Jordan, and went through all Bithron, and they came to Mahanaim.” “And Abner and his men went all that night through the Arabah; and they passed over the Jordan, and went through all Bithron, and came to Mahanaim” (ASV).
 - a. The toughness of these Israelite warriors is seen by their walking all night in returning to Mahanaim. Abner had been through a very rough and tiring time. There had been the disastrous battle with Joab and his men at the pool, the long run in which he tried to out-distance Asahel and the others, and the work getting ready for Joab’s attack at the hill of Ammah. Following that encounter, he and his men traveled all night.
 - b. “Abner proceeded with his troops through the *Arabah*, i.e. the valley of the Jordan, marching the whole night; and then crossing the river, went through the whole of *Bithron* back to Mahanaim. *Bithron* is a district upon the eastern side of the Jordan, which is only mentioned here” (Keil, p.298).
 - c. Arabah: ["desert; plain"]. “The great rift valley running over 200 miles (320 km) N to S through Palestine from Mt. Hermon to the Gulf of Aqaba. Containing the Sea of Galilee, Jordan River, and the Dead Sea, the Arabah is actually part of a fault line extending from N Syria to the SE coast of
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Africa. In modern usage, the Arabah is limited to the region between the Dead Sea and the Gulf of Aqaba. The "Sea of Arabah" is an alternate name for the Dead Sea" (*PC Bible Atlas*). The term is usually translated as "plain" in the KJV.

- 1) Deuteronomy 1:7: "Turn you, and take your journey, and go to the mount of the Amorites, and unto all *the places* nigh thereunto, in the plain, in the hills, and in the vale, and in the south, and by the sea side, to the land of the Canaanites, and unto Lebanon, unto the great river, the river Euphrates."
 - 2) Deuteronomy 3:17: "The plain also, and Jordan, and the coast *thereof*, from Chinnereth even unto the sea of the plain, *even* the salt sea, under Ashdothpishgah eastward."
 - 3) Joshua 18:18: "And passed along toward the side over against Arabah northward, and went down unto Arabah."
4. Verses 30-31: "And Joab returned from following Abner: and when he had gathered all the people together, there lacked of David's servants nineteen men and Asahel. But the servants of David had smitten of Benjamin, and of Abner's men, *so that* three hundred and threescore men died."
- a. In the fighting, David's forces had lost nineteen men, plus Asahel. Twelve had been slain in the first encounter at the pool. Abner had lost three hundred and sixty men.
 - b. "This striking disproportion in the numbers may be accounted for from the fact that in Joab's army there were none but brave and well-trying men, who had gathered round David a long time before; whereas in Abner's army there were only the remnants of the Israelites who had been beaten upon Gilboa, and who had been still further weakened and depressed by their attempts to recover the land which was occupied by the Philistines" (Keil, p.299).
 - c. "This skirmish is exactly similar to the battles of the Homeric warriors, amongst whom, in the flight of one, the pursuit by another, and the dialogue held between them, there is vividly represented the style of ancient warfare" (JFB, p.221).
5. Verse 32: "And they took up Asahel, and buried him in the sepulchre of his father, which *was in* Bethlehem. And Joab and his men went all night, and they came to Hebron at break of day."
- a. In returning home, Joab's men carried the body of Asahel; it was buried at Bethlehem, in his father's sepulchre.
 - b. Leaving Bethlehem, traveling all night, Joab and his men came to Hebron at the break of day. The straight-line distance between Bethlehem and Hebron is about fifteen miles, but the distance they would have had to cover was nearly twice that far.
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2 SAMUEL 3

A. 2 Samuel 3:1-5: David Increases in Power.

1. Verse 1: "Now there was long war between the house of Saul and the house of David: but David waxed stronger and stronger, and the house of Saul waxed weaker and weaker."
 - a. A state of hostility existed between the house Saul and that of David with active fighting developing on occasion.
 - b. The trend of these hostilities was for Ishbosheth and Abner's division to lose strength, while David's side gained in power and influence. By this time, it should have been known to most of the nation that God had anointed David to be king.
2. Verses 2-5: "And unto David were sons born in Hebron: and his firstborn was Amnon, of Ahinoam the Jezreelitess; And his second, Chileab, of Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite; and the third, Absalom the son of Maacah the daughter of Talmi king of Geshur; And the fourth, Adonijah the son of Haggith; and the fifth, Shephatiah the son of Abital; And the sixth, Ithream, by Eglah David's wife. These were born to David in Hebron."
 - a. David's wives bore him six sons during the time he dwelled at Hebron. At the last report, he had two wives, Abigail and Ahinoam; earlier, Michal had been taken from David by her father, King Saul, and given to another man. In the meantime, he had married four other women.
 - b. Each of his six wives bore him a son at Hebron.
 - 1) Ahinoam bore Amnon, his firstborn.
 - 2) Abigail bore Chileab. This son was also known as Daniel (1 Chron. 3:1).
 - 3) Maacah bore him Absalom. "Maacah was the daughter of the king of Geshur, a region in Syria, north of Israel. This marriage seems to have been a political match, made by David with a view to strengthen himself against Ish-bosheth's party, by the aid of a powerful friend and ally in the north" (JFB, p.222). *Absalom* means "father of peace," but he did not live up to his name.
 - 4) Haggith bore Adonijah.
 - 5) Abital bore Shephatiah.
 - 6) Eglah bore Ithream. "The clause appended to Eglah's name, viz, *David's wife*, merely serves as a fitting conclusion to the whole list...and is not added to show that Eglah was David's principal wife..." (Keil, p.300).

B. 2 Samuel 3:6-11: Abner Exalts Himself.

1. Verse 6: "And it came to pass, while there was war between the house of Saul and the house of David, that Abner made himself strong for the house of Saul."
 - a. As the hostile situation continued between the house of Saul and David's house, Abner began to show his true designs.
 - b. That Abner was the power behind Ishbosheth's throne cannot be ignored. He made himself strong; he began to take actions which indicated that he intended to take over the throne in his own name.
 2. Verses 7-8: "And Saul had a concubine, whose name was Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah: and *Ishbosheth* said to Abner, Wherefore hast thou gone in unto my father's concubine? Then was Abner very wroth for the words of Ishbosheth, and said, *Am* I a dog's head, which against Judah do show kindness this day unto the house of Saul thy father, to his brethren, and to his friends, and have not delivered thee into the hand of David, that thou chargest me to day with a fault concerning this woman?"
 - a. "It was the exclusive right of the successor to the throne to cohabit with the concubines of the deceased king, who came down to him as part of the property which he inherited" (Keil, pp.300f).
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- b. For Abner to take Saul's concubine as his own property was to assert a claim to Saul's throne. This was not only an insult to Ishbosheth, it was a blatant attempt to humble the young king.
 - c. When Ishbosheth rebuked Abner for this offense, the general became angry, and spoke harshly to the young king. "But Abner was furious at what Ishbaal said. 'Am I the mere head of a cur?' he asked, 'I with all my good service to the house of Saul your father, to his kinsfolk and his friends, I who have saved you from the grasp of David, that you find fault with me now about a wench?'" (NKJ).
3. Verses 9-10: "So do God to Abner, and more also, except, as the LORD hath sworn to David, even so I do to him; To translate the kingdom from the house of Saul, and to set up the throne of David over Israel and over Judah, from Dan even to Beersheba."
- a. Other translations:
 - 1) ASV: "So do God to Abner, and more also, except, as the LORD hath sworn to David, even so I do to him; To translate the kingdom from the house of Saul, and to set up the throne of David over Israel and over Judah, from Dan even to Beer-sheba."
 - 2) NKJ: "May God do so to Abner, and more also, if I do not do for David as the Lord has sworn to him — 10 to transfer the kingdom from the house of Saul, and set up the throne of David over Israel and over Judah, from Dan to Beersheba."
 - b. "We do not know of any oath with which God had promised the kingdom to David; but the promise of God in itself is equivalent to an oath, as God is the true God, who can neither lie nor deceive (1 Sam. 15:29; Num. 23:19)" (Keil, p.302).
 - 1) 1 Samuel 15:29: "And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent: for he is not a man, that he should repent."
 - 2) Numbers 23:19: "God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?"
 - 3) Hebrews 6:18: "That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us."
 - c. Abner, "impelled by revenge, determined to transfer all the weight of his influence to the opposite party. He evidently set a full value on his services, and seems to have lorded it over his weak nephew in a haughty, overbearing manner" (JFB, p.222).
 - d. Abner set in motion a plan by which he would transfer his influence behind David (verses 12ff); he took steps to encourage the other tribes of Israel to accept David as their king.
4. Verse 11: "And he could not answer Abner a word again, because he feared him."
- a. The young king could not reply to Abner's furious charge; he feared him too much. This suggests that Ishbosheth was mostly a figurehead, with Abner furnishing most of the strength and authority.
 - b. "Miserable is the lot of a king who is governed by the general of his army, who may strip him of his power and dignity whenever he pleases! Witness the fate of poor Charles 1 of England, and Louis XVI of France. Military men, above all others, should never be intrusted with any civil power, and should be great only in the field" (Clarke, p.314).

C. 2 Samuel 3:12-16: Michal is Returned to David.

1. Verse 12: "And Abner sent messengers to David on his behalf, saying, Whose *is* the land? saying *also*, Make thy league with me, and, behold, my hand *shall be* with thee, to bring about all Israel unto thee."
 - a. "But there is nothing in the present Hebrew text corresponding to the last two words; and though Telem was within the range of David's former marauding expeditions, he was now permanently settled in Hebron.
 - 1) "Though Abner's language implied a secret conviction that, in supporting Ish-bosheth, he had been

- labouring to frustrate the divine purpose of conferring the sovereignty of the kingdom on David, this acknowledgment was no justification either of the measure he was now adopting or of the motives that prompted it.
- 2) “Nor does it seem possible to uphold the full integrity and honour of David's conduct in entertaining his secret overtures for undermining Ish-bosheth, except we take into account the divine promise of the kingdom, and his belief that the secession of Abner was a means designed by Providence for accomplishing it.
 - 3) “The demand for the restoration of his wife Michal was perfectly fair; but David's insisting on it at that particular moment, as an indispensable condition of his entering into any treaty with Abner, seems to have proceeded, not so much from a lingering attachment to her, as from an expectation that his possession of that princess would incline some adherents of the house of Saul to be favourable to his cause” (Jamieson).
- b. Abner sent a message to David, asking for an agreement between himself and David, promising to help him gain control over all Israel.
 - c. He admitted in the message that David possessed the right to the throne.
2. Verse 13: “And he said, Well; I will make a league with thee: but one thing I require of thee, that is, Thou shalt not see my face, except thou first bring Michal Saul's daughter, when thou comest to see my face.”
 - a. David agreed to make a pact with Abner, but there was one condition: He demanded that his wife Michal be returned to him. He warned Abner that he would not see his face if he did not bring Michal with him.
 - b. Deuteronomy 24:1-4: "When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give *it* in her hand, and send her out of his house. And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's *wife*. And *if* the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and giveth *it* in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, which took her *to be* his wife; Her former husband, which sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after that she is defiled; for that *is* abomination before the LORD: and thou shalt not cause the land to sin, which the LORD thy God giveth thee *for* an inheritance."
 - 1) The specific conditions stated in the passage (Deut. 24:1-4) did not exist in the case of David and Michal; he had not put her away by divorce; she had been taken from him. It may be, however, that the situation was still governed by that command of the law. It may be that David did not have a right to have Michal as his wife, since she had been given to another man. "But Saul had given Michal his daughter, David's wife, to Phalti the son of Laish, which *was* of Gallim" (1 Sam. 25:44).
 - 2) Did David want Michal back merely for political advantage? “The demand for the restoration of his wife Michal was perfectly fair; but David’s insisting on it at that particular moment, as an indispensable condition of his entering into any treaty with Abner, seems to have proceeded, not so much from a lingering attachment to her, as from an expectation that his possession of that princess would incline some adherents of the house of Saul to be favourable to his cause” (JFB, pp.222f).
 - 3) “Besides David's affection for Michal, there were political reasons for demanding her restoration. Saul's despotic act in giving her in marriage to another man (1 Sam 25:44) had been a public disavowal of David as the son-in-law of the royal house, and equivalent to a proclamation of outlawry. David's rights were all declared null by such an act. But now Ishbosheth must with equal publicity reverse his father's deed, and restore to David his lost position. It must have been a most painful humiliation to him to be driven thus to cancel his father's decree, and declare thereby to
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- all Israel that he was unable to refuse his assent to whatever his rival demanded. And for this reason David sent his messengers directly to Ishbosheth, because the importance of Michal's surrender to him lay in its being a public act of the state" [Pulpit Commentary, *ibid.*].
3. Verse 14: "And David sent messengers to Ishbosheth Saul's son, saying, Deliver *me* my wife Michal, which I espoused to me for an hundred foreskins of the Philistines."
 - a. David sent a message to Ishbosheth demanding that he return Michal to him. Ishbosheth and Michal were brother and sister.
 - b. He reminds Ishbosheth that he had obtained permission of Saul to marry his daughter, by taking a hundred Philistines foreskins. Saul had placed this price for his daughter's hand because he figured that David would get killed in the process of taking these grisly trophies: "And Saul said, Thus shall ye say to David, The king desireth not any dowry, but an hundred foreskins of the Philistines, to be avenged of the king's enemies. But Saul thought to make David fall by the hand of the Philistines. And when his servants told David these words, it pleased David well to be the king's son in law: and the days were not expired. Wherefore David arose and went, he and his men, and slew of the Philistines two hundred men; and David brought their foreskins, and they gave them in full tale to the king, that he might be the king's son in law. And Saul gave him Michal his daughter to wife" (1 Sam. 18:25-27).
 4. Verses 15-16: "And Ishbosheth sent, and took her from *her* husband, *even* from Phaltiel the son of Laish. And her husband went with her along weeping behind her to Bahurim. Then said Abner unto him, Go, return. And he returned."
 - a. Ishbosheth bowed to David's demand. He had Michal taken from her present husband, and sent on the way back to David.
 - b. One of the most pitiful scenes in the Old Testament is depicted in her husband's reaction to this harsh experience. He followed along behind her, weeping. He loved her sincerely. She had previously loved David (1 Sam. 18:20), but she came to despise him (2 Sam. 6:16).
 - 1) 1 Samuel 18:20: "And Michal Saul's daughter loved David: and they told Saul, and the thing pleased him."
 - 2) 2 Samuel 6:16: "And as the ark of the LORD came into the city of David, Michal Saul's daughter looked through a window, and saw king David leaping and dancing before the LORD; and she despised him in her heart."
 - c. Abner commanded Phaltiel to go back home; he had no choice but to obey. The trials of real people are sharper than fiction.
 - d. Coffman:
 - 1) It is virtually certain that Michal never forgave David for his breaking up her marriage with Paltiel. This would explain her mocking reference to David at a later time.
 - 2) When once the God-given law of marriage has been violated, the law which requires a man and his wife to live together "until death do us part" — once that command is broken, there is no way to repair the resulting damage to human lives. God has revealed no "remedy" to cure the mess that people make for themselves with multiple marriages, divorces, etc. Why? There really is no way to make "everything all right" after the law of God has been flouted and disobeyed.
 - 3) And, since God has not given any "remedy" for such sad conditions, people should be warned against letting any church or any preacher or religious prelate lay down the rules on how to "fix the situation." Some things CANNOT be "fixed." DeHoff put it this way: "Some of the problems, no human being can solve."
 - 4) Young pointed out that what David did (by taking Michal back as his wife) was against God's law. "According to the law of Deuteronomy 24:1-4, David could not legitimately receive his wife back

after her marriage to Paltiel.

D. 2 Samuel 3:17-21: Abner Offers His Services to David.

1. Verses 17-18: “And Abner had communication with the elders of Israel, saying, Ye sought for David in times past *to be* king over you: Now then do *it*: for the LORD hath spoken of David, saying, By the hand of my servant David I will save my people Israel out of the hand of the Philistines, and out of the hand of all their enemies.”
 - a. Before meeting with David, Abner communicated with the elders of Israel, seeking to draw them into his political intrigue. He reminded them that they had in times past sought to have David reign over them. He stated that the time for this move had arrived.
 - b. “He spoke the truth in impressing their minds with the well-known fact of David’s divine designation to the kingdom. But he acted a base and hypocritically part in pretending that his present movement was prompted by religious motives, when it sprang entirely from malice and revenge against Ish-bosheth” (JFB, p.223).
2. Verse 19: “And Abner also spake in the ears of Benjamin: and Abner went also to speak in the ears of David in Hebron all that seemed good to Israel, and that seemed good to the whole house of Benjamin.”
 - a. “Abner had spoken in the same way in the ears of Benjamin. He spoke to the Benjaminites more especially, because the existing royal family belonged to that tribe, and they had reaped many advantages in consequence...” (Keil, p.303).
 - b. 1 Samuel 22:7: "Then Saul said unto his servants that stood about him, Hear now, ye Benjamites; will the son of Jesse give every one of you fields and vineyards, *and* make you all captains of thousands, and captains of hundreds?" Saul’s comment here indicates that he could vouchsafe unto the Benjamites the bounties named.
3. Verses 20-21: “So Abner came to David to Hebron, and twenty men with him. And David made Abner and the men that *were* with him a feast. And Abner said unto David, I will arise and go, and will gather all Israel unto my lord the king, that they may make a league with thee, and that thou mayest reign over all that thine heart desireth. And David sent Abner away; and he went in peace.”
 - a. The planned meeting between Abner and David took place at Hebron. Abner brought twenty men with him there, and David entertained them with a feast.
 - b. The outcome of the meeting is stated in verse twenty-one, where Abner pledged to bring all Israel under David’s banner. He sent Abner away in peace, believing that the whole nation would soon be with him.
 - c. “Apart altogether from the mildness of David’s own character, he had no reason whatever for treating Abner as an enemy, now that he had given up all opposition to his reigning, and had brought all the Israelites over to him” (Keil, pp.304f).

E. 2 Samuel 3:22-30: Joab and Abishai Slay Abner.

1. Verse 22: “And, behold, the servants of David and Joab came from *pursuing* a troop, and brought in a great spoil with them: but Abner *was* not with David in Hebron; for he had sent him away, and he was gone in peace.”
 - a. Joab had been on a raiding expedition against some unnamed foe, and now returned with a great amount of spoils. Instead of being received with rejoicing over a successful venture, he returned only to learn that his enemy Abner had been into the city, where he had met with David, who sent him away peaceably.
 - b. The previous chapter reported how Abner had slain Joab and Abishai’s brother Asahel. The surviving brothers were determined to avenge their brother’s death.
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2. Verse 23-25: “When Joab and all the host that *was* with him were come, they told Joab, saying, Abner the son of Ner came to the king, and he hath sent him away, and he is gone in peace. Then Joab came to the king, and said, What hast thou done? behold, Abner came unto thee; why *is it that* thou hast sent him away, and he is quite gone? Thou knowest Abner the son of Ner, that he came to deceive thee, and to know thy going out and thy coming in, and to know all that thou doest.”
 - a. Joab learned the news of Abner’s visit with David. He came to David with a word of complaint and warning. He demanded to know what David had done; more especially, why he had sent him away in peace.
 - b. He asserted that David should know Abner well enough to perceive that his visit was deceptive, that he really wanted only to spy on David’s activities. “Joab hoped in this way to prejudice David against Abner, to make him suspected as a traitor, that he might be able to gratify his own private revenge with perfect impunity” (Keil, p.305).
 - c. Joab knew of Abner’s skill and influence as a military leader. “The military talents of that general, his popularity with the army, his influence throughout the nation, rendered him a formidable rival; and in the event of his overtures being carried out, the important service of bringing over all the other tribes to the king of Judah would establish so strong a claim on the gratitude of David, that his accession would inevitably raise a serious obstacle to the ambition of Joab. To these considerations was added the remembrance of the blood feud that existed between them since the death of his brother Asahel (ch. 2:23)” (JFB, p.223).
 3. Verses 26-27: “And when Joab was come out from David, he sent messengers after Abner, which brought him again from the well of Sirah: but David knew *it* not. And when Abner was returned to Hebron, Joab took him aside in the gate to speak with him quietly, and smote him there under the fifth *rib*, that he died, for the blood of Asahel his brother.”
 - a. Following his talk with David, Joab sent messengers to overtake Abner. He likely sent the message in the name of David, a message that requested him to return to Hebron. Abner came back.
 - b. When Abner returned to Hebron, Joab took him aside to speak with him privately. The place where they went was beyond the immediate confines of Hebron, a city of refuge, in which Abner could enjoy safety from any personal enemy.
 - c. Getting him beyond the refuge the city offered, Joab smote him under the fifth rib, killing him. The reason assigned for the act is “for the blood of Asahel his brother.” Verse thirty shows that Abishai was somehow involved in the assassination.
 - d. “This act of Joab, in which Abishai must have been in some way concerned, was a treacherous act of assassination, which could not even be defended as blood-revenge, since Abner had slain Asahel in battle after repeated warnings, and only for the purpose of saving his own life. The principal motive for Joab’s act was most contemptible jealousy, or the fear lest Abner’s reconciliation to David should diminish his own influence with the king, as was the case again at a later period with the murder of Amasa (ch. 20:10)” (Keil, p.306).
 4. Verses 28-29: “And afterward when David heard *it*, he said, I and my kingdom *are* guiltless before the LORD for ever from the blood of Abner the son of Ner: Let it rest on the head of Joab, and on all his father's house; and let there not fail from the house of Joab one that hath an issue, or that is a leper, or that leaneth on a staff, or that falleth on the sword, or that lacketh bread.”
 - a. David was much dismayed on learning of the death of Abner. He knew that he had not been involved, and that he was free from the blood of Abner.
 - b. He pronounced a curse upon the house of Joab, to the end that among his descendants, may there always be one that would have a running issue, or a leper, or one who was lame, or one that would fall on a sword, or one that was poverty-stricken.
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- c. "The meaning is: May God avenge the murder of Abner upon Joab and his family, by punishing them continually with terrible diseases, violent death, and poverty. To make the reason for this fearful curse perfectly clear, the historian observes in ver. 30, that Joab and his brother Abishai had murdered Abner, *because he had slain their brother Asahel at Gibeon in the battle*' (ch. 2:23)" (Keil, p.306).
5. Verse 30: "So Joab and Abishai his brother slew Abner, because he had slain their brother Asahel at Gibeon in the battle."
 - a. "Killing during a battle neither required nor allowed that the next of kin should avenge the death. Abner's slaying of Asahel was justified as being in a battle and in self defense and absolutely unavoidable, except upon the premise that Abner should have sacrificed his own life to avoid it" (Coffman, p.39).
 - b. "The terrible curse which David invoked upon the house of Joab finally culminated in Solomon's slaughter of Joab between the horns of the altar, following Joab's backing of Adonijah to be the successor of David. Among David's last words, were those in which he admonished Solomon not to allow the gray hairs of Joab to go down to the grave in peace. The incredible damage to the entire history of Israel which resulted from this shameful assassination of Abner could hardly be over estimated. The eventual division of the kingdom in the reign of Rehoboam was due in part to the mistrust and hatred that followed this terribly unjust action of Joab and Abishai" (Coffman, p.41).
- F. 2 Samuel 3:31-39: David Laments the Death of Abner.
1. Verses 31-32: "And David said to Joab, and to all the people that *were* with him, Rend your clothes, and gird you with sackcloth, and mourn before Abner. And king David *himself* followed the bier. And they buried Abner in Hebron: and the king lifted up his voice, and wept at the grave of Abner; and all the people wept."
 - a. David understood that the effect of Abner's assassination would be to make it more difficult for him to get the whole nation to come under his banner. He commanded Joab and all his subjects to rend their clothes, don sackcloth, and mourn over Abner. This might mollify the friends and followers of Abner in at least a small way.
 - b. "Abner was a very evil man and fully deserved to die for his long and bitter opposition to David at a time when he most certainly knew that he was opposing God's will; but that in no way justified the totally unjustifiable murder inflicted upon him by the evil hands of Joab and Abishai. 'This evil deed brought upon David an evil name, and four or five more years had to elapse before the tribes could be induced to take him as their king'" (*Pulpit Commentary*, p.68; Coffman, p.42).
 2. Verses 33-34: "And the king lamented over Abner, and said, Died Abner as a fool dieth? Thy hands *were* not bound, nor thy feet put into fetters: as a man falleth before wicked men, *so* fellest thou. And all the people wept again over him."
 - a. In lamenting over Abner, David asked, "Did Abner die the death of a fool?" The kind of fool meant was one who was a "godless wretch" (Moffatt). "The fool hath said in his heart, *There is* no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, *there is* none that doeth good" (Ps. 14:1).
 - b. Abner did not die in fetters, after being mistreated and mocked by a cruel enemy. He died as a brave man, after being betrayed by an enemy.
 - c. So touching was the lament of David that the people wept over Abner. The lament was doubtless produced by inspiration. "The spirit of the LORD spake by me, and his word *was* in my tongue" (2 Sam. 23:2).
 3. Verses 35-37: "And when all the people came to cause David to eat meat while it was yet day, David sware, saying, So do God to me, and more also, if I taste bread, or ought else, till the sun be down. And all the people took notice *of it*, and it pleased them: as whatsoever the king did pleased all the people. For all the people and all Israel understood that day that it was not of the king to slay Abner the son of Ner."
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- a. David's design was logical and right; it was his purpose to show his sincere regards for Abner, and thus to promote a reunion of the nation under his leadership. This was God's plan.
 - b. David vowed not to eat any food until after the sun went down, as a token of respect to Abner. His actions in giving the lament and in mourning and fasting was well-received by the people.
 - c. Because of what he did in the matter, he proved to the people that he had not been responsible for the killing of Abner.
4. Verse 38: "And the king said unto his servants, Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel?"
- a. If Abner had lived, the tribes of Israel would have been brought under the unified leadership of God's anointed king—David. His assassination dealt a blow to the nation, the effects of which lasted a few years.
 - b. David paid a great tribute to Abner by describing him as a prince and a great man. The expression he used is often cited today when some great soldier of the cross falls.
5. Verse 39: "And I *am* this day weak, though anointed king; and these men the sons of Zeruiah *be* too hard for me: the LORD shall reward the doer of evil according to his wickedness."
- a. David admitted that the death of Abner had weakened his cause. Some of his most reliable men had taken matters into their own hands. The two were the sons of ' (David's sister), so he was speaking of his own nephews. See under 2 Samuel 2:13; also 1 Chronicles 2:15-16.
 - b. He stated the old truth concerning reaping and sowing; he was willing for the Lord to reward them according to their deeds.
 - c. "This deed was an insult to the authority, as well as most damaging to the prospects of the king. But David's feelings and conduct on hearing of the death, together with the whole character and accompaniments of the funeral solemnity, tended not only to remove all suspicion of guilt from him, but even to turn the tide of popular opinion in his favour, and to pave the way for his reigning over all the tribes more honourably than by the treacherous negotiations of Abner, whose services in consequence of his vile conduct, the Lord did in so important a transaction employ. In the neighbourhood of Hebron, at a spot now covered by the house of a Moslem inhabitant, is shown the traditional grave of Abner, who, according to the legend, belonged to the race of giants..." (JFB, p.224).
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2 SAMUEL 4

A. 2 Samuel 4:1-4: Troubles in Saul's Family.

1. Verse 1: "And when Saul's son heard that Abner was dead in Hebron, his hands were feeble, and all the Israelites were troubled."
 - a. Ishbosheth heard of Abner's death at Hebron, his confidence and strength to reign over his people dissipated. He had been installed as king over most of Israel following Saul's death, but the power behind his throne was Abner. Ishbosheth was not the strong leader his father had been. His reign did not have the approval of God; it was bound to fail. In listing the kings of Israel, Ishbosheth's name is not included, since it was not an authorized reign.
 - b. Abner was perceived as the real strength of the nation following Saul's demise. The Israelites knew the real situation, and were troubled when they learned that Abner had been slain. David's lament over his death was not overplayed (3:38); the nation understood Abner's greatness as a military man and political leader, and was distressed when his death became known.
2. Verses 2-3: "And Saul's son had two men *that were* captains of bands: the name of the one *was* Baanah, and the name of the other Rechab, the sons of Rimmon a Beerothite, of the children of Benjamin: (for Beeroth also was reckoned to Benjamin. And the Beerothites fled to Gittaim, and were sojourners there until this day)."
 - a. Two bands of Ishbosheth's army were commanded by two brothers, Baanah and Rechab, who were sons of Rimmon of Beeroth.
 - b. Coffman alleges that these men were not Israelites, but Gibeonites (cf. Josh. 9; 2 Sam. 21). Beeroth was one of four cities inhabited by Hivites which were involved in deceiving the Israelites (Josh. 9).
 - 1) "And the children of Israel journeyed, and came unto their cities on the third day. Now their cities *were* Gibeon, and Chephirah, and Beeroth, and Kirjathjearim" (Josh. 9:17). However, there is no proof that Beeroth was still inhabited by Hivites.
 - 2) Joshua 9:3-15: "And when the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done unto Jericho and to Ai, They did work wilily, and went and made as if they had been ambassadors, and took old sacks upon their asses, and wine bottles, old, and rent, and bound up; And old shoes and clouted upon their feet, and old garments upon them; and all the bread of their provision was dry and mouldy. And they went to Joshua unto the camp at Gilgal, and said unto him, and to the men of Israel, We be come from a far country: now therefore make ye a league with us. And the men of Israel said unto the Hivites, Peradventure ye dwell among us; and how shall we make a league with you? And they said unto Joshua, We are thy servants. And Joshua said unto them, Who are ye? and from whence come ye? And they said unto him, From a very far country thy servants are come because of the name of the LORD thy God: for we have heard the fame of him, and all that he did in Egypt, And all that he did to the two kings of the Amorites, that were beyond Jordan, to Sihon king of Heshbon, and to Og king of Bashan, which was at Ashtaroth. Wherefore our elders and all the inhabitants of our country spake to us, saying, Take victuals with you for the journey, and go to meet them, and say unto them, We are your servants: therefore now make ye a league with us. This our bread we took hot for our provision out of our houses on the day we came forth to go unto you; but now, behold, it is dry, and it is mouldy: And these bottles of wine, which we filled, were new; and, behold, they be rent: and these our garments and our shoes are become old by reason of the very long journey. And the men took of their victuals, and asked not counsel at the mouth of the LORD. And Joshua made peace with them, and made a league with them, to let them live: and the princes of the congregation sware unto them."
 - c. Beeroth was part of the territory given to Benjamin (Josh. 18:25), and presumably was inhabited by Benjaminites. "This remark concerning Beeroth in the verse before us, serves to confirm the statement

that the Beerothites mentioned were Benjaminites; but that statement also shows the horrible character of the crime attributed to them in the following verses. Two men of the tribe of Benjamin murdered the son of Saul, the king belonging to their own tribe” (Keil, p.309).

- d. On learning of Abner’s death, the Beerothites fled to Gittaim, a location that has not been identified. “*Gittaim* is mentioned again in Neh. 9:33, among the places in which Benjaminites were dwelling after the captivity....It is never mentioned again, and has not yet been discovered. The reason why the Beerothites fled to Gittaim, and remained there as strangers until the time when this history was written, is also unknown” (Keil, p.309).
3. Verse 4: “And Jonathan, Saul's son, had a son *that was* lame of *his* feet. He was five years old when the tidings came of Saul and Jonathan out of Jezreel, and his nurse took him up, and fled: and it came to pass, as she made haste to flee, that he fell, and became lame. And his name *was* Mephibosheth.”
 - a. This statement is masterfully interwoven into the narrative at this point, giving background information in anticipation of chapter nine, but primarily to show that after Ishbosheth, there was no one among Saul’s descendants who was fitted to continue the dynasty.
 - b. Ishobosheth’s days were numbered, and Mephibosheth was a cripple.
 - 1) “This is mentioned as a reason for his being considered, according to Oriental notions, unfit for exercising the duties of sovereignty” (JFB, p.225).
 - 2) “Before the historian proceeds to describe what the two Beerothites did, he inserts a remark concerning Saul’s family, to show at the outset, that with the death of Ishbosheth the government of this family necessarily became extinct, as the only remaining descendant was a perfectly helpless cripple” (Keil, p.309).
 - c. Mephibosheth was the son of Jonathan. The boy was only five years old when news came that Saul and Jonathan had been slain. His nurse took him up to flee, but somehow she let him fall. In the fall, the lad was permanently injured.

B. 2 Samuel 4:5-12: Ishbosheth is Slain.

1. Verses 5-6: “And the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, Rechab and Baanah, went, and came about the heat of the day to the house of Ishbosheth, who lay on a bed at noon. And they came thither into the midst of the house, *as though* they would have fetched wheat; and they smote him under the fifth *rib*: and Rechab and Baanah his brother escaped.”
 - a. Rechab and Baanah, introduced in verse 2, went to the house of Ishbosheth; he resided at Mahanaim, located on the eastern side of Jordan, northeast of Jericho.
 - b. Ishbosheth was taking rest in bed at noon, during the heat of the day. The two captains entered the house, as was customary, as though to obtain some grain. Their actions were unquestioned. The grain they ostensibly were after was likely for the troops they commanded.
 - c. Instead of getting grain, they assassinated Ishbosheth. "And they came there, all the way into the house, *as though* to get wheat, and they stabbed him in the stomach. Then Rechab and Baanah his brother escaped" (2 Sam. 4:6, NKJ).
 2. Verse 7: “For when they came into the house, he lay on his bed in his bedchamber, and they smote him, and slew him, and beheaded him, and took his head, and gat them away through the plain all night.”
 - a. “Rechab and Baanah came in the heat of the day, when they knew that Ishbosheth, their master, would, according to custom, be resting on his divan....They took advantage of these circumstances to execute an infamous plot they had formed against the life of their master...” (JFB, p.225).
 - b. They cut off his head to take to David. Leaving the household unaware of anything untoward, these two assassins traveled all night across the Jordan valley, and made their way to Hebron where David had set up his headquarters.
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3. Verse 8: “And they brought the head of Ishbosheth unto David to Hebron, and said to the king, Behold the head of Ishbosheth the son of Saul thine enemy, which sought thy life; and the LORD hath avenged my lord the king this day of Saul, and of his seed.”
 - a. “Such bloody trophies of rebels and conspirators have always been acceptable to princes in the East, and the carriers been liberally rewarded. Ish-bosheth being a usurper, the two assassins thought they were doing a meritorious service to David by removing the only existing obstacle to the union of the two kingdoms” (JFB, p.225).
 - b. When they greeted David, they presumed to give the “credit” for the murder of Ishbosheth to the Lord. God gets the blame for many things in which he is not involved.
 - c. They assumed that David would be happy to hear of Ishbosheth’s death. They were doomed to the same disappointment the Amalekite met when he claimed to have slain Saul (2 Sam. 1).
 4. Verses 9-11: “And David answered Rechab and Baanah his brother, the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, and said unto them, *As* the LORD liveth, who hath redeemed my soul out of all adversity, When one told me, saying, Behold, Saul is dead, thinking to have brought good tidings, I took hold of him, and slew him in Ziklag, who *thought* that I would have given him a reward for his tidings: How much more, when wicked men have slain a righteous person in his own house upon his bed? shall I not therefore now require his blood of your hand, and take you away from the earth?”
 - a. No doubt this information shocked David. He told Rechab and Baanah about the young Amalekite who came to him with the story that he had killed Saul. That man thought he would be rewarded by David for having slain his antagonist. Instead of getting a reward, that man was quickly executed!
 - b. He told them that he would certainly require the blood of the wicked men who had slain a righteous man in his own house while he was asleep on his own bed. He plainly told them that he would repay their crime by taking them away from the earth.
 - c. Genesis 9:6: "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man." God demands capital punishment for murder. When carried out by civil authorities, capital punishment is a strong deterrent to capital crimes.
 - d. Romans 13:1-7: "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to *execute* wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore *ye* must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute *is due*; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour."
 5. Verse 12: “And David commanded his young men, and they slew them, and cut off their hands and their feet, and hanged *them* up over the pool in Hebron. But they took the head of Ishbosheth, and buried *it* in the sepulchre of Abner in Hebron.”
 - a. David directed his young men to execute Rechab and Baanah. They quickly complied. The criminals were executed, and their hands and feet were cut off. “The cutting off of the hands and feet of criminals convicted of treason was an ancient custom...” (JFB, p.225)
 - b. “Next to the haram in interest and antiquity are the two pools of Hebron. The larger of these is in the lower part of the town, and a person entering the town from the west passes it on his right as he goes directly toward the haram. Its wall is of very ancient masonry, and is built up about three feet above the street. It is 142 feet square and about 20 feet deep, with a flight of stone steps descending in one
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corner.

- 1) “When seen by the author, boys and men were swimming in it, entering from the steps, while men and women at the corner diagonally opposite were drawing water to fill their skin-bottles and to water their stock. This, in all probability, is the pool near which David hung up the feet and hands of the men who assassinated Ishbosheth.
 - 2) “The other pool is toward the northwestern end of the town, and is much smaller, though it is constructed in the same manner and bears the same marks of antiquity. It is 74 feet long, 54 feet wide, and 21 feet deep. Both of the pools appear to be supplied by rainwater, though the bed of the valley, along which a stream of water flows in winter, passes by the western side of each” (J.W. McGarvey, *Lands of the Bible*, p.250).
- c. “Outside the town of Hebron is a pool of good water, which, being below the level of the adjoining ground, is accessible by flights of steps at each corner; and there is another reservoir at a little distance, both of which are very ancient. One or the other of these must certainly be the pool referred to. The exposure of the mutilated relics of the two assassins at the pool was owing to its being a place of public resort. The exposure of the mutilated remains were intended as not only a punishment of their crime, but also the attestation of David’s abhorrence” (JFB, p.225).
- d. “David then commanded his servant to slay the murderers, and also to make the punishment more severe than usual. ‘They cut off their hands and feet,’—the hands with which they had committed the murder, and the feet which had run for the reward—’and hanged the bodies by the pool at Hebron’ for a spectacle and warning, that others might be deterred from committing similar crimes (cf. Deut 21:22; J. H. Michaelis). In illustration of the fact itself, we may compare the similar course pursued by Alexander towards the murderer of king Darius, as described in Justin's history (2 Sam 12:6) and Curtius (7:5). They buried Ishbosheth's head in Abner's grave at Hebron. Thus David acted with strict justice in this case also, not only to prove to the people that he had neither commanded nor approved of the murder, but from heartfelt abhorrence of such crimes, and to keep his conscience void of offence towards God and towards man” [Keil & Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament: New Updated Edition, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1996 by Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.].
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2 SAMUEL 5

A. 2 Samuel 5:1-5: David is Made King Over All Israel.

1. Verses 1-2: "Then came all the tribes of Israel to David unto Hebron, and spake, saying, Behold, we *are* thy bone and thy flesh. Also in time past, when Saul was king over us, thou wast he that leddest out and broughtest in Israel: and the LORD said to thee, Thou shalt feed my people Israel, and thou shalt be a captain over Israel."
 - a. 1 Chronicles 11:1-3: "Then all Israel gathered themselves to David unto Hebron, saying, Behold, we *are* thy bone and thy flesh. And moreover in time past, even when Saul was king, thou *wast* he that leddest out and broughtest in Israel: and the LORD thy God said unto thee, Thou shalt feed my people Israel, and thou shalt be ruler over my people Israel. Therefore came all the elders of Israel to the king to Hebron; and David made a covenant with them in Hebron before the LORD; and they anointed David king over Israel, according to the word of the LORD by Samuel."
 - b. The text does not say that all of the people came, but that their representatives approached David. Israel came to David by means of their elders.
 - 1) 2 Samuel 5:3: "So all the elders of Israel came to the king to Hebron; and king David made a league with them in Hebron before the LORD: and they anointed David king over Israel."
 - 2) 1 Chronicles 11:3: "Therefore came all the elders of Israel to the king to Hebron; and David made a covenant with them in Hebron before the LORD; and they anointed David king over Israel, according to the word of the LORD by Samuel."
 - c. These men stated that they were one in their fleshly relationship; they were descendants of Abraham; they all followed the Law God gave them through Moses.
 - d. During Saul's reign, the elders stated that it was David who did a major part of leading Israel. The whole nation came to honor and love him. "And David went out whithersoever Saul sent him, *and* behaved himself wisely: and Saul set him over the men of war, and he was accepted in the sight of all the people, and also in the sight of Saul's servants" (1 Sam. 18:5).
 - e. They knew that God had promised that David would "feed my people Israel" and would be "a captain over Israel." The parallel account in 1 Chronicles 11:3 further shows that God had announced that David was to be king by the word he spoke through Samuel the prophet.
2. Verse 3: "So all the elders of Israel came to the king to Hebron; and king David made a league with them in Hebron before the LORD: and they anointed David king over Israel."
 - a. In view of the foregoing, Israel anointed David king over all the nation. Abner had laid the ground-work for this occasion when he approached the elders with the proposition that they select David to that position. "And Abner had communication with the elders of Israel, saying, Ye sought for David in times past *to be* king over you: Now then do *it*: for the LORD hath spoken of David, saying, By the hand of my servant David I will save my people Israel out of the hand of the Philistines, and out of the hand of all their enemies. And Abner also spake in the ears of Benjamin: and Abner went also to speak in the ears of David in Hebron all that seemed good to Israel, and that seemed good to the whole house of Benjamin. So Abner came to David to Hebron, and twenty men with him. And David made Abner and the men that *were* with him a feast. And Abner said unto David, I will arise and go, and will gather all Israel unto my lord the king, that they may make a league with thee, and that thou mayest reign over all that thine heart desireth. And David sent Abner away; and he went in peace" (2 Sam. 3:17-21).
 - b. The details were settled; an agreement was reached; David was appointed king. God never intended for Saul's sons to take their father's place; they all were now dead; only a crippled grandson remained. For the good of the nation and for the purposes he intended to accomplish by Israel, God now brought

David to the throne.

3. Verses 4-5: "David *was* thirty years old when he began to reign, *and* he reigned forty years. In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months: and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty and three years over all Israel and Judah."
 - a. A parallel statement is found in 1 Chronicles 29:27: "And the period that he reigned over Israel *was* forty years; seven years he reigned in Hebron, and thirty-three *years* he reigned in Jerusalem" (NKJ).
 - b. "The age of David is conclusive as to the fact that the earlier years of Saul's reign (during which Jonathan grew up to be a man) are passed over in silence, and that the events narrated from 1 Sam 13 to the end of the book did not occupy more than 10 years. If David was 20 years old at the time he killed Goliath, four years in Saul's service, four years of wandering from place to place, one year and four months in the country of the Philistines, and a few months after Saul's death, would make up the 10 years necessary to bring him to the age of 30" (Barnes).
 - c. "This proves that the earlier years of Saul's reign (during which Jonathan grew up to be a man) are passed over in silence, and that the events narrated in 1 Samuel from chapter 13 to the end of the book did not occupy a period of more than ten years. If David was twenty years old at the time he slew Goliath, four years in Saul's service, four years wandering from place to place, one year and four months in the country of the Philistines, then a few months after Saul's death would bring him to the age of thirty" (Albert Barnes, p.81, quoted by Coffman, p.55).
 - d. The total reign of David is put at forty years; seven and one-half years at Hebron and thirty-three years at Jerusalem. The inspired historian will next relate how Jerusalem came to be occupied by David. Until the time, it had been in the hands of Jebusites.
 - 1) "And the children of Benjamin did not drive out the Jebusites that inhabited Jerusalem; but the Jebusites dwell with the children of Benjamin in Jerusalem unto this day" (Judg. 1:21).
 - 2) At one point, Israel had taken and burned Jerusalem, but the pagan inhabitants reoccupied it: "Now the children of Judah had fought against Jerusalem, and had taken it, and smitten it with the edge of the sword, and set the city on fire" (Judg. 1:8).

B. 2 Samuel 5:6-10: David Takes Jerusalem.

1. Verse 6: "And the king and his men went to Jerusalem unto the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land: which spake unto David, saying, Except thou take away the blind and the lame, thou shalt not come in hither: thinking, David cannot come in hither."
 - a. "The conquest of the citadel Zion took place immediately after the anointing of David as king over all the tribes of Israel" (Keil, p.314).
 - 1) "The parallel account is found in 1 Chronicles 11:4-9: "And David and all Israel went to Jerusalem, which *is* Jebus; where the Jebusites *were*, the inhabitants of the land. And the inhabitants of Jebus said to David, Thou shalt not come hither. Nevertheless David took the castle of Zion, which *is* the city of David. And David said, Whosoever smiteth the Jebusites first shall be chief and captain. So Joab the son of Zeruiah went first up, and was chief.
 - 2) "And David dwelt in the castle; therefore they called it the city of David. And he built the city round about, even from Millo round about: and Joab repaired the rest of the city. So David waxed greater and greater: for the LORD of hosts *was* with him."
 - b. 2 Samuel 5:6: "And the king and his men went to Jerusalem against the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land, who spoke to David, saying, 'You shall not come in here; but the blind and the lame will repel you,' thinking, 'David cannot come in here'" (NKJ).
 - c. David laid siege to Jerusalem, but the Jebusites laughed at his prospects. They told him that even the blind and lame inhabitants could defend the city against him.

- d. Josephus gave this report of the taking of Jerusalem:
- 1) “Now the Jebusites, who were the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and were by extraction Canaanites, shut their gates, and placed the blind, and the lame, and all their maimed persons, upon the wall, in way of derision of the king; and said, that the very lame themselves would hinder his entrance into it. This they did out of contempt of his power, and as depending on the strength of their walls.
 - 2) “David was hereby enraged, and began the siege of Jerusalem, and employed his utmost diligence and alacrity therein, as intending, by the taking of this place, to demonstrate his power, and to intimidate all others that might be of the like [evil] disposition towards him: so he took the lower city by force, but the citadel held out still; whence it was that the king, knowing that the proposal of dignities and rewards would encourage the soldiers to greater actions, promised that he who would first go over the ditches that were beneath the citadel, and should have the command of the entire people conferred upon him.
 - 3) “So they all were ambitious to ascend, and thought no pains too great in order to ascend thither, out of their desire of the chief command. However, Joab, the son of Zeruiah, prevented [preceded] the rest, and as soon as he was got up to the citadel, cried out to the king, and claimed the chief command” (pp.150f).
2. Verses 7-8: “Nevertheless David took the strong hold of Zion: the same *is* the city of David. And David said on that day, Whosoever getteth up to the gutter, and smiteth the Jebusites, and the lame and the blind, *that are* hated of David's soul, *he shall be chief and captain*. Wherefore they said, The blind and the lame shall not come into the house.”
- a. Concerning verse seven, Keil says: “However, David took the citadel Zion, *i.e.* ‘the city of David.’ This explanatory remark anticipates the course of events, as David did not give this name to the conquered citadel, until he had chosen it as his residence and capital....This was the name of the southern and loftiest mountain of Jerusalem. Upon this stood the fortress or citadel of the town, which had hitherto remained in the possession of the Jebusites; whereas the northern portion of the city of Jerusalem, which was upon lower ground, had been conquered by the Judaeans and Benjaminites very shortly after the death of Joshua (see at Judg. 1:8)” (p.315).
 - b. 2 Samuel 5:8: "Now David said on that day, ‘Whoever climbs up by way of the water shaft and defeats the Jebusites (the lame and the blind, *who are* hated by David's soul), *he shall be chief and captain*.’ Therefore they say, ‘The blind and the lame shall not come into the house’" (NKJ).
 - c. David challenged his men with the task of getting up to the gutter [water shaft—NKJV]; to the one who smote the Jebusites, to him would be given the position of chief and captain over his host. 1 Chronicles 11:4-9 shows that Joab was the one who won the position. He had been one of David’s leaders, but after this episode, he was given position of chief; this was the status Abner occupied under Saul: “And David and all Israel went to Jerusalem, which *is* Jebus; where the Jebusites *were*, the inhabitants of the land. And the inhabitants of Jebus said to David, Thou shalt not come hither. Nevertheless David took the castle of Zion, which *is* the city of David. And David said, Whosoever smiteth the Jebusites first shall be chief and captain. So Joab the son of Zeruiah went first up, and was chief. And David dwelt in the castle; therefore they called it the city of David. And he built the city round about, even from Millo round about: and Joab repaired the rest of the city. So David waxed greater and greater: for the LORD of hosts *was* with him" (1 Chron. 11:4-9).
 - d. There were “at least two points outside the city’s wall through which Joab could have entered Jerusalem by stealth: (1) from Gihon Spring and up Warren’s Shaft; and (2) through a tunnel that exists on the eastern slope....
 - 1) “Warren’s Shaft, discovered in 1867 by Captain Charles Warren (and named after him), provided the ancient city with guarded access to the Gihon Spring, which lay out-side the city’s protective
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- wall.
- 2) “The irregular dimensions of the channel suggest that Warren’s Shaft was not humanly-contrived initially; rather, in all likelihood it was a naturally-occurring sinkhole (erosion shaft) caused by water percolating through dolomite....
 - 3) “Thus, before artificial water systems became architectural norms in royal centers, the Jebusites had access to a much-coveted water supply. It is reasonable to believe that the Jebusites’ city was well-known for this unusual accommodation ...Warren’s Shaft most likely was the aperture through which Joab ascended—a valiant feat which led to the demise of David’s unsuspecting enemy, and won him a place of honor in his king’s army.
 - 4) “We can be certain of one thing: the physical evidence suggests that there was a water shaft at the ancient Jebusite city as mentioned by David. Thus, archaeological and geological data are consistent with the biblical record, and corroborate its historical reliability” (Garry K. Brantly, “Reason & Revelation,” August, 1994).
3. Verses 9-10: “So David dwelt in the fort, and called it the city of David. And David built round about from Millo and inward. And David went on, and grew great, and the LORD God of hosts *was* with him.”
- a. “David may have been induced to select the citadel of Zion as his palace, and by so doing to make Jerusalem the capital of the whole kingdom, partly by the situation of Jerusalem, viz. on the border of the tribes of Benjamin and Judah, and tolerably near to the centre of the land” (Keil, p.317).
 - b. “The fortification ‘inwards’ must have consisted in the enclosure of Mount Zion with a strong wall upon the north side, where Jerusalem joined it as a lower town, so as to defend the palace against hostile attacks on the north or town side, which had hitherto been left without fortification. The Millo’ was at any rate some kind of fortification, probably a large tower or castle at one particular part of the surrounding wall...” (Keil, p.317).
 - c. “It was the stronghold or citadel of Zion which David took for his abode; but as he needed space for the dwellings of his mighty men, and for those who would soon flock for trade and security to the capital, David proceeded to fortify the whole of the summit. His works began from ‘the Millo,’ rendered ‘the citadel’ by the LXX.
 - 1) “Many, deriving the name from a Hebrew root signifying to fill, think that it was a mound, but Nature had herself supplied fit heights for defence, and it is evident that the place was called ‘the Millo’ when David captured the city. We find ‘Beth-millo’ also in Judg 9:6,20, where it signifies those who held the citadel of Shechem; and this Millo at Jerusalem was without doubt the old Jebusite keep, and the explanation of its name must be sought in the Jebusite language.
 - 2) “As it formed one of the strongest defences of the city, it was rebuilt by Solomon (1 Kings 9:24; 11:27), and repaired by Hezekiah (2 Chron 32:5) in preparation for the Assyrian attack. Probably it stood at a corner, whence the phrase, ‘round about from the Millo and inward,’ or, as it is expressed in 1 Chron 11:8, ‘from the Millo inward,’ that is, starting from the Millo, the walls enclosed the space behind it. In the parallel place (1 Chron 11:8) we find an interesting addition to the narrative, namely, that ‘Joab repaired the rest of the city.’
 - 3) “It appears from this that the Jebusites had occupied a good deal of the ground with their habitations, though probably the number of the tribe was not great; or possibly there remained old buildings which were the remains of the Hittite city, and which, being of massive construction, were easily made fit once again for human habitation.
 - 4) “We see also proof of Joab's great ability in peace as well as in war. He it was who had captured the stronghold, and it was now his office to arrange the streets and plan of the city, and to assign dwellings to David's mighty men. This would be a work sure to cause jealousy and heart burnings, and no one but Joab, their old commander, could have satisfied them.
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5) “We find that he assigned to one of them, Uriah the Hittite, a space of ground for a dwelling close to the royal palace. We may suppose, then, that David was now fully reconciled to the ‘hard sons of Zeruiah’ (2 Sam 3:39), and in the stern wars which followed David's election, he needed and had the full benefit of their vigour and ability” [The Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 2001 by BibleSoft].

d. Verse ten states that David went on to become great; that the Lord God of hosts was with him is given as the reason for his greatness. “With the capture of this stronghold, David eliminated a Jebusite fortress that, in effect, had cut his kingdom in two; and the making of Jerusalem as his capital was one of the most important achievements of David’s kingship” (Coffman, p.59).

C. 2 Samuel 5:11-16: David’s House and Children.

1. Verses 11-12: “And Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David, and cedar trees, and carpenters, and masons: and they built David an house. And David perceived that the LORD had established him king over Israel, and that he had exalted his kingdom for his people Israel's sake.”
 - a. Israel had been in an almost constant state of war and upheaval since they first entered the land several generations earlier. Although there were prosperous and peaceful times, much of their stay in Canaan had been characterized by trouble. Now under David, they were about to enter their most glorious period.
 - b. King Hiram of Tyre sent messengers to David. This communication resulted in the artisans of Tyre building a cedar house for David. This same Hiram is later mentioned as dealing also with Solomon.
 - c. “It is evident from these facts that Hiram was still reigning in the twenty-fourth, or at any rate the twentieth, year of Solomon’s reign, and consequently, as he had assisted David with contributions of wood for the erection of his palace, that he must have reigned at least forty-five or fifty years; and therefore that, even in the latter case, he cannot have begun to reign earlier than the eighth year of David’s reign over all Israel, or from six to ten years after the conquest of the Jebusite citadel upon Mount Zion” (Keil, p.318).
 - d. “There is no more desirable timber from which a house may be built. At Washington-on-the-Brazos, once the capital of the Republic of Texas, tourists may see the cedar house which was built for the first president of that state. The cedar wood is hostile to all kinds of insects and creeping things; and even after more than 150 years since the place was built, the attendant sweeps the dead insects out of that house every morning” (Coffman, pp.60f).
2. Verses 13-16: “And David took *him* more concubines and wives out of Jerusalem, after he was come from Hebron: and there were yet sons and daughters born to David. And these *be* the names of those that were born unto him in Jerusalem; Shammuah, and Shobab, and Nathan, and Solomon, Ibhar also, and Elishua, and Nepheg, and Japhia, And Elishama, and Eliada, and Eliphalet.”
 - a. After taking up residence in Jerusalem, David took more concubines and wives at Jerusalem. Six other wives [plus Michal] are named in 3:2-5, along with the children they bore. 1 Chronicles 3:5ff provides a parallel account.
 - b. The number of concubines and wives in the present instance is not given; only the names of the sons are identified; notice that the daughters are not named.
 - c. “David had therefore nineteen sons, six of whom were born in Hebron (ch. 3:2ff), and thirteen at Jerusalem. Daughters are not mentioned in the genealogical accounts, because as a rule only heiresses or women who acquired renown from special causes were included in them. There is a daughter named *Thamar* mentioned afterwards in ch. 13:1” (Keil, p.323).

D. 2 Samuel 5:17-25: David Battles the Philistines.

1. Verse 17: “But when the Philistines heard that they had anointed David king over Israel, all the Philistines

came up to seek David; and David heard *of it*, and went down to the hold.”

- a. Information came to the Philistines about David having been anointed to be king over Israel. They came up to put him to the test. In our times, before the demise of Communist Russia, virtually every new president of the United States underwent some kind of test at their hands. Aggressor nations have this practice in common.
 - b. When David learned of their incursion into his territory, he went down to the hold [fortress]. Keil thought that the fortress of Jerusalem is not meant, since it is said that he “went down” to the place.
 - c. These events may have taken place prior to the conquest of Jerusalem.
2. Verses 18-19: “The Philistines also came and spread themselves in the valley of Rephaim. And David inquired of the LORD, saying, Shall I go up to the Philistines? wilt thou deliver them into mine hand? And the LORD said unto David, Go up: for I will doubtless deliver the Philistines into thine hand.”
- a. The Valley of Rephaim:
 - 1) “This was a fertile vale (Isa 17:5), to the Southwest of Jerusalem (Josh 15:8; 18:16; the King James Version ‘Valley of the Giants’), on the border between Judah and Benjamin. Here David repeatedly defeated the invading Philistines (2 Sam 5:18,22; 23:13; 1 Chron 11:15; 14:9).
 - 2) “It is located by Josephus between Jerusalem and Bethlehem (Ant, VII, iv, i; xii, 4). It corresponds to the modern el-Biqā, which falls away to the Southwest from the lip of the valley of Hinnom. The name in ancient times may perhaps have covered a larger area, including practically all the land between Jerusalem and Bethlehem, where the head-waters of Nahr Ruben are collected” [International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, Electronic Database Copyright (c)1996 by Biblesoft].
 - b. The Philistines spread their forces over the valley of Rephaim, an open invitation for David to join them in battle. This valley lay to the southwest of Jerusalem and northwest of Bethlehem.
 - c. Having learned the lesson of asking for the Lord’s help in significant endeavors, David approached God to learn whether he should join battle with the Philistines. God promised to deliver them into his hand.
3. Verses 20-21: “And David came to Baalperazim, and David smote them there, and said, The LORD hath broken forth upon mine enemies before me, as the breach of waters. Therefore he called the name of that place Baalperazim. And there they left their images, and David and his men burned them.”
- a. God was true to his word. David battled the Philistine at Baalperazim, and gained a great victory over them. He is pictured as having broken forth on the enemy as raging waters overwhelm some object.
 - b. 2 Samuel 5:20-21: "So David went to Baal Perazim, and David defeated them there; and he said, ‘The LORD has broken through my enemies before me, like a breakthrough of water.’ Therefore he called the name of that place Baal Perazim. And they left their images there, and David and his men carried them away” (NKJ).
 - c. The place was named Baalperazim for the Philistines abandoned their images there, which David and his men burned. By burning these images, they certainly “took them away!” The parallel passage states that they burned the images. "And when they had left their gods there, David gave a commandment, and they were burned with fire" (1 Chron. 14:12). Israel had been commanded to burn the altars and idols they captured.
 - 1) Deuteronomy 7:5: "But thus shall ye deal with them; ye shall destroy their altars, and break down their images, and cut down their groves, and burn their graven images with fire."
 - 2) Deuteronomy 7:25: "The graven images of their gods shall ye burn with fire: thou shalt not desire the silver or gold *that is* on them, nor take *it* unto thee, lest thou be snared therein: for it *is* an abomination to the LORD thy God."
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4. Verses 22-23: “And the Philistines came up yet again, and spread themselves in the valley of Rephaim. And when David inquired of the LORD, he said, Thou shalt not go up; *but* fetch a compass behind them, and come upon them over against the mulberry trees.”
- a. Other translations:
 - 1) ASV: “And the Philistines came up yet again, and spread themselves in the valley of Rephaim. And when David inquired of Jehovah, he said, Thou shalt not go up: make a circuit behind them, and come upon them over against the mulberry-trees.”
 - 2) NKJ: Then the Philistines went up once again and deployed themselves in the Valley of Rephaim. 23 Therefore David inquired of the Lord, and He said, "You shall not go up; circle around behind them, and come upon them in front of the mulberry trees.
 - b. “The next year they renewed their hostile attempt with a larger force; but God manifestly interposed in David’s favour; at least, a slight occurrence produced a panic, and David was directed to attack them suddenly from behind the mulberry trees” (JFB, p.229).
 - c. In this engagement, God directed David not to make a frontal assault on the Philistines, but to circle around to get behind them, from a position near a grove of mulberry trees.
 - d. Jamieson suggested that these trees are “now generally thought not to be mulberry trees, but the aspen or trembling poplar, which delights in moist situations, and the leaves of which are rustled by the slightest movement of the zephyr. It abounds in the ravines of southern Palestine, and in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, where, according to tradition, a solitary mulberry in the valley of Jehosaphat still marks the spot of Isaiah’s martyrdom” (JFB, p.229).
5. Verses 24-25: “And let it be, when thou hearest the sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees, that then thou shalt bestir thyself: for then shall the LORD go out before thee, to smite the host of the Philistines. And David did so, as the LORD had commanded him; and smote the Philistines from Geba until thou come to Gazer.”
- a. The plan David was given was simple: When he heard the sound passing through the trees, he was to arise and make the attack. The sound of the stirring in the trees would indicate the Lord’s was going forth before him. David followed his instruction precisely; the result was his smiting the Philistines from Geba to Gazer.
 - b. This last encounter is depicted in *Atlas of the Bible* in this way:
 - 1) “Doggedly, the Philistines regrouped and came once again through the Valley of Rephaim, this time alert for an ambush. David had a different surprise ready for them.
 - 2) “He sent his troops on a concealed flank march through a balsam forest and they fell on the rear of the Philistine columns, taking a heavy toll and blocking the direct line of retreat down the valley.
 - 3) “The enemy struggled through the rugged country to the north, hotly pursued all the way to Gezer in the land of the Philistines. A triumphant David had beaten back the enemy not just once, but twice” (p.98).
 - c. “Under the cover of this thicket David was to wait until he heard the sound as of the regular tramp of an army in the tops of the baca trees. It would be in the morning that the wind would shake the treetops, but the sound was to be something more than the soft whispers of a gentle breeze. A gale was to put them into sudden motion, and then the soldiers would know that their Jehovah had gone forth to battle, and David must immediately bestir himself. The enthusiasm of his men must not cool down, but as soon as the wind rustled he must charge the enemy, and his warriors, feeling that they were going with the host of God, would break down all resistance by their impetuous onset” [The Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 2001 by BibleSoft].
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2 SAMUEL 6

A. 2 Samuel 6:1-11: Uzzah is Slain for Touching the Ark of the Covenant.

1. Verses 1-2: "Again, David gathered together all *the* chosen *men* of Israel, thirty thousand. And David arose, and went with all the people that *were* with him from Baale of Judah, to bring up from thence the ark of God, whose name is called by the name of the LORD of hosts that dwelleth *between* the cherubims."
 - a. A fuller account of these events is given in 1 Chronicles 13:1-14, 15:1-29, and 16:1-3. The present chapter relates a condensed version; both accounts are in complete accord.
 - b. *Again* implies another gathering with which David was connected. Earlier, in 2 Samuel 5:1-3, the nation's leaders assembled to elevate David to the throne over all Israel.
 - c. David gathered the chosen men of Israel to bring the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem. In 1 Chronicles we are told that he consulted with the leaders of the nation to get their agreement to enter into this action (13:1-4). Securing their approval and cooperation, David then gathered the large body of men to accompany the ark in transit. Thirty thousand were assembled. This large band would discourage the Philistines and other enemies from trying to disrupt the proceedings.
 - d. The Philistines had captured the ark (1 Sam. 4) and had kept it for a short period of time. When they perceived that it was the cause of certain curses from God, they sent it back to Israel, who left it at Kirjath-jearim (1 Sam. 7:1-2). *Baale of Judah* is another name for Kirjath-jearim (1 Chron. 13:6).
 - e. Verse three speaks of the great company going *from* Baale of Judah; 1 Chronicles 13:6 says they went *to* that place. This does not indicate a corrupted text in our verse. The statement in 1 Chronicles speaks of the company leaving Jerusalem to go down to Baale; the statement of our text speaks of them leaving Baale to return with the ark to Jerusalem. The perspective is different.
 - f. The owner of the ark of the covenant is identified as the Lord of hosts. It is he who dwelt between the two cherubims which were part of the mercy seat, the covering of the ark. God did not literally live between the two angelic forms (cf. 1 Kings 8:27). He met the High Priest at that place during the solemn activities of the day of atonement (Lev. 16). "But will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded?" (1 Kings 8:27).
2. Verses 3-4: "And they set the ark of God upon a new cart, and brought it out of the house of Abinadab that *was* in Gibeah: and Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, drave the new cart. And they brought it out of the house of Abinadab which *was* at Gibeah, accompanying the ark of God: and Ahio went before the ark."
 - a. God had given directions much earlier that the ark was to be transported by Levites, who would carry it by means of the poles made especially for that purpose.
 - 1) Exodus 25:12-15: "And thou shalt cast four rings of gold for it, and put *them* in the four corners thereof; and two rings *shall be* in the one side of it, and two rings in the other side of it. And thou shalt make staves *of* shittim wood, and overlay them with gold. And thou shalt put the staves into the rings by the sides of the ark, that the ark may be borne with them. The staves shall be in the rings of the ark: they shall not be taken from it."
 - 2) Exodus 37:1-5: "And Bezaleel made the ark *of* shittim wood: two cubits and a half *was* the length of it, and a cubit and a half the breadth of it, and a cubit and a half the height of it: And he overlaid it with pure gold within and without, and made a crown of gold to it round about. And he cast for it four rings of gold, *to be set* by the four corners of it; even two rings upon the one side of it, and two rings upon the other side of it. And he made staves *of* shittim wood, and overlaid them with gold. And he put the staves into the rings by the sides of the ark, to bear the ark."

- 3) Numbers 7:9: "But unto the sons of Kohath he gave none: because the service of the sanctuary belonging unto them *was that* they should bear upon their shoulders."
- b. The poles were inserted through rings which were attached to the sides of the ark; the poles were placed on the shoulders of the Levites (Num. 7:9). A covering was to be placed over the ark to hide it from full view, and not even the Levites were to touch it: "And when Aaron and his sons have made an end of covering the sanctuary, and all the vessels of the sanctuary, as the camp is to set forward; after that, the sons of Kohath shall come to bear *it*: but they shall not touch *any* holy thing, lest they die. These *things are* the burden of the sons of Kohath in the tabernacle of the congregation"(Num. 4:15).
 - c. The ark had been at Kirjath-jearim for many years. 1 Samuel 7:7 speaks of it residing there twenty years, but that figure probably only takes the reader up to the time that that part of 1 Samuel was written. The ark was left at Kirjath-jearim during the days of Samuel, prior to Saul's reign; Saul reigned for forty years, and David had now been king for a few years. Jamieson estimates that the ark had been there for almost fifty years (p.229); Keil though it was for about seventy years (p.330).
 - d. Despite the plain teaching on transporting the ark, David had it placed on a new cart. The Philistines had sent it back into Israel's territory by that means, and no harm was done to anyone. David's action was one of ignorance or improper investigation. Since Uzzah's touching the ark was not overlooked due to ignorance, David's transportation of the ark by means of the cart should not be excusable due to ignorance. However, God could not destroy David summarily as he did Uzzah, because there were many purposes which he intended to fulfill through David.
 - e. The historian reports that the ark was taken from Abinadab's house that was in Gibeah. Gibeah and Kirjath-jearim were two distinct places. Since *Gibeah* means "hill," the Hebrew term perhaps should be translated as "hill," and not be left untranslated as the name of a city. The NKJV gives this translation: "So they set the ark of God on a new cart, and brought it out of the house of Abinadab, which was on the hill; and Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, drove the new cart. And they brought it out of the house of Abinadab, which was on the hill, accompanying the ark of God; and Ahio went before the ark" (2 Sam. 6:3-4).
 - f. Two sons (some scholars think they were his grandsons) of Abinadab accompanied the ark. Uzzah drove the cart; Ahio went before the cart. Obviously the cart was being pulled by oxen.
3. Verse 5: "And David and all the house of Israel played before the LORD on all manner of *instruments made of* fir wood, even on harps, and on psalteries, and on timbrels, and on cornets, and on cymbals."
- a. "The quality of the wood used in the formation of musical instruments is of the greatest importance. The peculiar fitness of fir wood for that purpose was recognized in very ancient times" (JFB, p.230). Some scholars think the expression "fir wood" should be understood as a description to the manner in which the music was made, i.e., with might (see Clarke, p.323). Compare: "And David and all Israel played before God with all *their* might, and with singing, and with harps, and with psalteries, and with timbrels, and with cymbals, and with trumpets" (1 Chron. 13:8).
 - b. David and other Israelites played before the Lord on various kinds of instruments; the instruments named are harps, psalteries, timbrels, cornets, and cymbals (cf. 1 Chron. 13:8).
 - c. This is one of several references to David's use of instruments in worship. His use of instrumental music in worship carries no authority for their use in the worship of God on earth today.
 - 1) If we may use instrumental music in worship because David used them, then anything else David did (in worship or otherwise) is permitted on the same basis. But the entire Mosaic system has been replaced by the gospel system.
 - 2) Christ is the source of our religious authority, not David or anyone else in the Old Testament.
 - a) Matthew 17:1-5: "And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and

bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him. Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him."

- b) Ephesians 2:14-15: "For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace."
 - c) Colossians 2:14: "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross."
 - d) Hebrews 1:1-4: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they."
- d. Did David have God's approval to use instruments of music in worship?
- 1) 2 Chronicles 29:27-29: "And Hezekiah commanded to offer the burnt offering upon the altar. And when the burnt offering began, the song of the LORD began *also* with the trumpets, and with the instruments *ordained* by David king of Israel. And all the congregation worshipped, and the singers sang, and the trumpeters sounded: *and all this continued* until the burnt offering was finished. And when they had made an end of offering, the king and all that were present with him bowed themselves, and worshipped."
 - 2) Amos 6:1, 5-6: "Woe to them *that are* at ease in Zion, and trust in the mountain of Samaria, *which are* named chief of the nations, to whom the house of Israel came! That chant to the sound of the viol, *and* invent to themselves instruments of music, like David; That drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief ointments: but they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph."
 - 3) Acts 17:30: "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent."
- e. The following is gleaned from the author's material on Amos 6:1-6: What is described was a sinful action; Amos condemns them for doing what he relates here. Different sins are stated in each of the verses (3-6). The invention of mechanical instruments of music is not condemned as sinful. If it were, then everyone who ever invented one did so to the condemnation of his own soul. But the Lord made use of trumpets (e.g., Josh. 6). It is not the invention of these instruments that is sinful, but the use to which these people put them. Their invention of these instrument is likened to David's invention of instruments. Whatever the sinful action was, it appears that David was just as guilty of it as these people were.
- 1) These people invented the instruments **to** (KJV) or **for** (ASV) themselves; that is, they obtained them for their own uses; this both they and David did. David appropriated instruments for use in the worship of God.
 - 2) Some say that the point of comparison between these people and David is merely in the use of musical instruments, with nothing sinful being implied with David's actions; that Amos condemns
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- his auditors for their sinful use of instruments, such instruments as David had used.
- 3) Some argue that David introduced instrumental music into the Old Testament worship by the authority of God (2 Chron. 29:25; 1 Chron. 23:5; Psalm 150). Amos 5:23 shows God's attitude toward their *mechanical worship*: "I will not hear the melody of thy viols." Compare: "I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies. Though ye offer me burnt offerings and your meat offerings, I will not accept *them*: neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts" (Amos 5:21-22). There were many things that were tolerated during the Old Testament eras which God did not want (Acts 17:30).
 - a) God intended for marriage to be limited to one man and one woman (Gen. 2:18-24; Matt. 19:3-9). God over looked polygamy, for Jacob, David, and others had more than one wife.
 - b) God never intended for them to be ruled by an earthly king, but when they demanded a king, he allowed them to go ahead with their wishes. However, he issued some strong words of warning and denunciation (Deut. 8:14-20; 1 Sam. 8; Hosea 13:9-11).
 - 4) There is a great deal of difference between the trumpet of Moses and the instruments of David. It appears that God tolerated the introduction of instrumental music into worship at the hand of David, but that he did not intend for this so to be.
4. Verses 6-7: "And when they came to Nachon's threshingfloor, Uzzah put forth *his hand* to the ark of God, and took hold of it; for the oxen shook *it*. And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzzah; and God smote him there for *his* error; and there he died by the ark of God."
- a. As the great company made its way toward Jerusalem, they came to a place identified as "Nachon's threshingfloor." At this point, the oxen stumbled. Perhaps without thinking, Uzzah put forth his hand to steady the ark.
 - b. It is reasonable to assume that he was well aware of the divine restrictions against touching the ark, even to look at it. A great number of Israelites were smitten when they looked into the ark several years earlier. "And he smote the men of Bethshemesh, because they had looked into the ark of the LORD, even he smote of the people fifty thousand and threescore and ten men: and the people lamented, because the LORD had smitten *many* of the people with a great slaughter" (1 Sam. 6:19).
 - c. It is unreasonable to suppose that he had never heard of the death of so many people for having merely looked into the ark; it is likewise illogical to think he knew nothing of the restrictions imposed by the law regarding the ark. Although Uzzah may have acted by impulse, he should have prepared himself mentally against making such a grievous error.
 - 1) Exodus 25:12-13: "And thou shalt cast four rings of gold for it, and put *them* in the four corners thereof; and two rings *shall be* in the one side of it, and two rings in the other side of it. And thou shalt make staves of shittim wood, and overlay them with gold."
 - 2) Numbers 3:29-32: "The families of the sons of Kohath shall pitch on the side of the tabernacle southward. And the chief of the house of the father of the families of the Kohathites *shall be* Elizaphan the son of Uzziel. And their charge *shall be* the ark, and the table, and the candlestick, and the altars, and the vessels of the sanctuary wherewith they minister, and the hanging, and all the service thereof. And Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest *shall be* chief over the chief of the Levites, *and have* the oversight of them that keep the charge of the sanctuary."
 - 3) Numbers 4:15: "And when Aaron and his sons have made an end of covering the sanctuary, and all the vessels of the sanctuary, as the camp is to set forward; after that, the sons of Kohath shall come to bear *it*: but they shall not touch *any* holy thing, lest they die. These *things are* the burden of the sons of Kohath in the tabernacle of the congregation."
 - 4) Numbers 7:9: "But unto the sons of Kohath he gave none: because the service of the sanctuary belonging unto them *was that* they should bear upon their shoulders."
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- 5) 1 Chronicles 15:1-3: "And *David* made him houses in the city of David, and prepared a place for the ark of God, and pitched for it a tent. Then David said, None ought to carry the ark of God but the Levites: for them hath the LORD chosen to carry the ark of God, and to minister unto him for ever. And David gathered all Israel together to Jerusalem, to bring up the ark of the LORD unto his place, which he had prepared for it."
- 6) Was Uzzah a Levite?
- d. There being a great company of people present, if God had allowed the transgression to go unnoticed, reverence for him and respect for his word would have suffered. Further, what happened to Uzzah is included as part of the sacred record to teach and warn subsequent generations. "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope" (Rom. 15:4).
- e. There have been wicked people who were slain by the Lord. An entire generation during the time of Noah (Gen. 6-9); Er and Onan, sons of Judah (Gen. 38); Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5).
5. Verses 8-9: "And David was displeased, because the LORD had made a breach upon Uzzah: and he called the name of the place Perezuzzah to this day. And David was afraid of the LORD that day, and said, How shall the ark of the LORD come to me?"
- a. David was grieved over this tragic development. He did not criticize God; he had too much reverence to do that. Naturally, he would have been regretful over his own part in moving the ark; for all he knew, he should not have moved it. No information is given about his inquiring of the Lord over the rightness of the plan to transport the ark to Jerusalem.
- b. He was fearful to continue the operation, so he left the ark at a nearby house (vs. 10). He could not leave it in the road and he was afraid to go on toward Jerusalem; his only alternative was to leave it at the nearest place. He still wanted the ark to be taken to Jerusalem, but he knew not how he could get it there. His initial anger (displeasure) quickly changed into fear.
- c. 2 Samuel 6:8-9: "And David became angry because of the Lord's outbreak against Uzzah; and he called the name of the place Perez Uzzah to this day. David was afraid of the LORD that day; and he said, 'How can the ark of the LORD come to me?'" (NKJV).
- 1) The ASV and the KJV have "displeased" in the place of "angry" (NKJV). Young's concordance defines the Hebrew word as "to burn, be wroth, displeasing" (p.259).
- 2) "The burning of David's anger was not directed against God, but referred to the calamity which had befallen Uzzah, or speaking more correctly, to the cause of this calamity, which David attributed to himself or to his undertaking. As he had not only resolved upon the removal of the ark, but had also planned the way in which it should be taken to Jerusalem, he could not trace the occasion of Uzzah's death to any other cause than his own plans. He was therefore angry that such misfortune had attended his undertaking" (Keil, p.333).
6. Verses 10-11: "So David would not remove the ark of the LORD unto him into the city of David: but David carried it aside into the house of Obedom the Gittite. And the ark of the LORD continued in the house of Obedom the Gittite three months: and the LORD blessed Obedom, and all his household."
- a. David understood there was danger involved in furthering the transportation of the ark. He decided he must await further information or developments before continuing the move.
- b. During the next three months, the ark resided at the house of Obedom. The presence of the ark with this man who was friendly toward it resulted in his being blessed by God. When the ark was among the Philistines, grievous penalties were imposed on them by the Lord.

B. 2 Samuel 6:12-19: The Ark is Taken to Jerusalem.

1. Verse 12: "And it was told king David, saying, The LORD hath blessed the house of Obedom, and all

that *pertaineth* unto him, because of the ark of God. So David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obedom into the city of David with gladness.”

- a. Those who witnessed the situation at the house of Obedom clearly understood that God had blessed the man and his household greatly on account of the ark. There was no power inherent in the ark itself.
 - b. This was correctly interpreted by David to mean that his plan to take the ark to Jerusalem was not opposed by the Lord, otherwise, why was Obedom blessed? The king, therefore, went and brought the ark into Jerusalem. This final stage of the journey was accompanied with great joy.
2. Verse 13: “And it was *so*, that when they that bare the ark of the LORD had gone six paces, he sacrificed oxen and fatlings.”
- a. The ark was now transported by Levites, in keeping with the Lord’s admonition given through Moses. No mention is made of any oxen being driven or any cart being used. "And it came to pass, when God helped the Levites that bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD, that they offered seven bullocks and seven rams" (1 Chron. 15:26).
 - b. When those who bore the ark had gone only a few steps, David made a sacrifice of oxen and fatlings. Some scholars think that a sacrifice was offered every six paces from the house of Obedom to the destination, but that does not comport with 1 Chronicles 15:26. Only seven bullocks and seven rams were offered.
 - c. It seems that when the Levites had moved the ark from its resting place, the sacrifices were made. When the ark first returned to Israelite hands after its capture by the Philistines, the men at Bethshe-mash made a sacrifice (1 Sam. 6:10-15). David made the sacrifice to determine whether the operation was pleasing to God. If some indication of God’s displeasure was seen, the move would have been stopped immediately.
3. Verses 14-15: “And David danced before the LORD with all *his* might; and David *was* girded with a linen ephod. So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the LORD with shouting, and with the sound of the trumpet.”
- a. Keil says, “Dancing, as an expression of holy enthusiasm, was a customary thing from time immemorial: we meet it as early as at the festival of thanksgiving at the Red Sea (Ex. 15:20); but there, and also at subsequent celebrations of the different victories gained by the Israelites, none but women are described as taking part in it (Judg. 11:34; 21:19; 1 Sam. 18:6)” (p.336).
 - 1) Exodus 15:20: "And Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances."
 - 2) Judges 11:34: "And Jephthah came to Mizpeh unto his house, and, behold, his daughter came out to meet him with timbrels and with dances: and she *was his* only child; beside her he had neither son nor daughter."
 - 3) 1 Samuel 18:6: "And it came to pass as they came, when David was returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, that the women came out of all cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet king Saul, with tabrets, with joy, and with instruments of music."
 - b. “...The linen ephod being not exclusively the official habit of priests and Levites, but worn frequently by others (cf. 1 Sam. 2:18) who were in any capacity engaged in the service of God....It was customary for bands of women to meet warriors on their return home (1 Sam. 18:7,8) with music and dancing, one leading the rest, as Miriam also did before the Lord....On this occasion David acted himself as the leader, in lieu of Michal, who ought to have led the female choir” (JFB, p.231).
 - c. There was gloom when the ark was captured by the Philistines (1 Sam. 4); now, instead of gloom, there was great joy.
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4. Verse 16: “And as the ark of the LORD came into the city of David, Michal Saul's daughter looked through a window, and saw king David leaping and dancing before the LORD; and she despised him in her heart.”
 - a. Coffman:
 - 1) “Most of the commentators we have consulted take a very negative view of Michal, accusing her of pride, irreligion, lack of love for David, of dishonoring him and failing to show proper respect for him. In view of the very high place which King David occupies in the Holy Scriptures, we cannot contradict those views rashly, but we pray that this writer will be forgiven for a different viewpoint which we feel should be injected into our consideration of this episode.
 - 2) “In the first place it was sinful for David to take back Michal as his wife (Deuteronomy 17:17). Michal and Paltiel evidently loved each other, and David's sinful act in taking her away from her husband was probably never forgiven by Michal. A lonely and extremely competitive place in David's godless harem was a mighty poor substitute for the happy home she had been sinfully forced to leave behind her.
 - 3) “We cannot believe that David really loved Michal. All of his marriages seem to have been founded upon political, financial or other motives, none of which demanded his re-marrying Michal. Yes, some commentators say it re-enforced his claim on Saul's throne, but we do not accept that. It appears to this writer as having been motivated more by spite than by anything else. Added to all this was that pagan dance in which David shamelessly exposed himself and which was sinful, certainly in one aspect — that of his not wearing the required breeches.”
 - b. “Michal is intentionally designated the daughter of Saul here, instead of the wife of David, because on this occasion she manifested her father's disposition rather than her husband's. In Saul's time people did not trouble themselves about the ark of the covenant (1 Chron. 13:3); public worship was neglected, and the soul for vital religion had died out in the family of the king. Michal possessed teraphim, and in David she only loved the brave hero and exalted king: she therefore took offence at the humility with which the king, in his pious enthusiasm, placed himself on an equality with all the rest of the nation before the Lord” (Keil, pp.336f).
 - c. “The pride of her aristocratic rank was grievously offended by her husband's public exhibition of himself in a character so undignified, and resembling, as she thought, rather the conduct of a mountebank or buffoon than the sovereign of Israel. But Michal's thought was different from the ludicrous ideas which our imaginations are apt to associate with a man of grave character and dignified rank indulging in wild gestures and grotesque attitudes. The dance consisted in serious and solemn measures, and was associated in the minds of Eastern people with sentiments of religious worship. But Michal, who had no proper sense of religion, considered that David was exalting the priesthood above the throne, or, in other words, giving undue honour—an excess of eclat—to the officials of the sanctuary” (JFB, p.231).
 - d. The spiritual heart is that part of men and women which includes the emotions. It was in or with her heart that Michal despised David. The heart in biblical terminology also includes the intellect, the conscience, and the will-power.
5. Verse 17: “And they brought in the ark of the LORD, and set it in his place, in the midst of the tabernacle that David had pitched for it: and David offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the LORD.”
 - a. David had prepared a tent for the ark of the covenant. This was not the original tent which Moses had constructed in the wilderness. The original tabernacle remained at Gibeon. Likely, David's tent would have been designed after the pattern God gave to Moses (Ex. 25:40).
 - 1) 1 Chronicles 16:39: "And Zadok the priest, and his brethren the priests, before the tabernacle of the LORD in the high place that *was* at Gibeon."

- 2) 1 Chronicles 21:29: "For the tabernacle of the LORD, which Moses made in the wilderness, and the altar of the burnt offering, *were* at that season in the high place at Gibeon."
- 3) 2 Chronicles 1:3-4: "So Solomon, and all the congregation with him, went to the high place that *was* at Gibeon; for there was the tabernacle of the congregation of God, which Moses the servant of the LORD had made in the wilderness. But the ark of God had David brought up from Kirjathjearim to *the place which* David had prepared for it: for he had pitched a tent for it at Jerusalem."
- b. David offered burnt sacrifices and peace offerings before the Lord at this place. Did David personally do the sacrificing or did he employ the services of priests? David was a prophet and a king, but he had no authority to be priest. He was not of the priestly tribe. Although he was a type of Christ, that does not mean that he had to fill every role which the Messiah filled.
6. Verses 18-19: "And as soon as David had made an end of offering burnt offerings and peace offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD of hosts. And he dealt among all the people, *even* among the whole multitude of Israel, as well to the women as men, to every one a cake of bread, and a good piece of *flesh*, and a flagon of *wine*. So all the people departed every one to his house."
 - a. Following the sacrificing service, David pronounced a blessing on the people in the name of the Lord. Solomon blessed the people at the dedication of the temple which he later built: "And he stood, and blessed all the congregation of Israel with a loud voice..." (1 Kings 8:55).
 - b. David gave to each one present, women and men, a portion of bread, a piece of flesh, and a flagon of wine. This last item is called a cake of raisins in the ASV and NKJV. "Then he distributed among all the people, among the whole multitude of Israel, both the women and the men, to everyone a loaf of bread, a piece of *meat*, and a cake of raisins. So all the people departed, everyone to his house" (NKJ).
 - c. Regarding *flagon*: "The translation of 'ashishah, in the King James Version in 2 Sam 6:19; 1 Chron 16:3; Song 2:5; Hos 3:1. In all, these passages the Revised Version (British and American) reads 'cake of raisins' or 'raisins.' It was probably a pressed raisin cake. the King James Version and the Revised Version (British and American) read 'flagons,' in Isa 22:24 as a rendering of *nebhalim*, which is elsewhere (1 Sam 1:24; 10:3; 2 Sam 16:1, etc.) rendered 'bottles,' the Revised Version, margin 'skins.' These were the bags or bottles made of the whole skin of a kid, goat or other animal. The Revised Version (British and American) has 'flagons' in Ex 25:29 and 37:16 as translation of *qeshawoth*, a golden jug or jar used in the tabernacle from which the drink offerings were poured out. The same word is translated 'cups' in Num 4:7" [International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, Electronic Database Copyright (c)1996 by BibleSoft].

C. 2 Samuel 6:20-23: Michal Confronts David.

1. Verse 20: "Then David returned to bless his household. And Michal the daughter of Saul came out to meet David, and said, How glorious was the king of Israel to day, who uncovered himself to day in the eyes of the handmaids of his servants, as one of the vain fellows shamelessly uncovereth himself!" "Then David returned to bless his household. And Michal the daughter of Saul came out to meet David, and said, 'How glorious was the king of Israel today, uncovering himself today in the eyes of the maids of his servants, as one of the base fellows shamelessly uncovers himself!'" (NKJ).
 - a. As David went home to bless his household, Michal came out to meet him, directing scornful words toward him. "Proud of her royal extraction, she upbraided her husband with lowering the dignity of the country by the active share he had taken in the public ceremonial, especially by mingling in the dance along with the bands of male and female musicians" (JFB, p.232).
 - b. Michal accused David of having uncovered himself shamelessly as the "vain fellows" were want to do. "The words 'naked' and 'uncovered' are frequently used by the sacred writers in a restricted

sense..." (JFB, p.232).

- c. We do not have sufficient evidence to know exactly why she made these charges. Verse 23 indicates that her criticism was unjust. Did she resent being taken from Phaltiel's house (3:13-16)? Not likely.
2. Verse 21: "And David said unto Michal, *It was* before the LORD, which chose me before thy father, and before all his house, to appoint me ruler over the people of the LORD, over Israel: therefore will I play before the LORD."
 - a. David's defense against these charges was to state that God had chosen him to replace her father Saul as king; and that God gave the throne to him instead of any of Saul's offspring or descendants.
 - b. In view of this exaltation, David declared his intention to play before the Lord. *Play* is defined by Keil as giving utterance to joy (p.338).
 3. Verse 22: "And I will yet be more vile than thus, and will be base in mine own sight: and of the maidservants which thou hast spoken of, of them shall I be had in honour."
 - a. "Fitting his response into the irony with which her charge was dressed, he proclaimed his intention to let himself be still further despised before the Lord, *i.e.* would bear still greater contempt from men than that which he had just received..." (Keil, p.338).
 - b. He would continue to humble himself, and ignore the regal honor which his crown deserved. Bringing honor to God was more important than feeding any personal desire for glory. He would continue his humble ways, which Michal found so disgusting, but which were highly prized by his servants.
 - c. "Some have suggested that Michal's going forth to meet David and her reproach of him in the presence of others constituted a major insult of the king. However, that might very well have been the only opportunity that Michal had to speak with her husband. It should be remembered that she dwelt in the king's harem and would never have any kind of personal contact with him unless he sent one of his eunuch's to summons her and bring her to his bedroom. There is no evidence whatever that she ever had any other opportunity to speak with David except this one" (Coffman).
 4. Verse 23: "Therefore Michal the daughter of Saul had no child unto the day of her death."
 - a. This passage states that Michal had no child to the day of her death. A later passage attributes five sons to her: "But the king took the two sons of Rizpah the daughter of Aiah, whom she bare unto Saul, Armoni and Mephibosheth; and the five sons of Michal the daughter of Saul, whom she brought up for Adriel the son of Barzillai the Meholathite" (2 Sam. 21:8).
 - 1) Notice that the passage does not say she bore the five sons, but that she brought them up for Adriel. Her older sister Merab was the wife of Adriel, and apparently died before rearing her sons to manhood. The text seems to teach that Michal tended to her sister's five sons, bringing them up for her sister's husband Adriel.
 - 2) "Michal was humbled by God for her pride, and remained childless to the time of her death" (Keil, p.339).
 - b. The cause for her childless condition could be either of two means. She could have been made barren, which the Lord caused; or David never cohabited with her from this day forward.

2 SAMUEL 7

A. 2 Samuel 7:1-3: David Has Rest From His Enemies.

1. Verse 1: "And it came to pass, when the king sat in his house, and the LORD had given him rest round about from all his enemies."
 - a. The two preceding chapters related the stories of several important events in David's experiences. In chapter five, he became king over the entire nation of Israel; subsequent to that, he captured Jerusalem and established his throne there; then he had Hiram, king of Tyre, to build him a palace in the city; then followed successive victories over the Philistines. In chapter six, David arranged to bring the ark of the covenant into Jerusalem where he set it in a tent which he had made for that purpose. The day the ark was brought into Jerusalem was a glorious day of rejoicing and happiness.
 - b. After these events, David sat in his palace contemplating the situation. Israel was at peace from all its enemies, for which the Lord is given credit. He had enabled David to twice defeat the Philistines.
 - c. A parallel account of the present chapter is given in 1 Chronicles 17.
2. Verse 2: "That the king said unto Nathan the prophet, See now, I dwell in an house of cedar, but the ark of God dwelleth within curtains."
 - a. David spoke with Nathan, calling the prophet's attention to the fact that the king was living comfortably in a fine house constructed of cedar, but that the ark of God was abiding in a lowly tent.
 - b. The king began to feel bad about his luxurious surroundings while the ark of the covenant, which represented God's presence with Israel, was in a mere tent-like structure. While Israel was in the wilderness and during the time when their status in Canaan was tenuous due to the strength of their enemies and their own disunity, a tent was ideally suited for the place of worship. But now that their situation was on firmer ground, David thought to erect a permanent temple.
3. Verse 3: "And Nathan said to the king, Go, do all that *is* in thine heart; for the LORD *is* with thee."
 - a. David was implying by his statement to Nathan that he wanted to construct a better place for the ark, and thus a more substantial setting for God's presence to abide.
 - b. Nathan knew that David stood in high regards with God, hence he encouraged the king to do what he was minded to do. This must be understood as a general, non-inspired statement, for God took immediate steps to overrule this counsel.

B. 2 Samuel 7:4-11: God Speaks to Nathan.

1. Verse 4: "And it came to pass that night, that the word of the LORD came unto Nathan, saying."
 - a. God quickly took steps to put a stop to David's plan to construct a temple for God. Nathan had given encouragement to the idea, but he was speaking on his own, and was not uttering God's revelation on the matter. Not every word spoken by inspired prophets or apostles was inspired. When Peter said "Good Morning" to his wife, he did not need inspiration! David did not need inspiration to discipline his children.
 - b. Before David could take any practical steps in beginning the construction, God spoke to Nathan. His plans for the temple did not directly involve David.
 - c. 1 Chronicles 28:2,3,6: "Then David the king stood up upon his feet, and said, Hear me, my brethren, and my people: *As for me*, I *had* in mine heart to build an house of rest for the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and for the footstool of our God, and had made ready for the building: But God said unto me, Thou shalt not build an house for my name, because thou *hast been* a man of war, and hast shed blood....And he said unto me, Solomon thy son, he shall build my house and my courts: for I have chosen him *to be* my son, and I will be his father."
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2. Verses 5-6: "Go and tell my servant David, Thus saith the LORD, Shalt thou build me an house for me to dwell in? Whereas I have not dwelt in *any* house since the time that I brought up the children of Israel out of Egypt, even to this day, but have walked in a tent and in a tabernacle."
 - a. Nathan is instructed by the Lord to give David a message, negating his plans to build the temple. The prophet had not prefaced his first message with the statement, "Thus saith the Lord." This formula was specifically to be included in delivering this message.
 - b. The message was to include the question: "Shall you build me a house?" In the parallel account, the statement is plainly declared that he was not to do so. "Go and tell David my servant, Thus saith the LORD, Thou shalt not build me an house to dwell in" (1 Chron. 17:4).
 - c. Adopting the language of men, God speaks of his not having had a permanent house to dwell in, from the time he brought Israel out of Egypt unto the present. It is important to remember that God does not literally live on earth. David recognized this when he spoke of having desired to build a place for God to use as a footstool.
 - 1) 1 Chronicles 28:2-3: "Then David the king stood up upon his feet, and said, Hear me, my brethren, and my people: As for me, I had in mine heart to build an house of rest for the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and for the footstool of our God, and had made ready for the building: But God said unto me, Thou shalt not build an house for my name, because thou hast been a man of war, and hast shed blood."
 - 2) Other inspired statements agree:
 - a) 1 Kings 8:27: "But will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded?"
 - b) Acts 17:24-25: "God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things;"
3. Verse 7: "In all *the places* wherein I have walked with all the children of Israel spake I a word with any of the tribes of Israel, whom I commanded to feed my people Israel, saying, Why build ye not me an house of cedar?"
 - a. During the long time and through all the places Israel had lived, God had not told any of the Israelites to construct a permanent house for him. In the absence of such instruction, no one had the authority to build such an edifice.
 - b. In religious matters, man has the right to act or teach only if God has given him authority to do so. This truth is taught elsewhere in the Bible in unmistakable language.
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 4:6: "Now these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes; that in us ye might learn not *to go* beyond the things which are written; that no one of you be puffed up for the one against the other" (ASV).
 - 2) Colossians 3:17: "And whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him" (ASV).
 - 3) 2 John 9-11: "Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son. If any one cometh unto you, and bringeth not this teaching, receive him not into *your* house, and give him no greeting: for he that giveth him greeting partaketh in his evil works" (ASV).
 - c. 1 Chronicles 17:6: "Wheresoever I have walked with all Israel, spake I a word to any of the judges of Israel, whom I commanded to feed my people, saying, Why have ye not built me an house of cedars?" This parallel account of the statement identifies more specifically the ones to whom the subject of building the temple was not broached. To none of the judges (princes or leaders) of any of the tribes

- had God given authority to build a permanent house for the ark.
- d. Brother Coffman (pp.84-87) asserts that God never gave anyone at any time the right to build a temple, that God merely accommodated himself to the temple Solomon built, and the fact that God destroyed the temple twice proves the contention. However, statements are later made to show that God apparently approved of the temple.
 - 1) 1 Kings 8:10-11: "And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy *place*, that the cloud filled the house of the LORD, So that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud: for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of the LORD."
 - 2) 1 Kings 9:3: "And the LORD said unto him, I have heard thy prayer and thy supplication, that thou hast made before me: I have hallowed this house, which thou hast built, to put my name there for ever; and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually."
 - 3) 1 Chronicles 28:6: "And he said unto me, Solomon thy son, he shall build my house and my courts: for I have chosen him *to be* my son, and I will be his father."
 - 4) Matthew 21:12-13: "And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves, And said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves."
 4. Verses 8-9: "Now therefore so shalt thou say unto my servant David, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I took thee from the sheepcote, from following the sheep, to be ruler over my people, over Israel: And I was with thee whithersoever thou wentest, and have cut off all thine enemies out of thy sight, and have made thee a great name, like unto the name of the great *men* that *are* in the earth."
 - a. "Jehovah's designation of David by the honourable title of *his* servant, was to give him a gracious assurance that his pious intentions were appreciated. It was a kind and delicate form of address, with a view not to dishearten him or wound his feelings, but a stern or disdainful rejection of his proposal; and though it is not stated here, it is affirmed elsewhere (1 Ki. 8:18) that a positive expression of approval was given him on this occasion" (JFB, pp.233f).
 - 1) 1 Kings 8:18: "And the LORD said unto David my father, Whereas it was in thine heart to build an house unto my name, thou didst well that it was in thine heart."
 - 2) As indicated earlier, David understood that he was not given permission to build the temple because he was a man of war. "But God said unto me, Thou shalt not build an house for my name, because thou *hast been* a man of war, and hast shed blood" (1 Chron. 28:3).
 - b. God had graciously blessed David when he took him from tending his father's sheep, and exalted him to be ruler over Israel. He reminded the king that he had dealt kindly with David in his various activities and struggles, and had cut off his enemies, while making his name great. His position of honor and authority was equal to that of any other man on earth. Indeed, David's renown is doubtless greater than any other king of his era.
 5. Verses 10-11: "Moreover I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more; neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more, as beforetime, And as since the time that I commanded judges *to be* over my people Israel, and have caused thee to rest from all thine enemies. Also the LORD telleth thee that he will make thee an house."
 - a. God had already brought Israel into a land of their own, and had planted them there. Under David's reign, he would establish them firmly in Canaan. In earlier times, Israel had been overrun by their enemies almost at will. We remember, of course, that God permitted this to happen as punishment for their national rebellions against him.
 - b. While Israel was in the 40 years of living in the wilderness, they had no certain dwelling place for
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much of that time; they relocated from one temporary camp to another. Now that they were in the land God had promised, they would not have to move again. It is to be understood that this is conditioned on their faithfulness to the Almighty.

- c. David was presently enjoying a period of peace, having put down his most recent adversaries (5:17-25). In the future, the Philistines would again feel strong enough to attack David, and other enemies would arise later. If Israel remained loyal to Jehovah, he would insure their continued success.
- d. The Lord would establish David's house; it would not come to an end, as Saul's had. David's house was to continue. No one today can trace his ancestry back to David through fleshly lines. However, the spiritual house of Christ, who was a descendant of David, is still present; every faithful Christian is a member of this spiritual family.
 - 1) Amos 9:10-11: "All the sinners of my people shall die by the sword, which say, The evil shall not overtake nor prevent us. In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old."
 - 2) Acts 15:16-18: "After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things. Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world."
 - 3) Galatians 3:26-29: "For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ. There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be no male and female; for ye all are one man in Christ Jesus. And if ye are Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, heirs according to promise" (ASV).

C. 2 Samuel 7:12-17: Prophecy of the Church.

1. Verse 12: "And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom."
 - a. The time when the prophecy given would be fulfilled was at some time subsequent to David's death. God promises that David's seed, who would be his descendant, would have his kingdom established by the Lord. This seed of David would build a house for God, and the throne of his kingdom God would establish forever (vs. 13).
 - b. Ostensibly, the seed referred to was none other than Solomon, the son of David and Bathsheba. But other Biblical references place the fulfillment of the prophecy on a much higher plane. The passage seems, therefore, to have an immediate and limited fulfillment, with a more direct, primary fulfillment in Christ.
 - 1) A similar case is found in Hosea 11:1: "When Israel *was* a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt." The nation of Israel was called from Egypt, brought through the wilderness, and finally established in Canaan. A later passage gives the sojourn of Jesus in Egypt and his later return to Canaan as the primary meaning of Hosea's prophecy. "And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son" (Matt. 2:15).
 - 2) The present prophecy seems to have reference (1) to Solomon's construction of the temple, and (2) to Christ's establishment of his church, which is the house of God (1 Tim. 3:15).
 - 3) Anticipating the passage to be considered later, the prophecy has a two-fold application: first to Solomon and his temple, and second to Christ and his church.
 - c. The word *seed* can have reference to a son, or to several children, to a long line of descendants, or to some special son in the distant future. This last usage is true of the word seed in Genesis 22:18: "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice."

- 1) Galatians 3:16: "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ."
 - 2) Genesis 3:15: "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."
 - 3) Galatians 4:4: "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law."
 - 4) The Seed of Genesis 3:15 is Christ.
- d. Christ is manifestly a descendant of David. That is, he entered into the human family in the lineage of David (Matt. 1:1-17). Christ, the second member of the Godhead, is eternal; he did not begin life when he was conceived by the Holy Spirit and borne by Mary; his activities have been going on from eternity (Micah 5:2; John 1:1-3; Col. 1:15-17; 2:9). The physical lineage of Jesus goes back to David.
- 1) Micah 5:2: "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting."
 - 2) John 1:1-3: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made."
 - 3) Colossians 1:15-17: "Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist."
 - 4) Colossians 2:9: "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."
- e. Christ was destined to sit on David's throne: "Men *and* brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne" (Acts 2:29-30).
- 1) The apostles affirmed here that God had sworn with an oath that he would raise up Christ, who came through the fruit of David's loins, to sit on his throne (which implies the presence of a kingdom).
 - 2) Our text predicted that God the Father would be directly involved in the establishment of the kingdom of Christ. The apostles' statement concurs.
2. Verse 13: "He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever."
- a. The seed of David would build a house for God's name, and God vowed to establish the throne of his kingdom forever. In Solomon's case, he indeed did build a house for God (the temple); and further, the dynasty of Solomon continued down to the time when Babylon carried the Southern Kingdom into captivity.
 - b. Whereas the fleshly, regal lineage of David through Solomon ended [in the Babylonian Captivity], the spiritual lineage began when Christ ascended the throne of his spiritual kingdom. David's dynasty, therefore, continues today, in the reign of Christ.
 - c. Christ built a house—the church.
 - 1) Matthew 16:18: "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."
 - 2) 1 Timothy 3:15: "But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."
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- d. The reign of Christ is truly unending; it will endure the remainder of time.
 - 1) Daniel 2:44: "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, *but* it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever."
 - 2) Luke 1:33: "And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end."
 - 3) Hebrews 12:28: "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear."
 3. Verse 14: "I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men."
 - a. God treated Solomon kindly, as a father cares for his son. However, the relationship of Christ and the Father is infinitely superior. Not even the angels of heaven sustain such a relationship with God. "For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?" (Heb. 1:5). In fact, this verse applies the statement of our text directly to Christ.
 - b. But what of the second part of the verse? Solomon committed iniquity (1 Kings 11:1-40). God caused certain adversaries to rise up against Solomon.
 - c. Christ never committed even a single act of sin. "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as *we are*, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15). He was, however, severely beaten and crucified, not because of any iniquity of his own doing, but for the iniquity of mankind.
 - 1) Isaiah 53:3-8: "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were *our* faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he *was* wounded for our transgressions, *he was* bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace *was* upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 15:3-4: "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures."
 - 3) 2 Corinthians 5:21: "For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."
 4. Verses 15-17: "But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took *it* from Saul, whom I put away before thee. And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever. According to all these words, and according to all this vision, so did Nathan speak unto David."
 - a. God was merciful to Solomon. Saul had repeatedly earned God's disfavor, until God allowed the Philistines to destroy him. Although he punished Solomon for his crimes (1 Kings 11), he did not violently remove him from the throne. Solomon died a natural death.
 - b. In the case of Christ, the mercy of God was ever upon him; he never incurred the anger of God in any way. Time and again, God spoke of Christ as his beloved Son.
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- 1) Matthew 3:17: "And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."
 - 2) Matthew 17:5: "While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him."
 - 3) John 12:26-30: "If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour. ¶ Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again. The people therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to him. Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes."
 - 4) Colossians 1:13: "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated *us* into the kingdom of his dear Son."
 - c. God promised to David that his house and kingdom would be established forever, and his throne would likewise be forever. The literal house, kingdom, and throne of David are not eternal; no one living on earth today can prove he is a literal descendant of David. The kingdom over which David reigned has long since ended on earth, and his actual throne no longer exists. However, in Christ, the spiritual house, kingdom, and throne of David continue.
 - d. Nathan faithfully repeated all these words to David the king.
 5. Acts 2:25-36 shows that Christ is the real object of the prophecy of our text, plus that of Psalm 16:8-11, Psalm 89:3-4, Psalm 89:35-37, and Psalm 132:11.
 - a. Acts 2:25-36: "For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved: Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope: Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance. Men *and* brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Until I make thy foes thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ."
 - b. Psalms 16:8-11: "I have set the LORD always before me: because *he is* at my right hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope. For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence *is* fulness of joy; at thy right hand *there are* pleasures for evermore."
 - c. Psalms 89:3-4: "I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant, Thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations."
 - d. Psalms 89:35-37: "Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me. It shall be established for ever as the moon, and
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as a faithful witness in heaven."

- e. Psalms 132:11: "The LORD hath sworn *in* truth unto David; he will not turn from it; Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne."

D. 2 Samuel 7:18-29: David Speaks to the Lord.

1. Verses 18-20: "Then went king David in, and sat before the LORD, and he said, Who *am* I, O Lord GOD? and what *is* my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto? And this was yet a small thing in thy sight, O Lord GOD; but thou hast spoken also of thy servant's house for a great while to come. And *is* this the manner of man, O Lord GOD? And what can David say more unto thee? for thou, Lord GOD, knowest thy servant."
 - a. David entered into some building, most likely the tabernacle which he had erected at Jerusalem, and sat before the Lord in prayer. Scholars think he sat on his heels, with his face directed toward heaven or perhaps toward the ark of the covenant. The Moslems sit in that position in their devotions.
 - b. The king also humbled himself before the Lord by his words: "Who am I and what is my house, that thou hast brought me to this exalted position!" It was as much an exclamation as it was a question. David did not see himself as deserving the great honors God had given him.
 - c. He knew that what God had done for him and what he had revealed to him concerning the future of his house was no great strain on God's infinite power and knowledge. "Is this the manner of man?" The margin gives *law* as an alternate rendering of *manner*.
 - 1) No man has the power to see into the future, and no man can insure that his house will endure the ages. David's gratitude to God for giving this promise is evident.
 - 2) 1 Chronicles 17:16-17: "And David the king came and sat before the LORD, and said, Who *am* I, O LORD God, and what *is* mine house, that thou hast brought me hitherto? And *yet* this was a small thing in thine eyes, O God; for thou hast *also* spoken of thy servant's house for a great while to come, and hast regarded me according to the estate of a man of high degree, O LORD God."
 - d. David was well aware that God knew everything to be known about him; he could say much to God, but God already knew it all. "Instead of expressing his gratitude still further in many words, David appeals to the omniscience of God, before whom his thankful heart lies open..." (Keil, p.351).
 - 1) "Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him" (Matt. 6:8).
 - 2) "...David could neither ask nor desire anything greater than what had been now conferred; and therefore he would leave all his wants to be supplied by his gracious 'Lord, who knew his servant'" (JFB, p.236).
2. Verses 21-24: "For thy word's sake, and according to thine own heart, hast thou done all these great things, to make thy servant know *them*. Wherefore thou art great, O LORD God: for *there is* none like thee, neither *is there any* God beside thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears. And what one nation in the earth *is* like thy people, *even* like Israel, whom God went to redeem for a people to himself, and to make him a name, and to do for you great things and terrible, for thy land, before thy people, which thou redeemedst to thee from Egypt, *from* the nations and their gods? For thou hast confirmed to thyself thy people Israel *to be* a people unto thee for ever: and thou, LORD, art become their God."
 - a. David continues his expressions of gratitude to the Lord. He states that God has done many great things for David, including the promise of verses 12-16; further, he has told David of these matters. It was on account of God's goodness that these things were done.
 - b. David perceived that God's promise, through Jacob, that the descendants of Judah would rule in the nation of Israel.

- 1) Genesis 49:10: "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him *shall* the gathering of the people *be*."
 - 2) 1 Chronicles 28:4: "Howbeit the LORD God of Israel chose me before all the house of my father to be king over Israel for ever: for he hath chosen Judah *to be* the ruler; and of the house of Judah, the house of my father; and among the sons of my father he liked me to make *me* king over all Israel."
 - c. Because of God's omnipotence, omniscience, and goodness, David's heart is filled with gratitude and reverence to him. There is no other God like the God of Israel. No nation is like the nation of Israel. They had been more wonderfully blessed than any other people. God had taken Israel from their slavery in Egypt, and had brought them into a land of their own. They, guided and assisted by God's power, had driven out the Canaanites and their gods, thus gaining a land in which God's people could serve him.
 - d. "The first clause [of verse 24] does not refer merely to the liberation of Israel out of Egypt, or to the conquest of Canaan, alone, but to all that the Lord had done for the establishment of Israel as the people of his possession, from the time of Moses till his promise of the eternal continuance of the throne of David" (Keil, p.354).
3. Verses 25-26: "And now, O LORD God, the word that thou hast spoken concerning thy servant, and concerning his house, establish *it* for ever, and do as thou hast said. And let thy name be magnified for ever, saying, The LORD of hosts *is* the God over Israel: and let the house of thy servant David be established before thee."
 - a. Humbly and gratefully, David asked that the Lord fulfill the promise he had given. He happily accepted the blessing.
 - b. David desired that in fulfilling these promises, God's name would be magnified through the ages to come. He would gladly receive these blessings promised, but was chiefly interested in them as they brought greater glory to God.
 4. Verses 27-29: "For thou, O LORD of hosts, God of Israel, hast revealed to thy servant, saying, I will build thee an house: therefore hath thy servant found in his heart to pray this prayer unto thee. And now, O Lord GOD, thou *art* that God, and thy words be true, and thou hast promised this goodness unto thy servant: Therefore now let it please thee to bless the house of thy servant, that it may continue for ever before thee: for thou, O Lord GOD, hast spoken *it*: and with thy blessing let the house of thy servant be blessed for ever."
 - a. "David felt himself encouraged to offer this prayer through the revelation which he had received. Because God had promised to build him a house, 'therefore thy servant hath found in his heart to pray this prayer...'" (Keil, p.354).
 - b. He expressed his full confidence that what God had promised would be forthcoming, for "thy words be true."
 - c. David requested that God fulfill the promise; he would gladly receive it, and be properly grateful for it. The promises involved much more than the blessings David received—God's plan focused on the spiritual blessings to be given to vast multitudes through Christ.
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2 SAMUEL 8

A. 2 Samuel 8:1-2: David Conquers the Philistines and Moabites.

1. Verse 1: "And after this it came to pass, that David smote the Philistines, and subdued them: and David took Methegammah out of the hand of the Philistines."
 - a. In connection with the foregoing reports, we are told that David was able to smite the Philistines, subduing them and wresting *Methegammah* from them.
 - b. The parallel account gives a literal statement as to the meaning of *Methegammah*. "Now after this it came to pass, that David smote the Philistines, and subdued them, and took Gath and her towns out of the hand of the Philistines" (1 Chron. 18:1). Gath was the key to Philistine governmental power. Once this city was captured, the rest of the nation fell into David's control.
 - c. Methegammah ("bridle of Ammah") is a figurative expression used to denote Gath, the principal city of the Philistines. With the bridle, a small person is able to control and guide a large horse. "Behold, we put bits in the horses' mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body" (Jas. 3:3).
2. Verse 2: "And he smote Moab, and measured them with a line, casting them down to the ground; even with two lines measured he put to death, and with one full line to keep alive. And *so* the Moabites became David's servants, *and* brought gifts."
 - a. David's victories continued with the subjugation of Moab. Many of the captured warriors were slain, apparently for good reason. It appears that these prisoners were made to lie on the ground, two lines were drawn to identify those to be executed, and one full line measured to identify those to be spared. However, Josephus says that when David "had overcome two parts of their army in battle, he took the remaining part captive, and imposed tribute upon them, to be paid annually" (p.153). This view agrees with the text which reports that two-thirds of the Moabite army was slain.
 - b. "...Jewish writers assert that the cause of this particular severity against the people was their having massacred David's parents and family, whom he had, during his exile, committed to the king of Moab" (JFB, pp.236f). "And David went thence to Mizpeh of Moab: and he said unto the king of Moab, Let my father and my mother, I pray thee, come forth, *and be* with you, till I know what God will do for me. And he brought them before the king of Moab: and they dwelt with him all the while that David was in the hold" (1 Sam. 22:3-4). We have no proof that this was the cause of the war.
 - c. "In the previous history we find David and Moab on such friendly terms that he entrusted his father and mother into their king's keeping (1 Sam 22:3,4). Now he not only subjugates them, but puts two-thirds or, according to the ancient versions, half of the captured combatants to death.
 - 1) "Compared with the custom of the Romans, and with the attempt to destroy all the males in Edom, this was mild treatment; for we find Caesar in his Gallic wars putting all his prisoners to death, and using for their execution the mere phrase, 'he counted them in the number of enemies,' as if the killing of enemies was a matter of course.
 - 2) "The customs of the Israelites in war were not so cruel, and this treatment of the Moabites seems to be mentioned as showing that they received exceptionally severe treatment.
 - 3) "The justification of this is found by Jewish commentators, on the authority of the Midrash, in the supposed fact that the King of Moab had put David's father and mother to death. But as Philippon adds, even so it was an instance of the extreme barbarity of ancient warfare. Casting them down to the ground; Hebrew, making them to lie down on the ground; and so the Revised Version.
 - 4) "It is plain that those who were made to lie on the ground were combatants who had been made prisoners, and the Hebrew seems to mean that, while they were thus prostrate, they were measured off into three divisions, whereof two were put to the sword, and one permitted to live....

5) "It is probable that it was in this war that Benaiah slew 'two lion-like men of Moab' (1 Chron 11:22), who were its champions and perhaps members of the royal house" [Pulpit Commentary, Copyright (c) 2001 by Biblesoft].

d. The text says that the Moabites were placed under the requirement to pay tribute to Israel.

B. 2 Samuel 8:3-8: David Extends his Influence to the Euphrates.

1. Verse 3: "David smote also Hadadezer, the son of Rehob, king of Zobah, as he went to recover his border at the river Euphrates."
 - a. God had promised Abraham that his descendants would be given a great territory over which to rule. "In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates" (Gen. 15:18). It would extend from the river of Egypt to the river Euphrates.
 - b. This passage reports that David was able to subdue the territory within the limits God had identified.
 - 1) 1 Chronicles 18:3: "And David smote Hadarezer king of Zobah unto Hamath, as he went to stablish his dominion by the river Euphrates." We are told later that Solomon continued to rule over this vast area.
 - 2) 1 Kings 4:21: "And Solomon reigned over all kingdoms from the river unto the land of the Philistines, and unto the border of Egypt: they brought presents, and served Solomon all the days of his life."
 - c. Premillennialists deny that the land promise has ever been fulfilled, that it will only be obtained by Israel during the so-called thousand-year-reign of Christ on earth. This is a plain denial of the clear import of the Bible!
2. Verses 4-5: "And David took from him a thousand *chariots*, and seven hundred horsemen, and twenty thousand footmen: and David hocked all the chariot *horses*, but reserved of them *for* an hundred chariots. And when the Syrians of Damascus came to succour Hadadezer king of Zobah, David slew of the Syrians two and twenty thousand men."
 - a. In a decisive battle with Hadadezer, David captured a vast store of military personnel and equipment. "And David took from him a thousand chariots, and seven thousand horsemen, and twenty thousand footmen: David also hocked all the chariot *horses*, but reserved of them an hundred chariots" (1 Chron. 18:40).
 - b. The difference in the numbers has plagued students of the Bible. Some have explained such differences on the basis of the inexact methods of numbering that existed prior to the invention of our modern method, which was developed by the Arabs. "Until the Arabs invented our present system of notation, the ancient methods of representing numbers were so liable to error that little dependence can be placed upon them. The Hebrews used their letters for numerals, but after 400 their system breaks down. Any number higher than 400 can be represented only by long sums in arithmetic, or by an intricate system of points above and below, which were sure to get into confusion" [Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 2001 by Biblesoft].
 - c. This passage lists the horsemen as seven hundred; the other account gives seven thousand. The accounts agree that twenty thousand footmen were taken.
 - 1) Perhaps the explanation could be found in the fact that *chariots* is supplied by the translators in our present text, being interpolated from 1 Chronicles 18:4. Could it be that the writer of our text had something else in mind than the number of chariots captured?
 - 2) Keil explains it by alleging that the original number in the ancient manuscript was mis-copied.
 - d. David hamstringed all of the chariot horses except enough for a hundred chariots. The Mosaic Law prohibited the king from multiplying horses, lest he lean too heavily on military strength for protection

than on the Lord (cf. Deut. 17:16). The horses and chariots he kept intact may have been intended for formal occasions in the capital. Hamstrung horses are unfit for military purposes. This operation was to cut the hamstring of the horses legs.

- e. The Syrians in Damascus came to the aid of Hadadezer, but David slew twenty-two thousand of their soldiers. The reason for David's success was not to be accounted for by his having greater numbers, of superior warriors, or more cunning strategy. Instead, it was the fact that God was with him.

3. Verses 6-8: "Then David put garrisons in Syria of Damascus: and the Syrians became servants to David, *and* brought gifts. And the LORD preserved David whithersoever he went. And David took the shields of gold that were on the servants of Hadadezer, and brought them to Jerusalem. And from Betah, and from Berothai, cities of Hadadezer, king David took exceeding much brass."

- a. David placed garrisons of soldiers in Damascus. The Syrians were made to pay tribute to Israel, and served David.
- b. From the servants of Hadadezer, David took their shields of gold, and brought them to Jerusalem. Also, he took a great amount of brass from Betah and Berothai, cities which pertained to Hadadezer.
- c. The amassing of a great store of wealth enabled Solomon to construct the elaborate temple in Jerusalem some years later. The tribute under which David placed his conquered enemies insured a continuing supply of wealth.

C. 2 Samuel 8:9-12: David Deals with Toi King of Hamath.

1. Verses 9-10: "When Toi king of Hamath heard that David had smitten all the host of Hadadezer, Then Toi sent Joram his son unto king David, to salute him, and to bless him, because he had fought against Hadadezer, and smitten him: for Hadadezer had wars with Toi. And *Joram* brought with him vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and vessels of brass."

- a. When the king of Hamath heard of David's victory over Hadadezer, he sent his son to congratulate David. Hadadezer had been an enemy to the king of Hamath, who was glad to see him defeated.
- b. Toi, the king of Hamath, sent vessels of silver, gold, and brass to David in token of his congratulations for subduing his long-time enemy.

2. Verses 11-12: "Which also king David did dedicate unto the LORD, with the silver and gold that he had dedicated of all nations which he subdued; Of Syria, and of Moab, and of the children of Ammon, and of the Philistines, and of Amalek, and of the spoil of Hadadezer, son of Rehob, king of Zobah."

- a. David brought the vessels of gold, silver, and brass to Jerusalem, and dedicated them to the Lord's cause.
- b. The spoils and tribute which he had acquired from Syria, Moab, Ammon, Philistia, Amalek, and from Hadadezer must have been enormous.
- c. Israel was now riding the crest of their greatest success. If David had maintained his faithfulness, and if Solomon later had retained his spiritual integrity, the success of Israel would have continued.

D. 2 Samuel 8:13-14: David's Fame Spreads.

1. Verse 13: "And David gat *him* a name when he returned from smiting of the Syrians in the valley of salt, *being* eighteen thousand men." "And David made himself a name when he returned from killing eighteen thousand Syrians in the Valley of Salt."

- a. The name and fame of David was spread far and wide. His many victories were noted by the other nations in the area.
 - b. The victory of this present verse may have been over the Edomites, instead of the Syrians (see the next verse). Josephus said it was over the Edomites (Idumeans) that this victory was won. "Nor did God give victory and success to him only when he went to the battle himself, and led his own army, but
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he gave victory to Abishai, the brother of Joab, general of his forces, over the Idumeans, and by him to David, when he sent him with an army into Idumea; for Abishai destroyed eighteen thousand of them in the battle; whereupon the king [of Israel] placed garrisons through all Idumea, and received the tribute of the country, and of every head among them” (p.153).

2. Verse 14: “And he put garrisons in Edom; throughout all Edom put he garrisons, and all they of Edom became David's servants. And the LORD preserved David whithersoever he went.”
 - a. This verse obviously connects with verse thirteen. David put garrisons throughout Edom. He put them under tribute.
 - b. Wherever David went, God was with him, protecting and preserving him, and insuring his success. Israel was at the zenith of their power.

E. 2 Samuel 8:15-18: David's Men.

1. Verse 15: “And David reigned over all Israel; and David executed judgment and justice unto all his people.”
 - a. “Though involved in foreign wars, he maintained an excellent system of government at home, the most eminent men of the age composing his cabinet of ministers” (JFB, p.238).
 - b. “This record of David's wise and efficient administration of the affairs of his kingdom must be applied especially to the first half of his reign, before the king's adultery with Bathsheba and murder of her husband placed him under the judgment of divine punishment from God” (Coffman, p.108).
 - c. David's popularity was at high tide. Success and fame were constantly upon him. During such a time, one must be especially on guard, for he is more vulnerable to temptation than at other times.
 2. Verses 16-18: “And Joab the son of Zeruiah *was* over the host; and Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud *was* recorder; And Zadok the son of Ahitub, and Ahimelech the son of Abiathar, *were* the priests; and Seraiah *was* the scribe; And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada *was over* both the Cherethites and the Pelethites; and David's sons were chief rulers.”
 - a. Joab filled the role of David's general; he was in charge of all his forces.
 - b. Jehoshaphat was the writer of his chronicles.
 - c. Zadok and Ahimelech were the priests. Evidently, they both served as high priests. Perhaps one was stationed at the tabernacle Moses had constructed, and the other was at the tent David built.
 - d. Seraiah was the scribe. He was David's secretary.
 - e. Benaiah was over the Cherethites and the Pelethites. These two groups evidently served as special agents to the king. They probably protected his person, executed criminals, and ran errands.
 - f. David's sons were chief rulers (princes).
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2 Samuel 9

A. 2 Samuel 9:1-4: David Inquires About the House of Jonathan.

1. Verse 1: “And David said, Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?”
 - a. A good number of years had passed since the death of Saul. When news came of the death of Saul and Jonathan, the nurse of Jonathan’s son took him up to flee, and the lad was injured in a fall. He was five years old at the time. Now, this boy had become a man, had married, and was the father of young son.
 - 1) 2 Samuel 4:4: "And Jonathan, Saul's son, had a son that was lame of his feet. He was five years old when the tidings came of Saul and Jonathan out of Jezreel, and his nurse took him up, and fled: and it came to pass, as she made haste to flee, that he fell, and became lame. And his name was Mephibosheth."
 - 2) 2 Samuel 9:12: "And Mephibosheth had a young son, whose name was Micha. And all that dwelt in the house of Ziba were servants unto Mephibosheth."
 - b. David and Jonathan were close friends, despite the hatred Saul had for David (1 Sam. 18:1). Several years had elapsed since the death of his friend, and David presently was at peace on the throne. He began to think of Jonathan, and wondered whether there was any of Saul’s family still alive.
 - c. His purpose for the question was to show mercy to them, if any still lived. David was not a vindictive man. He could fight the enemy on the battlefield without mercy, but he knew how to show mercy to those who needed it. He was willing to be kind to Saul’s family for Jonathan’s sake.
2. Verse 2: “And *there was* of the house of Saul a servant whose name *was* Ziba. And when they had called him unto David, the king said unto him, *Art* thou Ziba? And he said, Thy servant is he. And the king said, *Is* there not yet any of the house of Saul, that I may show the kindness of God unto him? And Ziba said unto the king, Jonathan hath yet a son, *which is* lame on *his* feet.”
 - a. A servant of Saul, Ziba by name, was called before the king. When his identity had been affirmed, David asked him whether any of Saul’s family still lived. The king assured the servant that his reason for the inquiry was to show mercy.
 - b. Jonathan had a son that remained, Ziba reported; he was lame. The existence of Jonathan’s son was not known by David. He had been fleeing from Saul for a long time, and had been dwelling among the Philistines for a time. The lad could have been born without David’s knowledge.
3. Verse 4: “And the king said unto him, *Where is* he? And Ziba said unto the king, Behold, he *is* in the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel, in Lodebar.”
 - a. David wanted to know where the lad was now living. Ziba reported that he was in the house of Machir, in Lodebar.
 - b. Some scholars think Lodebar was on the east side of Jordan, somewhere in the pasture lands that are found there. Ziba is thought to have been Saul’s land servant (JFB, p.238), and was in charge of the vast acres which Saul is presumed to have owned. Brother Coffman supposes that Ziba had become a wealthy man from the income derived from these lands (p.114).

B. 2 Samuel 9:5-8: Mephibosheth is Brought into David’s House.

1. Verses 5-6: “Then king David sent, and fetched him out of the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel, from Lodebar. Now when Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, was come unto David, he fell on his face, and did reverence. And David said, Mephibosheth. And he answered, Behold thy servant!”
 - a. With this information in hand, David sent to have Jonathan’s son Mephibosheth brought to his house. What did Mephibosheth think when the messenger came? He probably thought at first that the king
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was intending him harm.

- b. When the young man entered into David's presence, he fell on his face before the king. He was well aware of David's authority; he exhibited respect for his high office.
 - c. When David called him by name, Mephibosheth replied, "Behold thy servant!" This exchange showed the attitude of both men. David's knowledge and use of his name showed that he intended him no harm; Mephibosheth's response showed that he was willing to serve David.
2. Verse 7: "And David said unto him, Fear not: for I will surely show thee kindness for Jonathan thy father's sake, and will restore thee all the land of Saul thy father; and thou shalt eat bread at my table continually."
- a. David's quickly spoke to the young man to quiet any fears he might have. He assured him that there was no cause for alarm for the summons.
 - b. Instead, David stated his intentions to show kindness to him for Jonathan's sake. He announced that he was going to deliver all of Saul's land to him, and that Mephibosheth would become part of the king's household, eating food at his table.
 - c. Notice that the Bible used the word *father* rather than *grandfather* in speaking of the kinship between Saul and Mephibosheth. The words *son* and *grandson* are used in a similar way. Thus, Jesus is said to be the *son* of Abraham (Matt. 1:1).
3. Verse 8: "And he bowed himself, and said, What *is* thy servant, that thou shouldest look upon such a dead dog as I am?"
- a. "Mephibosheth expressed his thanks for this manifestation of favour with the deepest obeisance, and a confession of his unworthiness of any such favour" (Keil, p.371).
 - b. David had used similar words in depicting himself as unworthy of Saul's notice, when the former king pursued him: "After whom is the king of Israel come out? after whom dost thou pursue? after a dead dog, after a flea" (1 Sam. 24:14).
 - c. "This type of hyperbole and self derogation was characteristic of Orientals during that era" (Coffman, p.119). When Abraham sought to buy the cave of Machpelah from Ephron (Gen. 23:11ff), it was offered to him without charge, which may have been a psychological ploy, for when Abraham insisted on paying, Ephron then charged him a high price for it.

C. 2 Samuel 9:9-13: David Restores Saul's Property to Mephibosheth.

1. Verse 9: "Then the king called to Ziba, Saul's servant, and said unto him, I have given unto thy master's son all that pertained to Saul and to all his house."
 - a. Ziba the servant was called before the king, and was told that David had given unto Mephibosheth all that belonged to the house of Saul. Ziba's master was, of course, Saul.
 - b. "Saul's family estate, which had fallen to David in right of his wife (Num 27:8), or been forfeited to the crown by Ish-bosheth's rebellion (2 Sam 12:8), was provided (2 Sam 9:11; also 2 Sam 19:28) for enabling him to maintain an establishment suitable to his rank, and Ziba appointed steward to manage it, on the condition of receiving one-half of the produce in remuneration of his labour and expense, while the other moiety [half, part, portion, share—Bob Winton] was to be paid as rent to the owner of the land (2 Sam 19:29), This is a very common arrangement in farming the soil in Eastern countries, especially when the proprietor furnishes the seed" [Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1997 by BibleSoft]. Mephibosheth would need a degree of wealth in order to maintain himself and his family before the court.
 2. Verse 10: "Thou therefore, and thy sons, and thy servants, shall till the land for him, and thou shalt bring in *the fruits*, that thy master's son may have food to eat: but Mephibosheth thy master's son shall eat bread always at my table. Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants."
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- a. David directed Ziba to till the land that now was given to Mephibosheth. He was to bring the produce of the land to Mephibosheth so that he would be able to provide for his family's needs. "Although Mephibosheth himself ate daily as a guest at the king's table, he had to make provision as a royal prince for the maintenance of his own family and servants..." (Keil, p.371).
 - b. The size of the land must have been great, since Ziba had 15 sons and 20 servants, all of whom would be employed in its operation.
3. Verses 11-13: "Then said Ziba unto the king, According to all that my lord the king hath commanded his servant, so shall thy servant do. As for Mephibosheth, *said the king*, he shall eat at my table, as one of the king's sons. And Mephibosheth had a young son, whose name *was* Micha. And all that dwelt in the house of Ziba *were* servants unto Mephibosheth. So Mephibosheth dwelt in Jerusalem: for he did eat continually at the king's table; and was lame on both his feet."
- a. Ziba told David that he would do exactly as the king had decreed. He had no choice but to agree to the orders he had been given.
 - b. "In view of Ziba's treacherous conduct during Absalom's rebellion, we may perhaps make a judgment here that Ziba was far from pleased with this new arrangement. His solemn promise to carry out the commandments of the king was evidently made with reluctance; and he rebelled at the first opportunity" (Coffman, p.121). Ziba evidently told a falsehood against Mephibosheth in order to gain control over the land.
 - 1) 2 Samuel 16:1-4: "And when David was a little past the top *of the hill*, behold, Ziba the servant of Mephibosheth met him, with a couple of asses saddled, and upon them two hundred *loaves* of bread, and an hundred bunches of raisins, and an hundred of summer fruits, and a bottle of wine. And the king said unto Ziba, What meanest thou by these? And Ziba said, The asses *be* for the king's household to ride on; and the bread and summer fruit for the young men to eat; and the wine, that such as *be* faint in the wilderness may drink. And the king said, And where *is* thy master's son? And Ziba said unto the king, Behold, he abideth at Jerusalem: for he said, To day shall the house of Israel restore me the kingdom of my father. Then said the king to Ziba, Behold, thine *are* all that *pertained* unto Mephibosheth. And Ziba said, I humbly beseech thee *that* I may find grace in thy sight, my lord, O king."
 - 2) 2 Samuel 19:17,29: "And *there were* a thousand men of Benjamin with him, and Ziba the servant of the house of Saul, and his fifteen sons and his twenty servants with him; and they went over Jordan before the king....And the king said unto him, Why speakest thou any more of thy matters? I have said, Thou and Ziba divide the land."
 - c. Mephibosheth had a young son, named Micha. The house of Ziba served Mephibosheth, who lived in Jerusalem, and ate at the king's table. We are told that Mephibosheth was lame in both of his feet. The injury he suffered was severe.
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2 SAMUEL 10

A. 2 Samuel 10: 1-5: David's Servants are Mistreated by the Ammonites.

1. Verses 1-2: "And it came to pass after this, that the king of the children of Ammon died, and Hanun his son reigned in his stead. Then said David, I will show kindness unto Hanun the son of Nahash, as his father showed kindness unto me. And David sent to comfort him by the hand of his servants for his father. And David's servants came into the land of the children of Ammon."
 - a. David continued in his benevolent spirit. When the king of Ammon died, and Hanun his son came to the throne, David determined to show kindness to the young king.
 - b. Hanun, it may be presumed, was mourning the death of his father, and David wanted to show him kindness, as Hanun's father had shown kindness to David.
 - c. "It is probable that this was the Nahash against whom Saul waged war at Jabesh-gilead (1 Sam.11:1). David, on leaving Gath, where his life was exposed to danger, found an asylum with the king of Moab; and as Nahash, king of the Ammonites, was his nearest neighbour, it may be that, during the feud between Saul and David, he, through enmity to the former, was kind and hospitable to David" (JFB, p.239).
 2. Verse 3: "And the princes of the children of Ammon said unto Hanun their lord, Thinkest thou that David doth honour thy father, that he hath sent comforters unto thee? hath not David *rather* sent his servants unto thee, to search the city, and to spy it out, and to overthrow it?"
 - a. All too often, the human mind is overly suspicious. David's sincerity was genuine; it should have been accepted at face value by the Ammonites.
 - b. But the advisors of Hanun persuaded their king that David's messengers were not there to offer him comfort, but to gather military intelligence that David could use to bring about Ammon's destruction.
 - c. Jamieson gave this possible reason for their rejection of David's efforts: "Their suspicion was not warranted either by any overt act or by any cherished design of David; it must have originated in their knowledge of the denunciations of God's law against them (Deut. 23:3-6), and of David's policy in stedfastly adhering to it" (p.239).
 - 1) "An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of the LORD; even to their tenth generation shall they not enter into the congregation of the LORD for ever: Because they met you not with bread and with water in the way, when ye came forth out of Egypt; and because they hired against thee Balaam the son of Beor of Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse thee.
 - 2) "Nevertheless the LORD thy God would not hearken unto Balaam; but the LORD thy God turned the curse into a blessing unto thee, because the LORD thy God loved thee. Thou shalt not seek their peace nor their prosperity all thy days for ever" (Deut. 23:3-6).
 3. Verse 4: "Wherefore Hanun took David's servants, and shaved off the one half of their beards, and cut off their garments in the middle, *even* to their buttocks, and sent them away."
 - a. Hanun directed that the messengers should have half of their beards shaved off, and for their garments to be cut off at the seat. One-half of a beard is less than useless, and so is half a garment.
 - b. "With the value universally set upon the beard by the Hebrews and other oriental nations, as being a man's greatest ornament, the cutting off of one-half of it was the greatest insult that could have been offered to the ambassadors, and through them to David their king. The insult was still further increased by cutting off the long dress which covered the body; so that as the ancient Israelites wore no trousers, the lower half of the body was quite exposed" (Keil, p.375).
 4. Verse 5: "When they told *it* unto David, he sent to meet them, because the men were greatly ashamed: and the king said, Tarry at Jericho until your beards be grown, and *then* return."
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- a. When the report reached David of the ill-treatment his servants received from the Ammonites, he told them to remain at Jericho until their beards had re-grown. They could, of course, obtain clothes.
- b. Their stay at Jericho would allow them to hide their shame until their beards were full again. This would take several weeks to a few months.
- c. Isaiah 20:4: "So shall the king of Assyria lead away the Egyptians prisoners, and the Ethiopians captives, young and old, naked and barefoot, even with *their* buttocks uncovered, to the shame of Egypt."
- d. "In the year 1764, a pretender to the Persian throne, named *Kerim Khan*, sent ambassadors to *Mir Mahenna*, the prince of Bendervigk, on the Persian Gulf, to demand tribute from him; but he in return cut off the ambassadors' beards. *Kerim Khan* was so enraged at this, that he went the next year with a large army to make war upon this prince, and took the city, and almost the whole of his territory, to avenge the insult" (Keil, p.375).

B. 2 Samuel 10:6-14: War With the Ammonites and Syrians.

1. Verses 6-7: "And when the children of Ammon saw that they stank before David, the children of Ammon sent and hired the Syrians of Bethrehob, and the Syrians of Zoba, twenty thousand footmen, and of king Maacah a thousand men, and of Ishtob twelve thousand men. And when David heard of *it*, he sent Joab, and all the host of the mighty men."
 - a. Perceiving that David would not accept this insult without taking action, they proceeded to procure a mercenary army from among the Syrians. The total number of these warriors was 33,000. To this number the Ammonites could field a large army from their own ranks.
 - b. 1 Chronicles 19:6-7: "And when the children of Ammon saw that they had made themselves odious to David, Hanun and the children of Ammon sent a thousand talents of silver to hire them chariots and horsemen out of Mesopotamia, and out of Syriamaachah, and out of Zobah. So they hired thirty and two thousand chariots, and the king of Maachah and his people; who came and pitched before Medeba. And the children of Ammon gathered themselves together from their cities, and came to battle."
 - c. David sent Joab, the general of the Israelite army, with all of his mighty men, to invade Ammon, and punish the insult. More was involved than the insult to the messengers David had sent. What the Ammonites had done was cast an aspersion upon Israel's God.
 2. Verse 8: "And the children of Ammon came out, and put the battle in array at the entering in of the gate: and the Syrians of Zoba, and of Rehob, and Ishtob, and Maacah, *were* by themselves in the field."
 - a. "The deployment of the hostile forces here presented a superlative challenge to Joab. Rabbah, presently Amman, the capital city of Jordan and a modern city of over half a million people is the same place called Philadelphia in the NT. It was a strongly fortified city; and David's capture of it was no easy undertaking" (Coffman, p.127). [This is not the Philadelphia of Revelation 3].
 - b. The Ammonites put their own army in the field outside the gates of their city; the Syrians were by themselves in the field. The stage now was set for a great battle.
 3. Verses 9-12: "When Joab saw that the front of the battle was against him before and behind, he chose of all the choice *men* of Israel, and put *them* in array against the Syrians: And the rest of the people he delivered into the hand of Abishai his brother, that he might put *them* in array against the children of Ammon. And he said, If the Syrians be too strong for me, then thou shalt help me: but if the children of Ammon be too strong for thee, then I will come and help thee. Be of good courage, and let us play the men for our people, and for the cities of our God: and the LORD do that which seemeth him good."
 - a. Joab found himself in a predicament. The Syrians were behind him and the Ammonites were to his front. He selected the mighty men, the ones who had earned special respect for their military skill,
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to follow him in doing battle with the Syrians; he placed the remainder of his army under the control of his brother Abishai to keep the Ammonites at bay.

- b. “Consequently the attack was not to be made upon both the armies of the enemy simultaneously; but Joab proposed to attack the Aramaeans (Syrians) first, cf. ver.13), and Abishai was merely to keep the Ammonites in check, though there was still a possibility that the two bodies of the enemy might make their attack simultaneously” (Keil, p.379).
 - c. The plan of battle was simple: if the Syrians proved to be too strong for Joab, Abishai was to help him; if the Ammonites were too strong for Abishai, Joab would come to his aid.
 - d. Despite the dangerous situation of being hemmed-in and evidently outnumbered, Joab encouraged his brother and the soldiers to be of good courage. They were fighting for the cities of their nation, and could hope for the help of God.
4. Verses 13-14: “And Joab drew nigh, and the people that *were* with him, unto the battle against the Syrians: and they fled before him. And when the children of Ammon saw that the Syrians were fled, then fled they also before Abishai, and entered into the city. So Joab returned from the children of Ammon, and came to Jerusalem.”
- a. Joab advanced against the Syrians, and the enemy fled the field. Mercenaries are not known for their dedication to the cause; they fight for money, not to defend their own territory or families. It appears that the battle was not long; in fact, the Syrians may have fled at the approach of Joab.
 - b. Joab used good judgment in attacking the mercenary army first. He knew that they would not hold their position in the face of a determined assault. When the Syrians fled, the Ammonites took flight into the city. Panic can spread quickly on the battlefield.

C. 2 Samuel 10:15-19: David Battles Hadarezer’s Army.

1. Verses 15-16: “And when the Syrians saw that they were smitten before Israel, they gathered themselves together. And Hadarezer sent, and brought out the Syrians that *were* beyond the river: and they came to Helam; and Shobach the captain of the host of Hadarezer *went* before them.”
 - a. “The Aramaeans, however, gathered together again after the first defeat, to continue the war; and Hadarezer, the most powerful of the Aramean kings, sent messengers to Mesopotamia, and summoned it to war. It is very evident, not only from the words ‘he sent and brought out Aram, which was beyond the river,’ but also from the fact that Shobach, Hadarezer’s general (*Shophac* according to the Chronicles), was at the head of the Mesopotamian troops, that the Mesopotamian troops who were summoned to help were under the supreme rule of Hadarezer” (Keil, p.379).
 - b. The complexion of the war had now changed. Hadarezer’s ire had been raised, and the national pride of the Syrians had been injured. A full-scale engagement was in the offing.
 2. Verse 17: “And when it was told David, he gathered all Israel together, and passed over Jordan, and came to Helam. And the Syrians set themselves in array against David, and fought with him.”
 - a. When David learned of the military preparations being made by the Syrians, he gathered the entire Israelite fighting men together.
 - b. The Israelites crossed over Jordan, and came to Helam. The two armies were arrayed against each other and the battle was joined. The outcome of the battle could affect the destiny of God’s people and the success or failure of God’s eternal plan.
 3. Verses 18-19: “And the Syrians fled before Israel; and David slew *the men of* seven hundred chariots of the Syrians, and forty thousand horsemen, and smote Shobach the captain of their host, who died there. And when all the kings *that were* servants to Hadarezer saw that they were smitten before Israel, they made peace with Israel, and served them. So the Syrians feared to help the children of Ammon any more.”
 - a. The Syrians fought, but were defeated by Israel. No details of the actual battle are given, only the
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result: David routed the enemy, they fled from the battlefield.

- b. The men assigned to 700 chariots were slain; the account in 1 Chronicles 19:18 places the number of men at 7,000. There were also 40,000 other enemy soldiers who were slain. Significantly, the general of the Syrian army was also killed. He is called *Hadarezer* in 2 Samuel 10, while he is known as *Shophrac* in 1 Chronicles 19.
 - c. The defeat caused the Syrians to make peace with Israel, and to serve them; they feared to come to the aid of the Ammonites any more.
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2 SAMUEL 11

A. 2 Samuel 11:1-5: David's Sin With Bathsheba.

1. Verse 1: "And it came to pass, after the year was expired, at the time when kings go forth *to battle*, that David sent Joab, and his servants with him, and all Israel; and they destroyed the children of Ammon, and besieged Rabbah. But David tarried still at Jerusalem."
 - a. When the time of the year returned, the usual season when the warring nations met in battle, David dispatched Joab and the Israelite army to besiege Rabbah, the capital city of the Ammonites.
 - 1) Earlier, in chapter 10, Joab had defeated the Syrians who came to the aid of the Ammonites; while the Syrians were being routed, the Ammonites took refuge in their city (10:9-14).
 - 2) Our present verse gives the abbreviated report of how this city was taken by Israel. The Israelites had waited until after the war against the Syrians was over before dealing with the Ammonites. Apparently it was the next fighting season before they commenced the siege which ultimately led to the capture of Rabbah.
 - b. The parallel account is in 1 Chronicles 20:1: "And it came to pass, that after the year was expired, at the time that kings go out *to battle*, Joab led forth the power of the army, and wasted the country of the children of Ammon, and came and besieged Rabbah. But David tarried at Jerusalem. And Joab smote Rabbah, and destroyed it."
 - c. David remained in Jerusalem during the siege of Rabbah. The events of this chapter took place while the siege was in progress. This verse gives a summary report of the entire operation, with the verses that follow providing many of the details of David's private activities in Jerusalem, while the siege was in underway.
 2. Verse 2: "And it came to pass in an eveningtide, that David arose from off his bed, and walked upon the roof of the king's house: and from the roof he saw a woman washing herself; and the woman *was* very beautiful to look upon."
 - a. The houses of Palestine in those ancient days were flat-roofed. It was common for the people to sleep on the roof; they also spent time there in the evening during the hot season. The cooling breeze would have been very refreshing.
 - b. On this occasion, late in the afternoon, David was walking on the roof of his palace. He had been taking an afternoon nap, a common practice during the heat of the day. From his rooftop, in his full view, probably in an adjacent courtyard, he could see a beautiful woman bathing. There was still enough daylight for him to see, or else her bathing area was lighted.
 - c. Why did she take a bath in the open? Perhaps she had no inkling that anyone would be looking. She knew whose palace was next door; could it be that she thought the king was with his army? Or could it be that she intended to be seen by the king? When he invited, she came to him without any sign of hesitation.
 - d. Why was David interested in another woman, since he had several wives? He also had concubines (2 Sam. 5:13). What he did in this chapter put a black mark on his record.
 - 1) Until this time, he had been blessed by the Lord with many victories and successes; after this chapter, he had many tragedies and defeats.
 - 2) It was before the dark deeds of this chapter that he had been called a man after's God's own heart. "And when he had removed him, he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the *son* of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will" (Acts 13:22). He was not called that in the Scriptures after these events.
 3. Verse 3: "And David sent and inquired after the woman. And *one* said, *Is* not this Bathsheba, the daugh-
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ter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?"

- a. The king asked the identity of this woman. He was told that she was Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam and the wife of Uriah the Hittite. She is called "Bathshua" in 1 Chronicles 3:5: "And these were born unto him in Jerusalem; Shimea, and Shobab, and Nathan, and Solomon, four, of Bathshua the daughter of Ammiel." Eliam also bears another name here, or another spelling. Other names and variant spellings of the same names are common. Eliam was one of David's chief men (2 Sam. 23:34).
 - b. Why was she married to a Hittite? Evidently Uriah had become a proselyte to the Israelite religion. David's lust caused him to ignore the consequences of his scheme for Uriah; it had to be gratified without regard to consequences.
 - c. Sexual desires must be contained, for once they are allowed free rein, they will lead the individual into greater and greater excesses. "Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death" (Jas. 1:15).
4. Verse 4: "And David sent messengers, and took her; and she came in unto him, and he lay with her; for she was purified from her uncleanness: and she returned unto her house."
- a. David sent a message to her that she come to him. There is no indication of any unwillingness or of hesitation in her response. She was a willing partner in the sin. "He lay with her," a euphemism for the act; it is used to modestly describe what was done. Modern people use euphemistic expressions to soften the ugliness of certain sins: being gay; having an affair; an alternate lifestyle.
 - b. But David's guilt was greater, since he was in a position to know more. Also, he had received many direct benefits from the Lord. His knowledge and gratitude should have kept him from committing this spiritual crime. Joseph, who lived before the Mosaic Law was given, declined the advances of a sinful woman:
 - c. "There is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back any thing from me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" (Gen. 39:9). But David initiated the advances in his case. Joseph lived and died prior to the giving of the Ten Commandments. The moral code taught from the beginning had been passed down through Seth and his descendants, but was ignored after the descendants of Cain and those of Seth intermarried; the apostasy that grew out of this produced the Great Flood. The moral code continued through Noah and his family.
 - d. God took direct action to bring punishment upon David for his guilt; Bathsheba was not punished in this way. The punishment David suffered also had its effects on other people. We reap what we sow, we reap more than we sow, we reap for longer than we sow, and others reap from our sowing. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting" (Gal. 6:7-8).
 - e. The obvious meaning of the last part of the verse is a reference to the monthly menstrual cycle. Adam Clarke observed that the time immediately after this cycle "is the time in which women are most apt to conceive" (p.335).
 - f. Was their "affair" only a one-time event, or did it continue longer? Nothing is said about any other occasion.
5. Verse 5: "And the woman conceived, and sent and told David, and said, I *am* with child."
- a. The woman conceived. She sent word of her condition to David. A "complication" had arisen; what shall be done about it? This was a major problem. The king would be implicated if the truth got out. What would Uriah do if he should learn of the escapade?
 - b. Bathsheba placed the responsibility for taking action directly on David. Did she have any idea what
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he might do? She mourned when she learned of Uriah's death, but showed no hesitation in becoming David's wife. "And when the wife of Uriah heard that Uriah her husband was dead, she mourned for her husband. And when the mourning was past, David sent and fetched her to his house, and she became his wife, and bare him a son. But the thing that David had done displeased the LORD" (2 Sam. 11:26-27).

B. 2 Samuel 11:6-13: Uriah's Dedication to His Compatriots.

1. Verses 6-7: "And David sent to Joab, *saying*, Send me Uriah the Hittite. And Joab sent Uriah to David. And when Uriah was come unto him, David demanded *of him* how Joab did, and how the people did, and how the war prospered."
 - a. David decided on a simple plan. He would cover up his guilt by getting Uriah to believe he was the father of the baby. He sent word to Joab for him to have Uriah come to him.
 - b. When Uriah arrived, David pretended to be interested in the siege of Rabbah, so he asked how the soldiers were doing and how the war was progressing. This was all a sham to get Uriah back home for a short visit with his wife.
 2. Verses 8-9: "And David said to Uriah, Go down to thy house, and wash thy feet. And Uriah departed out of the king's house, and there followed him a mess *of meat* from the king. But Uriah slept at the door of the king's house with all the servants of his lord, and went not down to his house."
 - a. David directed Uriah to go to his house and wash his feet. In other words, he was to go home for a visit, and wash away the dust from his feet; he was to take some time off from the war to pursue more enjoyable activities. Washing the feet was a common custom when one entered a house after working in the field or completing a journey.
 - b. When Uriah had left, David sent some food for Uriah, intending that he should eat at home a meal prepared by the king's servants.
 - c. Uriah was more honorable than David was in this episode. He refused to go home and enjoy all its comfort. He slept in the place where the servants of the king slept. Quarters were provided for the servants to sleep; perhaps rooms were available for messengers and others who were at the palace on the king's business. There is no indication that Uriah suspected any wrongdoing.
 3. Verses 10-11: "And when they had told David, *saying*, Uriah went not down unto his house, David said unto Uriah, *Camest thou not from thy journey? why then didst thou not go down unto thine house?* And Uriah said unto David, The ark, and Israel, and Judah, abide in tents; and my lord Joab, and the servants of my lord, are encamped in the open fields; shall I then go into mine house, to eat and to drink, and to lie with my wife? *as thou livest, and as thy soul liveth, I will not do this thing.*"
 - a. David's servants reported to him that Uriah had not gone home as was expected. The problem was not resolved as easily as the king supposed. Some other scheme must be devised.
 - b. The king called Uriah before him again, demanding to know why he had not gone to his house. He had been away from home for some considerable amount of time; why did you not go home? The king's will was for him to go home. Under ordinary circumstances, David's wishes would have been taken by Uriah as a command.
 - c. Uriah's reply shows the great honor he possessed. The ark of God abides in a tent; the people of Israel live in tents; the people of the tribe of Judah, David's tribe, also lived in tents; Joab the king's general lived in a tent; the soldiers of the king were encamped in open fields. His conscience and his honor would not permit him to take his ease at home, to eat and to drink, and to lie with his wife, while all these others were living exposed to discomforts and inconveniences. This was his avowed decision "as long as thy soul liveth."
 4. Verses 12-13: "And David said to Uriah, Tarry here to day also, and to morrow I will let thee depart. So
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Uriah abode in Jerusalem that day, and the morrow. And when David had called him, he did eat and drink before him; and he made him drunk: and at even he went out to lie on his bed with the servants of his lord, but went not down to his house.”

- a. David then decided on another stratagem. He told Uriah to remain in Jerusalem through the next day, and then he would be permitted to rejoin the army.
- b. The king invited Uriah to eat with him; he ate and drank, and became drunken. But his drunken state was not enough to get him to go against his commitment. The highest faculties of the mind are the first affected by alcohol: the judgment, moral standards, etc. But Uriah refused to go to his house.

C. 2 Samuel 11:14-21: Uriah is Slain According to David’s Plan.

1. Verses 14-15: “And it came to pass in the morning, that David wrote a letter to Joab, and sent *it* by the hand of Uriah. And he wrote in the letter, saying, Set ye Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle, and retire ye from him, that he may be smitten, and die.”
 - a. David could not bring himself, of course, to murder Uriah by direct means. All of his schemes to this point had failed, so the only other course seemed to be to kill him. His plan was unfolded in a letter he wrote to Joab. Uriah carried the letter which contained the evil plan which would lead to his death! What a despicable action on the part of David!
 - b. Joab was instructed to place Uriah in the forefront of the army, in the hottest part of the battle scene. The others with him were to be withdrawn, leaving Uriah to face the enemy alone. He was sure to be slain. W.J. Deane relates the following, which is quoted by Coffman, p.94: "The massive walls [of Rabbah—bw], some of which remain in ruins, rise from the precipitous sides of the cliff....I bent over them and looked sheer down about three hundred feet into one wady, and four hundred feet into the other. I did not wonder at its having occurred to King David that the leader of a charge against these ramparts would have met with certain death, consequently assigning the position to Uriah!" [cf. 2 Sam. 11].
 - c. Although David did not take a direct hand in murdering Uriah, he nevertheless was responsible for that crime; David killed Uriah by using the Ammonites. “But David’s soul was so beclouded by the wish to keep clear of the consequences of his sin in the eyes of the world, that he did not feel the sting....David’s sin was to be brought to light to his deep humiliation” (Keil, p.385).
2. Verses 16-17: “And it came to pass, when Joab observed the city, that he assigned Uriah unto a place where he knew that valiant men *were*. And the men of the city went out, and fought with Joab: and there fell *some* of the people of the servants of David; and Uriah the Hittite died also.”
 - a. Joab surveyed the city, and learned where the best Ammonite warriors were stationed; it was at this point that he launched the attack, with Uriah in the forefront.
 - b. The valiant soldiers defending that point of the city came forth, the result of which was that several of Israel’s soldiers were slain, including Uriah. David’s plan worked; the “problem” was resolved.
 - c. Uriah died without knowing the scheme by which his master orchestrated his death. Presumably, he has learned of this evil plan after entering the Hadean realm.
3. Verses 18-21: “Then Joab sent and told David all the things concerning the war; And charged the messenger, saying, When thou hast made an end of telling the matters of the war unto the king, And if so be that the king's wrath arise, and he say unto thee, Wherefore approached ye so nigh unto the city when ye did fight? knew ye not that they would shoot from the wall? Who smote Abimelech the son of Jerubbesheth? did not a woman cast a piece of a millstone upon him from the wall, that he died in Thebez? why went ye nigh the wall? then say thou, Thy servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also.”
 - a. “The report needs no comment. It is sufficient to say that it was worthy of the quarter from which it came; and in possessing so terrible a secret as the premeditated murder of Uriah, the wily Joab

perceived his advantage, not only for an understanding on account of any military errors he might have committed, but for all other delinquencies” (JFB).

- b. “Joab now performs another act in this iniquitous drama, and goes through the form of sending the king a report of the disaster which had followed upon his approaching too near the walls. With well-feigned hypocrisy, he makes the messenger believe that David will be displeased at the loss of life, and will blame him for his want of caution.
 - 1) “But it is curious that the messenger is instructed to mention the death of Uriah only after the king has given utterance to his anger. Possibly the meaning of this is that the loss of one so high in rank, and the king's near neighbour, is so serious a matter that it must be gradually broken to him, lest his indignation at Joab should be too violent. Probably there was also the suggestion that Uriah had been himself too rash, and had incurred his fate by his own fault.
 - 2) “The reference to the fate of Abimelech (Judg 9:53) proves that the history of the times of the judges was generally known. Very probably not only records of the several events existed, but the Book of Judges was already written.
 - 3) “In Samuel's schools the youth of Israel were instructed in the annals of their country, and men like Nathan and Gad, and others who aided Samuel in his work, would be sure quickly to turn their attention to the orderly arrangement and digest of the records in their possession” [Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 2001 by Biblesoft].
- c. “Joab assumed that David might possibly be angry at what had occurred, or at any rate that he might express his displeasure at the fact that Joab had sacrificed a number of warriors by imprudently approaching close to the wall: he therefore instructed the messenger, if such should be the case, to announce Uriah's death to the king, for the purpose of mitigating his wrath” (Keil, p.386).
- d. “It is likely that Joab had by some indiscretion suffered loss about this time; and he contrived to get rid of the odium by connecting the transaction with the death of Uriah, which he knew would be so pleasing to the king” (Clarke, p.336).
- e. The reference to Abimelech, who was killed when a woman cast down a piece of a millstone, was reported in Judges 9:52-53: "And Abimelech came unto the tower, and fought against it, and went hard unto the door of the tower to burn it with fire. And a certain woman cast a piece of a millstone upon Abimelech's head, and all to brake his skull."

D. 2 Samuel 11:22-25: David Receives the Report of Uriah's Death.

1. Verses 22-24: “So the messenger went, and came and showed David all that Joab had sent him for. And the messenger said unto David, Surely the men prevailed against us, and came out unto us into the field, and we were upon them even unto the entering of the gate. And the shooters shot from off the wall upon thy servants; and *some* of the king's servants be dead, and thy servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also.”
 - a. Joab's messenger came to Jerusalem, and delivered the information to David. He reported that the enemy came out of the city, and attacked the Israelites, but that they had been able to drive them back into the city. In the process of accomplishing this, archers on the wall were able to kill some of the Israelites, including Uriah.
 - b. “The messenger brought to David all the information with which Joab had charged him...but he so far condensed it as to mention Uriah's death at the same time. ‘When the men (of Rabbah) became strong against us, and came out to us into the field, we prevailed against them even to the gate, the archers shot at thy servants down from the wall, so that some of the servants of the king died, and thy servant Uriah the Hethite is dead also’” (Keil, p.387).
 2. Verse 25: “Then David said unto the messenger, Thus shalt thou say unto Joab, Let not this thing displease thee, for the sword devoureth one as well as another: make thy battle more strong against the city, and overthrow it: and encourage thou him.”
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- a. David showed hypocrisy by his reply. He stated that in war, no one is immune to injury, and that the death of these men was a matter of chance. Actually, what happened was by his own contrivance.
 - b. On the surface of the message, David consoled Joab with the battle losses. He encouraged Joab to be strong, and overthrow the city. Verse one, giving a preview of the war's outcome, has already reported that Rabbah fell to Israel.
3. Verses 26-27: "And when the wife of Uriah heard that Uriah her husband was dead, she mourned for her husband. And when the mourning was past, David sent and fetched her to his house, and she became his wife, and bare him a son. But the thing that David had done displeased the LORD."
- a. When the report came to Bathsheba, she mourned for her dead husband. Whether her tears were real or pretended, we may not know; we have no definite reason to doubt her sincerity, however.
 - b. When her mourning was over, David took her into his house as his wife. "The ordinary mourning of the Israelites lasted seven days (Gen. 50:10; 1 Sam. 21:13)" (Keil, p.387). She bore the child conceived in adultery.
 - c. "She...bare him a son. This would be the child whose death is recorded in the next chapter. Afterwards she bare David four sons (1 Chron 3:5), of whom one was Solomon, and another Nathan, the ancestor of our Lord. The thing... displeased the Lord. It was probably during the time of David's victories that success began to work in him its usual results.
 - 1) "Too commonly men who have conquered kingdoms have been vanquished by their own strong passions; and David had always evinced a keen appetite for sensuous pleasures. Even at Hebron he had multiplied unto himself wives, and now, raised by repeated victory to be the lord of a vast empire, he ceased to be 'base in his own sight'(2 Sam 6:22), and lost his self control.
 - 2) "And, as was to be expected in a man of such strong qualities, his fall was terrible. But this declaration of the inspired narrator is not made solely for ethical reasons, but is the key to all that follows up to the end of ch. 20. In this chapter we have had the history of David's sin; a year's respite succeeds, as if God would wait and see whether the sinner's own conscience would waken up, and bring him to repentance; but it slumbers on.
 - 3) "Then comes the message of reproof, followed by earnest penitence, and severe punishment. It was, perhaps, during this year of hardened persistence in crime that Amnon and his cousin Jonadab also gave the reins to their passions, and prepared the way for the first of the series of crimes that polluted David's home.
 - 4) "An early repentance might have saved the son; but the absence of paternal discipline, the loss of respect for his father, and the evil influence of that father's bad example, all urged on the son to the commission of his abominable crime" [Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 2001 by BibleSoft].
 - d. 2 Samuel 6:22: "And I will yet be more vile than thus, and will be base in mine own sight: and of the maidservants which thou hast spoken of, of them shall I be had in honour."
 - e. The sorry conduct of David was displeasing to God.
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2 SAMUEL 12

A. 2 Samuel 12:1-6: Nathan's Parable.

1. Verse 1: "And the LORD sent Nathan unto David. And he came unto him, and said unto him, There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor."
 - a. Parables were related by inspired men for definite purposes.
 - 1) To reveal truth in a distinct and powerful manner. "And he said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; And should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come" (Mark 4:26-29).
 - 2) To make a truth known so clearly and emphatically that it would be fastened tightly to the heart of men. The parable of the Good Samaritan is an example of this (Luke 10:30-37).
 - 3) To conceal the truth from those who would abuse it if they were to learn it.
 - a) Matthew 11:25: "At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes."
 - b) Matthew 13:13-17: "Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them."
 - 4) To cause men to acknowledge the truth before they realized it applied to them. The present story is an outstanding example of this.
 - b. The Lord sent Nathan the prophet to David to deliver this parable to the king; he obviously had shown the prophet what David had done, and gave him the parable as the means of convincing the monarch of his guilt.
 - c. The parable concerned two men who lived at the same place; one was rich and the other was poor. This was a classic case of parabolic material. The situation presented was something that could or did occur in the common affairs of life.
2. Verses 2-3: "The rich *man* had exceeding many flocks and herds: But the poor *man* had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up: and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter."
 - a. The rich man had plenty of this world's goods, including many flocks and herds. He had everything he needed, but was still grasping for more; he did not want to slaughter any of his animals.
 - b. The poor man had only one little ewe lamb; he had no great herds or flocks. The lamb was a family pet; it had grown up with his own family. It partook of the owner's food and drink; it often lay on the poor man's lap; it was treated as a daughter by the man.
 - c. "The use of parables is a favourite style of speaking amongst Oriental people, especially in the conveyance of unwelcome truth. This exquisitely pathetic parable was founded on a common custom of

pastoral people who have pet lambs, which they bring up with their children, and which they address in terms of endearment. The atrocity of the real, however, far exceeded that of the fictitious offence” (JFB, p.243).

3. Verse 4: “And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him; but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him.”
 - a. A traveler stopped at the rich man’s house. The host did not want to take an animal from his own herds or flocks to feed the stranger, so he took the poor man’s ewe lamb, killed and dressed it, and fed it to his visitor.
 - b. This simple story would engender anger in anyone who was compassionate toward the poor. “It was skillfully designed to arouse the sympathy of the hearer for the wronged poor man as well as angry contempt for the rich man who robbed him” (Coffman, p.151).
4. Verses 5-6: “And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, *As* the LORD liveth, the man that hath done this *thing* shall surely die: And he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity.”
 - a. David responded with great anger against the offender. He pronounced the death sentence upon this cold-hearted lamb-stealer, and declared he would be forced to repay the poor man fourfold. This latter penalty was the one imposed by the law. "If a man shall steal an ox, or a sheep, and kill it, or sell it; he shall restore five oxen for an ox, and four sheep for a sheep" (Ex. 22:1).
 - b. His quick declaration that the offender would die went beyond the penalty prescribed by the law. It did not classify the theft and slaughter of the lamb as a capital offense.
 - c. “The sympathies of the king had been deeply enlisted, his indignation aroused, but his conscience was still asleep; and at the time when he was most fatally indulgent to his own sins, he was most ready to condemn the delinquencies and errors of others” (JFB). It is much easier for most of us to see the mistakes of others than those we make ourselves. In proofreading a typewritten paper, it is more difficult for the author to discover the mistyped words than for one who is reading the information for the first time.
 - d. The rich man had no pity; he had no compassion for the poor man. He was unconcerned about the effect of his theft on the poor man’s children. But David was even more callous toward those who suffered indirectly from his offense. David cared nothing about the effect on Bathsheba, on Uriah, on Joab whom he directed to have Uriah slain in battle, or upon the other men who died in the same ill-fated operation.

B. 2 Samuel 12:7-14: “Thou Art the Man.”

1. Verse 7: “And Nathan said to David, Thou *art* the man. Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul.”
 - a. David had unwittingly convicted himself of his own spiritual crimes. Nathan declared to the king that he was the guilty party. He had not stolen and slaughtered a poor man’s lamb, but he had done an even more heinous crime. He had taken another man’s wife.
 - b. Through Nathan, God stated that he had anointed David to be king of Israel, and had delivered him from the treacherous hand of Saul. This was a reminder to him of the great things which God had done for him; his great successes were not due to his own skill and power.
 - 1) Many men fall victim to their own success, thinking that their prowess has provided it; but without God’s assistance, what success could any man have?
 - 2) Daniel 4:30-32: "The king spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty? While the word *was*

- in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, *saying*, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from thee. And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling *shall be* with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will."
2. Verse 8: "And I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah; and if *that had been* too little, I would moreover have given unto thee such and such things."
 - a. Continuing his statement of what he had done for David, the Lord said that he had given to him the houses and wives that pertained to Saul. Not only that, but he was willing to deliver into David's hands many other successes and property.
 - b. "The phraseology means nothing more than that God, in his providence, had given David, as king of Israel, everything that was Saul's. The history furnishes conclusive evidence that he never actually married any of the wives of Saul. But the harem of the preceding king belongs, according to Oriental notions, as a part of the regalia, to his successor..." (JFB, p.243). Jamieson's statement may be too broad in regards to Saul's wives.
 - c. A man is often his own worst enemy. David did to himself what others had been unable to do. His sin invited the wrath of God, which indeed was poured out upon him with sorrowful effect. If Israel had faithfully followed the Lord after leaving Egypt, they would have expeditiously entered Canaan. If they had obeyed his will in prosecuting the war with the Canaanites, they would have avoided much trouble. If David had continued to obey the Lord, sin and its consequences would not have occurred, sparing him, his family, and his kingdom great trouble and pain.
 3. Verse 9: "Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the LORD, to do evil in his sight? thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife *to be* thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon."
 - a. The charge and specifications of God's case against David are stated here. David had been guilty of despising the Lord's commandment. If the king had been asked whether he had despised God's word, doubtless he would have denied the charge. But with the specification following close on the heels of the charge, David's guilt was firmly established. He could not deny his guilt.
 - b. He had caused Uriah the Hittite to be slain with the sword of the Ammonites; he had taken Uriah's wife as if she were his own. These two specific acts were violations of God's word; his willingness to shun these prohibitions showed his attitude toward God's will at the time. His lust overcame his love and faith; he violated the law; he committed sin.
 - c. David is accused of murdering Uriah. He had not slain him directly and personally; but what one does through the agency of another, he does himself.
 - d. In contrast to this sorry case of disobedience on David's part, consider the wonderful attitude manifested by Job. "Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary *food*" (Job 23:12).
 4. Verse 10: "Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house; because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife."
 - a. The first penalty David must pay is to face a lifetime of violence within his own family. The reason for the penalty is "because thou hast despised me."
 - b. If we trample underfoot the requirement of God, we show our disdain for God's person. God cannot be separated from his word. He operates through his revealed will. To ignore it, and do what pleases ourselves, is to show despite toward God. "Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the
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- covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?" (Heb. 10:29).
- c. Again, the specification is the fact that he had taken the wife of Uriah. There was nothing wrong with his marrying her after Uriah was dead [under these Old Testament circumstances]. What was wrong was the fact that he took her as though she were his wife before Uriah died. David was guilty of adultery (Ex. 20:14).
5. Verse 11: "Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give *them* unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun."
- a. The first penalty prescribed by the Lord in punishment of his sins was that violence would come upon him from within his own house (verse 10); this was done when his son Absalom raised an insurrection against him (2 Sam. 15). Also, three of his sons were to be slain (Amnon, Absalom, and Adonijah). This verse likewise specifies the trouble he would face which was to arise from his own family.
 - b. The second penalty listed here is that some one would take his wives, and lie with them in the sight of the sun. "And Ahithophel said unto Absalom, Go in unto thy father's concubines, which he hath left to keep the house; and all Israel shall hear that thou art abhorred of thy father: then shall the hands of all that *are* with thee be strong. So they spread Absalom a tent upon the top of the house; and Absalom went in unto his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel" (2 Sam. 16:21-22).
6. Verse 12: "For thou didst *it* secretly: but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun."
- a. David did his contemptible sins under the cover of secrecy and darkness, but he could not hide them from the eyes of God.
 - 1) Proverbs 15:3: "The eyes of the LORD *are* in every place, beholding the evil and the good."
 - 2) Hebrews 4:13: "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things *are* naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do."
 - b. God's eyesight had not diminished with the passing of the millennia! He will bring to light everything done by men and hidden from other men; this he will do in the Judgment.
 - 1) Ecclesiastes 12:14: "For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether *it be* good, or whether *it be* evil."
 - 2) 1 Timothy 5:24-25: "Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some *men* they follow after. Likewise also the good works *of some* are manifest beforehand; and they that are otherwise cannot be hid."
7. Verses 13-14: "And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the LORD. And Nathan said unto David, The LORD also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die. Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also *that is* born unto thee shall surely die."
- a. David was unable to cover up his sin; he now knew that his evil deeds were exposed; he could not hide from the Almighty! Being able to feel godly sorrow, he repented, confessing his sin. This is a highly commendable disposition. Though he was a king, yet he was penitent.
 - b. Nathan revealed to David that the Lord had "put away thy sin." The Mosaic Law did not have the means of removing the guilt of sin (Heb. 10:1-4). Only the blood of Christ has that capability (1 Pet. 1:18-19). The benefits of the blood of Christ reached backward in time to cover the guilt of those in previous ages who were obedient to God; it reaches forward in time to cover the guilt of the obedient who live on this side of the cross.
 - 1) Romans 3:25: "Whom God hath set forth *to be* a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God."
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- 2) Hebrews 9:15: "And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions *that were* under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance."
- 3) The forgiveness David and others back then received was "on credit"—based on the proposition that Christ would later die for the sins of the world.
- c. David's spiritual crimes had great evil influence. It gave the enemies of the Lord an occasion to speak evil of God. When a child of God commits sin, and the transgression is known by the world, it gives occasion to the enemies of the Lord to rail against him. The sinful world gleefully uses such occasions to ridicule the Bible, the Lord's church, and Christianity in general.
- d. The third penalty David would face was the death of the child conceived in adultery. The baby had already been born, so a period of time had elapsed since Uriah was slain. David had quickly married Bathsheba, apparently hiding from the world the fact that she was already with child at the time of the marriage.
 - 1) Did David's angry declaration, that the rich man (in Nathan's story) would be put to death, have anything to do with the death of the innocent child? God told him through the prophet that his own life would not be required. Whether David's angry words had a bearing on this or not, we are not privileged to know, but we can see in these events that sin carries a penalty; to some degree at some time or another, sin has its evil effects, on the guilty party and in many cases on some who are innocent.
 - 2) This sinful escapade into which David had plunged must be punished, but God had made certain long-term promises to be fulfilled through David. It was essential that David survive this wicked experience, but there were penalties which would be imposed on him; the death of the innocent child was one of these punishments.

C. 2 Samuel 12:15-23: The Death of David's Son.

1. Verse 15: "And Nathan departed unto his house. And the LORD struck the child that Uriah's wife bare unto David, and it was very sick."
 - a. "The first visible chastisement inflicted on David appeared on the person of that child which was the evidence and monument of his guilt" (JFB, p.244). We are not told exactly how the Lord struck the child with the illness; we are not told the nature of the illness, only that it was to be fatal.
 - b. The child may have contracted some disease through some outwardly natural process. Whatever the means, God foretold what was to happen, and took responsibility for sending the fatal affliction. We are to remember, of course, that it was David's sin that brought about the whole problem.
 2. Verses 16-17: "David therefore besought God for the child; and David fasted, and went in, and lay all night upon the earth. And the elders of his house arose, *and went* to him, to raise him up from the earth: but he would not, neither did he eat bread with them."
 - a. The king prayed to the Lord in behalf of the child. He fasted and prayed, sitting on the ground. He was inside his house during this time, so there was some place or means which enabled him to enter the usual practice of lamenting. When the Hebrews were extremely agitated, they sat in sackcloth and ashes (or dirt) in their grief.
 - b. That David was following this practice is suggested by the fact that when this period of mourning was over, he arose and washed himself and changed his clothes (verse 20).
 - c. The "elders of his house" tried to persuade him to eat, but he would not. These elders may have been the older men among his servants. However, it could possibly be some of the leading men among his kinsmen.
 - d. It has long been thought that this period of time was the occasion when David penned Psalms 32, 51,
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and 103.

3. Verse 18: “And it came to pass on the seventh day, that the child died. And the servants of David feared to tell him that the child was dead: for they said, Behold, while the child was yet alive, we spake unto him, and he would not hearken unto our voice: how will he then vex himself, if we tell him that the child is dead?”
 - a. On the seventh day of the illness, the child died. His servants were worried about how they could tell him of the death. If he mourned so much while the child was alive, how will he react when he learns the child is dead?
 - b. They had pleaded with him to take food during these seven days, but he would not. They figured that the report of the child’s death would likely kill their master.
4. Verses 19-20: “But when David saw that his servants whispered, David perceived that the child was dead: therefore David said unto his servants, Is the child dead? And they said, He is dead. Then David arose from the earth, and washed, and anointed *himself*, and changed his apparel, and came into the house of the LORD, and worshipped: then he came to his own house; and when he required, they set bread before him, and he did eat.”
 - a. David saw that his servants were whispering among themselves, which indicated to him that the child must have died. He asked them whether this was so; they answered him truthfully and openly.
 - b. On learning of the baby’s death, David arose, washed, anointed himself, and changed his clothing. He entered into the house of the Lord, and worshipped. Afterwards, he returned to his own home, asked for food, and ate.
5. Verse 21: “Then said his servants unto him, What thing *is* this that thou hast done? thou didst fast and weep for the child, *while it was* alive; but when the child was dead, thou didst rise and eat bread.”
 - a. His conduct perplexed his servants. They asked why he had done this. The usual practice was for the one suffering the loss of a loved one to mourn after the individual had died.
 - b. David’s conduct was correct. When death comes to a loved one, life must continue for the living. The loss may be extremely great, but the world does not end with the death of one person.
6. Verses 22-23: “And he said, While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept: for I said, Who can tell *whether* GOD will be gracious to me, that the child may live? But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.”
 - a. David explained to his servants why he had acted as he did. While the child was still alive, there was the possibility that God would hear his pleas in its behalf, and would allow it to live. God is gracious and good, and can be entreated.
 - b. In this case, however, it was God’s will that the child should die. David fasted and prayed beforehand that the child might live, but now that he had died, it was no longer proper for him to make this plea. He could not expect God to raise the child from the dead.
 - c. The child would not return to David, but the king said he would go to him. This statement teaches the reunion of the redeemed in the next world. This fact could not be accurately affirmed unless each individual retains his identity and recognition is possible. "And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 8:11).

D. 2 Samuel 12:24-25: Solomon is Born.

1. Verse 24: “And David comforted Bathsheba his wife, and went in unto her, and lay with her: and she bare a son, and he called his name Solomon: and the LORD loved him.”
 - a. “David then comforted his wife Bathsheba, and lived with her again; and she bare a son, whom he
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called *Solomon*, the man of peace (cf. 1 Chron. 22:9). David gave the child this name, because he regarded his birth as a pledge that he should now become a partaker again of peace with God, and not from any reference to the fact that the war with the Ammonites was over, and peace prevailed when he was born; although in all probability Solomon was not born till after the capture of Rabbah and the termination of the Ammonitish war. His birth is mentioned here simply because of its connection with what immediately precedes” (Keil, p.393).

- b. Solomon’s name was appropriate in view of the fact that peace prevailed during most of his forty-year reign. Perhaps this is the significance of the fact that is stated that the Lord loved him. In the early chapters of 1 Kings, Solomon shows his greatness by requesting that God give him wisdom, instead of great wealth and power.
2. Verse 25: “And he sent by the hand of Nathan the prophet; and he called his name Jedidiah, because of the LORD.”
 - a. God sent Nathan to convey the name he gave to the baby. *Jedidiah* means “Beloved of the Lord.” “Nathan came to David according to Jehovah’s instructions, and gave Solomon the name *Jedidiah* for Jehovah’s sake, *i.e.* because Jehovah loved him. The giving of such a name was a practical declaration on the part of Jehovah that he loved Solomon, from which David could and was intended to discern that the Lord had blessed his marriage with Bathsheba” (Keil, p.394).
 - b. The lineage of the Messiah is traced through David and Solomon and on to Joseph, who was the legal father of Jesus (Matt. 1:1-17). Luke 3:23-38 traces the lineage of Jesus through Mary back to Nathan, one of David’s sons, to David, and on back through Abraham and on to Adam.

E. 2 Samuel 12:26-31: Rabbah is Captured and Ravaged.

1. Verses 26-27: “And Joab fought against Rabbah of the children of Ammon, and took the royal city. And Joab sent messengers to David, and said, I have fought against Rabbah, and have taken the city of waters.”
 - a. This section brings us back to the on-going siege by Joab of Rabbah, the capital of Ammon. He had laid siege to the city; David had remained in Jerusalem (1 Sam. 11:1).
 - b. “Rabbah, like Aroer, was divided into two parts—one, the lower town, insulated by the winding course of the Jabbok, which flowed almost round it, and the upper and stronger town, called the royal city, from its being the seat of the Ammonite government, and containing the palace of the king. Here was kept the iron bedstead of Og, as an antique relic, indicating the stature and strength of the gigantic king of Bashan. The first was taken by Joab, but the honour of capturing so strongly a fortified place as the other was an honour reserved for the king himself” (JFB, p.245).
 - c. Clarke explains it as follows: “Rabbah was composed of a *city* and *citadel*; the former, in which was the king’s residence, Joab had taken, and supposed he could soon render himself master of the latter, and therefore sends to David to come and take it, lest, he taking the whole, the city should be called after his name” (p.340).
 - d. The royal city would be the place where the king’s palace was situated; the city of waters, refers to the main water supply of the city. It was only a matter of time before the entire city fell.
 2. Verses 28-29: “Now therefore gather the rest of the people together, and encamp against the city, and take it: lest I take the city, and it be called after my name. And David gathered all the people together, and went to Rabbah, and fought against it, and took it.”
 - a. Joab’s message to David included the request that the king and the rest of the fighting forces come to Rabbah, set these forces against the city, and take it. Joab could have captured the city on his own, but he wanted David to have that honor. If he took it, the glory would have attached to him and not to the king; that might not set well with David, and put Joab in a disadvantageous light.
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- b. David heeded the request; he brought the rest of the army with him, fought against the city, and it fell into his hands.
3. Verse 30: "And he took their king's crown from off his head, the weight whereof *was* a talent of gold with the precious stones: and it was *set* on David's head. And he brought forth the spoil of the city in great abundance."
 - a. 1 Chronicles 20:2: "And David took the crown of their king from off his head, and found it to weigh a talent of gold, and *there were* precious stones in it; and it was set upon David's head: and he brought also exceeding much spoil out of the city."
 - b. The king had either been captured or slain. Apparently David personally removed the crown from the Ammonite king's head, and placed it on his own. The worth of the crown, along with its precious stones, was valued at one talent of gold. It seems that the value of the crown, and not its weight, is being given. If its weight is the point made, it weighed between seven and one hundred pounds (Clarke, p.340).
 - c. There was a tremendous amount of spoils taken from the city.
 4. Verse 31: "And he brought forth the people that *were* therein, and put *them* under saws, and under harrows of iron, and under axes of iron, and made them pass through the brickkiln: and thus did he unto all the cities of the children of Ammon. So David and all the people returned unto Jerusalem."
 - a. 1 Chronicles 20:3: "And he brought out the people that *were* in it, and cut *them* with saws, and with harrows of iron, and with axes. Even so dealt David with all the cities of the children of Ammon. And David and all the people returned to Jerusalem."
 - b. The Ammonites, characteristic of the times, were cruel people; they doubtless had mistreated those they captured; now they received the same kind of treatment. "Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of the children of Ammon, and for four, I will not turn away *the punishment* thereof; because they have ripped up the women with child of Gilead, that they might enlarge their border" (Amos 1:13).
 - c. Keil explains this as simply saying that David made the Ammonites slaves; that he forced them to use the various implements named. The explanation commonly made, however, is that David used these implements as the means of torturing and killing the captives.
 - d. Ancient people (including Israel) sometimes used these means for torturing their enemies.
 - 1) Amos 1:3: "Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Damascus, and for four, I will not turn away *the punishment* thereof; because they have threshed Gilead with threshing instruments of iron."
 - 2) Judges 1:6-7: "But Adonibezek fled; and they pursued after him, and caught him, and cut off his thumbs and his great toes. And Adonibezek said, Threescore and ten kings, having their thumbs and their great toes cut off, gathered *their meat* under my table: as I have done, so God hath requited me. And they brought him to Jerusalem, and there he died."
 - 3) Judges 8:7,16: "And Gideon said, Therefore when the LORD hath delivered Zebah and Zalmunna into mine hand, then I will tear your flesh with the thorns of the wilderness and with briers....And he took the elders of the city, and thorns of the wilderness and briers, and with them he taught themen of Succoth."
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2 SAMUEL 13

A. 2 Samuel 13:1-14: Amnon Humbles Tamar.

1. Verses 1-2: "And it came to pass after this, that Absalom the son of David had a fair sister, whose name *was* Tamar; and Amnon the son of David loved her. And Amnon was so vexed, that he fell sick for his sister Tamar; for she *was* a virgin; and Amnon thought it hard for him to do any thing to her."
 - a. This chapter begins the report of the several harsh judgments which began to fall upon David, given in punishment for his sin with Bathsheba. The tragic events of this chapter affected two of his sons and one of his daughters.
 - b. Amnon was David's firstborn son; his mother was Ahinoam (2 Sam. 3:2). Absalom's mother was Maacah the daughter of Talmai, king of Geshur (2 Sam. 3:3). Absalom and Tamar were brother and sister; Amnon and Tamar had the same father, but different mothers.
 - c. Absalom is described as a handsome young man (2 Sam. 14:25-26); Tamar is described here as beautiful; David is depicted as "ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to" (1 Sam. 16:12).
 - d. Amnon loved his half-sister; his love was nothing but lust; her beauty and form proved to be too much for him, especially in view of his inability to be near her, due to her being a virgin.
 - e. "Unmarried daughters were kept in close seclusion from the company of men; no strangers, nor even their relatives of the other sex, being permitted to see them without the presence of witnesses. Of course, Amnon must have seen Tamar, for he had conceived a violent passion for her, which, though forbidden by the law (Lev. 18:11), yet, with the sanction of Abraham's example (Gen. 20:12), and the common practice in neighbouring countries for princes to marry their half-sisters, he seems not to have considered an improper connection. But he had no means of making it known to her; and the pain of that disappointment preying upon his mind, produced a visible change on his appearance and health" (JFB, pp.245f).
 - f. "Amnon, David's firstborn son was the child of Ahinoam a woman of Jezreel whom David married while he was still a fugitive from Saul. She, along with Abigail the widow of Nabal, was captured by the Ammonites while David was still at Ziklag, but was promptly rescued by David. Amnon was the heir-apparent to David's throne (2 Samuel 3:2). "Loved her" (Tamar) (2 Samuel 13:1). This is an unfortunate translation, because Amnon in no sense whatever actually loved Tamar. He simply allowed himself to be consumed with a savage animal lust after her beautiful body. Furthermore, his "friend" Jonadab fully understood this for what it was and proposed to Amnon the ruse by which he would have the opportunity to rape her. [Coffman].
2. Verses 3-4: "But Amnon had a friend, whose name *was* Jonadab, the son of Shimeah David's brother: and Jonadab *was* a very subtle man. And he said unto him, Why *art* thou, *being* the king's son, lean from day to day? wilt thou not tell me? And Amnon said unto him, I love Tamar, my brother Absalom's sister."
 - a. American Standard Version: "But Amnon had a friend, whose name was Jonadab, the son of Shimeah, David's brother; and Jonadab was a very subtle man. And he said unto him, Why, O son of the king, art thou thus lean from day to day? wilt thou not tell me? And Amnon said unto him, I love Tamar, my brother Absalom's sister."
 - b. Amnon had a friend in his cousin Jonadab, the son of David's brother, Shimeah (or Shammah: 1 Sam. 16:9). Jonadab was a very subtle individual; he was very shrewd and conniving. Such a "friend" is more productive of evil than good. "But Amnon had a friend whose name *was* Jonadab the son of Shimeah, David's brother. Now Jonadab *was* a very crafty man" (2 Sam. 13:3, NKJ).
 - c. This "friend" asked Amnon why he was pining away from day-to-day. His misery had taken a toll on his appearance and his appetite. He replied that he loved Tamar, his brother Absalom's sister. Amnon

had evil intentions toward Tamar; there is no doubt that Jonadab fully understood his purpose, and by providing the scheme, he took part in its evil outcome.

3. Verse 5: “And Jonadab said unto him, Lay thee down on thy bed, and make thyself sick: and when thy father cometh to see thee, say unto him, I pray thee, let my sister Tamar come, and give me meat, and dress the meat in my sight, that I may see *it*, and eat *it* at her hand.”
 - a. Jonadab’s plan was for Amnon to lie upon his bed, pretending to be sick. When David learned of the “illness,” he would come to visit him. He was to request that his father send Tamar to him, to prepare a meal.
 - b. He was to convince David that if Tamar were to prepare a meal for him, and serve it to him, he would be able to regain his strength and health. This request seems strange to us, so much so that we wonder why the king did not perceive something to be amiss.
 4. Verses 6-7: “So Amnon lay down, and made himself sick: and when the king was come to see him, Amnon said unto the king, I pray thee, let Tamar my sister come, and make me a couple of cakes in my sight, that I may eat at her hand. Then David sent home to Tamar, saying, Go now to thy brother Amnon's house, and dress him meat.”
 - a. New King James Version: Then Amnon lay down and pretended to be ill; and when the king came to see him, Amnon said to the king, "Please let Tamar my sister come and make a couple of cakes for me in my sight, that I may eat from her hand." 7 And David sent home to Tamar, saying, "Now go to your brother Amnon's house, and prepare food for him."
 - b. Amnon accepted the scheme; the king soon made his appearance at the bedside; the scheming son made the request; and the unsuspecting David fell for the ploy. He asked that Tamar be allowed to come to him, and make a couple of cakes, make them in his presence, and serve them to him.
 - c. The king sent a message home, directing Tamar to proceed to Amnon’s house, and prepare the meal he had requested. Commonly, those who are innocent are taken in by a ruse. Such wily dealings are forbidden those who would have the Lord’s approval.
 - 1) 1 Peter 2:1-22: "Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby."
 - 2) 1 Peter 2:22: Christ ... “did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth."
 5. Verses 8-9: “So Tamar went to her brother Amnon's house; and he was laid down. And she took flour, and kneaded *it*, and made cakes in his sight, and did bake the cakes. And she took a pan, and poured *them* out before him; but he refused to eat. And Amnon said, Have out all men from me. And they went out every man from him.”
 - a. Tamar was also taken in by the scheme; she went to Amnon’s house, kneaded the dough, made cakes, and baked them—in his sight. “The cakes seem to have been a kind of fancy bread, in the preparation of which Oriental ladies take great delight; and Tamar, flattered by the invitation, lost no time in rendering the required service in the house of her sick brother” (JFB, p.246).
 - b. She poured out the cakes into a pan (a frying pan, perhaps), and cooked them, as he had asked. But when she served them, he refused to eat; instead, he dismissed all the others from the room.
 6. Verses 10-12: “And Amnon said unto Tamar, Bring the meat into the chamber, that I may eat of thine hand. And Tamar took the cakes which she had made, and brought *them* into the chamber to Amnon her brother. And when she had brought *them* unto him to eat, he took hold of her, and said unto her, Come lie with me, my sister.”
 - a. He directed Tamar to bring the food into his chamber, and there he promised to eat “of thy hand.” Still not suspecting his evil purpose, she entered the bed chamber with him.
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- b. As she held out the food to him, suddenly he took firm hold of her, and told her to lie with him. The import of his words was obvious, even to this innocent girl. Such an unspeakable demand is worthy of the strongest condemnation.
7. Verses 12-14: "And she answered him, Nay, my brother, do not force me; for no such thing ought to be done in Israel: do not thou this folly. And I, whither shall I cause my shame to go? and as for thee, thou shalt be as one of the fools in Israel. Now therefore, I pray thee, speak unto the king; for he will not withhold me from thee. Howbeit he would not hearken unto her voice: but, being stronger than she, forced her, and lay with her."
- a. She perceived the utter wickedness of his intent, and warned him that such an act ought not to be done in Israel; it was extremely foolish and sinful. Tamar's statement cited something that was recorded in Genesis 34:7: "And the sons of Jacob came out of the field when they heard *it*: and the men were grieved, and they were very wroth, because he had wrought folly in Israel in lying with Jacob's daughter; which thing ought not to be done." She was aware of this ancient statement.
 - b. His pent-up passions were not to be denied; he brushed aside her pleas and struggles. He was without concern to the shame that would attach to her by his folly. He did not care that the effect of his sin would do him great personal harm. She asked that he speak to the king, who would permit Amnon to take her as his wife.
 - c. Amnon refused to heed her logical arguments, and being stronger than she, he forced himself upon her. God's inviolate principle requires that individuals must reap what they sow (Gal. 6:7-8). Amnon succeeded in his evil desires, but he would face a mighty harsh penalty two years later.
 - d. Critics of the Bible allege that Tamar was not aware of the Law's prohibition of such close relatives to marry; they conclude that the Law had not yet been given. "The nakedness of thy sister, the daughter of thy father, or daughter of thy mother, *whether she be* born at home, or born abroad, *even* their nakedness thou shalt not uncover....The nakedness of thy father's wife's daughter, begotten of thy father, she *is* thy sister, thou shalt not uncover her nakedness" (Lev. 18:9,11). Tamar was using every means to convince Amnon to turn from his wicked plan.
 - e. "Tamar was merely trying to find a way out of her desperate situation. Sure, she knew that such marriages were forbidden in Leviticus 18:9,11, but she also knew that David frequently disobeyed God's law; and knowing his love for Amnon might reasonably have expected him to violate it for Amnon's sake" (Coffman).

B. 2 Samuel 13:15-22: Effect of the Assault.

1. Verses 15-16: "Then Amnon hated her exceedingly; so that the hatred wherewith he hated her *was* greater than the love wherewith he had loved her. And Amnon said unto her, Arise, be gone. And she said unto him, *There is* no cause: this evil in sending me away *is* greater than the other that thou didst unto me. But he would not hearken unto her."
 - a. His "love" for Tamar was nothing but lust! When it had been gratified, he hated her. "This sudden change, which may be fully explained from a psychological point of view, and is frequently exemplified still in actual life, furnishes a striking proof that lust is not love, but simply the gratification of the animal passions" (Keil, p.399).
 - b. "It is not unusual for persons instigated by violent and irregular passions to go from one extreme to another. In Amnon's case the sudden revulsion is easily accounted for; the atrocity of his conduct, with all the feelings of shame, remorse, and dread of exposure and punishment, now burst upon his mind, rendering the presence of Tamar intolerably painful to him" (JFB, pp.246f).
 - c. A man who has wronged another, if he still has a conscience, must ease his pangs of conscience somehow, to enable him to live with himself. Frequently, he convinces himself that the wronged man was responsible, so he develops an inner hatred against his victim. The offending party so skillfully
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deceives himself on this, that he may not be consciously aware of what he is doing. He would not be apt to see it even when it is pointed out to him.

2. Verses 17-18: "Then he called his servant that ministered unto him, and said, Put now this *woman* out from me, and bolt the door after her. And *she had* a garment of divers colours upon her: for with such robes were the king's daughters *that were* virgins apparelled. Then his servant brought her out, and bolted the door after her."
 - a. Amnon called his servant, and ordered him to force "this woman" out, and bolt the door behind her. He had shamed Tamar grievously, and now was thrusting her away as he would dispose of a piece of useless trash. He was utterly unconcerned about the effect this transaction had on her.
 - b. Tamar was wearing a garment of various colors. "When Jacob gave such a garment to Joseph, it aroused the fierce jealousy of his brothers. The 'diverse colors' were possible due to fancy embroidery with many colored threads. Tamar wore such a garment as an indication of her extremely high rank as a virgin daughter of the king. Her rending it and placing ashes on her head were expressions of her extreme sorrow and humiliation at the hands of her heartless brother" (Coffman, p.175).
 - c. "Notwithstanding this dress, by which a king's daughter could at once be recognised, Amnon's servant treated Tamar like a common woman, and turned her out of the house" (Keil, p.400).
 3. Verses 19-20: "And Tamar put ashes on her head, and rent her garment of divers colours that *was* on her, and laid her hand on her head, and went on crying. And Absalom her brother said unto her, Hath Amnon thy brother been with thee? but hold now thy peace, my sister: he *is* thy brother; regard not this thing. So Tamar remained desolate in her brother Absalom's house."
 - a. The picture of Tamar's distraught demeanor is enough to touch the heart of anyone who has compassion over the plight of others. She rent her beautiful, expensive, distinctive garment; she put ashes on her head, and proceeded on the way home, holding her hand on her head, crying. Compare: "Yea, thou shalt go forth from him, and thine hands upon thine head: for the LORD hath rejected thy confidences, and thou shalt not prosper in them" (Jer. 2:37).
 - b. "By these signs, especially the rending of her distinguishing robe, Absalom at once conjectured what had taken place. Recommending her to be silent about it, and not publish notice of it to Amnon. But all the while he was in secret 'nursing his wrath, to keep it warm,' and only 'biding his time' to avenge his sister's wrongs, and by the removal of the heir-apparent, perhaps further also his ambitious designs" (JFB, p.247).
 - c. Absalom "was her natural protector, as Simeon and Levi were of Dinah (Gen. 34); and the children of polygamists lived by themselves, as if they constituted different families" (JFB, p.247). Tamar lived a desolate life, bereft of her innocence, and humbled in the worst possible way.
 4. Verses 21-22: "But when king David heard of all these things, he was very wroth. And Absalom spake unto his brother Amnon neither good nor bad: for Absalom hated Amnon, because he had forced his sister Tamar."
 - a. David learned of this horrible action of Amnon, and although it made him very angry, he took no action against him. Why did he not punish Amnon? It may have been on account of the fact that he was his firstborn son, and heir to his throne.
 - b. "This probably gives the true reason why David let such a crime as Amnon's go unpunished, when the law enjoined that incest should be punished with death (Lev. 20:17)..." (Keil, p.400). "And if a man shall take his sister, his father's daughter, or his mother's daughter, and see her nakedness, and she see his nakedness; it *is* a wicked thing; and they shall be cut off in the sight of their people: he hath uncovered his sister's nakedness; he shall bear his iniquity" (Lev. 20:17).
 - c. David's sin with Bathsheba was in the background of this present dilemma. This sorry episode was part of the punishment God brought upon David for his spiritual crimes. However, God did not make
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Amnon do what he did. Were it not for the sin of David, perhaps God would have providentially acted to preclude Amnon's sin. It may have been the case that David did not properly instruct, govern and control his sons, which could have prevented the deed.

- d. In the meantime, Absalom was biding his time, speaking neither good nor evil to Amnon, waiting for an occasion in which he would wreak vengeance on Amnon. Intense hatred abode in his heart. One sin usually leads to another; the sin of one man can promote another sin in a second party; which in turn can lead to yet another sin. During this seemingly unending chain of disobedience, countless people can be grievously affected!

C. 2 Samuel 13:23-29: Absalom Kills Amnon.

1. Verses 23-23: "And it came to pass after two full years, that Absalom had sheepshearers in Baalhazor, which *is* beside Ephraim: and Absalom invited all the king's sons. And Absalom came to the king, and said, Behold now, thy servant hath sheepshearers; let the king, I beseech thee, and his servants go with thy servant."
 - a. For two full years Absalom awaited a fortuitous occasion to punish Amnon. He had sheep at Baalhazor where he scheduled a sheep-shearing operation.
 - b. "A sheep-shearing feast is a grand occasion in the East. Absalom, proposing to give such an entertainment at his estate in Baal-hazor, about eight miles north-east of Jerusalem, near a town called Ephraim (Josh. 11:10), he first invited the king and his court, but the king declining, on account of the heavy expense to which the reception of royalty would subject his son, Absalom then limited the invitation to the king's sons, which David the more readily agreed to, in the hope that it might tend to the promotion of brotherly harmony and union" (JFB, pp.247f).
 - c. As part of his plan, Absalom invited the king and the court to the festivities, perceiving that it was not likely that he would attend.
 2. Verses 25-27: "And the king said to Absalom, Nay, my son, let us not all now go, lest we be chargeable unto thee. And he pressed him: howbeit he would not go, but blessed him. Then said Absalom, If not, I pray thee, let my brother Amnon go with us. And the king said unto him, Why should he go with thee? But Absalom pressed him, that he let Amnon and all the king's sons go with him."
 - a. "The king declined the invitation, that he might not be burdensome to Absalom. Absalom pressed him indeed, but he would not go, and blessed him, *i.e.*, wished him a pleasant and successful feast (see 1 Sam. 25:14)" (Keil, p.401).
 - b. Absalom specifically requested that Amnon be allowed to attend the feast. It appears that David was mildly suspicious, for he asked, "Why should he go with thee?" Although two years had passed, the king remembered the crime of Amnon, and perhaps suspected that Absalom might not be as unconcerned as he seemed.
 - c. When Absalom pressed his father to allow all his sons to participate in the festivities, David's suspicions were allayed. He perhaps figured that no harm could befall all of his sons, that they could protect each other. We are not told that Absalom intended harm to all of his brothers.
 3. Verses 28-29: "Now Absalom had commanded his servants, saying, Mark ye now when Amnon's heart is merry with wine, and when I say unto you, Smite Amnon; then kill him, fear not: have not I commanded you? be courageous, and be valiant. And the servants of Absalom did unto Amnon as Absalom had commanded. Then all the king's sons arose, and every man gat him up upon his mule, and fled."
 - a. Arranging his murderous plot with his servants, Absalom ordered them to pay close attention to the drunken status of Amnon, that when he was merry with wine, he would give them the word to rise up and kill him. He reminded them that this was his will, and that they were to be prompt to obey. There was no cause for them to be fainthearted or fearful.
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- b. The servants were alert to the situation as it developed; when Amnon reached a certain state of drunkenness, Absalom issued the order, and they slew him quickly. The other sons of David arose, and every one fled the scene on his mule. Whether Absalom intended to kill them too is not indicated, but it is clear that the other sons were afraid he would do so, hence they escaped.
- c. Mules “had become the favourite equipage of the great. King David himself had a state mule (1 Ki. 1:33)” (JFB, p.248).

D. 2 Samuel 13:30-39: Results of Amnon’s Death.

1. Verses 30-31: “And it came to pass, while they were in the way, that tidings came to David, saying, Absalom hath slain all the king's sons, and there is not one of them left. Then the king arose, and tare his garments, and lay on the earth; and all his servants stood by with their clothes rent.”
 - a. While the rest of his sons were fleeing toward Jerusalem, an erroneous report reached the king that all of his sons had been slain by Absalom. Perhaps the messenger came on foot, and could take a shorter route, and thus reach Jerusalem ahead of the princes.
 - b. Although this was a false report, the king believed it; he rent his garment, and lay on the earth mourning. A lie believed produces the same emotional effect as does the truth. It is dangerous to put trust in a message that is not infallible. Many people risk the destiny of their souls to perverted messages.
2. Verses 32-33: “And Jonadab, the son of Shimeah David's brother, answered and said, Let not my lord suppose *that* they have slain all the young men the king's sons; for Amnon only is dead: for by the appointment of Absalom this hath been determined from the day that he forced his sister Tamar. Now therefore let not my lord the king take the thing to his heart, to think that all the king's sons are dead: for Amnon only is dead.”
 - a. Jonadab presumed to know more than anyone else about the matter. He encouraged David not to accept this initial report, for Absalom had been bearing a grudge against Amnon, not against the other men. He had given Amnon the scheme by which Absalom’s wrath was raised; being privy to the details, Jonadab could deduce that the other princes were safe from harm.
 - b. Jonadab was correct in his assessment; there was no need for David to mourn for his other sons; they were indeed safe. He may have learned the details of Absalom’s plan in some wily manner. He was one who had an affinity for intrigue.
3. Verses 34-36: “But Absalom fled. And the young man that kept the watch lifted up his eyes, and looked, and, behold, there came much people by the way of the hill side behind him. And Jonadab said unto the king, Behold, the king's sons come: as thy servant said, so it is. And it came to pass, as soon as he had made an end of speaking, that, behold, the king's sons came, and lifted up their voice and wept: and the king also and all his servants wept very sore.”
 - a. In the meantime, Absalom fled to safety; he knew that he would not be held innocent for slaying the king’s firstborn son.
 - b. The young man on watch saw a large company of people approaching Jerusalem from the hillside. Jonadab saw the company, and was quick to remind the king that it was he who had told him all of the other princes were safe, that only Amnon was dead.
 - c. Shortly, the king’s sons arrived, weeping loudly. David wept also, as did all of his servants. This was a time of great sadness to David, but he had brought the tragedy about, indirectly, by his own sinful conduct.
 - d. “Amnon, the heir apparent to David’s throne, had been shamefully murdered by one of David’s own sons; and the words of Nathan must have once more rung in David’s ears, ‘Now therefore the sword shall never depart from your house’ (12:10).
 - 1) “Furthermore, David could not have missed the similarity between Absalom’s murder of Amnon

- and his own murder of Uriah. Both David and Absalom procured the help of others to bring about the murder. The great difference was that Uriah did not deserve to die, whereas Amnon most assuredly did.
- 2) “And look at Amnon’s adulterous rape of Tamar. David could not have failed to note the resemblance of this to his own sin in taking Bathsheba. In both instances, the victim was brought to the residence of the adulterer. But these tragic events were by no means the end of God’s punishments upon David” (Coffman, p.182).
4. Verses 37-39: “But Absalom fled, and went to Talmai, the son of Ammihud, king of Geshur. And *David* mourned for his son every day. So Absalom fled, and went to Geshur, and was there three years. And *the soul of king David* longed to go forth unto Absalom: for he was comforted concerning Amnon, seeing he was dead.”
 - a. Absalom sought safety with his mother’s relatives. His grandfather was king of Geshur, “A small Aramean kingdom in upper Bashan, situated SW of Maacah and NW of the Argob. Although within the territory allotted to Manasseh E of the Jordan, the people of Geshur were not driven out by Israel. The daughter of Talmai, king of Geshur, became a wife of David. Her son, Absalom, escaped to Geshur after the murder of Amnon (Josh.12:5; 13:11-13; 2 Sam 14:23, 32; 1 Chr 2:23)” (PC Bible Atlas).
 - b. “The law as to premeditated murder (Num. 25:21) gave him no hope of remaining with impunity in his own country; the cities of refuge could afford him no sanctuary; and he was compelled to leave the kingdom, taking refuge at the court of Geshur with his maternal grandfather, who would doubtless approve of his conduct” (JFB, p.248).
 - c. David continued to mourn for Amnon daily, for an unspecified period of time. Absalom remained at Geshur for three years. After he overcame his grief for Amnon, the great man’s heart longed for his equally beloved son, Absalom. His anger toward this rebellious son cooled, and his love was rekindled.
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2 SAMUEL 14

A. 2 Samuel 14:1-3: Joab's Scheme.

1. Verse 1: "Now Joab the son of Zeruiah perceived that the king's heart *was* toward Absalom."
 - a. Wisely perceiving that David still loved Absalom, despite his banishment from the land, Joab decided on a scheme whereby he could reconcile David and his son.
 - b. Keil thought that the statement of verse one should be understood to indicate the king's heart was against Absalom. If he was kindly inclined toward his son, why was the stratagem necessary to reconcile the two? However, David was both the king and the father of Absalom; as his father, his natural love would be inclined toward his son, but his political position gave him a duty to render justice to criminals; it is toward this latter problem that Joab's scheme is addressed.
 - c. "He may have been induced to take these steps partly by his personal attachment to Absalom, but the principal reason no doubt was that Absalom had the best prospect of succeeding to the throne, and Joab thought this the best way to secure himself from punishment for the murder which he had committed. But the issue of events frustrated all such hopes. Absalom did not succeed to the throne, Joab did not escape punishment, and David was severely chastised for his weakness and injustice" (Keil, pp.405f).
 - d. "The whole attitude of David towards Absalom is one of persistent hostility, and, even when Joab had obtained his recall, for two full years he would not admit him into his presence. What has led most commentators to force the meaning here and in 2 Sam 13:39 is the passionate burst of grief when news was brought of Absalom's death following upon the anxious orders given to the generals to be careful of the young man's life.
 - 1) "But David was a man of very warm affections, and while this would make him feel intense sorrow for the death of a son by his brother's hand, and stern indignation towards the murderer, there would still lie deep in the father's heart true love towards his sinning child, and Absalom's fall was sad enough to cause a strong revulsion of feeling. David's grief would be not merely for the death of his son, but that he should have died so miserably, and in an attempt so shameful.
 - 2) "Was not, too, the natural grief of a father made the more deep by the feeling that this was the third stage of the penalty denounced on his own sin, and that the son's death was the result of the father's crime?" [Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 2001 by BibleSoft].
2. Verses 2-3: "And Joab sent to Tekoah, and fetched thence a wise woman, and said unto her, I pray thee, feign thyself to be a mourner, and put on now mourning apparel, and anoint not thyself with oil, but be as a woman that had a long time mourned for the dead. And come to the king, and speak on this manner unto him. So Joab put the words in her mouth."
 - a. Joab obtained a certain wise woman from Tekoah to pretend to be in mourning; he concocted a story for her to tell to the king, which was devised to move the king to restore Absalom to his former status. Tekoah was ten miles south of Jerusalem, and was the home of the prophet Amos, some years later (755 B.C.). She was wise in the sense of being intelligent and possessing the shrewdness to do the kind of assignment Joab envisioned.
 - b. The entire story which Joab put in the woman's mouth was fabricated; it was a likely story, but it was contrived.
 - c. Clarke noted several reasons for the woman's success in carrying out Joab's plan. She was a widow, which would give her an advantage on appealing to the king's compassion; she lived a significant distance from Jerusalem, making it more difficult to check on her story; she was dressed in mourning, which would likely dismantle any prejudice against her report; and she presented a story which was similar to the case of David and Absalom, but not so close as to be transparent.

B. 2 Samuel 14:4-10: The Woman of Tekoah Makes Her Initial Request.

1. Verses 4-5: “And when the woman of Tekoah spake to the king, she fell on her face to the ground, and did obeisance, and said, Help, O king. And the king said unto her, What aileth thee? And she answered, I *am* indeed a widow woman, and mine husband is dead.”
 - a. The woman agreed to the scheme, and forthwith presented herself before the king. Obviously, David had a policy of seeing certain ones who had compelling cases. She was able to obtain an audience with David.
 - b. In keeping with custom and propriety, she fell prostrate before David, pleading for help. The margin gives “save” as an alternate rendering.
 - c. The king quite naturally made inquiry of her problem. She began her story by asserting that she was truly a widow; her husband was dead.
 2. Verses 6-7: “And thy handmaid had two sons, and they two strove together in the field, and *there was* none to part them, but the one smote the other, and slew him. And, behold, the whole family is risen against thine handmaid, and they said, Deliver him that smote his brother, that we may kill him, for the life of his brother whom he slew; and we will destroy the heir also: and so they shall quench my coal which is left, and shall not leave to my husband *neither* name nor remainder upon the earth.”
 - a. “And thy handmaid had two sons, and they two strove together in the field, and there was none to part them, but the one smote the other, and killed him. And, behold, the whole family is risen against thy handmaid, and they say, Deliver him that smote his brother, that we may kill him for the life of his brother whom he slew, and so destroy the heir also. Thus will they quench my coal which is left, and will leave to my husband neither name nor remainder upon the face of the earth” (ASV).
 - b. She continued the contrived story by claiming that her two sons had gotten into a fight with each other in the field; there was no one to separate them, so one killed the other.
 - c. The rest of the clan demanded that she deliver the killer to them so that they could avenge the death of his brother. This policy called for the nearest kinsman to the victim to exact vengeance upon the killer.
 - 1) God ordained the law whereby one who murders another is to be punished. When Noah and his family emerged from the ark, God told him: “Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man” (Gen. 9:6).
 - 2) Exodus 21:12: “He that smiteth a man, so that he die, shall be surely put to death.”
 - 3) Leviticus 24:22: “And he that killeth any man shall surely be put to death.”
 - 4) See also Numbers 19 and Deuteronomy 35 for information on the nearest kinsman and vengeance.
 - d. The woman stated that if they slew her remaining son, no inheritance or name would remain for her husband, and “my coal” would be quenched. The hope for a posterity would be extinguished if this last son were to be executed. The figure is beautiful and poignant. Not only would there be no name and inheritance in Israel, if this son was slain, she would have no hope or reason to live.
 - e. This story differed from the case of David and Absalom in that the murder that Absalom committed was not done in the heat of anger, but was carefully premeditated; also, the matter of a relative seeking to avenge the death was not at issue. The similarity lay in the fact that a murderer was to be punished.
 3. Verses 8-10: “And the king said unto the woman, Go to thine house, and I will give charge concerning thee. And the woman of Tekoah said unto the king, My lord, O king, the iniquity *be* on me, and on my father's house: and the king and his throne *be* guiltless. And the king said, Whosoever saith *ought* unto thee, bring him to me, and he shall not touch thee any more.”
 - a. David told her to return home, and he would issue the proper orders to prevent the remaining son's
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death. “This declaration on the part of the king was perfectly just. If the brothers had quarreled, and one had killed the other in the heat of the quarrel, it was right that he should be defended from the avenger of blood, because it could not be assumed that there was any previous intention to murder. This declaration therefore could not be applied as yet to David’s conduct towards Absalom” (Keil, p.408).

- b. The woman’s response in verse nine was intended to state that if any guilt was attached to the killing going unpunished, let the guilt fall upon her and her father’s house; no guilt was to devolve upon the king or his throne.
- c. David thought to conclude the interview by his statement of verse ten. If anyone should approach her again with the demand for her son’s punishment, that party was to be brought to the king; no one would be permitted to bother the woman again on this matter.

C. 2 Samuel 14:11-20: The Woman’s Real Request.

1. Verses 11-12: “Then said she, I pray thee, let the king remember the LORD thy God, that thou wouldest not suffer the revengers of blood to destroy any more, lest they destroy my son. And he said, *As* the LORD liveth, there shall not one hair of thy son fall to the earth. Then the woman said, Let thine handmaid, I pray thee, speak *one* word unto my lord the king. And he said, Say on.”
 - a. “The crafty woman was not yet satisfied with this, and sought by repeating her petition to induce the king to confirm his promise on oath, that she might bind him the more firmly....the king immediately promised on oath that her son should not suffer the least harm” (Keil, pp.408f).
 - b. She was not finished; there was yet another matter which she sought to discuss. To this point, she had only laid the groundwork for the primary reason for her appointment. We remember that the entirety of her mission was a subterfuge; the story was a fabrication.
2. Verses 13-14: “And the woman said, Wherefore then hast thou thought such a thing against the people of God? for the king doth speak this thing as one which is faulty, in that the king doth not fetch home again his banished. For we must needs die, and *are* as water spilled on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again; neither doth God respect *any* person: yet doth he devise means, that his banished be not expelled from him.”
 - a. “You have granted me the pardon of a son who had slain his brother, and yet you will not grant to your subjects the restoration of Absalom, whose criminality is not greater than my son’s, since he killed his brother in similar circumstances of provocation. Absalom has reason to complain that he is treated by his own father more sternly and severely than the meanest subject in the realm; and the whole nation will have cause for saying that the king shows more attention to the petition of a humble woman than to the wishes and desires of a whole kingdom. The death of my son is a private loss to my family, while the preservation of Absalom is the common interest of all Israel, who now look to him as your successor on the throne” (JFB, p.249).
 - b. The *wise* woman reminded David of the brevity of life and the mercy of God. A human life is like water which is so easily spilled upon the ground, but once spilled, it cannot be put back in the container. The last part of verse fourteen is obscure, and evidently is difficult to translate. “For we must needs die, and are as water split on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again; neither doth God take away life, but deviseth means, that he that is banished be not an outcast from him” (ASV).
 - 1) In place of “neither doth God respect any person,” the margin gives, “because God hath not taken away his life, he hath also devised means.” The ASV agrees with this rendering.
 - 2) God does not slay those who violate his will, but devises a means of securing their reconciliation with him.
 - a) Romans 5:6-9: "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some

would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him."

- b) 2 Corinthians 5:18-21: "And all things *are* of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech *you* by us: we pray *you* in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."
 - c) 2 Peter 3:9: "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."
- 3) In David's case, God had developed certain highly significant purposes which he was to serve; if he had slain the king when he violated his will, those plans could not have been fulfilled.
3. Verses 15-17: "Now therefore that I am come to speak of this thing unto my lord the king, *it is* because the people have made me afraid: and thy handmaid said, I will now speak unto the king; it may be that the king will perform the request of his handmaid. For the king will hear, to deliver his handmaid out of the hand of the man *that would* destroy me and my son together out of the inheritance of God. Then thine handmaid said, The word of my lord the king shall now be comfortable: for as an angel of God, so *is* my lord the king to discern good and bad: therefore the LORD thy God will be with thee."
- a. She claims that the people had made her afraid in their seeking the death of her remaining son; this fear had led her to speak to the king on this matter; and having done so, she says she was emboldened to address this present subject as well.
 - b. She states that she was convinced that the king would deliver her from the destructive plans of those who sought to slay her other son, which would also destroy the inheritance intended for her and the son.
 - c. 2 Samuel 14:17: "Then thy handmaid said, Let, I pray thee, the word of my lord the king be comfortable; for as an angel of God, so is my lord the king to discern good and bad: and Jehovah thy God be with thee" (ASV). She claims that she had said of David, that he would speak restful words to her, as though he were an angel of God; she further states that he was able to discern good and evil, and that therefore the Lord would be with him. The statement that David was blessed with discernment is shown to be true, since he was able to see the hand of Joab in the entire episode.
4. Verses 18-20: "Then the king answered and said unto the woman, Hide not from me, I pray thee, the thing that I shall ask thee. And the woman said, Let my lord the king now speak. And the king said, *Is not* the hand of Joab with thee in all this? And the woman answered and said, *As* thy soul liveth, my lord the king, none can turn to the right hand or to the left from ought that my lord the king hath spoken: for thy servant Joab, he bade me, and he put all these words in the mouth of thine handmaid: To fetch about this form of speech hath thy servant Joab done this thing: and my lord *is* wise, according to the wisdom of an angel of God, to know all *things* that *are* in the earth."
- a. "These words of the woman were so well considered and so crafty, that the king could not fail to see both what she really meant, and also that she had not come with her petition of her own accord. He therefore told her to answer the question without disguise: whether the hand of Joab was with her in all this" (Keil, p.410).
 - b. In effect, the conversation went this way:
 - 1) David: "Tell me exactly what you are trying to say."
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- 2) Woman: "Tell me what you think I'm saying."
- 3) David: "I see Joab's hand in this matter."
- 4) Woman: "You are exactly right; no one can hide anything from you; you know as much about what is going on in your kingdom as an angel does. Joab put these words in my mouth."
- c. "The woman made effective use of flattery as she heaped compliment after compliment upon the king. This appeal was not only in line with what David actually wanted to do, but it was reinforced and enhanced by every possible device. No wonder that he granted it" (Coffman, p.192).

D. 2 Samuel 14:21-27: The Return of Absalom.

1. Verses 21-22: "And the king said unto Joab, Behold now, I have done this thing: go therefore, bring the young man Absalom again. And Joab fell to the ground on his face, and bowed himself, and thanked the king: and Joab said, To day thy servant knoweth that I have found grace in thy sight, my lord, O king, in that the king hath fulfilled the request of his servant."
 - a. David told Joab that he had decided to grant the desire he had presented so deviously to him through the woman. It was in keeping with the desires of his own heart to bring Absalom back home.
 - b. Joab prostrated himself before the king, and expressed his gratitude for fulfilling his request. He said that this showed he was in the king's good graces, and that he was glad it was so.
 - c. "It is pretty evident from this, that Joab had frequently applied to David for Absalom's return, without any attention being paid to his application. David therefore suspected that Joab had instructed the woman of Tekoah" (Keil, p.411).
 - d. "In considering this act of David, many extenuating circumstances may be urged in favour of it: the provocation given to Absalom, his being now in a country where justice could not overtake him, the risk of his imbibing a love for heathen principles and worship, the safety and interests of the Hebrew kingdom, together with the strong predilection of the Hebrew people for Absalom, as represented by the stratagem of Joab....The feelings of the father triumphed over the duty of the king, who, as the supreme magistrate, was bound to execute impartial justice on every murderer, by the express law of God (Gen. 9:6; Num. 35:30,31), which he had no power to dispense with (Deut. 18:18; Josh. 1:8; 1 Sam. 10:25)" (JFB, p.250).
 - 1) Genesis 9:6: "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man."
 - 2) Numbers 35:30-31: "Whoso killeth any person, the murderer shall be put to death by the mouth of witnesses: but one witness shall not testify against any person to cause him to die. Moreover ye shall take no satisfaction for the life of a murderer, which is guilty of death: but he shall be surely put to death."
 - 3) Deuteronomy 18:18: "I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him."
 - 4) Joshua 1:8: "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success."
 - 5) 2 Samuel 10:19: "And when all the kings that were servants to Hadarezer saw that they were smitten before Israel, they made peace with Israel, and served them. So the Syrians feared to help the children of Ammon any more."
2. Verses 23-24: "So Joab arose and went to Geshur, and brought Absalom to Jerusalem. And the king said, Let him turn to his own house, and let him not see my face. So Absalom returned to his own house, and saw not the king's face."

- a. Joab went to Geshur, and brought Absalom back home. David had set forth one proviso, that his son was not to be in the king's presence. It was one thing to grant Absalom freedom to return home; it was quite another for him to be before the king as before. The former would show his mercy to his son and to his son's supporters; the latter would demonstrate his unwillingness to countenance the brutal act of fratricide of which Absalom was guilty.
 - b. "This half forgiveness was an imprudent measure, and bore very bitter fruit. The further account of Absalom is introduced in vers. 25-27 with a description of his personal appearance and family affairs" (Keil, p.411).
 - c. Keeping Absalom out of the king's presence may show some of Bathsheba's influence. In the present case with Absalom, it would be very unlikely that he would be allowed to take David's throne later when the king died. This would at least make it possible for her son Solomon to accede to the throne.
3. Verses 25-27: "But in all Israel there was none to be so much praised as Absalom for his beauty: from the sole of his foot even to the crown of his head there was no blemish in him. And when he polled his head, (for it was at every year's end that he polled *it*: because *the hair* was heavy on him, therefore he polled it:) he weighed the hair of his head at two hundred shekels after the king's weight. And unto Absalom there were born three sons, and one daughter, whose name *was* Tamar: she was a woman of a fair countenance."
- a. His handsome appearance and his pleasing manners made for great popularity in Israel for Absalom. David himself had been a handsome young man: "And he sent, and brought him in. Now he *was* ruddy, *and* withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to. And the LORD said, Arise, anoint him: for this *is* he" (1 Sam. 16:12).
 - b. His flattery of the people won them over to him. "Absalom said moreover, Oh that I were made judge in the land, that every man which hath any suit or cause might come unto me, and I would do him justice! And it was *so*, that when any man came nigh *to him* to do him obeisance, he put forth his hand, and took him, and kissed him. And on this manner did Absalom to all Israel that came to the king for judgment: so Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel" (2 Sam. 15:4-6).
 - c. He was a perfect specimen of manhood, according to the Israelite standard. Not a blemish was to be seen in his appearance.
 - d. His abundant hair was one characteristic that exalted him in the eyes of his admirers. When the growth became too long and heavy, he cut off "two hundred shekels after the king's weight." The amount of the king's shekel is uncertain; different scholars assert different weights.
 - e. "Unless the royal shekel was smaller than the shekel of the sanctuary, the weight of Absalom's hair would be six pounds. But we cannot believe that the king's shekel was not full weight; for to imagine this is to suppose that the king had tampered with the coinage; for the shekel was a coin as well as a weight, being originally a fixed quantity of silver. As a matter of fact, David had amassed too much silver to have need of resorting to what is the expedient of feeble and impoverished princes. Nor can we grant an error in the number; for the versions all agree with the Hebrew, so that any mistake must, at all events, be of great antiquity. Josephus says that Solomon's body guard wore long hair powdered with gold dust, and undoubtedly Absalom's hair was something extraordinary (2 Sam 18:9)" [Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 2001 by Biblesoft].
 - 1) Some scholars place the weight at about three pounds. "We also found a suggestion that shekels were also used as units of monetary value, and the 200 shekels might have indicated the price rather than the weight of Absalom's hair" (Coffman, pp.194f).
 - 2) The specific mention of his hair is to illustrate the unique appearance of Absalom, and to furnish the background for the cause of his untimely death. "And Absalom met the servants of David. And Absalom rode upon a mule, and the mule went under the thick boughs of a great oak, and his
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head caught hold of the oak, and he was taken up between the heaven and the earth; and the mule that *was* under him went away....Then said Joab, I may not tarry thus with thee. And he took three darts in his hand, and thrust them through the heart of Absalom, while he *was* yet alive in the midst of the oak" (2 Sam. 18:9,14).

- f. Absalom became the father of three sons and one daughter. The daughter was named Tamar, likely in remembrance of his sister; she grew up to be a beautiful woman.

E. 2 Samuel 14:28-33: Absalom Comes Before the King.

1. Verses 28-29: "So Absalom dwelt two full years in Jerusalem, and saw not the king's face. Therefore Absalom sent for Joab, to have sent him to the king; but he would not come to him: and when he sent again the second time, he would not come."
 - a. After residing in Jerusalem for two years, and not having been in the presence of his father the king, Absalom sent word for Joab to come to him. The obvious purpose was for him to intervene in his behalf so that he might return to David's presence.
 - b. After two such messages had been sent, Joab still did not come. Absalom decided on a more direct method of summoning him.
 2. Verses 30-31: "Therefore he said unto his servants, See, Joab's field is near mine, and he hath barley there; go and set it on fire. And Absalom's servants set the field on fire. Then Joab arose, and came to Absalom unto *his* house, and said unto him, Wherefore have thy servants set my field on fire?"
 - a. Absalom directed his servants to set fire to Joab's barley field. If it was near the harvest season, the grain would burn quickly.
 - b. This got Joab's attention! No efforts had been made to conceal the identity of the arsonists, so the general knew who was responsible. He demanded of Absalom to know why he had done it.
 3. Verse 32: "And Absalom answered Joab, Behold, I sent unto thee, saying, Come hither, that I may send thee to the king, to say, Wherefore am I come from Geshur? *it had been* good for me *to have been* there still: now therefore let me see the king's face; and if there be *any* iniquity in me, let him kill me."
 - a. He plainly told Joab why he had burned his barley field. He had sent to Joab to ask him to inquire of the king why he had been brought back home from Geshur, if he was not permitted to see the king.
 - b. He stated if there was any iniquity in him, he stood ready to die for it.
 4. Verse 33: "So Joab came to the king, and told him: and when he had called for Absalom, he came to the king, and bowed himself on his face to the ground before the king: and the king kissed Absalom."
 - a. Joab reported this to David, who then sent for his son. Absalom bowed before the king, showing his apparent obedience.
 - b. David kissed his son, thus completing the reconciliation. But all was not well in the kingdom, as the next chapter will make abundantly clear.
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2 SAMUEL 15

A. 2 Samuel 15:1-6: Absalom's Flattery of the People.

1. Verse 1: "And it came to pass after this, that Absalom prepared him chariots and horses, and fifty men to run before him."
 - a. "This ostentation by Absalom should have alerted David to his son's intentions. Throughout history, the first step of any man seeking to usurp power was to procure a bodyguard. Herodotus tells us how Pisistratus seized control of Athens by means of that very procedure. It was unusual for Israelites to ride in chariots drawn by horses; and the practice was frowned upon by God's prophets" (Coffman, pp.199f). Hitler did the same as he prepared to seize control of Germany.
 - b. Samuel had warned the nation that such things would result from their demand for a king. "And he said, This will be the manner of the king that shall reign over you: He will take your sons, and appoint *them* for himself, for his chariots, and *to be* his horsemen; and *some* shall run before his chariots" (1 Sam. 8:11).
 - c. "Persons of quality, who ride on horseback, and still more those who are conveyed in splendid vehicles are preceded by one servant, or by several, who run before their masters, carrying a stick or baton, which they constantly wave about them, and strike right and left to clear the way, especially in the streets of Oriental cities, which are always narrow and crowded....They are accustomed to run, and can keep on at a rapid pace with the equipage which they precede, for many miles without stoppage, their feet covered with dust, and frequently bleeding from wounds" (JFB, p.251).
 2. Verses 2-3: "And Absalom rose up early, and stood beside the way of the gate: and it was *so*, that when any man that had a controversy came to the king for judgment, then Absalom called unto him, and said, Of what city *art* thou? And he said, Thy servant *is* of one of the tribes of Israel. And Absalom said unto him, See, thy matters *are* good and right; but *there is* no man *deputed* of the king to hear thee."
 - a. NKJ: Now Absalom would rise early and stand beside the way to the gate. So it was, whenever anyone who had a lawsuit came to the king for a decision, that Absalom would call to him and say, "What city are you from?" And he would say, "Your servant is from such and such a tribe of Israel." 3 Then Absalom would say to him, "Look, your case is good and right; but there is no deputy of the king to hear you."
 - b. Public business was usually conducted at the gates of the city; there the leaders and judges could be found; judicial and business matters were transacted there. Daily, Israelites from various parts of the nation would enter Jerusalem, seeking resolution of problems.
 - c. Absalom, taking advantage of his free time, good looks, and popularity, went early in the morning to the gates, and spoke with those who came with grievances. There are always malcontents in every nation, as well as some who have legitimate complaints. It may have been the case that David was too preoccupied with various matters of state and personal concerns to deal with these grievances; also he may not have deputed subordinates to handle these problems.
 - d. Absalom took advantage of this situation to advance his personal ambitions. He sought out those men who had a controversy, the resolution of which they came to make an appeal to the king. Absalom made it plain that the individual's complaint was legitimate, but that there was no one who would deal with his case.
 - e. Everyone likes to have others to sympathize with his personal problems and to reassure him that his grievance is genuine. We all like for others to support our cause.
 3. Verse 4: "Absalom said moreover, Oh that I were made judge in the land, that every man which hath any suit or cause might come unto me, and I would do him justice!"
 - a. Absalom had little concern for the problems of these people; he was manipulating them to his own
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- selfish ends! They were so naive that they could not perceive his true purposes. His real motives could have been discovered by the ostentatious display of chariots and runners.
- b. “Studiously concealing his ambitious designs, he expressed a wish to be invested with official power, only that he might accelerate the course of justice, and advance the public interests.
 - 1) “This profession had an air of extraordinary generosity and disinterestedness; and, together with his fawning arts in lavishing civilities on all, made him a popular favourite.
 - 2) “Thus, by forcing a contrast between his own display of public spirit and the dilatory proceedings of the court, he created a growing disgust with his father’s government, as weak, careless, or corrupt, and seduced the affections of the multitude, who neither penetrated the motives nor foresaw the tendency of his conduct...” (JFB, p.252).
 - c. There have been gospel preachers who have followed the way of Absalom. Some of these are very personable, handsome, and talented; by sweet words and pleasing smiles they have deceived the hearts of countless simple people. That is another reason we need the divine standard of God’s word! "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple" (Rom. 16:17-18).
4. Verse 5: “And it was *so*, that when any man came nigh *to him* to do him obeisance, he put forth his hand, and took him, and kissed him.”
- a. Absalom’s behavior was contrived to make the people believe he considered himself on their social level, that although he was of the royal blood, yet he was one of the common people in reality.
 - b. Flattery is a powerful tool the devious mind can use with great success on the unsuspecting. Many so-called “evangelists” use this effectively. Genuine compliments and flattery are not the same.
 - 1) Job 17:5: "He that speaketh flattery to *his* friends, even the eyes of his children shall fail."
 - 2) Proverbs 6:24: "To keep thee from the evil woman, from the flattery of the tongue of a strange woman."
 - 3) Job 32:21-22: "Let me not, I pray you, accept any man's person, neither let me give flattering titles unto man. For I know not to give flattering titles; *in so doing* my maker would soon take me away."
 - 4) Psalms 12:2-3: "They speak vanity every one with his neighbour: *with* flattering lips *and* with a double heart do they speak. The LORD shall cut off all flattering lips, *and* the tongue that speaketh proud things."
 - 5) Proverbs 7:21: "With her much fair speech she caused him to yield, with the flattering of her lips she forced him."
 - 6) Proverbs 26:28: "A lying tongue hateth *those that are* afflicted by it; and a flattering mouth worketh ruin."
 - 7) 1 Thessalonians 2:5: "For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloak of covetousness; God *is* witness."
 - 8) Romans 16:17-18: “Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.”
5. Verse 6: “And on this manner did Absalom to all Israel that came to the king for judgment: so Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel.”
- a. “His methods were the same as that of any demagogue; he promised everyone whom he met that he
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would give them what they wanted if only he were in authority. He pretended that he was interested in justice for every one....All of this, of course, was as phony as similar pretensions by current seekers of political office; but the people were deceived by it..." (Coffman, p.202).

- b. Why are people gullible? It is not due to lack of education, for the present generation of Americans are the best educated of our history, and we are among the most gullible on earth! For proof, look at the huge success of radical political, social, pseudo-scientific, and religious agendas. How could a cultist succeed without naive people?
- c. People are gullible because they do not know or do not apply God's infallible standard. The more we know, understand, believe, and apply the Bible to our thinking and actions, the less likely we are to be deceived. Americans have swallowed the devil's poison that there is no absolute standard; once this concept has been accepted, it is only a matter of time before the general public will fall victim to the most blatant of errors.

B. 2 Samuel 15:7-12: Absalom's Treachery.

1. Verses 7-8: "And it came to pass after forty years, that Absalom said unto the king, I pray thee, let me go and pay my vow, which I have vowed unto the LORD, in Hebron. For thy servant vowed a vow while I abode at Geshur in Syria, saying, If the LORD shall bring me again indeed to Jerusalem, then I will serve the LORD."
 - a. Scholar after scholar asserts that the number 40 should be 4, that the larger number crept into the text due to scribal error. However, as Coffman admits, other ancient versions have "forty years."
 - b. The historian does not identify the point of reference. The point of reference is generally understood to be to Absalom's return from exile, and that after being back home for four years, he made his power play. It is at least possible that some other point of reference is involved.
 - 1) It is not likely to be Absalom's age, although that would be a handy view; he was born after David began his reign. David's entire reign was forty years in length, and a considerable time yet remained of his reign. Absalom's age at the time is not the reference point.
 - 2) The forty years would probably fit if the point of reference was the time when David was first anointed to be king by Samuel (1 Sam. 16).
 - 3) The number "forty" appears so frequently in the Scriptures that some have suggested that it might be used as a figure of speech, indicating a significant period of time. But there is nothing in the text that demands that the number be taken in anything but its ordinary meaning.
 - 4) This Bible student is not going to adopt a view that casts doubt on the sacred text, for such would be an admission of discrepancies therein, and if one passage is thus undermined, other passages of great import could be questioned. In time, however, information might come to light to let us see the exact meaning.
 - c. The point of the passage is to show that after a certain amount of time had elapsed, Absalom besought the king to permit him to go to Hebron and pay an alleged vow. There was no vow; this was his devious way of gaining the king's permission to absent himself from Jerusalem. It is not important for us to know how much time had passed, or the reference point of that time factor, in order for us to understand the passage.
 - d. Absalom claimed that he had made a vow while he was living in exile at Geshur, that if the Lord allowed him to return to Jerusalem, then he would serve him. He knew his father's great interest in spiritual matters, and that this was the best way to obtain consent to leave the city.
 - e. A side-note: David died at the age of seventy, a number reached by simple arithmetic: "David was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years" (2 Sam. 5:4).
 2. Verse 9: "And the king said unto him, Go in peace. So he arose, and went to Hebron."
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- a. Of course, David quickly granted him his request. Perhaps the king was elated to learn that his rebellious son had made a change for the better. Could it be, however, that he perceived Absalom's purpose was somehow to bring woe to David? He remembered God's word of judgment against him, that he "would raise up evil against thee out of thine own house."
 - b. "Hebron was the spot selected for the performance of this vow, ostensibly as being his native place (ch. 3:3), and a famous high place, an ancient sacred place (Gen. 13:18; 18; 22), and a city of the priests (Josh. 21:11), in presence of whom the vow was to be paid (Lev. 27), where sacrifices were frequently offered before the temple was built; but really as being in many respects the most suitable for the commencement of his rebellious enterprise. David, who always encouraged piety, and desired to see religious engagements punctually performed, gave his consent and blessing. What a black heart must Absalom have had when he could not only plot the ruin of his father, but pursue his treasonable designs under the mask of religion" (JFB, p.252).
3. Verse 10: "But Absalom sent spies throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, As soon as ye hear the sound of the trumpet, then ye shall say, Absalom reigneth in Hebron."
- a. He sent spies throughout the nation, saying that when the trumpet was sounded, the people were to know that he was reigning in Hebron.
 - b. His underhanded work had reached a point at which he believed he would have gained a greater number of supporters than David had. He was unconcerned about the fact that his rebellion against his father, was also rebellion against God, who put David on the throne in Israel. He had no right to usurp something that God had given to another.
4. Verse 11: "And with Absalom went two hundred men out of Jerusalem, *that were* called; and they went in their simplicity, and they knew not any thing."
- a. Absalom took two hundred selected men to leave Jerusalem with him. These were hand-picked men, men who could bring their influence to Absalom. The presence of these men with him would lend credence to his claim to the throne; if certain powerful and influential men were with him then he would appear to have their support, whether it was given him or not.
 - b. However, these were not conspirators with the young rebel. We are specifically told that they went with him "in their simplicity, and they knew not any thing." "Although ignorant of Absalom's plans, they would have been supposed by the citizens of Hebron to be Absalom's partisans. Furthermore, if they had, in any manner, objected to Absalom's having himself proclaimed as king, they would have, at once, become his hostages. This was a clever maneuver indeed" (Coffman, p.204).
5. Verse 12: "And Absalom sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, David's counsellor, from his city, *even* from Giloh, while he offered sacrifices. And the conspiracy was strong; for the people increased continually with Absalom."
- a. Absalom summoned Ahithophel, David's advisor, to come to him at Hebron; at the time, Ahithophel was in his hometown of Giloh, in the territory of Judah. "Ahithophel had no doubt been previously initiated into Absalom's plans, and had probably gone to his native city, merely that he might come to him with the greater ease; since his general place of abode, as king's councillor, must have been in Jerusalem" (Keil, p.417).
 - b. "The rapid accession of one place after another, in all parts of the kingdom, to the party of the insurgents, shows that deep and general dissatisfaction existed at this time against the person and government of David. The remnant of Saul's partisans, the unhappy affair of Bathsheba, the overbearing insolence and crimes of Joab, negligences and obstruction in the administration of justice, were some of the principal causes that contributed to the success of this wide-spread insurrection (cf. Ps. 3:1)" (JFB, p.252).

C. 2 Samuel 15:13-18: David Flees From Jerusalem.

1. Verse 13: “And there came a messenger to David, saying, The hearts of the men of Israel are after Absalom.”
 - a. Too late to stop the insurrection, a message came to David reporting the defection of many in Israel from David to Absalom. No doubt more information was included in the message than is reported in the text. The message was sufficient to give David a clear picture of the problem.
 - b. We are not told the source of the message. Perhaps it was from some governmental agent. The effect of the news must have caused great consternation within David. Not only was his position as king being destroyed, his life and the lives of his family were at risk; and to add to this, it was one of his own sons who was the instigator of this mischief.
2. Verses 14-15: “And David said unto all his servants that *were* with him at Jerusalem, Arise, and let us flee; for we shall not *else* escape from Absalom: make speed to depart, lest he overtake us suddenly, and bring evil upon us, and smite the city with the edge of the sword. And the king's servants said unto the king, Behold, thy servants *are ready to do* whatsoever my lord the king shall appoint.”
 - a. It is inconceivable that David panicked in issuing these orders. It is more likely that he wanted to spare Jerusalem and its citizens from the violence of civil war. He directed that preparations be made for a speedy withdrawal from the city.
 - b. “David was perhaps afraid that Jerusalem might fall into Absalom’s power through treachery, and therefore resolved to fly as speedily as possible, not only in order to prevent a terrible massacre, but also to give his own faithful adherents time to assemble” (Keil, p.417).
 - c. Jerusalem was probably ill-prepared for a long siege. In the open country, David was an expert at the art of making war. He had been victorious in scores of battles through the years, some under the most adverse of circumstances. His experience and skill in war, together with God’s help, would nullify any numerical superiority Absalom might be able to muster.
3. Verse 16: “And the king went forth, and all his household after him. And the king left ten women, *which were* concubines, to keep the house.”
 - a. His servants reported their readiness to depart (verse 15); the king went forth, taking his household with him.
 - b. He left ten concubines behind to tend to his house in his absence. This would give Absalom the means of heaping great scorn on his father: "Then said Absalom to Ahithophel, Give counsel among you what we shall do. And Ahithophel said unto Absalom, Go in unto thy father's concubines, which he hath left to keep the house; and all Israel shall hear that thou art abhorred of thy father: then shall the hands of all that *are* with thee be strong. So they spread Absalom a tent upon the top of the house; and Absalom went in unto his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel" (2 Sam. 16:20-22).
4. Verses 17-18: “And the king went forth, and all the people after him, and tarried in a place that was far off. And all his servants passed on beside him; and all the Cherethites, and all the Pelethites, and all the Gittites, six hundred men which came after him from Gath, passed on before the king.”
 - a. After leaving the city behind, David and company paused at a certain place far enough from the city to be safe, until the entire body of servants could catch up to him.
 - b. “And all his servants, *i.e.* his state officers and attendants, went along by his side, and the whole body-guard...and all the Gathites, namely the six hundred men who had come in his train from Gath, went along in front of the king. David directed the fugitives to fall into rank, the servants going by his side, and the bodyguard and the six hundred old companions in arms, who probably also formed a kind of bodyguard, marching in front” (Keil, p.418).

D. 2 Samuel 15:19-23: Ittai Commits Himself to David.

1. Verse 19: “Then said the king to Ittai the Gittite, Wherefore goest thou also with us? return to thy place,
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and abide with the king: for thou *art* a stranger, and also an exile.”

- a. “A military commander named *Ittai*, who had emigrated from Gath and come over to David not long before, also accompanied the king from the city. It is evident from ch. 18:2, where Ittai is said to have commanded a third part of the army sent against Absalom, and to have been placed on an equality with Joab and Abishai the most experienced generals, that Ittai was a Philistian general who had entered David’s service” (Keil, p.418).
 - b. Ittai the Gittite and those with him are not to be confused with the six hundred Gittites of the previous verse. The former ones were David’s old company who served with him during his years of fleeing from Saul.
 - c. David advised Ittai to “stay with the king,” meaning that since he was a stranger in Israel, there was no need for him to take sides in the present civil war. He could remain in Jerusalem and serve the king, whether he be Absalom, David, or someone else. Keil suggests the more exact meaning might be, “It is not your place to decide this contest as to who ought to be king; but you may remain quiet and see whom God shall appoint as king, and whether it be I or Absalom, you can serve the one that God shall choose” (p.419).
 - d. “Ittai was not one of the six hundred, though there was an Ittai among them, a Benjamite. He was a citizen of Gath, who had lately come (‘yesterday,’ see ver. 20), with all his household of slaves and dependents, his clan, Hebrew, his *taf*—translated in ver. 22 his ‘little ones.’ He had evidently been a person of importance in his own country, whence he had been driven, perhaps by political troubles, and was now, therefore, an exile and a foreigner (Authorized Version, ‘stranger’) at Jerusalem. As David made him joint commander of his army with Joab and Abishai (2 Sam 18:2), he must also have been a general of recognized military skill. As he was thus not personally interested in the government of Israel, and, in fact, had only lately come thither, David recommends him to return... and abide with the king, that is, with the *de facto* king, Absalom. But so great was the fascination which David exercised upon those around him, that this foreigner boldly threw in his lot with him, and accompanied him in his flight” [Pulpit Commentary, *ibid.*].
2. Verse 20: “Whereas thou camest *but* yesterday, should I this day make thee go up and down with us? seeing I go whither I may, return thou, and take back thy brethren: mercy and truth *be* with thee.”
 - a. The verse implies that Ittai had several others with him. David advised him to return, that since he had only come recently into his employ, he could expect to be well-treated by Absalom.
 - b. “May God ever show thee mercy, as thou showest it to me, and his truth ever preserve thee from error and delusion!” (Clarke, p.350).
 3. Verse 21: “And Ittai answered the king, and said, *As* the LORD liveth, and *as* my lord the king liveth, surely in what place my lord the king shall be, whether in death or life, even there also will thy servant be.”
 - a. A more faithful follower could not be found than Ittai, if his words mean anything. He here vowed to remain steadfastly by David’s side in life or death.
 - b. David did not coerce anyone to go with him who did not wish to be there. In this case, he could not get Ittai to return, he was so dedicated to serve him.
 - c. This is the kind of spiritual soldiers that are needed in the army of Christ; only volunteers are taken into the company; and only the dedicated are allowed to remain.
 4. Verse 22: “And David said to Ittai, Go and pass over. And Ittai the Gittite passed over, and all his men, and all the little ones that *were* with him.”
 - a. Seeing the determination of Ittai to remain with him, David bids him to pass over the Brook Kidron, and therefore gave him permission to remain in his company.
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- b. Those with Ittai included his family, for “little ones” could scarcely be anyone but children. “It is characteristic of Oriental people that they carry their whole family along with them in all their migrations” (JFB, p.253).
5. Verse 23: “And all the country wept with a loud voice, and all the people passed over: the king also himself passed over the brook Kidron, and all the people passed over, toward the way of the wilderness.”
 - a. “All the land...wept aloud when all the people went forward; and the king went over the brook Kidron, and all the people went over in the direction of...the way to the desert. The brook *Kidron* is a winter torrent, *i.e.* a mountain torrent which only flows during the heavy rains of winter....It is on the eastern side of Jerusalem, between the city and the Mount of Olives, and derives its name from the appearance of the water when rendered muddy through the melting of the snow (cf. Job 6:16)” (Keil, pp.420f).
 - b. Compare: "When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into the which he entered, and his disciples" (John 18:1).
 - c. The citizens who did not leave Jerusalem with David were the ones who lifted up the great cry; they realized the serious nature of his departure from the city. They envisioned a frightful and bloody civil war, after which things could not be expected to be as they were before.
- E. 2 Samuel 15:24-29: David Sends the Ark Back to Jerusalem.
1. Verse 24: “And lo Zadok also, and all the Levites *were* with him, bearing the ark of the covenant of God: and they set down the ark of God; and Abiathar went up, until all the people had done passing out of the city.”
 - a. “David appears here as the giant of faith which he was. How he had grown spiritually! He relied upon the power and lovingkindness of God as totally distinct from such a talisman as the ark of the covenant, important as that ark was. Furthermore, David courageously faced the truth that it might indeed be God’s will to punish him with death for the terrible sins which had marred his life; but David would willingly submit to that, if it should be God’s will” (Coffman, pp.209f).
 - b. Zadok the priest brought the ark of the covenant, which David had deposited in a tent at Jerusalem, following his capture of that city. The priest knew the king’s strong religious commitment, and tried to put the ark in company with David.
 - c. There seems to have been a gathering at the Kidron, of those who went out to follow the king. At this point they got organized for the journey. "And the king went forth, and all the people after him, and tarried in a place that was far off" (2 Sam. 15:17).
 2. Verses 25-26: “And the king said unto Zadok, Carry back the ark of God into the city: if I shall find favour in the eyes of the LORD, he will bring me again, and show me *both* it, and his habitation: But if he thus say, I have no delight in thee; behold, *here am I*, let him do to me as seemeth good unto him.”
 - a. David directed Zadok to return the ark to its place in Jerusalem. If God saw fit to bring him through this present emergency, he would be able to return to Jerusalem as before.
 - b. However, if God did not find favor in David, he was ready and willing to suffer whatever might be sent upon him. He was perfectly willing to accept the Lord’s verdict, whatever it might be.
 3. Verses 27-29: “The king said also unto Zadok the priest, *Art not* thou a seer? return into the city in peace, and your two sons with you, Ahimaaz thy son, and Jonathan the son of Abiathar. See, I will tarry in the plain of the wilderness, until there come word from you to certify me. Zadok therefore and Abiathar carried the ark of God again to Jerusalem: and they tarried there.”
 - a. David reminded Zadok that he was a seer (a prophet). He was to return to Jerusalem, along with his two sons; those two sons seem to include Ahimaaz (Zadok’s actual son) and Jonathan (the son of Abiathar, another priest).
 - b. The king said that he planned to proceed to the plain of the wilderness, and remain there until such
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time that he received word that he was to return to Jerusalem, and continue his reign.

- c. The instructions to Zadok carry the implication that, as high priest, he had nothing to fear from the insurgents; the high priest served as the religious leader of the nation, and without his office, the religion of the country could not be practiced.
- d. The two priests, Zadok and Abiathar, transported the ark of God back into Jerusalem. They took up their stations there, to perform their duties as before.

F. 2 Samuel 15:30-37: David Sends Hushai Back to Jerusalem to Defeat Ahithophel's Counsel.

1. Verse 30: "And David went up by the ascent of *mount Olivet*, and wept as he went up, and had his head covered, and he went barefoot: and all the people that *was* with him covered every man his head, and they went up, weeping as they went up."
 - a. David and company climbed the slope of the mount of olives, heading eastward. He made his way mournfully, having his head covered with a mourning wrapper, and his feet bare of shoes.
 - b. "The humility and resignation of David marked strongly his sanctified spirit, induced by contrition for his transgressions. He had fallen, but it was the fall of the upright; and he rose again, submitting himself meekly in the meantime to the will of God" (JFB, p.254).
 2. Verse 31: "And *one* told David, saying, Ahithophel *is* among the conspirators with Absalom. And David said, O LORD, I pray thee, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness."
 - a. Making his way eastward, away from Jerusalem into a kind of exile, weeping and mourning as he went, another blow is administered to him. He learns that his advisor, Ahithophel, had cast his lot with the conspirators.
 - b. The treachery of Ahithophel was a bitter pill for David to swallow. He meekly asked God to turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness. He did not ask the Lord to destroy his former advisor.
 3. Verses 32-34: "And it came to pass, that *when* David was come to the top *of the mount*, where he worshipped God, behold, Hushai the Archite came to meet him with his coat rent, and earth upon his head: Unto whom David said, If thou passest on with me, then thou shalt be a burden unto me: But if thou return to the city, and say unto Absalom, I will be thy servant, O king; *as I have been* thy father's servant hitherto, so *will* I now also *be* thy servant: then mayest thou for me defeat the counsel of Ahithophel."
 - a. When he reached the top of Mount Olivet, David worshiped God. We can easily picture David in our mind's eye, kneeling or prostrating himself on the earth, in humble obeisance before the Lord. His heart was heavy for his nation, his family, and for the future of the people and plan of God.
 - b. At this point, Hushai approached the king, having his clothing rent and dirt on his head; this was the classic description of one in grief.
 - c. David advised him that if he went with him, he would be somewhat of an additional burden to him, and that he ought to return to Jerusalem. He would be of greater service as a spy in Absalom's court than he would be if he went with David.
 - d. By giving counsel to Absalom, Hushai would be able to serve David the better. The advice could be of such a nature as to defeat the conspirators, and to aid David's cause.
 4. Verses 35-37: "And *hast thou* not there with thee Zadok and Abiathar the priests? therefore it shall be, *that* what thing soever thou shalt hear out of the king's house, thou shalt tell *it* to Zadok and Abiathar the priests. Behold, *they have* there with them their two sons, Ahimaaz Zadok's *son*, and Jonathan Abiathar's *son*; and by them ye shall send unto me every thing that ye can hear. So Hushai David's friend came into the city, and Absalom came into Jerusalem."
 - a. Zadok and Abiathar were supporters of David; information that would help his cause, which Hushai would be apt to hear by being a counsellor to Absalom, could be passed on to the priests, who would
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send the information on to David.

- b. The two sons of the priests, Ahimaaz and Jonathan, could bring the information to David, keeping him abreast of developments in Absalom's court.
 - c. Hushai, David's friend, returned to Jerusalem, to do the bidding of his king.
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2 SAMUEL 16

A. 2 Samuel 16:1-4: David Encounters Ziba.

1. Verse 1: “And when David was a little past the top *of the hill*, behold, Ziba the servant of Mephibosheth met him, with a couple of asses saddled, and upon them two hundred *loaves* of bread, and an hundred bunches of raisins, and an hundred of summer fruits, and a bottle of wine.”
 - a. “The rebellion at first looked like a great success. With King David out of the city and fleeing toward the Jordan river, Absalom found it easy to occupy Jerusalem, seize the palace, have sex relations with the ten concubines of the king which David had left in charge of the palace, and to set up his government without any opposition whatever. At that point it certainly looked like the rebellion had turned into a revolution” (Coffman, p.215).
 - b. David had scarcely crossed the Mount of Olives when he met Ziba, the servant of Mephibosheth. Ziba appeared in the narrative in 2 Samuel 9. “This crafty man, anticipating the certain failure of Absalom’s conspiracy, took steps to prepare for his future advancement on the restoration of the king” (JFB, p.254).
 - c. Ziba had with him two saddled donkeys, loaded with two hundred loaves of bread, a hundred bunches of raisins, a hundred summer fruits, and a bottle of wine. The summer fruit was figs (JFB).
 - 1) 2 Samuel 16:1: "When David was a little past the top *of the mountain*, there was Ziba the servant of Mephibosheth, who met him with a couple of saddled donkeys, and on them two hundred *loaves* of bread, one hundred clusters of raisins, one hundred summer fruits, and a skin of wine" (NKJ).
 - 2) 2 Samuel 16:1: "And when David was a little past the top *of the ascent*, behold, Ziba the servant of Mephibosheth met him, with a couple of asses saddled, and upon them two hundred loaves of bread, and a hundred clusters of raisins, and a hundred of summer fruits, and a bottle of wine" (ASV).
 - d. The bottle (skin) of wine was “a large goat-skin vessel. Its size made the supply of wine proportioned to the rest of his present...” (JFB, p.254). This kind of container is noted elsewhere: "They did work wilily, and went and made as if they had been ambassadors, and took old sacks upon their asses, and wine bottles, old, and rent, and bound up" (Josh. 9:4).
2. Verse 2: “And the king said unto Ziba, What meanest thou by these? And Ziba said, The asses *be* for the king's household to ride on; and the bread and summer fruit for the young men to eat; and the wine, that such as be faint in the wilderness may drink.”
 - a. When asked about the purpose of the animals and supplies, Ziba said the donkeys were for the king’s household to ride on [taking turns], the bread and fruit were for the young men, and the wine for those who grew faint in the wilderness.
 - b. Clarke gave this view: “This is the Eastern method of speaking when any thing is presented to a great man: ‘This and this is for the slaves of the servants of your majesty,’ when at the same time the presents are intended for the sovereign himself, and are so understood. It is a high Eastern compliment: These presents are not worthy of *your* acceptance; they are only fit for the slaves of your slaves” (p.352).
3. Verse 3: “And the king said, And where *is* thy master's son? And Ziba said unto the king, Behold, he abideth at Jerusalem: for he said, To day shall the house of Israel restore me the kingdom of my father.”
 - a. David inquired about the location of Mephibosheth. Ziba told him that his master remained behind in Jerusalem, thinking that Israel would place him on the throne as successor to Saul.
 - b. That this was a fabrication of Ziba has been generally accepted by Bible students. He made this false accusation against Mephibosheth for the purpose of advancing his own cause. It will be remembered

from chapter nine, that he had had control of Saul's property until David gave it to Mephibosheth, the lone surviving son of the long-dead king.

- c. Later, Mephibosheth told his side of the story to David. "And Mephibosheth the son of Saul came down to meet the king, and had neither dressed his feet, nor trimmed his beard, nor washed his clothes, from the day the king departed until the day he came *again* in peace. And it came to pass, when he was come to Jerusalem to meet the king, that the king said unto him, Wherefore wentest not thou with me, Mephibosheth? And he answered, My lord, O king, my servant deceived me: for thy servant said, I will saddle me an ass, that I may ride thereon, and go to the king; because thy servant *is* lame. And he hath slandered thy servant unto my lord the king; but my lord the king *is* as an angel of God: do therefore *what is* good in thine eyes. For all *of* my father's house were but dead men before my lord the king: yet didst thou set thy servant among them that did eat at thine own table. What right therefore have I yet to cry any more unto the king? And the king said unto him, Why speakest thou any more of thy matters? I have said, Thou and Ziba divide the land. And Mephibosheth said unto the king, Yea, let him take all, forasmuch as my lord the king is come again in peace unto his own house" (2 Sam. 19:24-30).
4. Verse 4: "Then said the king to Ziba, Behold, thine *are* all that *pertained* unto Mephibosheth. And Ziba said, I humbly beseech thee *that* I may find grace in thy sight, my lord, O king."
 - a. During a time of war or other crisis, mistakes are honestly made; without the time or means to test a situation carefully, often decisions are rash or terribly wrong. David erred in this present case.
 - b. The king believed Ziba's report. Others had turned against him, even his own son and one of his advisors (cf. 1 Sam. 15:31). The account was plausible. David verbally gave to Ziba the property that he formerly had restored to Mephibosheth. Later, when David heard Mephibosheth's report, he could not decide the truth of the matter, and so divided the property between them.

B. 2 Samuel 16:5-8: Shimei Curses David.

1. Verse 5: "And when king David came to Bahurim, behold, thence came out a man of the family of the house of Saul, whose name *was* Shimei, the son of Gera: he came forth, and cursed still as he came."
 - a. Concerning Shimei and Bahurim, Holman Bible Dictionary gives the following information:
 - 1) Shemei: "Personal name meaning, 'my being heard.'Relative of King Saul who cursed and opposed David as he fled from Absalom (2 Sam. 16). When David returned after Absalom's death, Shimei met him and pleaded for forgiveness and mercy, which David granted because of the festive occasion (2 Sam. 19). Solomon followed David's advice and had Shimei slain (1 Kings 2)."
 - 2) Bahurim: "Place name meaning, 'young men.' Village on road from Jerusalem to Jericho in tribal territory of Benjamin. David demanded Ishbosheth, Saul's son, send back Michal, Saul's daughter and David's wife. Ishbosheth took her from her husband Phaltiel, who followed her weeping to Bahurim until Abner, the general, forced him to return home (2 Sam. 3:16). When David fled from his son Absalom, a kinsman of Saul named Shimei met him at Bahurim, cursed him, and threw stones at his party. David prevented immediate punishment (2 Sam. 16:5; 19:16). Two messengers taking secret messages about Absalom from the priests hid from Absalom's servants at Bahurim (2 Sam. 17:18)."
 - b. Shemei, a relative of Saul, came out from Bahurim as David made his flight from Jerusalem. He came forth, cursing David. "The misfortune of Saul's family, and the occupation by David of what they considered their rightful possessions, afforded a natural, if not a justifiable cause for this ebullition [sudden outburst] of rude insults and violence by Shimei. He upbraided David as an ambitious usurper, and charged him, as one whose misdeeds had recoiled upon his own head, to surrender a throne to which he was not entitled. His language was that of a man incensed by the wrongs that he conceived had been done to his house" (JFB, p.255).

2. Verse 6: “And he cast stones at David, and at all the servants of king David: and all the people and all the mighty men *were* on his right hand and on his left.”
 - a. Showing both his courage and his wrath, Shimei threw rocks at the king. A lesser man than David would have had him slain immediately. Perhaps this despicable man’s courage was nothing but bravado, or maybe he was so overwrought with hatred that he was unable to perceive his danger; or is the reason for his actions to be found in a foolhardy mind?
 - b. David’s mighty men were on both sides of the king, protecting him from danger. Those who were not protected by armor stood the chance of being injured by the missiles Shimei threw.
3. Verses 7-8: “And thus said Shimei when he cursed, Come out, come out, thou bloody man, and thou man of Belial: The LORD hath returned upon thee all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose stead thou hast reigned; and the LORD hath delivered the kingdom into the hand of Absalom thy son: and, behold, thou *art taken* in thy mischief, because thou *art* a bloody man.”
 - a. In his fury, Shimei shouted for David to come out (“begone”), to flee from the country, called him a “bloody man,” and accused him of being a “man of Belial.” Calling him a bloody man was a charge of savagery and murder against the innocent. A “man of Belial” was a very strong accusation, denoting the individual was worthless and sinful.
 - b. “Belial” is defined by Holman’s in this way: “The transliteration of a Hebrew common noun meaning, ‘useless’ or ‘worthless.’ KJV interprets it as a proper name sixteen times, but modern translations translate it as a common noun, “worthless” or “wicked.” It is a term of derision (Deut. 13:13). In Nahum 1:15, where the King James Version translates it as “the wicked,” Belial appears to be the name of some specific malevolent power. In the New Testament the word occurs one time (2 Cor. 6:15). There Paul the apostle declared the mutual irreconcilability of Christ and Belial...”
 - c. “Belial is a word frequently used in the Old Testament, with various meanings, especially in the books of Samuel, where it is found nine times. See also Deut 13:13; Judg 19:22; 20:13; 1 Kings 21:10,13; 2 Chron 13:7. Its original meaning was either ‘worthlessness’ or ‘hopeless ruin’ (see the RV, margin). It also had the meanings of ‘extreme wickedness and destruction,’ the latter indicating the destiny of the former. In the period between the OT and the NT it came to be a proper name for Satan. There may be an indication of this in Nah 1:15, where the word translated ‘the wicked one’ is Belial....In the NT, in 2 Cor 6:15, it is set in contrast to Christ and represents a personification of the system of impure worship connected especially with the cult of Aphrodite” [Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, Copyright (c)1985, Thomas Nelson Publishers].
 - d. “David was guiltless of the crime of which Shimei accused him; but his conscience reminded him of other flagrant iniquities, and he therefore regarded the cursing of this man as a chastisement from heaven” (JFB, p.255).

C. 2 Samuel 16:9-14: David Ignores Shimei.

1. Verse 9: “Then said Abishai the son of Zeruiah unto the king, Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? let me go over, I pray thee, and take off his head.”
 - a. Abishai, a strong and courageous warrior, requested permission from David to remove the head of this “dead dog” who cursed the king.
 - b. Concerning Zeruiah and Abishai, Holman’s Dictionary provides this information:
 - 1) Zeruiah: “Personal name meaning, ‘perfumed with mastix’ or ‘bleed.’ Mother of three of David’s generals, Joab, Abishai, and Asahel (2 Sam. 2:18). According to 1 Chronicles 2:16, Zeruiah was David’s (half-) sister.” Other information suggests that this lady was David’s aunt.
 - 2) Abishai: “Personal name meaning, ‘father exists.’ Son of David’s sister Zeruiah and brother of Joab, David’s general (1 Chron. 2:15-16). He was with David when he spared Abner (1 Sam. 26:7)

and with Joab pursuing Abner (2 Sam. 2:24) and killing Abner (2 Sam. 3:30). He commanded troops against Ammon (2 Sam. 10). He sought to kill Shimei for cursing David, but the king restrained him (2 Sam. 16; 19:21). He led a third of David's troops against David's son Absalom (2 Sam. 18). He commanded forces against Sheba, who led a northern rebellion against David (2 Sam. 20). He killed Isbi-benob, the Philistine giant who threatened David (2 Sam. 21:15-17). A mighty captain, he was still not among David's elite three (2 Sam. 23:8-19). He was famed for killing 18,000 Edomites (1 Chron. 18:12)."

- a) 1 Samuel 26:7-9: "So David and Abishai came to the people by night: and, behold, Saul lay sleeping within the trench, and his spear stuck in the ground at his bolster: but Abner and the people lay round about him. Then said Abishai to David, God hath delivered thine enemy into thine hand this day: now therefore let me smite him, I pray thee, with the spear even to the earth at once, and I will not smite him the second time. And David said to Abishai, Destroy him not: for who can stretch forth his hand against the LORD'S anointed, and be guiltless?"
 - b) 2 Samuel 16:9: "Then said Abishai the son of Zeruiah unto the king, Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? let me go over, I pray thee, and take off his head."
 - c) 2 Samuel 21:15-17: "Moreover the Philistines had yet war again with Israel; and David went down, and his servants with him, and fought against the Philistines: and David waxed faint. And Ishbibenob, which was of the sons of the giant, the weight of whose spear weighed three hundred shekels of brass in weight, he being girded with a new sword, thought to have slain David. But Abishai the son of Zeruiah succoured him, and smote the Philistine, and killed him. Then the men of David sware unto him, saying, Thou shalt go no more out with us to battle, that thou quench not the light of Israel."
 - d) 2 Samuel 23:14-17: "And David was then in an hold, and the garrison of the Philistines was then in Bethlehem. 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! 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. 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."
 - e) 1 Chronicles 18:12: "Moreover Abishai the son of Zeruiah slew of the Edomites in the valley of salt eighteen thousand."
2. Verse 10: "And the king said, What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah? so let him curse, because the LORD hath said unto him, Curse David. Who shall then say, Wherefore hast thou done so?"
- a. "His answer to Abishai's proposal evinced the spirit of deep and humble resignation—the spirit of a man who watched the course of Providence, and acknowledged Shimei as the instrument of God's chastening hand. One thing is remarkable, that he acted more independently of the sons of Zeruiah in this season of great distress than he could often muster courage to do in the days of his prosperity and power" (JFB, p.255).
 - b. David's point is this: If the Lord has told Shimei to say what he said to me, then so be it; who can take issue with what the Lord has done?
 - c. Abishai wanted to kill Shimei. "But David replied, 'What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah?' Joab probably joined with Abishai. The formula 'what to me and you?' signifies that a person did not wish to have anything in common with the feelings and views of another (cf. 1 Kings 17:18, Josh. 22:24...)" (Keil, p.425).
- 1) 1 Kings 17:18: "And she said unto Elijah, What have I to do with thee, O thou man of God? art
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thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son?"

- 2) Joshua 22:24: "And if we have not rather done it for fear of this thing, saying, In time to come your children might speak unto our children, saying, What have ye to do with the LORD God of Israel?"
- d. Coffman: "They are enraged, like a bear robbed of her cubs in the field ... Your father is expert in war ... He is a mighty man ... The men with him are valiant men" (2 Samuel 17:8-10). No one in Israel would have denied such truth as this, with which Hushai loaded his appeal. "All that Hushai said about the bravery and heroism of David and his men was well founded," and universally known in Israel. However, there were also some bold, flattering implications and outright lies in Hushai's appeal.
3. Verses 11-12: "And David said to Abishai, and to all his servants, Behold, my son, which came forth of my bowels, seeketh my life: how much more now *may this* Benjamite *do it?* let him alone, and let him curse; for the LORD hath bidden him. It may be that the LORD will look on mine affliction, and that the LORD will requite me good for his cursing this day."
 - a. David addressed Abishai and his other servants to explain why he did not permit them to punish Shimei, and why he was fleeing from Absalom instead of putting up a fight; otherwise they might think he was filled with fear.
 - b. The truth was, he thought the entire episode was part of the punishment God was sending upon him for his own violations of his will. He had rather flee from the scene, and let God's will be done, than stay and fight, which would be fruitless if the affair was of the Lord; also, by taking the actions he took, innocent people would not be harmed. David shows a high degree of spiritual strength.
 - c. The king explained that his own son now sought his life; since his son wanted to kill him, he was not shocked to discover this Benjamite wanting him dead. David had replaced Saul, a Benjamite, as king; the Benjamites could not be expected to look with great favor on David, who was from Judah.
 - d. David mentioned the possibility that the Lord would look with approval on his case, and recompense him good for the curse which Shimei poured upon him.
4. Verses 13-14: "And as David and his men went by the way, Shimei went along on the hill's side over against him, and cursed as he went, and threw stones at him, and cast dust. And the king, and all the people that *were* with him, came weary, and refreshed themselves there."
 - a. Shimei did not give up his evil work. As David and his company continued their journey, Shimei went along on the side of the hill above them, cursing, casting stones, and throwing dust at them.
 - b. "The king came with his train, pursued in this manner, to Ayephim, and refreshed himself there. The context requires that *Ayephim* should be taken as the name of a place. If it were an appellative, signifying weary, there would be no information as to the place to which David came, and to which the word...(there) distinctly refers" (Keil, pp.426f). However, Jamieson thought that the common rendering is the correct view, that David and his company grew weary as they traveled, and that they refreshed themselves at that point.
 - c. Other versions:
 - 1) 2 Samuel 16:14: "Now the king and all the people who *were* with him became weary; so they refreshed themselves there" (NKJ).
 - 2) 2 Samuel 16:14: "And the king, and all the people that were with him, came weary; and he refreshed himself there" (ASV).

D. 2 Samuel 16:15-23: Ahithophel's Counsel to Absalom.

1. Verses 15-16: "And Absalom, and all the people the men of Israel, came to Jerusalem, and Ahithophel with him. And it came to pass, when Hushai the Archite, David's friend, was come unto Absalom, that Hushai said unto Absalom, God save the king, God save the king."

- a. “When Absalom and ‘all the people, the men of Israel,’ *i.e.* the people who had joined him out of all the tribes of Israel (ch. 15:10), came to Jerusalem, and Ahithophel with him, Hushai the Archite also came and greeted him warmly as king, by exclaiming again and again, ‘Long live the king!’” (Keil, p.427).
 - b. “Right here is where Absalom lost his chance to be king of Israel....He was taken in by Hushai’s deceitful flattery. Hushai was in Absalom’s presence upon David’s specific orders with the sole purpose of defeating the counsel of Ahithophel; and once he gained Absalom’s confidence, the rest of his assignment was easy. It must not be thought that Hushai’s lying flattery of Absalom was approved by the Lord. The deeds of sinful men are frequently used and overruled by the Providence of God in the achievement of his eternal purpose” (Coffman, p.221).
 - c. The orders David gave to his friend Hushai are found in 2 Samuel 15:32-37: "And it came to pass, that *when* David was come to the top *of the mount*, where he worshipped God, behold, Hushai the Archite came to meet him with his coat rent, and earth upon his head: Unto whom David said, If thou passest on with me, then thou shalt be a burden unto me: But if thou return to the city, and say unto Absalom, I will be thy servant, O king; *as I have been* thy father's servant hitherto, so *will* I now also *be* thy servant: then mayest thou for me defeat the counsel of Ahithophel. And *hast thou* not there with thee Zadok and Abiathar the priests? therefore it shall be, *that* what thing soever thou shalt hear out of the king's house, thou shalt tell *it* to Zadok and Abiathar the priests. Behold, *they have* there with them their two sons, Ahimaaz Zadok's *son*, and Jonathan Abiathar's *son*; and by them ye shall send unto me every thing that ye can hear. So Hushai David's friend came into the city, and Absalom came into Jerusalem."
 - d. Ahithophel was a very able advisor who had been by David’s side in former times, but now had betrayed David to become the counselor of Absalom. Hushai was not greatly overshadowed by Ahithophel; this wise man was sent to counter Ahithophel’s counsel.
2. Verses 17-19: “And Absalom said to Hushai, *Is* this thy kindness to thy friend? why wentest thou not with thy friend? And Hushai said unto Absalom, Nay; but whom the LORD, and this people, and all the men of Israel, choose, his will I be, and with him will I abide. And again, whom should I serve? *should I* not *serve* in the presence of his son? as I have served in thy father's presence, so will I be in thy presence.”
 - a. Absalom must have been astonished to see Hushai, a known friend to David. The would-be king asked him why he was not with his friend. Hushai replied that his allegiance belonged to the one who had been chosen by the Lord, by the people in the present company, and by all Israel. He stated further that he had served David well while he was king, and that he would serve his son just as well.
 - b. “With great craftiness, Hushai declared at the very outset that Jehovah had chosen Absalom—at least he could not come to any other conclusion, judging from the results. And under such circumstances he could not have any doubt as to whom it was his duty to serve. As he had formerly served the father, so now he would serve his son Absalom. In this way he succeeded in completely deceiving Absalom, so that he placed unbounded confidence in him” (Keil, pp.427f).
 - c. “Hushai’s devotion to David was so well known, that his presence in the camp of the conspirators excited great surprise. Professing, however, with great address, to consider it his duty to support the cause which the course of Providence and the national will had seemingly decreed should triumph, and urging his friendship for the father as a ground of confidence in his fidelity to the son, he persuaded Absalom of his sincerity, and was admitted amongst the concillors of the new king” (JFB, p.256).
 3. Verses 20-21: “Then said Absalom to Ahithophel, Give counsel among you what we shall do. And Ahithophel said unto Absalom, Go in unto thy father's concubines, which he hath left to keep the house; and all Israel shall hear that thou art abhorred of thy father: then shall the hands of all that *are* with thee be strong.”
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- a. "After taking possession of the capital of the kingdom, the next thing to do was to form the resolution to take and keep the throne. Absalom therefore turned to Ahithophel, and said, 'Give me counsel what we are to do'" (Keil, p.428).
 - b. "This is the first cabinet council on record, although the deference paid to Ahithophel gave him the entire direction of the proceedings....This councillor saw that, now the die was cast, half measures would be inexpedient; and to cut off all possibility of reconciliation between the king and his rebellious son, and thereby ensure the safety of those who had joined the conspiracy, gave this atrocious advice regarding the treatment of the royal women who had been left in charge of the palace....
 - 1) "The history of the East affords only one parallel to this infamous outrage of Absalom. Ahithophel's counsel appeared politic, but in reality it was most pernicious—a flagrant breach of the divine law (Lev 20:11), a greater crime than that of Reuben, who forfeited his birthright (1 Chron 5:1), and sure to draw down upon the perpetrator the execration of all good people.
 - 2) "Thus, however, the adultery of David with Bath-sheba was punished by this horrid crime of Absalom, committed apparently in the same palace, according to the denunciation of the prophet (2 Sam 12:11)" [Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1997 by Biblesoft].
 - c. "Lying with the king's concubines was an appropriation of the royal harem, and, as such, a complete usurpation of the throne...which would render any reconciliation between Absalom and his father utterly impossible, and therefore would of necessity instigate the followers of Absalom to maintain his cause with all the greater firmness" (Keil, p.428). When Cortez landed in Mexico, in order to motivate his little army, he burned the ships, committing them to the venture.
 - d. If the insurrection died down, it was possible that David could find room for forgiveness in his heart for Absalom, his son, but there could be no pardon for Ahithophel. Thus the counsellor produced the surest means to forever separate David from Absalom, and give the cause of the rebels the greatest possible motivation. Compare: "And Saul had a concubine, whose name was Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah: and Ishbosheth said to Abner, Wherefore hast thou gone in unto my father's concubine?" (2 Sam. 3:7).
4. Verses 22-23: "So they spread Absalom a tent upon the top of the house; and Absalom went in unto his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel. And the counsel of Ahithophel, which he counselled in those days, *was* as if a man had inquired at the oracle of God: so *was* all the counsel of Ahithophel both with David and with Absalom."
- a. A tent was erected atop David's palace; there Absalom went in unto David's concubines, in the sight of all Israel. The Israelites knew very well what was transpiring within the tent.
 - 1) "The wives of the conquered king were always the property of the conqueror; and in possessing these, he appeared to possess the right to the kingdom....But for a son to take his father's wives was the sum of abomination, and was death by the law of God, Lev. 20:11. This was a sin rarely found, even among the Gentiles" (Clarke, p.345).
 - 2) "And the man that lieth with his father's wife hath uncovered his father's nakedness: both of them shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them" (Lev. 20:11).
 - b. The counsel of Ahithophel was so highly respected it was as if his words were a divine oracle. This was so with him during his days with both David and Absalom.
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2 SAMUEL 17

A. 2 Samuel 17:1-4: Ahithophel's Counsel to Absalom.

1. Verse 1: "Moreover Ahithophel said unto Absalom, Let me now choose out twelve thousand men, and I will arise and pursue after David this night."
 - a. Ahithophel was riding the crest of popularity. He had served David, and had now thrown his support behind the usurper, Absalom. His wicked counsel of the previous chapter had been accepted by the self-proclaimed king.
 - b. This evil advisor of kings now asked Absalom to give him twelve thousand men, and he would lead them immediately on an attack of David's camp. If this plan were carried out, David would be slain, and all God's plans involving David would have been brought to nought.
 - c. We have no reason to doubt the sincerity of Ahithophel's proposal. Coffman and others offer the theory, however, that his purpose was to overwhelm David, as indicated, but once in control of this sizeable military force, he would turn on Absalom, and place himself on the throne. Admitting that the theory cannot be proved, brother Coffman suggested it would allow Ahithophel to spare his granddaughter (Bathsheba) and his great-grandson (Solomon), for once established on the throne, Absalom would make short work of any who might represent a challenge to his right to be king.
2. Verse 2: "And I will come upon him while he *is* weary and weak handed, and will make him afraid: and all the people that *are* with him shall flee; and I will smite the king only."
 - a. This meeting must have taken place soon after David's departure from Jerusalem, at a time when he and his band had scarcely reached relative safety in eastern Palestine. While they were still weary from their forced march, Ahithophel intended to launch an attack.
 - b. His ingenious plan would, he figured, result only in the death of David. When his supporters saw the superior numbers of Ahithophel's attacking army, David would be forsaken by them. "This advice was sagaciously conceived; for if David had been attacked that night by a powerful army, he might possibly have been defeated" (Keil, p.429).
3. Verse 3: "And I will bring back all the people unto thee: the man whom thou seekest *is* as if all returned: *so* all the people shall be in peace."
 - a. 2 Samuel 17:3: "Then I will bring back all the people to you. When all return except the man whom you seek, all the people will be at peace" (NKJ).
 - b. Ahithophel knew that the only man Absalom needed to kill was David; once he was slain, the fight would go out of his followers, and they would meekly accept the new king's authority.
4. Verse 4: "And the saying pleased Absalom well, and all the elders of Israel."
 - a. "The adoption of his advice would have extinguished the cause of David; and it affords a dreadful proof of the extremities to which the heartless prince was, to secure his ambitious objects, prepared to go, that the parricidal counsel 'pleased Absalom well, and all the elders of Israel'" (JFB, p.257).
 - b. We wonder whether Athithophel or any of Abasalom's henchmen gave any thought to the fact that God had placed David on Israel's throne and had made many highly significant promises to be fulfilled through David and his descendants. On the surface, it would appear that David's future was all but extinguished. This was one of the several cases where God's long-range plans seemed on the verge of ruin.
 - 1) The descendants of Abraham almost went out of existence as a separate, identifiable people while they were under the domination of Pharaoh, during their severe bondage in Egypt.
 - 2) Later, during the time of Esther, a cruel plan was instigated which would have resulted in the complete annihilation of the Israelites.

- 3) Still later, if Herod the Great had succeeded in killing baby Jesus, all of God's plans would have come to nought.
- 4) In the present case, if David had been slain, God's plans would have been severely disrupted. But despite David's sinful blunders, God protected him. Likewise, despite the frequent rebellions of Israel, God was able to sustain them as an identifiable people, and thus to work out his great plans successfully.
- c. Although David had justifiable cause to execute Absalom earlier after he slew his brother Amnon, he permitted him to live in exile with his mother's people at Geshur. But Absalom was unwilling to allow his father the same right.
- d. Absalom and those elders of Israel who were under his banner were well-pleased with Ahithophel's wicked counsel.

B. 2 Samuel 17:5-14: Hushai's Counsel to Absalom.

1. Verses 5-6: "Then said Absalom, Call now Hushai the Archite also, and let us hear likewise what he saith. And when Hushai was come to Absalom, Absalom spake unto him, saying, Ahithophel hath spoken after this manner: shall we do *after* his saying? if not; speak thou."
 - a. Hushai was David's friend and advisor who had agreed to gain entrance into Absalom inner circle, and counteract the powerful counsel Ahithophel would offer. He was now called before Absalom to give his advice.
 - b. Absalom repeated what Ahithophel has suggested, and asked Hushai what he thought of it. If he did not agree with it, he was to give his recommendations.
 2. Verse 7-8: "And Hushai said unto Absalom, The counsel that Ahithophel hath given *is* not good at this time. For, said Hushai, thou knowest thy father and his men, that they *be* mighty men, and they *be* chafed in their minds, as a bear robbed of her whelps in the field: and thy father *is* a man of war, and will not lodge with the people."
 - a. Absalom was willing to kill his father; there was no compunction in his heart against it. His willingness to adopt the suggestion Ahithophel made could have led to the death, not only of David, but of all of those with him.
 - b. Hushai, perceiving the grave danger Ahithophel's plan meant for David, did not agree with it. He gave clear, cogent reasons why it should not be adopted. He showed that that plan was not good "at this time."
 - c. He reminded Absalom that David and his men were mighty men of war, skilled and knowing in the art of fighting. They were "chafed in their minds" at having to flee from Jerusalem, forced from home and comfort, and deprived of their usual positions. This will make them to be aching for a fight, just as a mother bear would be enraged over the theft of her cubs.
 - d. Also, being the wise warrior that he was, David would not be at the same location as his men; he would find concealment elsewhere, thus would elude a nighttime attack.
 3. Verses 9-10: "Behold, he is hid now in some pit, or in some *other* place: and it will come to pass, when some of them be overthrown at the first, that whosoever heareth it will say, There is a slaughter among the people that follow Absalom. And he also *that is* valiant, whose heart *is* as the heart of a lion, shall utterly melt: for all Israel knoweth that thy father *is* a mighty man, and *they* which *be* with him *are* valiant men."
 - a. Hushai declared that already David would have found some pit, or some other safe place, in which to hide, making such an assault as Ahithophel recommended to be worse than useless. David would not be found even if the attack succeeded.
 - b. When Ahithophel made his attack, Hushai maintained that some of his men would be slain, and the
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- report would be circulated quickly that a great slaughter had fallen upon Absalom's men.
- c. This report, Hushai said, would melt the most valiant of Absalom's soldiers, convincing them that they would have to face David in an open fight. They knew what a great warrior David was, and would not have the heart to meet him in a fair battle.
4. Verses 11-12: "Therefore I counsel that all Israel be generally gathered unto thee, from Dan even to Beersheba, as the sand that *is* by the sea for multitude; and that thou go to battle in thine own person. So shall we come upon him in some place where he shall be found, and we will light upon him as the dew falleth on the ground: and of him and of all the men that *are* with him there shall not be left so much as one."
 - a. Hushai's counsel was for the fighting men of the whole nation be gathered, and that Absalom lead this mighty army in person. There would be such an overwhelming force against David that he and his band would have no chance. Absalom could lead his great army, as the sand on the seashore in number, and fall upon David as dew falls upon the ground.
 - b. "This word-picture of Absalom riding in his royal clothing at the head of a mighty army most certainly appealed to Absalom, especially, if there had been any suspicion on his part of Ahithophel's suggestion that he lead twelve thousand picked soldiers of Absalom's troops. The eloquence of Hushai appeared in his simile of the bear robbed of her cubs in the field, and in that of the dew" (Coffman, pp.232f).
 - c. The result of this operation, which would accrue to Absalom's glory, would be the annihilation of David and his men.
 - d. Hushai's plan would spare David from the clear danger Ahithophel's plan represented. His aim was to give David time to make preparations for handling the insurrection. His efforts were completely successful.
 5. Verse 13: "Moreover, if he be gotten into a city, then shall all Israel bring ropes to that city, and we will draw it into the river, until there be not one small stone found there."
 - a. Covering all obvious contingencies, Hushai said that if David and his men took refuge in some walled city while the Israelite host was being assembled, then ropes could be brought with which to pull down the walls, and every stone of which could be thrown into the river.
 - b. "In besieging a town, hooks or cranes were often thrown upon the walls or turrets, by which, with ropes attached to them, the besiegers, uniting all their force, pulled down the fortifications in a mass of ruins" (JFB, p.257).
 6. Verse 14: "And Absalom and all the men of Israel said, The counsel of Hushai the Archite *is* better than the counsel of Ahithophel. For the LORD had appointed to defeat the good counsel of Ahithophel, to the intent that the LORD might bring evil upon Absalom."
 - a. "Absalom and all Israel thought his advice better than that of Ahithophel; for it was intended to commend itself to Absalom and his supporters....All that Hushai had said about the bravery and heroism of David and his followers, was well founded. The deception lay in the assumption that all the people from Dan to Beersheba would crowd around Absalom as one man; whereas it might easily be foreseen, that after the first excitement of the revolution was over, and greater calmness ensued, a large part of the nation and army would gather round David" (Keil, p.431).
 - b. The second part of the verse is the inspired historian's statement that God had determined to defeat the counsel of Ahithophel, and thus bring evil upon Absalom. The Lord was not going to allow the selfish aims of a sinful young rebel to annul his great plans. God used Absalom to punish David for his sins, and now he used the evil traits of Absalom to bring about that young man's overthrow.
 - c. "The reasons specified being extremely plausible, and expressed in the strong hyperbolic language
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suiting to dazzle an Oriental imagination, the council declared in favour of Hushai's advice; and their resolution was the immediate cause of the discomfiture of the rebellion, although the counsel itself was only a link in the chain of causation held by the controlling hand of the Lord" (JFB, p.257).

C. 2 Samuel 17:15-22: Hushai Sends a Message to David.

1. Verse 15: "Then said Hushai unto Zadok and to Abiathar the priests, Thus and thus did Ahithophel counsel Absalom and the elders of Israel; and thus and thus have I counselled."
 - a. In keeping with the arrangement made earlier, Hushai passed information on to Zadok and Abiathar as to the proceedings in Absalom's war council. This military intelligence was then to be forwarded to David by the sons of these two priests.
 - b. 2 Samuel 15:35-36: "And *hast thou* not there with thee Zadok and Abiathar the priests? therefore it shall be, *that* what thing soever thou shalt hear out of the king's house, thou shalt tell *it* to Zadok and Abiathar the priests. Behold, *they have* there with them their two sons, Ahimaaz Zadok's son, and Jonathan Abiathar's son; and by them ye shall send unto me every thing that ye can hear."
2. Verses 16-17: "Now therefore send quickly, and tell David, saying, Lodge not this night in the plains of the wilderness, but speedily pass over; lest the king be swallowed up, and all the people that *are* with him. Now Jonathan and Ahimaaz stayed by Enrogel; for they might not be seen to come into the city: and a wench went and told them; and they went and told king David."
 - a. "Apparently doubting that his advice would be followed, Hushai ordered secret intelligence to be conveyed to David of all that transpired, with an urgent recommendation to cross the Jordan without a moment's delay, lest Ahithophel's address and influence might produce a change on the prince's mind, and an immediate pursuit be determined on" (JFB, p.257).
 - b. If David camped in the open plains, his encampment could be overrun by a sudden attack of a strong force during the night. Hushai sent word that he should quickly cross over Jordan into an area where he could find concealment lest Absalom have another change of mind.
 - c. Jonathan and Ahimaaz stayed at Enrogel lest they should be seen entering into Jerusalem. Ahimaaz was known for his running: "And the watchman said, Me thinketh the running of the foremost is like the running of Ahimaaz the son of Zadok. And the king said, He is a good man, and cometh with good tidings" (2 Sam. 18:27). Since he and Jonathan were to be used as fleet-footed messengers, evidently both of them were renowned for that ability. This would account for the fact that their presence near Jerusalem was kept secret. If they were to be seen entering the city, Absalom's spies would suspect them of taking messages to David.
 - d. En-rogel: "Place name meaning, 'spring of the fuller' or 'spring of the foot.' A border town between the tribal territory of Judah (Josh. 15:7) and that of Benjamin (Josh. 18:16). Jonathan and Ahimaaz, the priests' sons, stayed at En-rogel as messengers to relay to David what the priests might learn from Absalom when he took over Jerusalem from his father (2 Sam 17:17). Adonijah staged a party there to proclaim himself as David's successor as king of Judah (1 Kings 1:9). En-rogel lay near Jerusalem where the Kidron and Hinnom valleys met at modern Bir Ayyub" (Holman PC Bible Dictionary). The En-rogel of our text is the spring near Jerusalem. Jamieson reports that this spring produced about 3,600 gallons of water daily.
 - e. "A short distance below the Pool of Siloam, the road descending the Valley of Jehoshaphat unites with that descending the Valley of Hinnom, and a short distance below this point you reach the only unfailing well about Jerusalem. It was known in the Old Testament, and in the writings of the earliest Christian travelers, as En-Rogel; but since the Mohammedan invasion it has been called by the Arabs the Well of Job, and by some the Well of Joab. Since the sixteenth century the Greek and Latin priests in Jerusalem have called it the Well of Nehemiah, from a tradition mentioned in 2 Macc. 1:19-22, that in a chamber connected with it the holy fire of the altar was concealed during the Babylonian captivity,

and found there by Nehemiah.

- 1) "The surface of the ground at this well is 345 feet lower than that of the haram area, and the well, according to Barclay's measurement, is 124 feet deep. It is a very large well, though its mouth is narrow, and a stone cast in produces a reverberation when it strikes the water as if thrown into a large cavern.
 - a) "A small and rude stone building stands over it, in the rear of which you gain access to its mouth. It has a large collecting chamber at the bottom, and another 12 feet above; hence the reverberation.
 - b) "In the winter it frequently overflows, and sends a lively stream down the valley. In the summer its water becomes low sometimes, but never fails. Dr. Barclay relates that in September, 1853, when the cisterns and tanks within the city were generally exhausted, about 2000 donkey-loads of water, amounting to 25,000 gallons, were daily carried in skins into the city from this well, yet this heavy draught, though continued more than a month, reduced the water only 6½ feet, and it promptly came back to 21 feet when the first rains of November put a little water into the exhausted cisterns of the city.
 - 2) "The antiquity of this invaluable well is attested by the fact that it was one of the landmarks on the line between Judah and Benjamin in the days of Joshua, and it possesses historical interest from its connection with David's unhappy flight from Absalom, and with Adonijah's rebellion" (J.W. McGarvey, *Lands of the Bible*, pp.192f).
- f. When a message was to be sent, a maidservant was dispatched to them from Zadok and Abiathar to give them the information. This was a safe and sensible arrangement, showing good thinking.
3. Verses 18-19: "Nevertheless a lad saw them, and told Absalom: but they went both of them away quickly, and came to a man's house in Bahurim, which had a well in his court; whither they went down. And the woman took and spread a covering over the well's mouth, and spread ground corn thereon; and the thing was not known."
 - a. Despite the greatest caution, the best-laid plans can fail. A lad saw Jonathan and Ahimaaz, and reported their presence to Absalom. "Absalom had most likely set spies to watch the priests and their sons. But the two sons who had noticed the spy hurried into the house of a man at Bahurim, who had a well (or cistern that was dry at the time) in his court, and went down into the well" (Keil, p.432).
 - b. The two messengers quickly went to Bahurim, and concealed themselves in a well. The woman (the wife of the man, most likely) placed a covering over the top of the well, and spread ground corn upon it. "And the woman took and spread the covering over the well's mouth, and strewed bruised grain thereon; and nothing was known" (2 Sam. 17:19, ASV).
 - c. Bahurim: "Village on road from Jerusalem to Jericho in tribal territory of Benjamin. David demanded Ishbosheth, Saul's son, send back Michal, Saul's daughter and David's wife. Ishbosheth took her from her husband Phaltiel, who followed her weeping to Bahurim until Abner, the general, forced him to return home (2 Sam. 3:16).
 - 1) "When David fled from his son Absalom, a kinsman of Saul named Shimei met him at Bahurim, cursed him, and threw stones at his party. David prevented immediate punishment (2 Sam. 16:5; 19:16).
 - 2) "Two messengers taking secret messages about Absalom from the priests hid from Absalom's servants at Bahurim (2 Sam. 17:18).
 - 3) "Solomon followed David's orders and had Shimei of Bahurim killed (1 Kings 2:8-9,36-46). Azmaveth, one of David's valiant soldiers, was from Bahurim (1 Chron. 11:33)....
 - 4) "Bahurim was probably located at modern Ras et-Tmim, east of Mount Scopus near Jerusalem"

(Holman PC Bible Dictionary).

d. A note about Bahurim from McGarvey's *Lands of the Bible*:

- 1) "The road after leaving Bethany soon ascends a hill on which Martha is supposed to have met Jesus [John 11:20], and then about a mile farther it descends into a narrow valley called Wady el Hod (valley of the watering-place), in which about a mile farther we find a fountain. This is probably the 'waters of En-shemesh,' mentioned in the southern line of the tribe of Benjamin [Josh. 15:7], and near here must have been Bahurim, for as we approach the fountain the road passes along the back of a descending ridge with one much higher to the left separated by a narrow valley.
- 2) "As David passed along the former Shemei could have passed along the latter, throwing stones and hurling curses, while Abishai was chafing to go over and take off his head. The fountain sends forth a stream from an orifice three feet from the ground. The temperature of the water in April, 1879, was 75 degrees. A winter torrent flows along the bed of the valley, and the road crosses it a short distance below the fountain.
- 3) "This is the brook of water referred to by the woman of Bahurim when, having hid Hushai's messengers to David in her well, she told the pursuers that they had gone over 'the brook of water'" (p.233).

4. Verse 20: "And when Absalom's servants came to the woman to the house, they said, Where *is* Ahimaaz and Jonathan? And the woman said unto them, They be gone over the brook of water. And when they had sought and could not find *them*, they returned to Jerusalem."

- a. When Absalom's men came to the man's house at Bahurim, they demanded that the woman tell them the whereabouts of Jonathan and Ahimaaz.
- b. The woman's reply was a falsehood. She claimed that they had gone over the nearby brook, and were on their way in that direction. The search party vainly sought for them, and had to return to Jerusalem empty-handed.
- c. There were some things God overlooked during those dark ages of the Old Testament (Acts 17:30); perhaps the woman's false statement was one of them. There is no authority in her statement for anyone to do likewise today, for God commands repentance and godliness of all (Acts 17:30-31). The Lord is not responsible for her falsehood, even though it aided the cause.

5. Verses 21-22: "And it came to pass, after they were departed, that they came up out of the well, and went and told king David, and said unto David, Arise, and pass quickly over the water: for thus hath Ahithophel counselled against you. Then David arose, and all the people that *were* with him, and they passed over Jordan: by the morning light there lacked not one of them that was not gone over Jordan."

- a. As soon as the searchers were gone, Jonathan and Ahimaaz climbed from the well, and delivered the message to David. They knew just where to find him.
- b. The message was for him to cross over Jordan, to insure he was beyond the immediate reach of the rebel forces. This advice is based on the likelihood of Absalom changing his mind, and adopting the plan proposed by Ahithophel.

D. 2 Samuel 17:23-29: Various Incidents, Including the Suicide of Ahithophel.

1. Verse 23: "And when Ahithophel saw that his counsel was not followed, he saddled *his* ass, and arose, and gat him home to his house, to his city, and put his household in order, and hanged himself, and died, and was buried in the sepulchre of his father."

- a. Ahithophel was convinced that Absalom had fully rejected his recommendation, and viewed this as a personal rejection. This was a very proud man, whose very happiness depended on remaining the only source of counsel for the one he served.

- b. Having his counsel rejected was evidently something of a new experience for him; it was more than he could bear. He saddled his donkey, rode home, set his house in order, and hanged himself. His body was buried in the family sepulcher.
 - c. “Along with Judas Iscariot (Mt. 27:5), Zimri (1 Kings 16:18), and King Saul (1 Sam. 31:5), Ahithophel is one of only four suicides mentioned in the Bible” (Coffman, p.238).
 - d. David’s prayer regarding Ahithophel was fulfilled. "And *one* told David, saying, Ahithophel *is* among the conspirators with Absalom. And David said, O LORD, I pray thee, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness" (2 Sam. 15:31).
 - 1) The consequence of Ahithophel’s treachery was most horrible indeed. God brought his counsel to nothing, although at the time it appeared that he was certain to win and David was certain to lose. When some evil person seeks to harm a faithful Christian, vengeance is to be left in the most capable hands of the Almighty! His retribution will be without error, and may be truly severe.
 - 2) Romans 12:17-21: "Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but *rather* give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance *is* mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."
2. Verse 24: “Then David came to Mahanaim. And Absalom passed over Jordan, he and all the men of Israel with him.”
- a. David took the counsel sent by Hushai, and moved on across Jordan to Mahanaim. Meanwhile, his son Absalom and all the men of Israel crossed over Jordan, seeking to engage David in battle. He must have followed through on Hushai’s plan.
 - b. “It would take many pages of this book to give a full description of the ruins of this city, and even then but a faint conception of its ancient grandeur would be conveyed. It was anciently known as *Gerasa*, and Jerash is but an Arabic corruption of this name. It belonged, like Gadara, to Decapolis, and some suppose, from its situation and importance, that it is the Mahanaim of the Old Testament [Gen. 32:2; 2 Sam. 17:24].
 - 1) “Its most prosperous period was after the Christian era, and in the fourth century it was regarded as one of the largest and strongest cities of Arabia. It is spoken of as a deserted city as early as the thirteenth century, and consequently the ruins which we now behold there, though they are neither weather-stained nor covered with earth, have remained in their present condition for more than 600 years.
 - 2) “It is probable that an earthquake first destroyed the city, and that its reconstruction was prevented by the fact that tent-dwelling Arabs afterwards held possession of the country, as they do to the present day” (McGarvey, *ibid.*, pp.363f).
 - c. Mahanaim: “Place name meaning, ‘two camps.’ City somewhere in the hill country of Gilead on the tribal borders of Gad and eastern Manasseh (Josh. 13:26,30). It was a Levitical city (Josh. 21:38). It served as a refuge twice: for Ishbosheth after Saul's death (2 Sam. 2:8-9), and for David when Absalom usurped the throne (2 Sam. 17:24-27). During Solomon's administration, the city served as a district capital (1 Kings 4:14). German archaeologists locate it at tell Heggog, half a mile south of Penuel, while Israelis point to tell edh-Dhabab el Gharbi” (Holman PC Bible Dictionary).
3. Verses 25-26: “And Absalom made Amasa captain of the host instead of Joab: which Amasa *was* a man's son, whose name *was* Ithra an Israelite, that went in to Abigail the daughter of Nahash, sister to Zeruah Joab's mother. So Israel and Absalom pitched in the land of Gilead.”
- a. Absalom made Amasa the captain over his army, occupying the same position held by Joab under
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- David. "By the genealogy it appears that this captain stood in the same relation to David as Joab, both being his nephews. He seems to have been an illegitimate son, his father, Ithra, being an Israelite, and his mother an Ammonitess..., and of course Amasa was Absalom's cousin" (JFB, pp.258f).
- b. Amasa fell victim to Joab's treachery later, when he slew him after putting him off guard by affecting to greet him (2 Sam. 20:4-13).
 - c. David was situated at Mahanaim in the territory of Gilead; Absalom and his great host set up their encampment also in Gilead. A terrible civil war was in the offing.
4. Verses 27-29: "And it came to pass, when David was come to Mahanaim, that Shobi the son of Nahash of Rabbah of the children of Ammon, and Machir the son of Ammiel of Lodebar, and Barzillai the Gileadite of Rogelim, brought beds, and basins, and earthen vessels, and wheat, and barley, and flour, and parched *corn*, and beans, and lentiles, and parched *pulse*, And honey, and butter, and sheep, and cheese of kine, for David, and for the people that *were* with him, to eat: for they said, The people *is* hungry, and weary, and thirsty, in the wilderness."
- a. David's many contacts and acts of kindness of the past paid off in the present instance. While he abode at Mahanaim, certain people, including Ammonites, brought provisions to him and his people.
 - b. 2 Samuel 17:27-29: "And it came to pass, when David was come to Mahanaim, that Shobi the son of Nahash of Rabbah of the children of Ammon, and Machir the son of Ammiel of Lodebar, and Barzillai the Gileadite of Rogelim, brought beds, and basins, and earthen vessels, and wheat, and barley, and meal, and parched *grain*, and beans, and lentils, and parched *pulse*, and honey, and butter, and sheep, and cheese of the herd, for David, and for the people that were with him, to eat: for they said, The people are hungry, and weary, and thirsty, in the wilderness" (ASV).
 - c. 2 Samuel 17:27-29: "Now it happened, when David had come to Mahanaim, that Shobi the son of Nahash from Rabbah of the people of Ammon, Machir the son of Ammiel from Lo Debar, and Barzillai the Gileadite from Rogelim, brought beds and basins, earthen vessels and wheat, barley and flour, parched *grain* and beans, lentils and parched *seeds*, honey and curds, sheep and cheese of the herd, for David and the people who *were* with him to eat. For they said, 'The people are hungry and weary and thirsty in the wilderness'" (NKJ).
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2 SAMUEL 18

A. 2 Samuel 18:1-5: David Makes Military Preparations to Battle the Insurrectionists.

1. Verses 1-2: “And David numbered the people that *were* with him, and set captains of thousands and captains of hundreds over them. And David sent forth a third part of the people under the hand of Joab, and a third part under the hand of Abishai the son of Zeruiah, Joab's brother, and a third part under the hand of Ittai the Gittite. And the king said unto the people, I will surely go forth with you myself also.”
 - a. “The hardy mountaineers of Gilead came in great numbers at the call of their chieftains; so that, although without money to pay any troops, David soon found himself at the head of a considerable army” (JFB, p.259).
 - b. The text does not give the number of either opposing army, but it is obvious that Absalom’s forces were vastly superior to David’s. Josephus says that “when David had numbered his followers, and found them to be about four thousand, he resolved not to tarry till Absalom attacked him, but set over his men captains of thousands, and captains of hundreds, and divided his army into three parts...” (Josephus, Antiquities, Book 7, Chapter 10, Section 1, pp.160f). The statement in verse three is taken by some Bible scholars to imply that David’s army was ten thousand or more in number.
 - c. David gave command of the three sections of his army to Joab, Abishai, and Ittai. Joab and Abishai were David’s nephews, and were great warriors. Ittai was a Gittite, and was likewise a powerful leader of fighting men. This foreigner had his own warriors (2 Sam. 15:22).
2. Verses 3-4: “But the people answered, Thou shalt not go forth: for if we flee away, they will not care for us; neither if half of us die, will they care for us: but now *thou art* worth ten thousand of us: therefore now *it is* better that thou succour us out of the city. And the king said unto them, What seemeth you best I will do. And the king stood by the gate side, and all the people came out by hundreds and by thousands.”
 - a. After the army had been mustered and organized, David expressed his intention to go forth with his men (verse 2). However, the people discouraged his presence. By this time, the king was getting along in years. If the army was defeated, David would be able to raise another, if he remained safe.
 - b. David’s men talked him out of accompanying them in the campaign. He would be exposing himself to grave danger during the battle; also, he could be of help to them by remaining in Mahanaim (17:27), in command of the reserves, thus could “succour us out of the city.”
 - c. His men argued that if they were defeated by Absalom’s army, the conquerors would have no concern for them, even if half of them were slain. There would be no compassion shown to David’s men, in that eventuality, and it was certain that David’s life would not be spared.
 - d. On the other side, Hushai had convinced Absalom to lead his men personally (2 Sam. 17:11-12), thus placing this rebel in jeopardy. Absalom’s pride led him to accept the challenge, which resulted in his death.
3. Verse 5: “And the king commanded Joab and Abishai and Ittai, saying, *Deal* gently for my sake with the young man, *even* with Absalom. And all the people heard when the king gave all the captains charge concerning Absalom.”
 - a. David ordered his three generals to show compassion toward Absalom if they should be victorious. It does not appear that David entertained any doubt about the outcome of the inevitable battle.
 - b. The rest of the army was within earshot of this command. This fact is included at this point by the inspired historian to furnish the background to what is later reported in the chapter. The way Joab dealt with Absalom was done in spite of David’s directions.
 - c. “This affecting charge, which the king gave his generals, proceeded not only from his overwhelming affection for his children, but from his consciousness that this rebellion was the chastisement of his

own crimes, Absalom being merely an instrument in the hand of retributive Providence, and also from his piety, lest the unhappy prince should die with his sins unrepented of” (JFB, pp.259f).

B. 2 Samuel 18:6-8: The Rebels Are Defeated.

1. Verse 6: “So the people went out into the field against Israel: and the battle was in the wood of Ephraim.”
 - a. The battle was fought in the wood of Ephraim:
 - 1) “The densely wooded site of the battle between the forces of King David and the rebel army of Absalom (2 Sam. 18:6,8). The location of the forest presents difficulties.
 - 2) “The account in 2 Samuel suggests a site on the east side of the Jordan near enough to the city of Mahanaim in the Jabbok valley to allow David to send reinforcements.
 - 3) “The difficulty arises since the tribal allotment for Ephraim was west of the Jordan. Joshua 17:14-18 predicts Ephraim's expansion north into the wooded Jezreel valley and the vicinity of Beth Shan, both within Issachar's territory. It is possible that this dominant tribe also settled in the wooded hills to the east of the Jordan” (Holman Bible Dictionary).
 - b. The forest could have been on either side of the Jordan; there are good arguments for both views. Absalom is last placed on the eastern side of Jordan (17:26), where David was also located (17:24,27). No mention is made of either army crossing to the west side of Jordan. But Ephraim’s territory was on the western side of Jordan. If the battle was fought there, the victorious army went back to Mahanaim, in Gilead, which was on the eastern side of Jordan, to return to their king. Afterwards, he and his men could return to Jerusalem.
 - c. “This would naturally be sought in the west of Jordan (marginal reference). But on the other hand it seems certain that the scene of this battle was on the east of Jordan. It seems therefore inevitable to conclude that some portion of the thick wood of oaks and terebinths which still runs down to the Jordan on the east side was for some reason called ‘the wood of Ephraim,’ either because it was a continuation on the east side of the great Ephraimitic forests on the west, or because of some transaction there in which Ephraim had taken part, such as the slaughter of the Midianites (Judg 7:24-25), or their own slaughter (Judg 12:6)” [Barnes' Notes, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1997 by BibleSoft].
 - d. Of course, identifying the location of this forest of Ephraim is only of academic interest. The point of importance was the battle and its outcome.
 2. Verse 7: “Where the people of Israel were slain before the servants of David, and there was there a great slaughter that day of twenty thousand *men*.”
 - a. The result of the battle is stated in a very concise report. The followers of Absalom suffered the loss of twenty thousand men.
 - b. Israel was a tiny nation by today’s standards, so the death of twenty thousand soldiers represented a great disaster. Think of the thousands of families affected by this catastrophe!
 3. Verse 8: “For the battle was there scattered over the face of all the country: and the wood devoured more people that day than the sword devoured.”
 - a. “The nature of the ground contributed a great deal to the utter defeat of Absalom....The conflict extended over the surface of the whole land, *i.e.* the whole of that region....The woody region was most likely full of ravines, precipices, and marshes, into which the flying foe was pursued, and where so many perished” (Keil, pp.437f).
 - b. “The thick forest of oaks and terebinths, by obstructing the flight, greatly aided the victors in the pursuit, and was the occasion of more being slain in the rout than in the battle” (JFB, p.260).
 - c. Josephus reports: “Now David’s men were conquerors, as superior in strength and skill in war; so they
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followed the others as they fled away through the forests and valleys; some they took prisoners, and many they slew, and more in the flight than in the battle, for there fell about twenty thousand that day” (7,10,2, p.161).

C. 2 Samuel 18:9-18: Absalom is Slain.

1. Verse 9: “And Absalom met the servants of David. And Absalom rode upon a mule, and the mule went under the thick boughs of a great oak, and his head caught hold of the oak, and he was taken up between the heaven and the earth; and the mule that *was* under him went away.”
 - a. “But all David’s men ran violently upon Absalom, for he was easily known by his beauty and tallness. He was himself also afraid lest his enemies should seize on him, so he got upon the king’s mule and fled; but as he was carried with violence, and noise, and a great motion, as being himself light, he entangled his hair greatly in the large boughs of a knotty tree, that spread a great way, and there he hung after a surprising manner; and as for the beast, it went on further, and that swiftly, as if his master had been still upon his back; but he hanging in the air upon the boughs, was taken by his enemies” (Josephus, *ibid.*).
 - b. Josephus’ statement has given us the view that it was Absalom’s hair that got caught in the branches of the tree. The text itself states that it was his head that was snared. However, it is most likely that his voluminous head of hair would be especially vulnerable. This appears to be implied by the earlier reference to his abundant hair: "But in all Israel there was none to be so much praised as Absalom for his beauty: from the sole of his foot even to the crown of his head there was no blemish in him. And when he polled his head, (for it was at every year's end that he polled *it*: because *the hair* was heavy on him, therefore he polled it:) he weighed the hair of his head at two hundred shekels after the king's weight" (2 Sam. 14:25-26).
 - c. Some have argued that it was his helmet that was caught in the tree. However, the text does not speak of his having on a helmet; that fact is assumed on the basis that men usually wore helmets in ancient battles.
 - d. In some fashion, Absalom was caught by the head or hair as he fled on a mule from David’s soldiers, riding through a dense forest. He was suspended from the tree, with his feet above the ground, and was unable to escape.
 2. Verses 10-11: “And a certain man saw *it*, and told Joab, and said, Behold, I saw Absalom hanged in an oak. And Joab said unto the man that told him, And, behold, thou sawest *him*, and why didst thou not smite him there to the ground? And I would have given thee ten *shekels* of silver, and a girdle.”
 - a. One of David’s soldiers saw what had happened to Absalom, and told Joab. The man took no action himself, remembering what David had ordered regarding the treatment of Absalom.
 - b. Joab demanded to know why the man did not smite Absalom. He said he would have rewarded him ten shekels of silver and a girdle.
 3. Verses 12-13: “And the man said unto Joab, Though I should receive a thousand *shekels* of silver in mine hand, *yet* would I not put forth mine hand against the king's son: for in our hearing the king charged thee and Abishai and Ittai, saying, Beware that none *touch* the young man Absalom. Otherwise I should have wrought falsehood against mine own life: for there is no matter hid from the king, and thou thyself wouldest have set thyself against *me*.”
 - a. The man told Joab that he had heard David’s command to the three generals to take no vengeance against Absalom, but to treat him gently.
 - b. The soldier asserted that even if the reward had been a thousand shekels of silver, and he had it in his hand already, he would not have gone against the king’s specific orders. He further alleged that nothing could be hidden from the knowledge of David, and that if he had done what Joab now said, even Joab’s hand would have been against him.
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4. Verses 14-15: "Then said Joab, I may not tarry thus with thee. And he took three darts in his hand, and thrust them through the heart of Absalom, while he *was* yet alive in the midst of the oak. And ten young men that bare Joab's armour compassed about and smote Absalom, and slew him."
 - a. 2 Samuel 18:14: "Then Joab said, 'I cannot linger with you.' And he took three spears in his hand and thrust them through Absalom's heart, while he was *still* alive in the midst of the terebinth tree" (NKJ).
 - b. 2 Samuel 18:14: "Then said Joab, I may not tarry thus with thee. And he took three darts in his hand, and thrust them through the heart of Absalom, while he was yet alive in the midst of the oak" (ASV).
 - c. Joab stated that he would not wait for the soldier to kill Absalom; he would take care of that job in a more personal way. Taking three darts, the general thrust them into Absalom. Jamieson described the darts as "small rods with iron points; lances" (p.260). Holman PC Bible Dictionary defines "dart" as: "A thrusting or throwing weapon used for medium range combat either similar to a spear or javelin (2 Sam. 18:14) or else an arrow (Prov. 7:23; Eph. 6:16). The use of flaming arrows (Ps. 7:13; 120:4) becomes in Eph. 6:16 a picture of the assault of the evil one on believers. KJV uses darts to translate two different Hebrew."
 - d. "The deed, partially done by Joab, was completed by his body-guard. Being a violation of the expressed wish, as well as of all the fond paternal feelings of David, it must have been deeply offensive to the king, nor was it ever forgotten (1 Ki. 2:5); and yet there is the strongest reason for believing that Joab, in doing it, was actuated by a sincere regard to the interests of David, both as a man and a monarch" (JFB, pp.260f).
 - e. Justice demanded that Absalom should be executed. He had murdered his brother Amnon (Gen. 9:6; Ex. 21:12); he had raised a rebellion against David in which he had sought to kill his father (cf. Deut. 21:18,21).
 - 1) Genesis 9:6: "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man."
 - 2) Exodus 21:12: "He that smiteth a man, so that he die, shall be surely put to death."
 - 3) Deuteronomy 21:18-21: "If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, which will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, and *that*, when they have chastened him, will not hearken unto them: Then shall his father and his mother lay hold on him, and bring him out unto the elders of his city, and unto the gate of his place; And they shall say unto the elders of his city, This our son *is* stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voice; *he is* a glutton, and a drunkard. And all the men of his city shall stone him with stones, that he die: so shalt thou put evil away from among you; and all Israel shall hear, and fear."
 - f. The Hebrew word translated "heart" can mean "in the midst of," thus could be understood in this verse to mean that the darts were thrust into the midst of Absalom's body, and not necessarily pierced his fleshly heart. The ten young men who were in company with Joab, his armor bearers or bodyguards, surrounded the suspended body of Absalom, and "finished him off," if he was not already dead from Joab's darts.
 5. Verses 16-17: "And Joab blew the trumpet, and the people returned from pursuing after Israel: for Joab held back the people. And they took Absalom, and cast him into a great pit in the wood, and laid a very great heap of stones upon him: and all Israel fled every one to his tent."
 - a. Joab "sounded recall" on the trumpet. "Knowing that, by the death of the usurper, there was no occasion for further bloodshed, he put an end to the pursuit, and thereby evinced the temperate policy of his conduct. However harsh and unfeeling to the king Joab may appear, there can be no doubt that he acted the part of a wise statesman in regarding the peace and welfare of the kingdom more than his master's private inclinations, which were opposed to strict justice as well as his own interests" (JFB, p.261).
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- b. Before leaving the battlefield, the body of Absalom was thrown into a pit, and a very large heap of stones was used to cover his body. The pile of stones was used as “an ignominious monument, like those thrown up over Achan (Josh. 7:26) and the king of Ai (Josh. 8:29). This was the end of Absalom and his rebellion” (Keil, p.439).
 - c. All of the Israelites who had sided with Absalom fled to their tents. They accepted defeat, conceding the throne to David.
6. Verse 18: “Now Absalom in his lifetime had taken and reared up for himself a pillar, which *is* in the king's dale: for he said, I have no son to keep my name in remembrance: and he called the pillar after his own name: and it is called unto this day, Absalom's place.”
- a. Absalom is said to have had three sons. "And unto Absalom there were born three sons, and one daughter, whose name *was* Tamar: she was a woman of a fair countenance" (2 Sam. 14:27). At the time he erected the memorial pillar, his sons had not yet been born, or they had died.
 - b. His grave, however, was in the forest of Ephraim, in a deep pit, covered with a large pile of stones. The location of this grave is unknown. A monument in the Kidron Valley east of Jerusalem has been passed off as the monument which Absalom raised, but the architecture is said to be of a much later period.
 - c. “In contrast with the heap of stones cast over his dishonoured body, the narrator calls attention to the costly memorial erected by Absalom in his lifetime. The three unnamed sons mentioned in 2 Sam 14:27 seem to have died in their infancy, and probably also their mother; and Absalom, instead of taking other wives to bear him sons, which would have been in unison with the feelings of the time, manifested his grief by raising this monument. We have no reason for supposing that it was the result of vanity and ostentation. Ostentatious he was, and magnificent, but his not marrying again is a sign of genuine sorrow. The king's dale is ‘the Valley of Shaveh,’ mentioned in Gen 14:17; but whether it was near Jerusalem, as Josephus asserts, or near Sodom, is uncertain. The pillar was probably an obelisk, or possibly a pyramid, and certainly was not the Ionic column of Roman workmanship shown in the Middle Ages and at the present time as ‘Absalom's grave’” [The Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 2001 by BibleSoft].
 - d. The vanity of Absalom is seen in his erection of the monument, but the tomb he actually received was of an entirely different nature.

D. 2 Samuel 18:19-33: David Learns of the Victory and Absalom's Death.

1. Verses 19-21: “Then said Ahimaaz the son of Zadok, Let me now run, and bear the king tidings, how that the LORD hath avenged him of his enemies. And Joab said unto him, Thou shalt not bear tidings this day, but thou shalt bear tidings another day: but this day thou shalt bear no tidings, because the king's son is dead. Then said Joab to Cush, Go tell the king what thou hast seen. And Cush bowed himself unto Joab, and ran.”
 - a. Ahimaaz, the fleet-footed son of Zadok, requested permission from Joab to carry the news of the great victory to David. Joab declined to give it, saying that he would be given a later message to deliver. “David had executed the messenger who brought him the news of Saul's death, and also the ones who brought him the news of the death of Ishbosheth (2 Sam. 1:15,16; 4:5-12); and Joab wanted to spare Ahimaaz the danger he would encounter if he brought David the news of the death of his son Absalom” (Coffman, p.253). However, there were other factors involved in the former cases, namely the desire to be rewarded by David.
 - b. “The reasons of Joab's declining to accept Ahimaaz's offer to bear intelligence of the victory to David, and afterwards letting him go along with another, are variously stated by commentators; but they are of no importance; and yet the alacrity of the messengers, as well as the eager excitement of the expectants, is graphically described” (JFB, p.261).
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- c. "Joab therefore entrusted *the Cushite* with the duty of conveying to David the announcement of what had occurred. It cannot be decided with certainty whether...*Cushi* is the proper name of an Israelite, or whether it signifies the 'Cushite,' *i.e.* a descendant of Cush. The form of the name rather favours the latter view, in which case it would suggest the idea of a Moorish slave in the service of Joab" (Keil, p.440).
 2. Verses 22-23: "Then said Ahimaaz the son of Zadok yet again to Joab, But howsoever, let me, I pray thee, also run after Cushi. And Joab said, Wherefore wilt thou run, my son, seeing that thou hast no tidings ready? But howsoever, *said he*, let me run. And he said unto him, Run. Then Ahimaaz ran by the way of the plain, and overran Cushi."
 - a. "As Ahimaaz still expressed a wish to hasten to the king, even after Cushi had been sent, and could not be induced to relinquish his purpose by the repeated expostulations of Joab, the latter at length permitted him to run. And he ran so fast, that he got before Cushi" (Keil, p.440).
 - b. Cushi may have been a foreigner, and if so, he was likely unknown to David. On the other hand, Ahimaaz was well-known. He could confirm the message Cushi bore.
 3. Verses 24-25: "And David sat between the two gates: and the watchman went up to the roof over the gate unto the wall, and lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold a man running alone. And the watchman cried, and told the king. And the king said, If he *be* alone, *there is* tidings in his mouth. And he came apace, and drew near."
 - a. "The two gates are the outer and inner gate of the fortified city wall, between which there was a small court, where David was sitting. The watchman then went up to the roof of the gate by the wall, probably the outer gate in the city wall, and as he looked he saw a man running alone" (Keil, p.441).
 - b. David perceived that the presence of only one runner would indicate that he bore a message of good tidings; if a group of running men had been seen, that would have portended a general flight from the battlefield, hence a defeat.
 4. Verses 26-27: "And the watchman saw another man running: and the watchman called unto the porter, and said, Behold *another* man running alone. And the king said, He also bringeth tidings. And the watchman said, Me thinketh the running of the foremost is like the running of Ahimaaz the son of Zadok. And the king said, He *is* a good man, and cometh with good tidings."
 - a. The watchman spotted another runner, and gave the report of what he saw. The king again decided that this second runner also brought good tidings.
 - b. 2 Samuel 18:26-27: "Then the watchman saw *another* man running, and the watchman called to the gatekeeper and said, 'There is *another* man, running alone!' And the king said, 'He also brings news.' So the watchman said, 'I think the running of the first is like the running of Ahimaaz the son of Zadok.' And the king said, 'He *is* a good man, and comes with good news'" (NKJ).
 5. Verses 28-30: "And Ahimaaz called, and said unto the king, All is well. And he fell down to the earth upon his face before the king, and said, Blessed *be* the LORD thy God, which hath delivered up the men that lifted up their hand against my lord the king. And the king said, Is the young man Absalom safe? And Ahimaaz answered, When Joab sent the king's servant, and *me* thy servant, I saw a great tumult, but I knew not what *it was*. And the king said *unto him*, Turn aside, *and* stand here. And he turned aside, and stood still."
 - a. Ahimaaz ran up to the king, crying out that all was well. He fell before David, and declared that the Lord had delivered into the hands of the king's men those who had raised the insurrection.
 - b. This was only part of the information David sought. He asked pointedly whether Absalom was safe. Ahimaaz would not give the king that information, claiming that he did not know. He admitted that when he left the battlefield, there was a tumult, but that he did not know the outcome.
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- c. "Ahimaaz spoke as if he had been sent off before Absalom's fate had been decided or could be known. '*The king's servant*' is the Cushite, whom Ahimaaz saw just approaching, so that he could point to him. *Joab* is the subject, which is sometimes written after the object in the case of an infinitive construction....and the expression 'thy servant' is a conventional one for 'me'" (Keil, p.442). Ahimaaz did not tell the full truth, for he must have known of the death of Absalom..
 - d. David directed Ahimaaz to stand off to the side while he awaited the report of the second messenger. He stepped aside.
6. Verses 31-32: "And, behold, Cushite came; and Cushite said, Tidings, my lord the king: for the LORD hath avenged thee this day of all them that rose up against thee. And the king said unto Cushite, Is the young man Absalom safe? And Cushite answered, The enemies of my lord the king, and all that rise against thee to do thee hurt, be as *that* young man is."
- a. 2 Samuel 18:31-32: "Just then the Cushite came, and the Cushite said, 'There is good news, my lord the king! For the LORD has avenged you this day of all those who rose against you.' And the king said to the Cushite, 'Is the young man Absalom safe?' So the Cushite answered, 'May the enemies of my lord the king, and all who rise against you to do harm, be like *that* young man!'" (NKJ).
 - b. Cushite plainly stated that the rebellion had been crushed, that David's men were victorious. He gave the Lord the credit for this great success.
 - c. Again, the king had to ask about the status of Absalom. Cushite simply stated that his desire was that all of the king's enemies were as that young man was. His words could only mean that Absalom was dead. David understood this to be the meaning of the statement.
7. Verse 33: "And the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept: and as he went, thus he said, O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!"
- a. David entered into the chamber which was situated above the gate, and there mourned over the death of his son. His mourning involved more than a father's grief over the tragic loss of a son. He knew that it was his own sinful conduct that had precipitated Absalom's rebellion.
 - b. Absalom was responsible for his own sins. If David had not committed sin with Bathsheba, along with the other despicable acts that grew out of that affair, it may have been that God's providence would not have allowed Absalom's rebellion to have come to fruition.
 - c. In his plaintive cries, David's heart is exposed for all who read the story to see. "Here David takes upon himself the blame (because of his sins) for the outrageous crimes of Absalom; and the simple truth is that David might have fully expected that God would execute upon him the death which his sins certainly deserved. Therefore, bound up with his willingness to forgive Absalom was the hope that God would also forgive him" (Coffman, pp.255f).
 - d. "The death of Absalom was a heavy trial, and it is impossible not to sympathize with the outburst of feeling by which David showed that all thoughts of the victory he had won as a king were completely sunk in the painful loss he had sustained as a father. The extraordinary ardour and strength of his affection for this worthless son breaks out in the redundancy and vehemence of his mournful ejaculations" (JFB, p.262).
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2 SAMUEL 19

A. 2 Samuel 19:1-8: Joab Rebukes David's Continued Mourning for Absalom.

1. Verses 1-2: "And it was told Joab, Behold, the king weepeth and mourneth for Absalom. And the victory that day was *turned* into mourning unto all the people: for the people heard say that day how the king was grieved for his son."
 - a. "In his passionate ... sorrow on account of Absalom's death, David not only forgot altogether what it was his duty to do, in order to recover the affections of the people, so that Joab was obliged to remind him of this duty which was binding upon him as king..." (Keil, pp.442f).
 - b. David was in Mahanaim when the report came to him of his victory over the rebellion and Absalom's death. Instead of meeting his returning soldiers with warmth and rejoicing, David entered into an upper room at the gate and wept and mourned over his dead son.
 - c. When the soldiers learned of David's mourning, gloom spread over the host. Their morale was at its lowest level. The atmosphere was one which bespoke more of defeat than of victory.
 2. Verses 3-4: "And the people gat them by stealth that day into the city, as people being ashamed steal away when they flee in battle. But the king covered his face, and the king cried with a loud voice, O my son Absalom, O Absalom, my son, my son!"
 - a. "His troops, instead of being welcomed back, as a victorious army always was, with music and other demonstrations of public joy, slunk secretly and silently into the city, as if ashamed, after the commission of some crime" (JFB, pp.262f).
 - b. When the truce was signed, ending American involvement in Vietnam, our troops were treated very shabbily by many of their countrymen when they returned home. Some of them were terribly insulted by their ungrateful fellow-citizens. They returned, not to glory, but with a sense of rejection.
 - c. David was oblivious to the return of his men from their victorious campaign. He was too filled with personal grief and self-pity to be aware what these soldiers had accomplished for him and the Lord. We are touched by David's great sorrow, but he had a nation to guide; he had work to do. He had mourned enough; now he must fulfill his duty as king.
 3. Verses 5-7: "And Joab came into the house to the king, and said, Thou hast shamed this day the faces of all thy servants, which this day have saved thy life, and the lives of thy sons and of thy daughters, and the lives of thy wives, and the lives of thy concubines; In that thou lovest thine enemies, and hatest thy friends. For thou hast declared this day, that thou regardest neither princes nor servants: for this day I perceive, that if Absalom had lived, and all we had died this day, then it had pleased thee well. Now therefore arise, go forth, and speak comfortably unto thy servants: for I swear by the LORD, if thou go not forth, there will not tarry one with thee this night: and that will be worse unto thee than all the evil that befell thee from thy youth until now."
 - a. Joab's character and conduct leave much to be desired, but he was not lacking in courage. He knew David was being remiss in his duty regarding his faithful soldiers, and thus approached the king with a needed rebuke.
 - b. He plainly accused David of having shamed his soldiers by not giving them a warm welcome from their triumph over the enemy. These men had saved the lives of David, his sons and daughters, and his wives and concubines.
 - c. David, said Joab, had shown love toward his enemies and hatred toward his friends, for he mourned over the death of the chief rebel (Absalom), and ignored the return of those who risked their lives for the king. Joab stated bluntly, that if Absalom had not lost his life, and all of David's soldiers had died in the fighting, David would have been well-pleased! This is truly a hard accusation, but the king evidently needed to be shocked back into his senses.
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- d. Joab further declared that if David did not arise from his mourning, and go forth to speak with kindness to his soldiers, then the king would lose their loyalty before another day dawned; furthermore, Joab predicted that the result of that would be more trouble than he had faced in all of his preceding years.
 - e. "The king felt the truth of Joab's reprimand; but the threat by which it was enforced, grounded as it was on the general's unbounded popularity with the army, showed him to be a dangerous person; and that circumstance, together with the violation of an express order to deal gently for his sake with Absalom, produced in David's mind a settled hatred, which was strongly manifested in his last directions to Solomon" (JFB, p.263).
 - f. "Every man who candidly considers the state of the case, must allow that David acted imprudently at least; and that Joab's firm reproof was necessary to arouse him to a sense of his duty to his people. But still, in his manner, Joab had far exceeded the bonds of that reverence which a servant owes to his master, or a subject to his prince. Joab was a good soldier, but in every respect a bad man, and a dangerous subject" (Clarke, p.361). Solomon had Joab executed for his crimes.
 - 1) 1 Kings 2:5-6: "Moreover thou knowest also what Joab the son of Zeruiah did to me, *and* what he did to the two captains of the hosts of Israel, unto Abner the son of Ner, and unto Amasa the son of Jether, whom he slew, and shed the blood of war in peace, and put the blood of war upon his girdle that *was* about his loins, and in his shoes that *were* on his feet. Do therefore according to thy wisdom, and let not his hoar head go down to the grave in peace."
 - 2) 1 Kings 2:28-34: "Then tidings came to Joab: for Joab had turned after Adonijah, though he turned not after Absalom. And Joab fled unto the tabernacle of the LORD, and caught hold on the horns of the altar. And it was told king Solomon that Joab was fled unto the tabernacle of the LORD; and, behold, *he is* by the altar. Then Solomon sent Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, saying, Go, fall upon him. And Benaiah came to the tabernacle of the LORD, and said unto him, Thus saith the king, Come forth. And he said, Nay; but I will die here. And Benaiah brought the king word again, saying, Thus said Joab, and thus he answered me. And the king said unto him, Do as he hath said, and fall upon him, and bury him; that thou mayest take away the innocent blood, which Joab shed, from me, and from the house of my father. And the LORD shall return his blood upon his own head, who fell upon two men more righteous and better than he, and slew them with the sword, my father David not knowing *thereof, to wit*, Abner the son of Ner, captain of the host of Israel, and Amasa the son of Jether, captain of the host of Judah. Their blood shall therefore return upon the head of Joab, and upon the head of his seed for ever: but upon David, and upon his seed, and upon his house, and upon his throne, shall there be peace for ever from the LORD. So Benaiah the son of Jehoiada went up, and fell upon him, and slew him: and he was buried in his own house in the wilderness."
4. Verse 8: "Then the king arose, and sat in the gate. And they told unto all the people, saying, Behold, the king doth sit in the gate. And all the people came before the king: for Israel had fled every man to his tent."
- a. David saw the wisdom of Joab's counsel, and rose from his mourning, and placed himself in the gate, where he could receive the people.
 - b. When the people heard that the king was at the gate, they assembled before him. We have already been told that the Israelites had gone to their homes in a state of gloom and despair. The followers of Absalom had fled from the battlefield; the victorious followers of David were in no better frame of mind.
 - c. It was David's followers who gathered themselves around the king. This action on David's part showed his appreciation for his men, and his admiration for their triumph.
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B. 2 Samuel 19:9-15: David is Called Back to the Throne.

1. Verses 9-10: “And all the people were at strife throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, The king saved us out of the hand of our enemies, and he delivered us out of the hand of the Philistines; and now he is fled out of the land for Absalom. And Absalom, whom we anointed over us, is dead in battle. Now therefore why speak ye not a word of bringing the king back?”
 - a. “The kingdom was completely disorganized. The sentiments of three different parties are represented in vv. 9,10—the royalists, the adherents of Absalom, who had been very numerous, and those who were indifferent to the Davidic dynasty. In these circumstances the king was right in not hastening back, as a conqueror, to re-ascend his throne. A re-election was in some measure necessary. He remained for some time on the other side of Jordan, in expectation of being invited back. This invitation was given, without, however concurrence of Judah; and David, disappointed and vexed by his own tribe’s apparent lukewarmness, despatched the two high priests to rouse the Judahites to take a prominent interest in his cause” (JFB).
 - b. The movement to reinstate David as king began, not in Judah, but in the other tribes. The people of Judah had been directly involved with Absalom in the rebellion. Hebron, where Absalom made his overt move to usurp the kingdom, was a city of Judah. Ahithophel, who deserted David to become counselor to Absalom, was from a city near to Hebron.
 - c. The people remembered how David had delivered them from their enemies, most notably from the Philistines. Mention is also made of the fact that David had fled from Jerusalem when Absalom tried to steal the kingdom from his father. Furthermore, they stated that Absalom was now dead and spoke of their negligence to invite David to return to his throne.
 - d. The fact is clearly stated here that Absalom had been anointed to be king. However, the anointing was only by the authority of mere men; it did not have the authority of God. God had dispatched Samuel to anoint David; the Almighty had not changed his mind about David being his chosen king. Doubtless, it was at Hebron that Absalom’s followers anointed him to be king.
 2. Verses 11-10: “And king David sent to Zadok and to Abiathar the priests, saying, Speak unto the elders of Judah, saying, Why are ye the last to bring the king back to his house? seeing the speech of all Israel is come to the king, *even* to his house. Ye *are* my brethren, ye *are* my bones and my flesh: wherefore then are ye the last to bring back the king?”
 - a. “When these words of all Israel were reported to David, he sent to the priests Zadok and Abiathar, saying, ‘Speak to the elders of Judah, why will ye be the last to bring back the king to his palace?...’” (Keil, p.444).
 - b. The priests were told to speak with the elders of Judah, demanding to know why they had not asked David to return to his God-given position as king. In view of the fact that the rest of the nation had done so, why had not these, seeing both they and David had descended from Judah.
 - c. “David was afraid to fall out with this tribe: they were in possession of Jerusalem, and this was a city of great importance to him. They had joined Absalom in his rebellion; and doubtless were now ashamed of their conduct. David appears to take no notice of their infidelity, but rather to place confidence in them, that their confidence in him might be naturally excited: and, to oblige them yet farther, purposes to make Amasa captain of the host in the place of Joab” (Clarke, p.631).
 - d. “It was the act of a skillful politician, as, Hebron having been the seat of the rebellion, it was graceful on his part to encourage their return to allegiance and duty; and it was an appeal to their honour not to be the last of the tribes. But this separate message, and the preference given to them, occasioned an outburst of jealousy among the other tribes that was nearly followed by fatal consequences” (JFB, p.263).
 3. Verse 13: “And say ye to Amasa, *Art* thou not of my bone, and of my flesh? God do so to me, and more
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also, if thou be not captain of the host before me continually in the room of Joab.”

- a. “This also was a dexterous stroke of policy. David was fully alive to the importance of extinguishing the rebellion—of withdrawing from that cause the only leader who could keep it alive; and he therefore secretly intimated his intention to raise Amasa to the command of the army in room of Joab, whose overbearing haughtiness had become intolerable. The king justly reckoned that, from natural temper, as well as gratitude for the royal pardon, he would prove a more tractable servant; and David doubtless intended in all sincerity to fulfil this promise. But Joab managed to retain his high position...” (JFB, pp.263f). See 2 Samuel 20.
 - b. It appears that David followed through with his intention, for in the next chapter, he sends Amasa on a military mission. "Then said the king to Amasa, Assemble me the men of Judah within three days, and be thou here present. So Amasa went to assemble *the men of Judah*: but he tarried longer than the set time which he had appointed him" (2 Sam. 20:4-5).
 - c. Amasa had been appointed to that position under Absalom’s short-lived rule. "And Absalom made Amasa captain of the host instead of Joab: which Amasa *was* a man's son, whose name *was* Ithra an Israelite, that went in to Abigail the daughter of Nahash, sister to Zeruiah Joab's mother" (2 Sam. 17:25).
 - d. David vows before the Lord to place Amasa in this position so that he would “continually” serve in the office Joab presently held under David.
4. Verses 14-15: “And he bowed the heart of all the men of Judah, even as *the heart of* one man; so that they sent *this word* unto the king, Return thou, and all thy servants. So the king returned, and came to Jordan. And Judah came to Gilgal, to go to meet the king, to conduct the king over Jordan.”
- a. 2 Samuel 19:14-15: "So he swayed the hearts of all the men of Judah, just as *the heart of* one man, so that they sent *this word* to the king: ‘Return, you and all your servants!’ Then the king returned and came to the Jordan. And Judah came to Gilgal, to go to meet the king, to escort the king across the Jordan" (NKJ).
 - b. The efforts David put forth in the above verse enabled him to persuade the Israelites to unite under his banner once again. The unity was so complete that the inspired historian described it as their having the heart of one man. They were so fully committed to David that they sent word to David that he should return to them, and bring all his men with him.
 - c. David began his journey back to his capital, and Judah made their journey to Gilgal, to meet the king and conduct him over the Jordan River.
 - 1) “Gilgal is the name of a place “meaning, ‘circle,’ and probably referring to a circle of stones or a circular altar. Such a circle of stones could be found almost anywhere in Palestine and led easily to naming towns ‘Gilgal.’
 - 2) “The many references to Gilgal in the Old Testament cannot thus be definitely connected to the same town, since several different Gilgals may well have existed. Gilgal is most closely associated with Joshua, but the number of Gilgals involved continues an unsolved question. After crossing the Jordan, Joshua established the first camp at Gilgal (Josh. 4:19).
 - 3) “There Joshua took twelve stones from the bed of the river to set up a memorial for the miraculous crossing. Gilgal, the first foothold on Palestinian soil, became Israel's first worship place, where they were circumcised and observed the Passover. There God appeared to Joshua and affirmed his mission (Josh. 5).
 - 4) “This Gilgal apparently became Israel's military base of operations (Josh. 9:6; 10:6; 14:6), though some scholars would identify this with a Gilgal farther north near Shechem. Joshua set up Gilgal as the border between Judah and Benjamin (Josh. 15:7; compare 18:17), though many Bible students think the border town must be south of the original camp. Ehud, the judge, passed Gilgal
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in his mission to slay the king of Moab (Judg. 3:19,26).

- 5) “David passed through Gilgal as he fled from Absalom (2 Sam. 19:15,40). This Gilgal is often located at modern khirbet Mefjir, a little more than a mile east of Jericho. Others would locate it at khirbet en-Nitleh, two miles southeast of Jericho. Still others remain baffled at finding a location. The boundary town is often seen as khan el-Ahmar or 'Araq ed-Deir. The military camp is at times located at tell Jiljulieh east of Shechem but without archaeological support. This could be the same Gilgal of Deuteronomy 11:30, if Joshua's original town is not meant. “Gilgal was also one of the three places where Samuel annually held circuit court (1 Sam. 7:16). This could be near tell Jiljulieh or at Joshua's first landing place near the Jordan.
- 6) “Saul was both crowned and rejected as king at Gilgal (1 Sam. 11:14-15; 13:14-15). Gilgal established itself as a major place of worship for Israel with ancient traditions. However, it also permitted worship associated with other gods and became the object of prophetic judgment (Hos. 4:15; Amos 4:4; 5:5).
- 7) “Elijah and Elisha were associated closely with Gilgal. At one time Elisha made his headquarters there (2 Kings 4:38), where Elijah was taken up into heaven (2 Kings 2:1). This was apparently tell Jiljulieh about three miles southeast of Shiloh, though it could still be Joshua's original Gilgal. Gilgal of the nations is mentioned as a royal city near Dor (Josh. 12:23)...” (Holman PC Bible Dictionary).
- d. “A little more than a mile east of Eriha are the ruins of an ancient city which has been identified as Gilgal. The identification is established by the locality, which agrees with the account given in Joshua [4:19], and by the preservation of the name in the Arabic Jiljulieh. The ruins are meagre—so much so that one might pass near them without observing them—but they are the evident remains of a very ancient city” (McGarvey, *Lands of the Bible*, p.340).
- e. The unity indicated to exist within the ranks of Judah toward David is the kind of unity which is to prevail in the body of Christ. "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any *of them* that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common" (Acts 4:32).

C. 2 Samuel 19:16-23: Shimei Declares his Penitence.

1. Verses 16-17: “And Shimei the son of Gera, a Benjamite, which *was* of Bahurim, hasted and came down with the men of Judah to meet king David. And *there were* a thousand men of Benjamin with him, and Ziba the servant of the house of Saul, and his fifteen sons and his twenty servants with him; and they went over Jordan before the king.”
 - a. Shimei, the man who had followed David as he fled from Jerusalem, throwing both stones and curses at the king, now came before him expressing penitence for his earlier actions. He brought with him a thousand men, showing the kind of power he could bring to (or against) David.
 - b. Also coming before David was Ziba, the servant of Saul whose name has already appeared in the present record; he brought with him his fifteen sons and his twenty servants. These men preceded the king over the Jordan. Ziba knew that David would meet and hear the truth from Mephibosheth; his aim here is to place himself in a better light before the king.
 - c. “The motives of both Shimei and Ziba were clearly selfish and their actions hypocritical; but David was correct in receiving all actions toward reconciliation; because it was a day of rejoicing and not a day of bloodshed. The victory had been won by Joab and his men, and the healing of all wounds properly received the priority to which it was entitled” (Coffman, p.266).
2. Verse 18: “And there went over a ferry boat to carry over the king's household, and to do what he thought good. And Shimei the son of Gera fell down before the king, as he was come over Jordan.”
 - a. A ferry boat was brought to the scene to enable David’s family to cross safely over the river. In his

household there were women and children; also Ittai had his “little ones” with him (2 Sam. 15:22).

- b. Josephus describes this ferry boat as a bridge of boats. “All these, as well as the tribe of Judah, laid a bridge [of boats] over the river, that the king, and those that were with him, might with ease pass over it” (Antiquities, 7,11,2, p.162). We take the text at face value, and understand the crossing to have been effected by means of a ferry boat.
 - c. Shimei came to the king as David approached the river. He prostrated himself before David, in an attitude denoting penitence.
3. Verses 19-20: “And said unto the king, Let not my lord impute iniquity unto me, neither do thou remember that which thy servant did perversely the day that my lord the king went out of Jerusalem, that the king should take it to his heart. For thy servant doth know that I have sinned: therefore, behold, I am come the first this day of all the house of Joseph to go down to meet my lord the king.”
- a. Having prostrated himself before the king, Shimei besought David to pardon him for the offense he had given him earlier. He asked that iniquity not be charged to him for this transgression. He openly confessed that he had done perversely, that he had sinned.
 - b. Because of his offense, Shimei said that he had come to David ahead of all of the house of Joseph to meet “my lord the king.” Verse eighteen reported that Shimei had with him a thousand men from the tribe of Benjamin. Benjamin was the youngest son of Jacob, and the tribe of Benjamin was the smallest of the tribes.
4. Verses 21-23: “But Abishai the son of Zeruiah answered and said, Shall not Shimei be put to death for this, because he cursed the LORD'S anointed? And David said, What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah, that ye should this day be adversaries unto me? shall there any man be put to death this day in Israel? for do not I know that I *am* this day king over Israel? Therefore the king said unto Shimei, Thou shalt not die. And the king sware unto him.”
- a. Abishai did not believe the claims Shimei made, or else he was unwilling to accept him back under David’s banner. He advised the king to put Shimei to death for his offense. When the crime was committed, it was Abishai who wanted to kill Shimei on the spot. “Then said Abishai the son of Zeruiah unto the king, Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? let me go over, I pray thee, and take off his head” (2 Sam. 16:9).
 - b. “If David had allowed Abishai to kill Shimei, which he undoubtedly wanted to do, he could easily have precipitated a battle with great slaughter” (Coffman, p.267). Abishai was one who was fully capable of wreaking vengeance on Shimei.
 - c. David advised Solomon to deal wisely with Shimei (1 Kings 2:8-9). Solomon ordered Shimei to build himself a house in Jerusalem, and threatened him with execution if he should leave the city. When he left to capture some fleeing slaves, he was slain (1 Kings 2:36-46).
- D. 2 Samuel 19:24-30: Mephibosheth Explains Why He Did Not Leave Jerusalem with David.
1. Verses 24-25: “And Mephibosheth the son of Saul came down to meet the king, and had neither dressed his feet, nor trimmed his beard, nor washed his clothes, from the day the king departed until the day he came *again* in peace. And it came to pass, when he was come to Jerusalem to meet the king, that the king said unto him, Wherefore wentest not thou with me, Mephibosheth?”
 - a. Mephibosheth was the son of Jonathan, making him the grandson of Saul. Biblical terminology often speaks of grandsons, great-grandsons, etc., as sons of the progenitor.
 - b. The inspired historian declares that Mephibosheth had not washed his feet, trimmed his beard, or washed his clothes since David departed from Jerusalem (2 Sam. 15:13-18). This was not the mere claim of Mephibosheth; it is the declaration of the inspired record. His physical appearance would verify the statement. Since he was crippled in both of his feet, to dress them may have involved much
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- more than washing them; maybe there were bindings and supports which his handicap required.
- c. “The sincerity of that prince’s grief for the misfortunes of the king cannot be doubted....The Hebrews cut off the hair on the upper lip (see on Lev. 13:45) and cheeks, but in mourning let it grow carelessly, as on the chin...The neglect of this attention to his beard was an undoubted proof of the depth of Mephibosheth’s grief” (JFB, p.264).
 - d. When David met Mephibosheth, he demanded to know why the young man had not accompanied him in his evacuation of the city. “The king seems to have received him upbraidingly, and not to have been altogether sure either of his guilt or innocence. It is impossible to commend the cavalier treatment, any more than to approve the partial award, of David in this case” (JFB, pp.264f).
2. Verses 26-28: “And he answered, My lord, O king, my servant deceived me: for thy servant said, I will saddle me an ass, that I may ride thereon, and go to the king; because thy servant *is* lame. And he hath slandered thy servant unto my lord the king; but my lord the king *is* as an angel of God: do therefore *what is* good in thine eyes. For all *of* my father’s house were but dead men before my lord the king: yet didst thou set thy servant among them that did eat at thine own table. What right therefore have I yet to cry any more unto the king?”
- a. Mephibosheth replied that he had been deceived by his servant (Ziba). He had stated on the occasion that he would saddle a donkey, and go with David. He needed the animal for transportation because of his crippled feet. "And Jonathan, Saul's son, had a son *that was* lame of *his* feet. He was five years old when the tidings came of Saul and Jonathan out of Jezreel, and his nurse took him up, and fled: and it came to pass, as she made haste to flee, that he fell, and became lame. And his name *was* Mephibosheth" (2 Sam. 4:4).
 - b. It is unlikely that the prince could have saddled the donkey by himself. It is probable that Ziba had been directed to see to that job, and instead of waiting for his master, Ziba had taken the two asses (2 Sam. 16:1) and left without him. "And when David was a little past the top *of the hill*, behold, Ziba the servant of Mephibosheth met him, with a couple of asses saddled, and upon them two hundred *loaves* of bread, and an hundred bunches of raisins, and an hundred of summer fruits, and a bottle of wine" (2 Sam. 16:1).
 - c. Mephibosheth accused Ziba of having slandered him to the king. He stated that David was as an angel of God in his sight, that nothing could be hidden from his royal sight, and that he (the prince) would never have done what the servant charged him with doing.
 - d. However, he was willing to accept whatever David decided to do. Mephibosheth acknowledged that all of his father’s house were but dead men, but the king had exalted him to sit at the royal table. He stated that he did not have any reason to plead his case before the king, in view of the fact that David had already been so gracious to him. He placed the disposition of the matter entirely in the hands of the king.
3. Verses 29-30: “And the king said unto him, Why speakest thou any more of thy matters? I have said, Thou and Ziba divide the land. And Mephibosheth said unto the king, Yea, let him take all, forasmuch as my lord the king is come again in peace unto his own house.”
- a. “It must have been very evident to David from these words of Mephibosheth, that he had been deceived by Ziba, and that he had formed an unfounded prejudice against Mephibosheth, and committed an act of injustice in handing over his property to Ziba” (Keil, p.449).
 - b. Ziba had formerly had full control of Saul’s property, but when Mephibosheth was located, David turned the property over to the grandson, and gave Ziba the responsibility of tilling the land for the young man (2 Sam. 9:9-10).
 - c. Under this arrangement, Ziba would retain one-half of the crops produced for doing the work, and Mephibosheth would receive the other half as the legal owner (See Clarke, p.362). When David was
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met by Ziba as he fled from Jerusalem (2 Sam. 16:1ff), who furnished him and his company some essentials for the journey, the king gave Ziba full control over the land once again.

- d. Now, David reverses the hasty decision he made in Ziba's favor (2 Sam. 16:4). He states that the first ruling (2 Sam. 9:9-10) was in effect again. Mephibosheth and Ziba were to jointly share in the produce of the land, or the land was to be divided equally between them.
 - 1) Ziba did not deserve to be treated with this great generosity; he had slandered a good man, which should have received a rebuke, not a reward. His giving David some necessary food for the flight from Jerusalem was not a great gift.
 - 2) David's ruling here was made at a time when he was under great pressure; also he was desirous of smoothing over as much as possible the various disagreements which had recently rent the nation. He was trying to reconcile the nation.
- e. Mephibosheth's response was that Ziba could take all the property; David's safe return was sufficient enough a reward to him. This reply is an example of an eastern exaggeration; it was not intended to be taken literally.

E. 2 Samuel 19:31-40: Barzillai Journeys With David.

1. Verses 31-32: "And Barzillai the Gileadite came down from Rogelim, and went over Jordan with the king, to conduct him over Jordan. Now Barzillai was a very aged man, *even* fourscore years old: and he had provided the king of sustenance while he lay at Mahanaim; for he *was* a very great man."
 - a. An old man, Barzillai, arrived on the scene to accompany the king as he crossed over Jordan. His age is given as eighty. He was one of those who had supplied David with certain necessities when the king took up residence at Mahanaim: "And it came to pass, when David was come to Mahanaim, that Shobi the son of Nahash of Rabbah of the children of Ammon, and Machir the son of Ammiel of Lodebar, and Barzillai the Gileadite of Rogelim, Brought beds, and basons, and earthen vessels, and wheat, and barley, and flour, and parched corn, and beans, and lentiles, and parched pulse, And honey, and butter, and sheep, and cheese of kine, for David, and for the people that were with him, to eat: for they said, The people is hungry, and weary, and thirsty, in the wilderness" (2 Sam. 17:27-29).
 - b. He is described as "a very great man." His wealth was extensive, and his influence was powerful. He lived in the area known as Gilead, in a town named Rogelim. Rogelim: "Place name meaning, '[place of] the fullers.' City on the Jabbok River in Gilead (2 Sam. 17:27-29; 19:31). The site is perhaps Zaharet's Soq'ah. Tell Barsina lacks evidence of occupation in David's time" (Holman).
2. Verses 33-34: "And the king said unto Barzillai, Come thou over with me, and I will feed thee with me in Jerusalem. And Barzillai said unto the king, How long have I to live, that I should go up with the king unto Jerusalem?"
 - a. David was willing to take Barzillai with him to Jerusalem, to repay his kindness and hospitality there. The king was a very generous-hearted man; this attribute of character he demonstrated many times; it contributed greatly to his popularity and success.
 - b. We reap what we sow. David showed kindness to many through the years, and when he was in dire circumstances, many came to his aid. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting" (Gal. 6:7-8).
 - 1) We reap what we sow.
 - 2) We reap more than we sow.
 - 3) We reap for longer than we sow.
 - 4) Others reap from our sowing.

5) Our sowing has eternal consequences.

3. Verses 35-37: “*I am* this day fourscore years old: *and* can I discern between good and evil? can thy servant taste what I eat or what I drink? can I hear any more the voice of singing men and singing women? wherefore then should thy servant be yet a burden unto my lord the king? Thy servant will go a little way over Jordan with the king: and why should the king recompense it me with such a reward? Let thy servant, I pray thee, turn back again, that I may die in mine own city, *and be buried* by the grave of my father and of my mother. But behold thy servant Chimham; let him go over with my lord the king; and do to him what shall seem good unto thee.”
 - a. He states that he was eighty years old, and that he was unable to enjoy the good things of life as before. His ability to discern good and evil in the moral realm was not impaired; this power is more greatly enhanced with age and experience. The inability he speaks of pertains to the appetites and enjoyments of life: food, entertainment, and the like. He would be more of a burden to David than an asset. He would not be able to serve David well as a counselor.
 - b. He offered to accompany the king a little way beyond Jordan, but he did not want any reward for the assistance he had rendered him during his stay at Mahanaim. He had only a little time left, and his physical appetites had degenerated to such a degree that he would be unable to enjoy the benefits of the king’s table.
 - c. He requested that he be allowed to return to his own city, where he could die among members of his family, and be buried at the burying-site of his parents.
 - d. He also requested that Chimham, another servant of David, be invited to accompany the king, and receive from the royal hand whatever might be offered. Josephus asserts that Chimham was the son of Barzillai (Antiquities, Book 7, Chapter 11, Section 4, p.163).
4. Verses 38-40: “And the king answered, Chimham shall go over with me, and I will do to him that which shall seem good unto thee: and whatsoever thou shalt require of me, *that* will I do for thee. And all the people went over Jordan. And when the king was come over, the king kissed Barzillai, and blessed him; and he returned unto his own place. Then the king went on to Gilgal, and Chimham went on with him: and all the people of Judah conducted the king, and also half the people of Israel.”
 - a. David agreed to have Chimham join his company, and promised to do for him whatever Barzillai thought good.
 - b. The great company crossed Jordan. David kissed Barzillai, and blessed him. Barzillai returned to his own city and home.
 - c. David proceeded to Gilgal, with Chimham in his company. The people of Judah and about half of the people of Israel were in the vast congregation.
 - d. Coffman wrote this regarding verse 40: “These are ominous words, indicating the fundamental separation of the two Israels, Judah and Joseph. It did not begin here. It existed in the times of Joshua, during the times of the Judges, and was prominent in the period of David’s rise to the throne. It reached all the way back to the rivalry between Leah and Rachel, the wives of Jacob, and to the partiality of Jacob toward Joseph. The seat of their mutual hatred lay in the polygamous marriages of Jacob and in his unwise partiality to the children of Rachel. The sinful idolatry of Laban, Jacob’s father-in-law, was also a contributing factor” (pp.272f).

F. 2 Samuel 19:41-43: Judah and the Others Tribes in Conflict Over David.

1. Verse 41: “And, behold, all the men of Israel came to the king, and said unto the king, Why have our brethren the men of Judah stolen thee away, and have brought the king, and his household, and all David’s men with him, over Jordan?”
 - a. The men of Israel complained to David over the fact that the people of Judah had brought him and his
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household over Jordan. It bothered them that the men of Judah had been allowed to occupy such a close relationship with the king.

- b. This complaint seems strange, since a short time before, most of the people of Israel and of the tribe of Judah were involved in Absalom's rebellion against David.
2. Verse 42: "And all the men of Judah answered the men of Israel, Because the king *is* near of kin to us: wherefore then be ye angry for this matter? have we eaten at all of the king's *cost*? or hath he given us any gift?"
 - a. The men of Judah gave their reply: David is of our tribe; we are relatives, and deserve this closeness with the king. Anyhow, they continued, we have not been eating the king's food and we have not received any gift from him.
 - b. Because we are related to him by having a common ancestor (Judah), and have not cost the king anything, thus have not benefited from the income he derives from the nation, you have no right to complain.
 3. Verse 43: "And the men of Israel answered the men of Judah, and said, We have ten parts in the king, and we have also more *right* in David than ye: why then did ye despise us, that our advice should not be first had in bringing back our king? And the words of the men of Judah were fiercer than the words of the men of Israel."
 - a. The men of Israel responded by noting that David was also their king, and they had ten times as many people as did Judah; the people of Judah constituted the minority of the nation, but they were enjoying a greater relationship with the king than the majority.
 - b. They did not dispute the fact that David was from the tribe of Judah, and thus related to the tribe of Judah, but they argued that he was king over the entire nation of twelve tribes. They were upset that they had not been given the privilege of being more involved in bringing David back to the throne.
 - c. The seeds were being sown for the great rupture between the ten tribes of the north and the two tribes of the south; this division took place following the death of Solomon, David's son.
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2 SAMUEL 20

A. 2 Samuel 20:1-3: David Returns to Jerusalem With Problems to Solve.

1. Verse 1: "And there happened to be there a man of Belial, whose name *was* Sheba, the son of Bichri, a Benjamite: and he blew a trumpet, and said, We have no part in David, neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: every man to his tents, O Israel."
 - a. "Though nothing is known of this man [Sheba], he must have been a person of considerable power and influence ere he could have raised so sudden and extensive a sedition. He belonged to the tribe of Benjamin, where the adherents of Saul's dynasty were still numerous, and perceiving the strong disgust of the other tribes with the part assumed by Judah in the Restoration, his ill-designing heart resolved to turn it to the overthrow of David's authority in Israel" (JFB, p.266).
 - b. Sheba was a "son of Belial," which is a Hebrew idiom for a worthless individual. It is often used of morally corrupt people, such as certain ones in Gibeah (Judg. 19:22). This man took advantage of the anger that had been aroused in the emotional discussion between men of Judah and the men of the other tribes regarding the restoration of David to his throne (19:41-43). This case illustrates the severe danger involved when men lose control of their temper. A rabble-rouser like Sheba is able to gain mastery over the emotions of others, and can lead them wherever he wishes. This is how false teachers and political opportunists today operate.
 - c. Sheba blew a trumpet to attract the attention of the Israelites. Through the centuries, a trumpet or a similar instrument has been used to issue military commands. Joab used a trumpet to recall his army following the death of Absalom (2 Sam. 18:16). American military personnel still hear the sound of *taps* and *reveille*.
 - d. The trumpet blast drew the Israelites into an assembly where Sheba called on them to return to their tents. This message was intended to pull them away from David, with Sheba expecting them to look to him as their leader. The call for them to go to their tents was a "proverbial expression....This was the usual watchword of national insurrection, and from the actual temper of the people, it was followed by effects beyond what he probably anticipated" (JFB, p.266).
 2. Verse 2: "So every man of Israel went up from after David, *and* followed Sheba the son of Bichri: but the men of Judah clave unto their king, from Jordan even to Jerusalem."
 - a. There was a vast assemblage of people who were present when David traveled from the Jordan toward Jerusalem. In was during this journey that the dispute between Judah and the others tribes erupted.
 - b. The men of Judah won the argument, but caused a serious rent in the nation's unity, as well as being the immediate cause of Amasa's death, and Sheba's untimely end. It is likely that the entire episode could have been avoided if the men of Judah had invited the men of Israel to join with them in bringing David back to Jerusalem. Selfishness in both parties precipitated the turmoil.
 - c. The Israelites followed Sheba into this short-lived rebellion, but the men of Judah stayed steadfast with David. Sheba was riding the crest of popularity for the moment, but in a few days the people turned against him.
 3. Verse 3: "And David came to his house at Jerusalem; and the king took the ten women *his* concubines, whom he had left to keep the house, and put them in ward, and fed them, but went not in unto them. So they were shut up unto the day of their death, living in widowhood."
 - a. David's homecoming had already been spoiled by the trouble within the ranks of his followers as they journeyed from Jordan and Jerusalem. After returning to his palace, he had to deal with the ten concubines he had left to tend to his house during his absence.
 - b. The practices in ancient times was for the concubines of a king to be placed in a secluded place at the death of the monarch, there to live out their lives in isolation. "Jewish writers say that the widowed
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queens of Hebrew monarchs were not allowed to marry again, but were obliged to pass the rest of their lives in strict seclusion....David treated his concubines in the same manner, after the outrages committed on them by Absalom. They were not divorced, for they were guiltless; but they were no longer publicly recognized as his wives; nor was their confinement to a sequestered life a very heavy doom, in a region where women have never been accustomed to go much abroad" (JFB, p.266).

- c. David provided for them the rest of their lives, but no longer "went in unto them." There were many sinful practices which David did which God overlooked. His polygamous marriages was one of these. Adultery was one of the prohibitions of the Ten Commandments (Ex. 20:14), but David was guilty of breaking this law by his multiple wives and concubines. Polygamy is both senseless and sinful. "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent" (Acts 17:30).
- d. Why did God overlook this sin in David and yet execute Uzziah for touching the ark of the covenant (2 Sam. 6:1-7)? God had a great purpose for David to serve, which made it necessary for him to be kept alive and on the throne in Israel. God had ordained certain great roles for David to fill as part of the background for the coming of the Messiah. He had to overlook David's errors while punishing him in various immediate ways, or execute him as soon as his guilt was established. God chose the former of these two alternatives.

B. 2 Samuel 20:4-13: Joab Slays Amasa.

1. Verses 4-5: "Then said the king to Amasa, Assemble me the men of Judah within three days, and be thou here present. So Amasa went to assemble *the men of Judah*: but he tarried longer than the set time which he had appointed him.
 - a. David had promised to Amasa that he would occupy Joab's office as general of the army (2 Sam. 19:13). This passage shows that the king considered him to be trustworthy for the present job. It may be the case, however, that this relatively minor job [to assemble the men of Judah] was a test of his faithfulness and effectiveness as a military commander. Amasa filled an important part in Absalom's insurrection, and perhaps David was skeptical of this former rebel.
 - b. He here gives Amasa the job of assembling the fighting men of Israel. The purpose of this muster was to marshal his forces to put down the developing mutiny.
 - c. David gave Amasa three days to put this call to arms in force, and for him to be back before the king before that three-day span was over. He wanted to have his men ready for war as soon as possible, and he did not want to give the rebels time to entrench and reinforce themselves. Amasa did not get back before the prescribed time.
 2. Verses 6-7: "And David said to Abishai, Now shall Sheba the son of Bichri do us more harm than *did* Absalom: take thou thy lord's servants, and pursue after him, lest he get him fenced cities, and escape us. And there went out after him Joab's men, and the Cherethites, and the Pelethites, and all the mighty men: and they went out of Jerusalem, to pursue after Sheba the son of Bichri."
 - a. When it appeared that Amasa had betrayed him, or had joined the rebellion, or had fallen victim to some mischief, David dispatched Abishai to take to the field in pursuit of Sheba. Since this present rebellion followed so closely on the heels of the previous insurrection led by Absalom, David thought that the current mutiny would surpass Absalom's.
 - b. David still had the sizeable force around him, some of which had been with him for several years, plus the Cherethites and Pelethites. Joab's men (including Joab) were also available for the operation. The number of men with Sheba is not likely to be great.
 - c. The Cherethites (or Cherethim): "A people who lived south of or with the Philistines (1 Sam. 30:14). They were probably related to or paid soldiers for the Philistines. Crete may have been their original home. David used some of these soldiers as a personal bodyguard (2 Sam. 8:18). Ezekiel pronounced
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- judgment on them (Ezek. 25:16), as did Zephaniah (Zeph. 2:5)” (Holman).
- d. The Pelethites: “A family name meaning, ‘courier.’ Foreign mercenaries King David employed as body guards and special forces. Their leader was Benaiah (2 Sam. 8:18). The Pelethites are mentioned in conjunction with the Cherethites. These two groups probably were sea peoples who formed a loyalty to David during his days in the Philistine country while evading Saul. They remained with him until his death, fighting for him during the rebellions against his throne. Following his death, they helped Solomon purge the kingdom of David's enemies” (Holman).
 - e. Abishai and Joab took these men to pursue Sheba, hoping to take him before he was able to find refuge in a walled city. David gave Abishai command of the campaign, but Joab soon filled that office.
3. Verses 8-10: “When they *were* at the great stone which *is* in Gibeon, Amasa went before them. And Joab's garment that he had put on was girded unto him, and upon it a girdle *with* a sword fastened upon his loins in the sheath thereof; and as he went forth it fell out. And Joab said to Amasa, *Art* thou in health, my brother? And Joab took Amasa by the beard with the right hand to kiss him. But Amasa took no heed to the sword that *was* in Joab's hand: so he smote him therewith in the fifth *rib*, and shed out his bowels to the ground, and struck him not again; and he died. So Joab and Abishai his brother pursued after Sheba the son of Bichri.”
- a. When the army reached a certain well-known rock at Gibeon, Amasa joined them. He had not gone over to the rebels, but neither had he been able to assemble an army. Perhaps the Israelites were fed up with civil war. Josephus, however, states that Amasa had a large army with him when he joined Joab and Abishai at the rock of Gibeon (Book 7, Chapter 11, Section 7, pp.163f).
 - b. “The great stone which is in Gibeon. Gibeon is situated in the mountains of Ephraim, in the tribe of Benjamin, northwest of Jerusalem. The great stone was probably some isolated rock well known in the neighbourhood. Amasa went before them; Hebrew, Amasa came before them; that is, came in view with the levy of men he had raised in Judah.
 - 1) “And Joab's garment, etc.; more correctly, and Joab was girded with his military coat as his garment, and over it was the strap of his sword in its sheath, and it (masculine, equivalent to ‘the sheath’) came out, and it (feminine, equivalent to ‘the sword’) fell. This change of gender is very harsh, and has caused the Authorized Version to apply the masculine verb to Joab, and translate, and as he went forth it fell; but a very slight change, supported by the Septuagint, gives us a more satisfactory sense, namely, and it (the sword) came out and fell. It is generally assumed that all this was arranged beforehand on Joab's part, who had so placed his sword that he could shake it out of the sheath.
 - 2) “More probably it was an accident, of which he took instant advantage. He had felt that his position was insecure, and that if David had the support of Amasa, and a powerful band of the men of Judah at Jerusalem, he would probably order his execution for slaying Absalom; and Amasa would carry out the command willingly enough, as he thereby would secure the high position offered him.
 - 3) “We know David's feelings towards Joab from his dying command to Solomon (1 Kings 2:5), and probably he had given various indications of his deep seated resentment. Joab, therefore, determined to stop Amasa's growth in power, and also to give David a rough lesson. And this accident gave him an early opportunity, which he used with ruthless energy” [The Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 2001 by Biblesoft].
 - c. Gibeon:
 - 1) “Little was known of Gibeon's exact location until the twentieth century. Originally, the city was assigned to the tribe of Benjamin following Israel's victory in Canaan (Josh. 18:25) and made a city for Levites (Josh. 21:17).
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- 2) "Beginning in 1956, excavations led by James B. Pritchard gave proof that the modern city of el-Jib was the site of ancient Gibeon. Lying eight miles northwest of Jerusalem, Gibeon was in an area of moderate climate, ample rainfall, with a wine-led economy. With an elevation of about 2400 feet Gibeon towered above most other cities, making it easily defended.
 - 3) "Dating to about 3000 B.C., Gibeon served as the fortress city at the head of the valley of Ajalon which provided the principal access from the coastal plain into the hill country. Gibeon's power was strong as archaeology has found no sign of the city's destruction" (Holman).
 - 4) "This is the city whose citizens deceived Joshua into believing they had come from a far country especially to aid him in capturing Canaan (Josh. 9).
- d. The King James Version could be understood to say that Amasa had on Joab's garment, but as seen by other translations, Joab is the one wearing the indicated garment.
- 1) 2 Samuel 20:8: "When they *were* at the large stone which *is* in Gibeon, Amasa came before them. Now Joab was dressed in battle armor; on it was a belt *with* a sword fastened in its sheath at his hips; and as he was going forward, it fell out" (NKJ).
 - 2) 2 Samuel 20:8: "When they were at the great stone which is in Gibeon, Amasa came to meet them. And Joab was girded with his apparel of war that he had put on, and thereon was a girdle with a sword fastened upon his loins in the sheath thereof; and as he went forth it fell out" (ASV).
- e. "...Joab was girded with his armour-coat as his clothing, and the girdle of the sword was bound over it upon his loins in its sheath, which came out, and it fell (*i.e.* the sheath came out of the sword-belt in which it was fastened, and the sword fell to the ground)..." (Keil, p.453).
- 1) Josephus says, "Now Joab was girded with a sword, and his breastplate on; and when Amasa came near to salute him, he took particular care that his sword should fall out, as it were, of its own accord; so he took it up from the ground, and while he approached Amasa, who was then near him, as though he would kiss him, he took hold of Amasa's beard with his other hand, and smote him in his belly when he did not foresee it, and slew him" (*ibid*).
 - 2) Another possible understanding of how this murder transpired is that Joab's sword fell out of the sheath, and was left where it fell; this would have deceived Amasa into thinking Joab did not now have a weapon, but he in fact held another sword in his left hand, and as he reached forth his right hand to take Amasa's beard, he used the left hand to inflict the single, killing thrust.
- f. Joab greeted Amasa with the deceitful words, "Art thou in health, my brother?" Amasa took no notice of the sword in Joab's left hand. Joab used his right hand to take hold of Amasa's beard so as to kiss him in greeting. "It is worthy of remark that in the eastern country it is the *beard*, not the *man*, which is usually kissed" (Clarke, p.364).
- g. The sword thrust was inflicted "in the fifth *rib*," an idiomatic expression that obviously speaks of the abdominal region of the body. That this is so is seen in the fact that Amasa's body was so ripped open that his bowels came forth. This was a terrible injury, which would have been accompanied with great suffering, and followed by death. Joab had slain many men in battle, and knew just how to deliver a fatal blow; there was no need for a second thrust. He and Abishai continued their pursuit of Sheba. The apparent reason for killing Amasa was for Joab to remain general of the army.
4. Verses 11-13: "And one of Joab's men stood by him, and said, He that favoureth Joab, and he that *is* for David, *let him go* after Joab. And Amasa wallowed in blood in the midst of the highway. And when the man saw that all the people stood still, he removed Amasa out of the highway into the field, and cast a cloth upon him, when he saw that every one that came by him stood still. When he was removed out of the highway, all the people went on after Joab, to pursue after Sheba the son of Bichri."
- a. One of Joab's men stayed near the body of Amasa, and told the men who had accompanied Amasa to decide whether they would support David; if so, they were to follow Joab. We are not told what

the consequence would have been if they had declined the offer. They obviously understood that Joab would deal with them as effectively as he had dealt with Amasa.

- b. In the meantime, Amasa wallowed in his own blood and gore in the middle of the road. He did not die immediately. The men did not seem to want to pass his body, so the man moved it out of the way and covered it with a cloth. The men were then willing to pass the body of Amasa, and continue on after Joab.

C. 2 Samuel 20:14-22: Sheba is Slain at Abel.

1. Verses 14-15: “And he went through all the tribes of Israel unto Abel, and to Bethmaachah, and all the Berites: and they were gathered together, and went also after him. And they came and besieged him in Abel of Bethmaachah, and they cast up a bank against the city, and it stood in the trench: and all the people that *were* with Joab battered the wall, to throw it down.”
 - a. Sheba traveled through the tribes of Israel, trying to drum up support for his rebellion. He had very little success. With Joab’s army on his trail, Sheba entered the city of Abel, “A place name used alone and as the first part of other place names as seen below. The Hebrew 'Abel is a distinct word with a different spelling from the personal name Abel (Hebrew, hebel). The precise meaning of the place name is uncertain. It may mean, ‘brook.’ Standing alone, Abel appears in 2 Samuel 20:14-18, probably being the same place as Abel-beth-maachah” (Holman).
 - b. Joab surrounded and besieged the city, dug a trench around it for protection, and had his men to begin battering the wall to try to force an entrance.
 - c. Two interesting notes from McGarvey:
 - 1) “The third site referred to above is *Abil*, the Abel or Abel-beth-Maacha of the Scriptures. It is situated at the northwestern curve of the Plain of Huleh, on an isolated hill whose summit has been artificially leveled for a much larger town than the present village. This is the place to which Joab chased Sheba, the son of Bichri, who rebelled against David. The previous reputation of the place for wisdom was extolled by the woman who spoke from the wall to Joab, and said: ‘They were wont to speak in old time, saying, They shall surely ask counsel at Abel, and they ended the matter’ [2 Sam. 20:14-22]. It was one of the cities smitten by Ben-hadad, king of Syria, in the reign of Baasha [1 Kings 15:20], and one of those whose inhabitants were led captive by Tiglath-pileser in the reign of Pekah [2 Kings 15:29]” (*Lands of the Bible*, p.342).
 - 2) “At our right, on a hill overlooking the lake, is the site of Hazor, the city of Jabin, king of Canaan, who was conquered by Joshua. Nearer to us, and beautifully situated on a rounded hill-top, we saw the village of Abil, the ancient Abel-beth-Maacha, where Sheba took refuge when pursued by David’s army under Joab, and over whose walls his head was thrown to Joab by the advice of a wise woman in the city [2 Sam. 20:1-22]” (p.542).
2. Verses 16-17: “Then cried a wise woman out of the city, Hear, hear; say, I pray you, unto Joab, Come near hither, that I may speak with thee. And when he was come near unto her, the woman said, *Art* thou Joab? And he answered, *I am he*. Then she said unto him, Hear the words of thine handmaid. And he answered, I do hear.”
 - a. A certain “wise woman” of the city called out to speak with Joab. After establishing his identity, she said she had something to say to him. He invited her to speak.
 - b. This wise woman was of the same stripe as the woman from Tekoah who was sent by Joab to speak with David about bringing Absalom back from exile (2 Sam. 14). These women were known and respected for their knowledge and cunning.
3. Verses 18-19: “Then she spake, saying, They were wont to speak in old time, saying, They shall surely ask *counsel* at Abel: and so they ended *the matter*. *I am one of them that are peaceable and faithful* in Israel: thou seekest to destroy a city and a mother in Israel: why wilt thou swallow up the inheritance of

the LORD?”

- a. “Abel was probably famed for the wisdom of its inhabitants; and parties who had disputes appealed to their judgment, which appears to have been in such high reputation as to be final by consent of all parties. To this the wise woman refers, and intimates to Joab that he should have proceeded in this way before he began to storm the city, and destroy the peaceable inhabitants” (Clarke, 365f).
 - b. She demands to know why Joab was trying to destroy a peaceful city, kill a mother in Israel (herself) and swallow up the inheritance of the Lord. Her words indicate that she saw his attack as nothing more than a war of conquest, an act of piracy. Of course, she could not have been as ignorant of the situation as she claims.
4. Verses 20-22: “And Joab answered and said, Far be it, far be it from me, that I should swallow up or destroy. The matter *is* not so: but a man of mount Ephraim, Sheba the son of Bichri by name, hath lifted up his hand against the king, *even* against David: deliver him only, and I will depart from the city. And the woman said unto Joab, Behold, his head shall be thrown to thee over the wall. Then the woman went unto all the people in her wisdom. And they cut off the head of Sheba the son of Bichri, and cast *it* out to Joab. And he blew a trumpet, and they retired from the city, every man to his tent. And Joab returned to Jerusalem unto the king.”
- a. Joab denies that he was there to destroy a city or swallow up anyone’s inheritance. The reason was to apprehend a man from mount Ephraim, Sheba by name, who had lifted up his hand against King David. He asks her to deliver him up to him and Joab would withdraw his army from Abel, and do no further damage. He specifically stated that the only man he wanted was Sheba.
 - b. The woman replied that Sheba’s head would be delivered to him, thrown over the wall. She made this commitment without consulting the leaders of the city. She convinced the rulers of Abel to cut off the head of Sheba, and cast it out to Joab.
 - c. Joab was true to his word. He blew a trumpet, and directed the army to withdraw. The soldiers were dismissed to return to their homes, while he went back to Jerusalem. The men he brought with him would, of course, go with him.

D. 2 Samuel 20:23-26: Some of David’s Mighty Men.

1. Verse 23: “Now Joab *was* over all the host of Israel: and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada *was* over the Cherethites and over the Pelethites.”
 - a. Joab retained his position as the general of David’s army. David made no effort to remove Joab; he knew the dangerous nature of this man. He did, however, make arrangements with Solomon for Joab to be executed for his crimes (1 Kings 2:5-6).
 - b. Benaiah was in charge of the Cherethites and Pelethites. Benaiah: “Personal name meaning, ‘Yahweh has built.’ 1. Captain of David's professional soldiers (2 Sam. 8:18; 20:23), known for heroic feats such as disarming an Egyptian and killing him with his own sword as well as killing a lion in the snow (2 Sam. 23:20-23). Still he was not among the top three military advisors of David (2 Sam. 20:23). His unquestioned loyalty to David led Adonijah not to include him as he attempted to replace David as king instead of Solomon (1 Kings 1:8-26). He followed David's orders and helped anoint Solomon as king (1 Kings 1:32-47). He became Solomon's executioner (1 Kings 2:25-46) and army commander (1 Kings 4:4)...” (Holman).
 2. Verse 24: “And Adoram *was* over the tribute: and Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud *was* recorder.”
 - a. Adoram was in charge of the collection of taxes. He is also known by the name Adoniram (1 Kings 4:6). Adoram (Adoniram): “Personal name meaning, ‘the Lord is exalted.’ Officer in charge of the work gangs Solomon conscripted from Israel (1 Kings 4:6; 5:14). The king forced Israel's citizens to work for the state to secure materials to build the Temple and the other projects of Solomon. Apparently the same person continued administering the work force for Rehoboam, though his name
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- is abbreviated to Adoram in 1 Kings 12:18. At that time, Israel rebelled against making free citizens work. They stoned Adoniram to death. The name is spelled Hadoram in 2 Chronicles 10:18. Recently archaeologists uncovered a seal which probably dates to the seventh century, long after Adoniram. The seal talks of a person over the labor force” (Holman).
- b. Jehoshaphat was the recorder. Jehoshaphat: “An official at David's court (2 Sam. 8:16), called the ‘recorder’ or ‘secretary of state’ (REB). The Hebrew term's root meaning is ‘remember.’ Some Bible students compare the office to the Egyptian court herald who reported events to the king and made public announcements. Others think the office maintained public records, while others speak of a foreign minister. As with many Hebrew offices, certainty is not possible. Jehoshaphat retained the office under Solomon (1 Kings 4:3)” (Holman).
3. Verses 25-26: “And Sheva *was* scribe: and Zadok and Abiathar *were* the priests: And Ira also the Jairite was a chief ruler about David.”
 - a. Sheva served in David’s cabinet as scribe. Sheva: “Personal name meaning, ‘similarity.’ Scribe for David (2 Sam. 20:25), perhaps the transliteration of an Egyptian title meaning, ‘writer of letters.’ The name is Seraiah in 2 Samuel 8:17; Shavsha in 1 Chronicles 18:16” (Holman).
 - b. Zadok and Abiathar were the priests.
 - c. Ira was David’s chief ruler (minister). Ira: “Personal name meaning, ‘city’ or ‘donkey's colt.’ 1. Priest under David (2 Sam. 20:26). KJV and a few Bible students see ‘priest’ here as a civil office rather than a religious one. Ira was apparently from Havoth-jair in Gilead (Num. 32:41), though some Bible students think he was from Kiriath-jearim (1 Sam. 7:1). Ira is not identified as a Levite, and his function is not related to those of Abiathar and Zadok, the official priests. Thus some have concluded that he served on David's private staff as a personal priest to the king.... 2. Two of David's military heroes were named Ira (2 Sam. 23:26,38). Ira from Tekoa was also an officer in charge of the sixth month's ‘national guard’ army (1 Chron. 27:9)” (Holman).
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2 SAMUEL 21

A. 2 Samuel 21:1-9: Famine Strikes the Land.

1. Verse 1: “Then there was a famine in the days of David three years, year after year; and David inquired of the LORD. And the LORD answered, *It is* for Saul, and for *his* bloody house, because he slew the Gibeonites.”
 - a. A serious famine struck the land during the reign of David, and persisted for three successive years. While many people might be able to survive one or even two years of famine, due to sufficient stores of supplies, few would be able to subsist through three years without disastrous effects. Somehow Israel survived, although undoubtedly there was immense affliction.
 - b. How long had the famine been going on before David sought information from the Lord regarding why it was sent and how to obtain relief from it? Is it possible that he waited three years? Perhaps, but that seems unlikely in view of his usual closeness to the Lord. David may have thought himself too busy to ask the Lord sooner about this problem.
 - c. Upon inquiry, the Lord told David that it was on account of the bloody dealings of Saul with the Gibeonites. During the conquest of Canaan, the Israelites were deceived into thinking the Gibeonites had journeyed a long distance to assist them in conquering the land (Josh. 9). This deception led them to make a treaty with these Canaanites, but when they discovered this duplicity, Israel made the Gibeonites their servants. Israel got into trouble by failing to ask the Lord what they should do.
 - d. The text states that Saul had dealt with the Gibeonites in some bloody way. The Bible does not report any further information about this. “The sacred history had not recorded either the time or the reason of this massacre. Some think that they were sufferers in the atrocity perpetrated by Saul at Nob (1 Sam. 22:19), where many of them may have resided as attendants of the priests; while others suppose it more probable that the attempt was made afterwards, with a view to regain the popularity he had lost throughout the nation by that execrable outrage” (JFB, p.269).
 - e. Saul’s slaughter of the Gibeonites was a direct violation of the treaty which Joshua and Israel had made with them many years earlier.
 2. Verses 2-3: “And the king called the Gibeonites, and said unto them; (now the Gibeonites *were* not of the children of Israel, but of the remnant of the Amorites; and the children of Israel had sworn unto them: and Saul sought to slay them in his zeal to the children of Israel and Judah.) Wherefore David said unto the Gibeonites, What shall I do for you? and wherewith shall I make the atonement, that ye may bless the inheritance of the LORD?”
 - a. The Gibeonites were a heathen people, members of the pagan Canaanite race. *Amorite* is sometimes used as a general reference to the nations which occupied Palestine before Israel came; it is also the specific name of a certain nation. Specifically, the Gibeonites were members of the Hivite nation (Josh. 9:7).
 - b. Saul violated the treaty Israel had made with these Hivites, thus caused God’s wrath to be visited upon Israel. Why did God wait until now to punish this sin? Knowing God’s infinite knowledge and wisdom, we may be certain that this was the best time for it. “Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness *of any thing* that *is* in heaven above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or that *is* in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God *am* a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me” (Ex. 20:4-5).
 - c. “In consequence of this answer from God, which merely indicated in a general manner the cause of the visitation that had come upon the land, David sent for the Gibeonites to ask them concerning the wrong that had been done them by Saul” (Keil, p.460).
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- d. "It is simply amazing that David would have asked the pagan Gibeonites what should be done; there was not a chance in a million that they would have, or even **could have** given him a correct answer" (Coffman, p.291).
 - e. David asked the Gibeonites what he should do in order to make things right with them and to gain their favor. He should have sought this information from God, not from these pagans! They were bound to make some harsh demand.
 - f. "The case was a very peculiar one; and the entire narrative shows that, though reduced like the Spartan zealots to a state of perpetual servitude, they were not an oppressed people" (JFB, p.269).
3. Verse 4: "And the Gibeonites said unto him, We will have no silver nor gold of Saul, nor of his house; neither for us shalt thou kill any man in Israel. And he said, What ye shall say, *that* will I do for you."
- a. God's law stated that the guilty party was to suffer for his own sins; those who were not involved were not to be punished. Notwithstanding this injunction, David opened the door for the Gibeonites to make the demand they offered.
 - 1) Numbers 35:33: "So ye shall not pollute the land wherein ye *are*: for blood it defileth the land: and the land cannot be cleansed of the blood that is shed therein, but by the blood of him that shed it."
 - 2) Deuteronomy 24:16: "The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin."
 - b. In their first response, the Gibeonites stated that they were not seeking monetary satisfaction for the crime committed against them. They further asserted that they did not seek the death of an Israelite (one who was not involved by guilt or association).
 - c. David virtually promised to give them anything they demanded, without knowing what they were to request.
4. Verses 5-6: "And they answered the king, The man that consumed us, and that devised against us *that* we should be destroyed from remaining in any of the coasts of Israel, Let seven men of his sons be delivered unto us, and we will hang them up unto the LORD in Gibeah of Saul, *whom* the LORD did choose. And the king said, I will give *them*."
- a. Since Saul had endeavored to destroy all of the Gibeonites, they requested that David turn over to them seven of Saul's sons (i.e., grandsons).
 - b. These seven men they would hang "up before the Lord in Gibeah," Saul's hometown. "The practice of the Hebrews, as of most Oriental nations, was to slay first, and afterwards to suspend on a gibbet..." (JFB, p.269). The execution of these men in Gibeah was doubtless intended as an insult to the house of Saul.
 - c. David agreed to turn seven of Saul's descendants over to these heathen Gibeonites. Needless to say, the king was not perfect in decision-making, action, or word.
5. Verses 7-9: "But the king spared Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan the son of Saul, because of the LORD'S oath that *was* between them, between David and Jonathan the son of Saul. But the king took the two sons of Rizpah the daughter of Aiah, whom she bare unto Saul, Armoni and Mephibosheth; and the five sons of Michal the daughter of Saul, whom she brought up for Adriel the son of Barzillai the Meholathite: And he delivered them into the hands of the Gibeonites, and they hanged them in the hill before the LORD: and they fell *all* seven together, and were put to death in the days of harvest, in the first *days*, in the beginning of barley harvest."
- a. David spared Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, because of the oath David and Jonathan had sworn to each other in the Lord's sight.
 - 1) 1 Samuel 18:3: "Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul."
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- 2) 1 Samuel 20:8: "Therefore thou shalt deal kindly with thy servant; for thou hast brought thy servant into a covenant of the LORD with thee: notwithstanding, if there be in me iniquity, slay me thyself; for why shouldst thou bring me to thy father?"
 - 3) 1 Samuel 20:15: "But *also* thou shalt not cut off thy kindness from my house for ever: no, not when the LORD hath cut off the enemies of David every one from the face of the earth."
- b. Those chosen to be executed by the Gibeonites were:
- 1) The two sons of Rizpah (the daughter of Aiah). "And Saul had a concubine, whose name was Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah..." (2 Sam. 3:7). These two men were named Armoni and Mephibosheth (not to be confused with Jonathan's son by the same name).
 - 2) The others were the five sons of Adriel. We are informed that Michal, the daughter of Saul, had brought up these five boys. The marginal rendering shows that *Michal* could be translated as *Michal's sister*; her sister's name was Merab, who is identified as the wife of Adriel. "But it came to pass at the time when Merab Saul's daughter should have been given to David, that she was given unto Adriel the Meholathite to wife" (1 Sam. 18:19). The phrase *brought up* is given as *bare* in the ASV. Barzillai is said by the scholars to be different from the man by that name in 2 Samuel 19:31-40.
- c. David turned these seven men over to the Gibeonites, who hanged them on the hill at Gibeah, before the Lord.
- 1) "Deeming themselves not bound by the criminal law of Israel (Deut. 21:22,23), their intention was to let the bodies hang until God, propitiated by this offering, should send rain upon the land, for the want of it had occasioned the famine.
 - 2) "It was a heathen practice to gibbet men with a view of appeasing the anger of the gods in seasons of famine; and the Gibeonites, who were a remnant of the Amorites (v. 2), though brought to the knowledge of the true God, were not, it seems, free from this superstition.
 - 3) "God in His providence suffered the Gibeonites to ask and inflict so barbarous a retaliation, in order that they, having been injured, might obtain justice and some reparation of their wrongs, especially that the scandal brought on the name of the true religion by the violation of a solemn national compact, might be wiped away from Israel, and that a memorable lesson should be given to respect treaties and oaths" (JFB, p.270).
- d. "Did God require this sacrifice of Saul's sons, probably all innocent of the alleged crime of their father? Was there no other method of averting the Divine displeasure? Was the restitution of the Gibeonites to have Saul's sons sacrificed to God, to be considered as an oracle of God? Certainly not; God will not have man's blood for sacrifice, no more than he will have swine's blood. The famine might have been removed, and the land properly purged, by offering the sacrifices prescribed by the law, and by a general humiliation of the people" (Clarke, pp.367f).
- e. Coffman:
- 1) Before leaving this vengeful request of the Gibeonites, we should point out what a foolish request it was from their own viewpoint. Having been condemned by Israel to perpetual slavery, why did they not ask for an end of that? Instead, they wished to torture the sons of Saul! Not until the request of Salome who turned down half a kingdom to choose instead the head of John the Baptist is there anything in the Bible that matches this insane request of the Gibeonites. As Matthew Henry said, "They had a fair opportunity to get rid of their servitude, but they did not take it."
 - 2) God indeed promised that the sins of one generation might indeed be the reason for punishment of succeeding generations, but there is no record where God ever extended this privilege of executing innocents for the crimes of their ancestors into the hands of mortal and fallible men. These men David turned over to the Gibeonites were not sons of Saul in the ordinary sense, but
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grandsons, and there never was a Divine law that allowed men to execute grandsons for the crimes of their grandfather.

- 3) The scholars who excuse this outrage by relating it to the ancient custom of blood-vengeance (for which the cities of refuge were provided as a deterrent) which allowed the next of kin to kill the murderer have simply failed to see that this case resembles that custom in no manner whatever. Here we have, not the next of kin but a racial contingent murdering all of the offender's next of kin! There is no correspondence whatever in the two cases. In the case of the scriptural avenger of blood, the next of kin (singular) murdered the offender (singular) (and if the manslayer sought refuge in an appointed city, even that was allowed only after a judicial hearing); here we have, not the next of kin, but mere members (plural) of the same race murdering all the descendants (plural) of the offender.

B. 2 Samuel 21:10-14: The Bones of Saul and Jonathan Are Reburied in Benjamin.

1. Verses 10-11: "And Rizpah the daughter of Aiah took sackcloth, and spread it for her upon the rock, from the beginning of harvest until water dropped upon them out of heaven, and suffered neither the birds of the air to rest on them by day, nor the beasts of the field by night. And it was told David what Rizpah the daughter of Aiah, the concubine of Saul, had done."
 - a. The inspired historian has told us that the executions took place at the time of the barley harvest, which was in the spring of the year; here we are told that Rizpah's vigilance over the bodies of those executed continued until the rains fell. The rainy season is in the autumn, apparently the time meant in the text, although it is possible that God caused rain to fall earlier in these special circumstances. There is no indication in the context to suggest the rainy season was early.
 - b. Rizpah spread sackcloth over a rock, and maintained constant watch over the bodies to keep the birds and beasts from molesting them. The bodies were allowed to stay on the gibbets throughout this time. David was told of Rizpah's actions, and was much touched by her attentiveness.
2. Verse 12: "And David went and took the bones of Saul and the bones of Jonathan his son from the men of Jabeshgilead, which had stolen them from the street of Bethshan, where the Philistines had hanged them, when the Philistines had slain Saul in Gilboa."
 - a. David directed that the bones of Saul and Jonathan be removed from their burial place at Jabesh-gilead, where they had been interred following their removal from the walls of Bethshan.
 - b. 1 Samuel 31:11-13: "And when the inhabitants of Jabeshgilead heard of that which the Philistines had done to Saul; All the valiant men arose, and went all night, and took the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons from the wall of Bethshan, and came to Jabesh, and burnt them there. And they took their bones, and buried *them* under a tree at Jabesh, and fasted seven days."
3. Verses 13-14: "And he brought up from thence the bones of Saul and the bones of Jonathan his son; and they gathered the bones of them that were hanged. And the bones of Saul and Jonathan his son buried they in the country of Benjamin in Zelah, in the sepulchre of Kish his father: and they performed all that the king commanded. And after that God was entreated for the land."
 - a. The bones of Saul and Jonathan were buried in the land of Benjamin, at Zelah, in the sepulcher of Kish, Saul's father. The bones of the seven descendants of Saul were also properly buried.
 - b. After the disposition of the bones was tended to, God was entreated for the land. The prayers of the people were heard and answered, and relief was provided.
 - c. Some scholars view this episode as having taken place earlier in the experiences of David, and that the position the story occupies in the text is not indicative of the chronology of the event. There is no clear proof that this is so; but the time of its occurrence has little to do with the report itself.

C. 2 Samuel 21:15-22: Philistine Giants Slain.

1. Verse 15: “Moreover the Philistines had yet war again with Israel; and David went down, and his servants with him, and fought against the Philistines: and David waxed faint.”
 - a. The inspired historian relates the story of yet another war that David had with the Philistines. David was at the head of his army on the battlefield. During the fighting, the king grew faint, and apparently was at the mercy of the enemy. This fatigue may indicate the declining strength of the aging warrior-king.
 - b. “Although the Philistines had completely succumbed to the army of David, yet the appearance of any gigantic champions among them revived their courage, and stirred them up to renewed inroads on the Hebrew territory. Four successive contests they provoked during the latter period of David’s reign, in the first of which the king ran so imminent a risk of his life, that he was no longer allowed to encounter the perils of the battlefield” (JFB, p.271).
2. Verses 16-17: “And Ishbibenob, which *was* of the sons of the giant, the weight of whose spear *weighed* three hundred *shekels* of brass in weight, he being girded with a new *sword*, thought to have slain David. But Abishai the son of Zeruiah succoured him, and smote the Philistine, and killed him. Then the men of David sware unto him, saying, Thou shalt go no more out with us to battle, that thou quench not the light of Israel.”
 - a. Ishbibenob, who was from a family of giants, was on the verge of slaying David. This was a very fearsome fighter. The weight of his spearhead is placed at 300 shekels of brass, which was about half the weight of Goliath’s (1 Sam. 17:7). Three hundred shekels of brass is equivalent to about eight pounds (Keil, p.464). He was also equipped with a new *sword*.
 - b. Abishai came to David’s assistance, when he saw the king’s danger. He slew the giant, which again demonstrates the fighting skills of Abishai.
 - c. The soldiers decided that David should no longer accompany them into battle, lest the light of Israel be quenched by his being slain. “...Abishai rushed to his aid and slew the monster. But such an occurrence created more than a momentary alarm; and his officers, determined not to expose so precious a life to a similar risk, exacted a solemn promise from the aged king that he would henceforth leave the command of the army to his generals” (JFB, p.271).
 - d. Pulpit Commentary:
 - 1) David was exhausted in this fight, and a Philistian giant thought to slay him; but Abishai came to his help and slew the giant. He was called Yishbo benob (Keri, Yishbi) ... a proper name, the meaning of which is probably "his dwelling is on the height," and which may have been given to him because of his inaccessible castle.
 - 2) He was one of the descendants of Raphah, i.e., one of the gigantic race of Rephaim. Raphah was the tribe-father of the Rephaim, an ancient tribe of gigantic stature, of whom only a few families were left even in Moses' time (vid., Deut 2:11; 3:11,13 The weight of his lance, i.e., of the metal point to his lance, was three hundred shekels, or eight pounds, of brass, half as much as the spear of Goliath (1 Sam 17:7); "and he was girded with new armour."
 - 3) The danger into which the king had been brought in this war, and out of which he had been rescued solely by Abishai's timely help, induced his attendants to make him swear that he would not go into battle any more in person administered an oath to him, i.e., fixed him by a promise on oathDavid had become the light of Israel from the fact that Jehovah was his light (2 Sam 22:29), or, according to the parallel passage in Ps 18:29 The light (or lamp) is a figure used to represent the light of life as continually burning, i.e., life in prosperity and honour. David's regal life and actions were the light which the grace of God had kindled for the benefit of Israel. This light he was not to extinguish, namely by going into the midst of war and so exposing his valuable life to danger.

3. Verse 18: “And it came to pass after this, that there was again a battle with the Philistines at Gob: then Sibbechai the Hushathite slew Saph, which *was* of the sons of the giant.”
 - a. Yet another battle with the Philistines ensued, this time at Gob. 1 Chronicles 20:4 gives the name of the place as *Gezer*.
 - b. In this conflict, another giant had been found by the Philistines, who seemed to have a penchant for finding such men to serve them in battle. Sibbechai the Hushathite slew Saph, the giant. "And it came to pass after this, that there arose war at Gezer with the Philistines; at which time Sibbechai the Hushathite slew Sippai, *that was* of the children of the giant: and they were subdued" (1 Chron. 20:4).
 - c. The Philistines were once again subdued—for a time.
4. Verse 19: “And there was again a battle in Gob with the Philistines, where Elhanan the son of Jaareoregim, a Bethlehemite, slew *the brother of* Goliath the Gittite, the staff of whose spear *was* like a weaver's beam.”
 - a. The parallel account of this battle is in 1 Chronicles 20:5: "And there was war again with the Philistines; and Elhanan the son of Jair slew Lahmi the brother of Goliath the Gittite, whose spear staff *was* like a weaver's beam."
 - b. This battle was also at Gob, and its story is closely akin to the preceding. Again, the Philistines had procured the services of another giant, a kinsman (brother) of Goliath.
 - c. Critical scholars assert that there is a conflict between this verse and 1 Samuel 17. They allege that the two accounts give contradictory reports of who killed Goliath; the present passage says Elhanan did, while the other says David. But the difficulty is removed by understanding the text to say that the present giant was a kinsman to Goliath or that two giants bore the same name.
 - d. The parallel account (1 Chron. 20:5) places the matter beyond controversy: it was the brother of Goliath that was slain in the present case.
5. Verses 20-21: “And there was yet a battle in Gath, where was a man of *great* stature, that had on every hand six fingers, and on every foot six toes, four and twenty in number; and he also was born to the giant. And when he defied Israel, Jonathan the son of Shimea the brother of David slew him.”
 - a. In yet another battle with the Philistines, this time at Gath, another giant arose to do battle with Israel. This man had six fingers on each of his hands and six toes on each foot. His immense size and his deformity made him a unique individual.
 - b. This giant defied Israel, as Goliath had done earlier (1 Sam. 17). In the former case, David went out to meet and slay Goliath; in this latter case, Jonathan the son of David's brother (Shimea, or Shammah) went forth and slew this giant. The story is given in a concise, terse report, but it may have been as fully thrilling as the more detailed description of David's battle with Goliath.
6. Verse 22: “These four were born to the giant in Gath, and fell by the hand of David, and by the hand of his servants.”
 - a. These four giants (of verses 16-21) were members of the family of giants residing at Gath. All four of these pagan warriors were slain by David and his men.
 - b. About these giants, Holman Bible Dictionary says:
 - 1) “Ethnic designation of the pre-Israelite inhabitants of Palestine, equivalent to the Anakim, the Moabite term Emim (Deut. 2:10-11), and the Ammonite term Zanzummim (2:20-21).
 - 2) “Despite their reputation for might and height, the Rephaim were defeated by a coalition of eastern kings (Gen. 14:5) and were later displaced by the Israelites (Deut. 3:11,13; compare Gen. 15:20) and their distant kin, the Moabites (Deut. 2:10-11) and the Ammonites (2:20-21). KJV regularly translated Rephaim as ‘giants’ (except Gen. 14:5; 15:20 and some references to the valley or land

of the Rephaim). NASB and RSV used the translation 'giants' only in reference to individual giants in 2 Samuel and 1 Chronicles. NIV avoided the translation 'giant' completely, using 'Rephaim' when referring to the valley or land, 'Rephaites' when referring to the pre-Israelite inhabitants, and 'descendant of Rapha' for individuals in 2 Samuel and 1 Chronicles.

- 3) "The artificial distinction between Rephaites and descendant of Rapha apparently attempts to ease the tension between the designation of King Og of Bashan as the last of the Rephaim (Deut. 3:11; Josh. 12:4) and the mention of later descendants in 2 Samuel 21:16,18,20,22; 1 Chronicles 20:6,8."
- c. Another designation of ancient giants is Anak (or Anakim):
- 1) "Personal and clan name meaning, 'long-necked' or 'strong-necked.' The ancestor named Anak had three children: Ahiman, Sheshai, Talmi (Num. 13:22).
 - 2) "They lived in Hebron and the hill country (Josh. 11:21) before being destroyed by Joshua. Their remnants then lived among the Philistines (Josh. 11:22).
 - 3) These tall giants were part of the Nephilim (Gen. 6:4; Num. 13:33). Arba was a hero of the Anakim (Judg. 14:15). The spelling Anakims puts the English plural 's' on to the Hebrew plural 'im'" (Holman).
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2 SAMUEL 22

A. 2 Samuel 22:1-3: Introduction of David's Song of Triumph.

1. Verse 1: "And David spake unto the LORD the words of this song in the day *that* the LORD had delivered him out of the hand of all his enemies, and out of the hand of Saul."
 - a. This song is virtually identical to Psalm 18. Whatever variations that may be discovered between the two songs, the reason for them is to be found in the infinite wisdom of God's mind. The word of God came to us in written form, being revealed to inspired men by the Holy Spirit.
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 2:9-14: "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed *them* unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned."
 - 2) 2 Peter 1:19-21: "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake *as they were* moved by the Holy Ghost."
 - 3) 2 Samuel 23:1-2: "Now these be the last words of David. David the son of Jesse said, and the man who was raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel, said, The Spirit of the LORD spake by me, and his word was in my tongue."
 - 4) Acts 1:16: "Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus."
 - b. The exact time of this song is not specified; the inspired historian merely reports that it was at some occasion following the great victories God had given to David. The victories are summed up by the reference to "all his enemies, and out of the hand of Saul."
 - c. The triumph over Saul is reported. "He is mentioned, not as the last of David's persecutors, but rather as, in the spirit of bitter and implacable hostility, the greatest and most formidable of them all. The phrase means, *especially* out of the hand—*i.e.*, the oppressive and sanguinary grasp of Saul" (JFB, p.273).
2. Verses 2-3: "And he said, The LORD *is* my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; the God of my rock; in him will I trust: *he is* my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower, and my refuge, my saviour; thou savest me from violence."
 - a. Verses two through four form the introduction of the song. "This introduction contains the sum and substance of the whole psalm, inasmuch as David groups the many experiences of divine deliverance in his agitated life into a long series of predicates, in all of which he extols God as his defence, refuge, and deliverer. The heaping up of these predicates is an expression both of liveliest gratitude, and also of hope for the future" (Keil, p.470).
 - b. David pictures God as his **rock**, by which he means that God is his source of protection. "The word, from which was derived Sela, the ancient name of *Petra* (hewn out of, and imbedded amongst, rocks), denotes not only a rock, but also excavations of fissures in the rock, so numerous in the mountain

districts of Palestine that the Israelites at various periods of their early history (Judg. 6:2; 1 Sam. 24:3,22) sought shelter there from foreign aggression. David's own personal experience had furnished remarkable proofs of the safety afforded by these rocky caverns" (JFB, p.273).

- c. God is depicted as David's **fortress**. God was his citadel; his place of refuge and safety. He further described God as his **deliverer**. Jehovah provided the protection from the onslaughts of the enemy, and eventually supplied him with full deliverance from the enemy.
- d. In verse four, David speaks of Jehovah as being his rock, in whom he would trust; also, as his shield, from whom he would receive protection. He is depicted as his horn (a figure of might and strength), who would give salvation to David. Further, God is his high tower (a structure which was used as an observation post from which the guard could be ever vigilant for the approach of the enemy; God is therefore, on guard duty, protecting David. Finally, the psalmist speaks of God as his refuge and savior, who would deliver David from the violence intended by his enemies.

B. 2 Samuel 22:4-19: David Describes the Deliverance he has Received.

1. Verse 4: "I will call on the LORD, *who is* worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies."
 - a. Because God is able to perform all of the above functions in regard to David, he would call upon God and be saved by his mighty hand. To call upon God involves far more than to call out to him. To "call upon God" is to obey his will.
 - 1) In Acts 2:21, Peter quoted from Joel 2:32 when he said: "And it shall come to pass, *that* whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." Paul also cited this statement in Romans 10:13.
 - 2) In the case of Acts 2, Peter specifically stated the means by which one is able to call upon the name of the Lord, in Acts 2:38: "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."
 - 3) Paul also showed in the context of his statement what is meant by this Old Testament phrase, in Romans 10:16: "But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?"
 - b. God is worthy to be praised, not merely for the deliverance and other blessings he offers, but because of his very nature. "He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love....We love him, because he first loved us" (1 John 4:8, 19).
 2. Verses 5-7: "When the waves of death compassed me, the floods of ungodly men made me afraid; The sorrows of hell compassed me about; the snares of death prevented me; In my distress I called upon the LORD, and cried to my God: and he did hear my voice out of his temple, and my cry *did enter* into his ears."
 - a. "When the waves of death surrounded me, The floods of ungodliness made me afraid. The sorrows of Sheol surrounded me; The snares of death confronted me. In my distress I called upon the LORD, And cried out to my God; He heard my voice from His temple, And my cry *entered* His ears" (2 Sam. 21:5-7, NKJ).
 - b. The opposition of his enemies is pictured as the waves of the sea and the waters of a flood. Their waves had him surrounded, and their floods made him fearful.
 - c. The sorrows (or *cords*, margin) of *sheol* were around him, and the snares of death were upon him. These two statements are parallel; they express the same thought in two different ways. Sheol (hades) was about to capture him; the snares of death were about to be thrown upon him. His life was in grave jeopardy; he was on the verge of being slain by his enemies. This condition developed many times in David's experiences.
 - d. In his great distress, David cried unto Jehovah, and God in his heavenly temple heard his plaintive cry,
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and responded.

3. Verses 8-10: “Then the earth shook and trembled; the foundations of heaven moved and shook, because he was wroth. There went up a smoke out of his nostrils, and fire out of his mouth devoured: coals were kindled by it. He bowed the heavens also, and came down; and darkness *was* under his feet.”
 - a. Using figures of speech, David described God’s response to his cry. He caused the earth to shake and tremble; the foundations of heaven were moved and shaken. God’s anger is the source of this effect. He is seriously concerned when an enemy launches an attack against a child of God.
 - b. Continuing his use of figurative language, David speaks of God’s anger causing smoke to proceed from his nostrils and fire to emerge from his mouth. So fierce was this fire that coals were kindled by it. This picture is one that would cause great terror if it should be seen literally.
 - c. God’s response is further described as producing a strong effect on the heavens. “The scene is now removed from heaven to earth. Isaiah wished that God would ‘rend the heavens, and come down’ (64:1). The figure used in this passage is less bold, but very graphic and pertinent to the occasion, for the verb, ‘bowed down’ is equivalent to ‘made tend downwards’...” (JFB, p.275). A dense gloom accompanied this symbolic coming of God; the gloom was for the enemies of David.
 4. Verses 11-13: “And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly: and he was seen upon the wings of the wind. And he made darkness pavilions round about him, dark waters, *and* thick clouds of the skies. Through the brightness before him were coals of fire kindled.”
 - a. The Lord is also depicted as riding upon a cherub. “A cherub in the Mosaic system is an ideal creature, which combined all the highest powers and properties of animal existence” (JFB, p.275). “The *cherub* is not a personified earthly creature, for *cherubim* are angels around the throne of God (see at Gen. 3:22). The poetic figure ‘riding upon the cherub’ is borrowed from the fact that God was enthroned between the two cherubim on the lid of the ark of the covenant, and above their outspread wings (Ex. 25:20,21)” (Keil, p.473).
 - b. The second part of the statement has him riding upon the wings of the wind, which shows that the former illustration of his riding on the cherub is figurative also.
 - c. The picture of the description is one of beauty and awesomeness. God is enclosed by darkness; dark clouds and dark waters hide him from the view of men; at the same time, the brightness that surrounded him was as brightly burning fire.
 - d. “In the manner of Oriental sovereigns, who withdrew into total, distant seclusion from the view of their subjects, God is described as surrounded by impenetrable darkness; for he is a Being who ‘dwells in light which is inaccessible, and full of glory’” (JFB, p.275).
 - e. “God in his wrath withdraws his face from man. He envelopes himself in clouds. The darkness round about him is the black thundercloud which forms his hut or tent...The splendor of the divine nature enveloped in clouds breaks through the dark covering in burning coals of fire. The coals of fire which burst forth, *i.e.* which break out in flame from the dark clouds, are the lightning which shoots forth from the dark storm-clouds in streams of fire” (Keil, p.474).
 5. Verses 14-16: “The LORD thundered from heaven, and the most High uttered his voice. And he sent out arrows, and scattered them; lightning, and discomfited them. And the channels of the sea appeared, the foundations of the world were discovered, at the rebuking of the LORD, at the blast of the breath of his nostrils.”
 - a. Continuing this symbolic description of how God intervened in delivering David from his enemies, the psalmist speaks of God thundering from heaven, with the thunder being his voice speaking out against the wicked and in favor of David. This grows out of the preceding picture of God being surrounded by dark clouds and water in the sky.
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- b. God shot forth his arrows and scattered David's foes; he discomfited them with his lightning bolts. This fearsome scene, though figurative, is nevertheless awe-inspiring.
 - c. "To the thunder there were added stormy wind and earthquake, as an effect of the wrath of God, whereby the foundations of the sea and land were laid bare, *i.e.* whereby the depth of the abyss and of the hell in the interior of the earth, into which the person to be rescued had fallen, were disclosed" (Keil, p.475).
6. Verses 17-19: "He sent from above, he took me; he drew me out of many waters; He delivered me from my strong enemy, *and* from them that hated me: for they were too strong for me. They prevented me in the day of my calamity: but the LORD was my stay."
- a. 2 Samuel 22:17-19: "He sent from above, He took me, He drew me out of many waters. He delivered me from my strong enemy, From those who hated me; For they were too strong for me. They confronted me in the day of my calamity, But the LORD was my support" (NKJ).
 - b. "The Lord stretched forth his hand from the height into the deep abysses, which had been uncovered through the threatening of the wrath of God, and drew out the sinking man....As Moses was taken out of the waters of the Nile, so David was taken out of great (many) waters" (Keil, p.476).
 - c. David's strong enemies were too powerful for him to defeat on his own, but with the assistance of the Almighty, his triumph was certain and complete. Consider the many battles which David fought, many of which had him pitted against tremendous odds, as in the case of his battle with Goliath, and his continuing struggle against King Saul. His victory against Absalom's rebel army is another case in which David was triumphant, despite the odds.
- C. 2 Samuel 22:20-28: David Devotes Himself to Serving God.
1. Verses 20-22: "He brought me forth also into a large place: he delivered me, because he delighted in me. The LORD rewarded me according to my righteousness: according to the cleanness of my hands hath he recompensed me. For I have kept the ways of the LORD, and have not wickedly departed from my God."
 - a. Having delivered David from the grasp of his enemies, God set him in a large, or broad, place; from the confining quarters into which his enemies had pressed him, the Lord brought him into a place in which he had plenty of room.
 - b. "David ascribes all his many and wonderful deliverances to the good pleasure and grace of Jehovah as the grand source of them; and he shows wisdom, as well as piety, in premising this remark; otherwise he might have laid himself open, by what follows, to the charge of claiming them as the reward of his personal merits" (JFB, p.576).
 - c. David did not earn the glorious blessings of God, but without his adherence to God's will, he would not have been rewarded. Faith and obedience are characteristic of God's acceptance of men.
 - 1) Ecclesiastes 12:13-14: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this *is* the whole *duty* of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether *it be* good, or whether *it be* evil."
 - 2) Matthew 7:21-23: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."
 - 3) 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9: "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."
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- 4) Revelation 22:14: "Blessed *are* they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."
2. Verses 23-24: "For all his judgments *were* before me: and *as for* his statutes, I did not depart from them. I was also upright before him, and have kept myself from mine iniquity."
 - a. 2 Samuel 22:23-24: "For all his ordinances were before me; And as for his statutes, I did not depart from them. I was also perfect toward him; And I kept myself from mine iniquity" (ASV).
 - b. David was mindful to walk in harmony with the will of God. The Lord's ordinances and statutes were always before his mind, and he was diligent to live in obedience to them. He endeavored to be perfect before the Lord, and thus he kept himself from iniquity (lawlessness).
 - c. He is not to be understood as claiming perfect obedience to God's word in every particular, for all who have read his history are fully aware of his sin with Bathsheba, his complicity in the death of Uriah, and other short-comings on his part. However, when he learned that he had committed sin, he was quick to repent, and humbly accepted the punishment God chose to dispense.
3. Verses 25-27: "Therefore the LORD hath recompensed me according to my righteousness; according to my cleanness in his eye sight. With the merciful thou wilt show thyself merciful, *and* with the upright man thou wilt show thyself upright. With the pure thou wilt show thyself pure; and with the froward thou wilt show thyself unsavoury."
 - a. Broadly speaking, God shows to the individual the kind of response as the person has shown toward God. David knows he has been righteous, and has been recompensed accordingly. God has seen that he was clean, and therefore had rewarded him.
 - b. To those who have shown mercy, God recompenses mercy; to those who are upright, God treats them with uprightness; to those who have been pure, their reward is one of purity; to those who have lived after a froward fashion, their recompense is one that is unpleasant. One who is froward is one who is perverse, devious, and untrustworthy.
 - c. Revelation 22:11-12: "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward *is* with me, to give every man according as his work shall be."
4. Verse 28: "And the afflicted people thou wilt save: but thine eyes *are* upon the haughty, *that* thou mayest bring *them* down."
 - a. "God shows himself so towards the perverse, by giving him up to his perverseness (Rom. 1:28). This general truth is applied in ver. 28 to the congregation of God, in the contrast which it presents of humble and haughty, and is expounded from the conduct of God, as displayed in the history of Israel, towards those two classes of men, into which the nation was divided" (Keil, pp.477f).
 - b. John 5:28-29: "Marvel not at this: for the hour cometh, in which all that are in the tombs shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment."
 - c. Galatians 6:7-8: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth unto his own flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth unto the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap eternal life."
 - d. Revelation 20:12-15: "And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne; and books were opened: and another book was opened, which is *the book* of life: and the dead were judged out of the things which were written in the books, according to their works....And if any was not found written in the book of life, he was cast into the lake of fire."

D. 2 Samuel 22:29-46: Illustrations of God's Goodness.

1. Verses 29-31: "For thou *art* my lamp, O LORD: and the LORD will lighten my darkness. For by thee I
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have run through a troop: by my God have I leaped over a wall. *As for God, his way is perfect; the word of the LORD is tried: he is a buckler to all them that trust in him.*"

- a. David speaks of the light which God has been to him. Through the goodness of God, the darkness which surrounded David has been dispelled.
 - 1) 1 John 1:5-7: "And this is the message which we have heard from him and announce unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him and walk in the darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanseth us from all sin."
 - 2) Psalms 119:105: "Thy word *is* a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."
 - 3) Psalms 119:130: "The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple."
 - 4) Psalms 119:11: "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee."
 - b. The goodness of God is credited with the successes David has obtained. God has helped him to run through a troop of the enemy warriors; he has been enabled to break through the enemy at the place of their heaviest concentration; he has been enabled to scale over the battlements of their strongest fortification. David does not take credit for any of these accomplishments, but gives the Lord the glory, as must we.
 - 1) 2 Corinthians 2:14: "Now thanks *be* unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place."
 - 2) Philippians 4:13: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."
 - 3) 1 Timothy 1:12: "And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry."
 - c. God's way is perfect. "Amid all the darkness that sometimes shrouds, and the severity that often marks the course of his providence, his counsel is unerringly wise, just, and good" (JFB, p.278).
 - d. God's word is tried; it is like the metal that has been proved by the fire. One of the several strong proofs of the inspiration of God's written word is the fact that it has withstood the assaults of many powerful enemies, through many centuries.
 - 1) 1 Peter 1:22-25: "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, *see that ye* love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh *is* as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you."
 - 2) Matthew 24:35: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."
 - e. Therefore, since God is perfect and his word reliable, those who put their trust in him will not be ashamed, but will be well-protected. "Let your conversation *be* without covetousness; *and be* content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord *is* my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me" (Heb. 13:5-6).
2. Verses 32-35: "For who *is* God, save the LORD? and who *is* a rock, save our God? God *is* my strength *and* power: And he maketh my way perfect. He maketh my feet like hinds' *feet*: and setteth me upon my high places. He teacheth my hands to war; so that a bow of steel is broken by mine arms."
 - a. David identifies God as the Lord (Jehovah). He is the only rock on which one can safely trust. He is David's strong fortress; he has led David unerringly through many years. We may add that, even though David has often failed the Lord, the Lord had never failed him.
 - b. God had given David swift feet, like those of the hind (deer), which is said to have the ability to run
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- equally swift on level ground and in rocky mountains (JFB, p.278). The swift hind could leave its pursuers far behind as it escaped them into the mountains, where it found safety. David credits his escape from his enemies under this figure; he had been able, with God's help, to find refuge in high, lofty places.
- c. 2 Samuel 22:35: "He teaches my hands to make war, So that my arms can bend a bow of bronze" (NKJ). God had given him such strength and skill to make war that he could even bend (and even break) a bronze (brass) bow (if such were available).
3. Verses 36-39: "Thou hast also given me the shield of thy salvation: and thy gentleness hath made me great. Thou hast enlarged my steps under me; so that my feet did not slip. I have pursued mine enemies, and destroyed them; and turned not again until I had consumed them. And I have consumed them, and wounded them, that they could not arise: yea, they are fallen under my feet."
 - a. God had given to David the shield of salvation. Salvation can do for the soul what a literal shield can do for the body: offer protection. Because one is aware he is saved, he obtains greater confidence and strength from this knowledge. In Ephesians 6:17, salvation is pictured under the figure of a helmet, which protects the head.
 - b. In his gentleness, God was able to make David great (margin: "multiplied me"). God is kind; he shows gentleness to his people, even though he may lead them through adversity for the purpose of developing their strength.
 - c. The psalmist describes the safety God gave him by saying that he had provided plenty of firm places for his feet. "Thou hast given ample room and verge enough, so that, like a pedestrian, I can more freely walk, without the risk of stumbling, in a rugged or precipitous path" (JFB, p.279).
 - d. Because of God's help in the above ways, David had been able to pursue his enemies, and to destroy them; he had been enabled to press the battle until they were no more. He gained ultimate victory over all his enemies.
 4. Verses 40-43: "For thou hast girded me with strength to battle: them that rose up against me hast thou subdued under me. Thou hast also given me the necks of mine enemies, that I might destroy them that hate me. They looked, but *there was* none to save; *even* unto the LORD, but he answered them not. Then did I beat them as small as the dust of the earth, I did stamp them as the mire of the street, *and* did spread them abroad."
 - a. David did not claim to have won these victories by his own strength; rather, he gave God the credit for providing the strength and other help that was so necessary for the triumph to be effected. God gave him the strength, and aided him providentially, but David had to do his part.
 - b. God had delivered the enemy into his hands, and he did his part in effecting their overthrow. They sought for God's help in being delivered from David, but he did not aid them. David describes their defeat as beating them into dust, which he was able to stamp under his feet, and spread them over the ground.
 5. Verses 44-46: "Thou also hast delivered me from the strivings of my people, thou hast kept me *to be* head of the heathen: a people *which* I knew not shall serve me. Strangers shall submit themselves unto me: as soon as they hear, they shall be obedient unto me. Strangers shall fade away, and they shall be afraid out of their close places."
 - a. The "strivings of his people" is a reference to the various upheavals among the Israelites with which David had to deal. These include the rebellions of Ishbosheth, Absalom, and Sheba. Through all of these strivings, God led him to the throne in Israel, and preserved him thereon despite the troubles that attended him.
 - b. On the throne, David found himself king over unbelieving strangers. These nations included Moab, Edom, Syria, Ammon, and others. The scope of his authority extended even to the River Euphrates.
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"David smote also Hadadezer, the son of Rehob, king of Zobah, as he went to recover his border at the river Euphrates" (2 Sam. 8:3).

- c. Those who opposed him were unable to withstand him; they were fearful to leave their close places, but remained in hiding lest he overwhelm them with his great power. For all of this, David gave to the Lord the proper glory and gratitude.

E. 2 Samuel 22:47-51: The Lord Lives.

1. Verse 47: "The LORD liveth; and blessed *be* my rock; and exalted be the God of the rock of my salvation."
 - a. Jehovah lives, which places him in direct contrast to the dead idols so prevalent among the heathen. Because he lives, David praises him, and attributes to him the strength and salvation which he enjoys.
 - b. This stark contrast between the Living God and dead idols is also made in the New Testament. "For they themselves show of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God" (1 Thess. 1:9). Thinking individuals are able to see clearly this great distinction between God and idols.
 - c. A "god" made of wood, stone, or metal has no being, no power, and no right to man's devotion. But the Living God does have being, power, and the right to our devotion.
 2. Verses 48-49: "It *is* God that avengeth me, and that bringeth down the people under me, And that bringeth me forth from mine enemies: thou also hast lifted me up on high above them that rose up against me: thou hast delivered me from the violent man."
 - a. David directly gives God the glory for having avenged him against those who have wronged him, and for having brought those outlanders under his rule. He makes no claim to having done this with his own strength, skill, and wisdom.
 - b. It was God who had delivered him from the evil designs which his enemies had for him. He had lifted him from their hand, and delivered him from the violence they intended for him.
 3. Verses 50-51: "Therefore I will give thanks unto thee, O LORD, among the heathen, and I will sing praises unto thy name. *He is* the tower of salvation for his king: and showeth mercy to his anointed, unto David, and to his seed for evermore."
 - a. In view of who God is and what he has done, David commits himself to render thanks to him in the sight of the heathen, and to sing praise to his great name.
 - b. God is the tower of salvation for David; he shows mercy to him, and will show it to his descendants through forthcoming ages.
 4. A careful student of this song can perceive several elements which have Messianic overtures. The things which David, by inspiration, wrote concerning his own experiences in God's service, can also be said about Christ, the Son of God. The Father was with Christ, aiding him in his struggles, and gave him the final victory over his many enemies.
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2 SAMUEL 23

A. 2 Samuel 23:1-7: The Last Words of David.

1. Verse 1: "Now these *be* the last words of David. David the son of Jesse said, and the man *who was* raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel, said."
 - a. Some scholars think that this verse refers back to the preceding passage. Others allege that this was the last *poetic* passage he wrote, that he afterwards wrote more in prose; but there is nothing in the text to support this conclusion.
 - b. The obvious meaning of the statement is that the present information forms the last inspired report he was privileged to receive and deliver. The next verse shows the context and nature of the passage. The passage refers to the last words of an inspired man.
 - c. This inspired man was David, the son of Jesse, the man who was taken from being a shepherd and exalted to the throne of Israel, the most important nation on earth. David is further described as the sweet psalmist of Israel.
 2. Verse 2: "The spirit of the LORD spake by me, and his word *was* in my tongue."
 - a. This is one of the clearest statements to affirm and describe inspiration. The Holy Spirit spoke through David; it was the Spirit's words which were on David's tongue. "Men *and* brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus" (Acts 1:16).
 - b. Inspiration involves not only giving the thought, but the very words that are to be spoken. That this is so is to be seen in the following cases:
 - 1) An argument Jesus made depended on the very tense of the verb he used. "But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I **am** the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living" (Matt. 22:31-32).
 - 2) An argument Paul made depended on the difference between the singular and plural of a noun. "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to **seeds**, as of many; but as of one, And to thy **seed**, which is Christ" (Gal. 3:16).
 - c. 2 Peter 1:19-21: "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake *as they were* moved by the Holy Ghost."
 3. Verse 3: "The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me, He that ruleth over men *must be* just, ruling in the fear of God."
 - a. The reference to God as "the Rock of Israel" emphasizes the strength and stability of the Lord; he is unshakable in his purposes and promises, and he is strong enough to accomplish whatever he determines to do.
 - b. God said to David that the one who rules over men must be just in his governing and that he must exercise his authority in the fear of God. David's reign was obligated to fulfill these two principles. These are imperative to any successful rule.
 - c. These principles are also exercised by Christ in his kingdom. "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of *his* government and peace *there shall be* no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to
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order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this" (Isa. 9:6-7).

4. Verses 4-5: "And *he shall be* as the light of the morning, *when* the sun riseth, *even* a morning without clouds; *as* the tender grass *springing* out of the earth by clear shining after rain. Although my house *be* not so with God; yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all *things*, and sure: for *this is* all my salvation, and all *my* desire, although he make *it* not to grow.
 - a. It is difficult to know the identity of the person whose rule is indicated in these verses. Does it refer to the success of David and his descendants' rule if they follow the principles of verse three? Or is the reference to the Messiah's rule in his spiritual kingdom? The descriptions given in verse four certainly fit the Lord's rule today, but with verse five in mind, it is the reign of David and his dynasty that seems to be indicated.
 - b. The reign is beautifully depicted as the light the sun casts when it rises in the morning, and as the grass which springs up after a refreshing rain. "Little patches of grass are seen rapidly springing up in Palestine after rain; and even where the ground has been long parched and bare, within a few days or hours after the enriching showers begin to fall, the face of the earth is so renewed that it is covered over with a pure, fresh mantle of grass. This beautiful imagery was designed to convey an idea of the auspicious effects that would result from the reign of the great Ruler..." (JFB, p.282).
 - c. In verse five, David speaks of his house not being such as God has described. Nevertheless, God had made an everlasting covenant with him. God could have given up on David when he went into sin, but the Almighty stuck with him, and fulfilled the purposes he had in mind for David and his descendants.
 - 1) The realization of these ends did not depend on David and his posterity ruling perfectly on the throne of Israel. Despite the imperfections on David's part, and even the gross wickedness of his successors to his throne, God was able to bring the Messiah into the world and establish his kingdom in keeping with his eternal timetable.
 - 2) Galatians 4:4-5: "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons."
 - d. David expressed his confident expectation in this passage, that God would see to it that he would keep his promises in accordance to the covenant he had made with the sweet psalmist. The result of the covenant would be David's salvation, which was what he deeply desired. The salvation of all who are saved in eternity comes from the Messiah, who entered the world as a member of the house of David. Despite the fact that David's house might not be worthy of the use to which God would put it, the king expressed confidence in his own salvation.
 - 1) Romans 3:25: "Whom God hath set forth *to be* a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God."
 - 2) Hebrews 9:15: "And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions *that were* under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance."
 - e. The New King James has the last phrase of verse five in the form of a rhetorical question, which has David expressing confidence in his salvation, not stating a doubt. "Although my house *is* not so with God, Yet He has made with me an everlasting covenant, Ordered in all *things* and secure. For *this is* all my salvation and all *my* desire; Will He not make *it* increase?" (2 Sam. 23:5, NKJ).
 - f. "A king who rules his people justly is as glorious as the sun rising in its strength to drive away the works of darkness, and give men, by precept and example, the light of clear knowledge of their duty. But the last metaphor is especially beautiful.

- 1) "In the summer, vegetation dries up under the burning heat of the sun; all is bare and brown, and a few withered stalks of the coarser plants alone remain. But when the rains come, followed by bright sunshine, nature at one burst flashes into beauty, and the hillsides and plains are covered with the soft green of the reviving grass, through which myriads of flowers soon push their way, and clothe the landscape with bright colours.
 - 2) "So a just and upright government calls into being countless forms of human activity, and fosters all that is morally beautiful, while it checks the blighting influences of unregulated passion and selfish greed....
 - 3) "David could not but feel that his house was too stained with sin upon sin for him to be able to lay claim to have been in fact that which the theocratic king was in theory, and which David ought to have been as the representative of Christ, and himself the christ, or anointed of Israel's God.
 - 4) "But most modern commentators take the negatives as interrogative, and, therefore, as strong assertions" [The Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 2001 by Biblesoft].
5. Verses 6-7: "But *the sons* of Belial *shall be* all of them as thorns thrust away, because they cannot be taken with hands: But the man *that* shall touch them must be fenced with iron and the staff of a spear; and they shall be utterly burned with fire in the *same* place."
- a. "As thorns are extirpated out of a land which is about to be brought under culture, so wicked men will disappear from the kingdom of the Messiah....They resemble those prickly thorny plants which are twisted together, whose spires point in every direction, and are so sharp and strong that they cannot be touched or approached without danger; but hard instruments and violent means must be taken to destroy or uproot them. So God will remove or destroy all who are opposed to this kingdom" (JFB, p.283).
 - b. 2 Samuel 23:6-7: "But *the sons* of rebellion *shall all be* as thorns thrust away, Because they cannot be taken with hands. But the man *who* touches them must be armed with iron and the shaft of a spear, And they shall be utterly burned with fire in *their* place" (NKJ).
 - c. Compare: "Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house: and his disciples came unto him, saying, Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field. He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked *one*; The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear" (Matt. 13:36-43).

B. 2 Samuel 23:8-24: David's Mighty Men.

1. Verse 8: "These *be* the names of the mighty men whom David had: The Tachmonite that sat in the seat, chief among the captains; the same *was* Adino the Eznite: *he lift up his spear* against eight hundred, whom he slew at one time."
 - a. 2 Samuel 23:8: "These *are* the names of the mighty men whom David had: Josheb-Basshebeth the Tachmonite, chief among the captains. He was called Adino the Eznite, because he had killed eight hundred men at one time" (NKJ).
 - b. The parallel passage gives a different number (three hundred instead of eight hundred). "And this *is* the number of the mighty men whom David had; Jashobeam, an Hachmonite, the chief of the captains: he lifted up his spear against three hundred slain *by him* at one time" (1 Chron. 11:11).
 - 1) The usual explanation of this difference is to attribute it to a copyist's error. Perhaps the inspired

historian intended only to give a general reference to a large number of the slain enemies, rather than to a specific number. When a large figure is given in the Bible, specifying a number, that number is likely to be more general than specific. Did Samson kill exactly one thousand enemies with the donkey's jawbone? Or was the historian only giving a general number? Could it mean that *about* one thousand were slain?

- 2) Since our own salvation and hope do not depend on either passage, the problem is of little significance to faithful Christians. Still, we would like to know what the best explanation is. Perhaps he faced eight hundred enemy soldiers at one time and slew three hundred of them. Perhaps he personally slew three hundred, while eight hundred were slain in the engagement.
 - c. The point of this verse is to identify one of the great men who served David; he was called Adino the Eznite (also see the margin), and in 1 Chronicles 11:11, his name is given as Jashobeam. Since Joab was the general of David's army, this man was subordinate to Joab. Among the other captains, Jashobeam was chief.
 - d. His fame lies in the fact that he slew eight hundred (or three hundred) men on one occasion. Possibly he did not do this without supernatural help. Samson slew a thousand men with the jaw-bone of an ass (Judg. 15:15), but without his miraculous strength, he could not have done so.
2. Verses 9-10: "And after him *was* Eleazar the son of Dodo the Ahohite, *one* of the three mighty men with David, when they defied the Philistines *that* were there gathered together to battle, and the men of Israel were gone away: He arose, and smote the Philistines until his hand was weary, and his hand clave unto the sword: and the LORD wrought a great victory that day; and the people returned after him only to spoil."
 - a. 2 Samuel 23:9-10: "And after him *was* Eleazar the son of Dodo, the Ahohite, *one* of the three mighty men with David when they defied the Philistines *who* were gathered there for battle, and the men of Israel had retreated. He arose and attacked the Philistines until his hand was weary, and his hand stuck to the sword. The LORD brought about a great victory that day; and the people returned after him only to plunder" (NKJ).
 - b. Eleazar was next in rank to Jashobeam (verse 8). On the occasion of his fame, the Israelite army had retreated from the battlefield, but Eleazar fought against the Philistines, and won a great victory. He fought so long and hard that his arm was weary and his hand was clenched to the hilt of his sword.
 - c. After this victory, the Israelites returned to the scene to gather their part of the spoils. There are men like them today, who cannot be found when labor and sacrifice are required, but who are quick to be present to share in the glory. When the Lord was arrested in Gethsemane, Peter followed "afar off." He was close enough to witness the event if Christ should direct his miraculous powers against the enemy, but far enough away to avoid any personal danger if the Lord remained in custody.
 3. Verses 11-12: "And after him *was* Shammah the son of Agee the Hararite. And the Philistines were gathered together into a troop, where was a piece of ground full of lentiles: and the people fled from the Philistines. But he stood in the midst of the ground, and defended it, and slew the Philistines: and the LORD wrought a great victory."
 - a. Shammah the son of Agee is the next of David's mighty warriors. The Israelite army fled from the Philistines on the occasion described, but Shammah took a stand in the midst of a field of lentils, stood his ground, and wrought a great victory over the enemy.
 - b. The fact that Shammah took his stand in the field of lentils suggests that the Philistines had invaded for the purpose of stealing the produce of Israelite fields.
 4. Verses 13-17: "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. And David *was* then in an hold, and the garrison of the Philistines *was* then *in* Bethlehem. And David longed, and said, Oh that
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one would give me drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem, which *is* by the gate! 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. 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.”

- a. On the occasion of this passage, David was in the cave of Adullam when a troop of Philistines set up camp nearby. The Philistines had a garrison in Bethlehem. Three of David's mighty men came to him at the cave. Keil states that these three men were from among the list which follows, since there is no definite article in the text in the reference to them.
 - b. “These three came to David in the harvest time unto the cave of Adullam (see at 1 Sam. 22:1), when a troop of the Philistines was encamped in the valley of Rephaim, and David was on the mountain fortress, and a Philistian post was then in Bethlehem....The encampment of the Philistines in the valley of Rephaim, and the position of David...render it probable that the feat mentioned here took place in the war with the Philistines described in ch. 5,17 sqq.” (Keil, p.495f).
 - c. David was thirsty, and stated his longing for a drink of water from a certain well at Bethlehem. The three men of the passage, left the stronghold, fought their way through the Philistines, drew water from the well, and took the water to David. The strength and courage of these men are emphasized in the story, as well as their devotion to David.
 - d. Also shown in the story is David's gratitude. He refused to drink the water that they had risked their lives to obtain. He poured it out unto the Lord. “When he thought of the imminent peril at which the draught had been procured, he would not partake of it, lest he should seem to prefer the selfish gratification of his palate to the lives of his most valued soldiers” (JFB, p.285). It might have been the case that David did not perceive at first the serious danger getting the water would be.
5. Verses 18-19: “And Abishai, the brother of Joab, the son of Zeruiah, was chief among three. And he lifted up his spear against three hundred, *and slew them*, and had the name among three. Was he not most honourable of three? therefore he was their captain: howbeit he attained not unto the *first* three.”
- a. Abishai, Joab's brother, was another of these mighty men of David. He had been able to use his spear against three hundred enemies, and slew them.
 - b. He had been with David on the occasion he entered Saul's camp and took the king's spear (1 Sam. 26). On another occasion, Abishai slew eighteen thousand Edomites, probably with the men under his command (1 Chron. 18:12).
 - c. Verse nineteen credits Abishai with greater honor than the three who are named in this context. He was not part of the first three [Jashobeam, Eleazar, and Shammah]. But he was captain of the group of three to which he belonged. His group included his brother Ashahel (who was slain by Abner) and Benaiah (verses 20-22).
6. Verses 20-23: “And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, the son of a valiant man, of Kabzeel, who had done many acts, he slew two lionlike men of Moab: he went down also and slew a lion in the midst of a pit in time of snow: And he slew an Egyptian, a goodly man: and the Egyptian had a spear in his hand; but he went down to him with a staff, and plucked the spear out of the Egyptian's hand, and slew him with his own spear. These *things* did Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and had the name among three mighty men. He was more honourable than the thirty, but he attained not to the *first* three. And David set him over his guard.”
- a. Benaiah is credited with the slaying of two lion-like Moabite men. Some have taken this to be a reference to literal lions, but the more common view is that these men were ferocious fighters, thus akin to lions. The New King James translates it as “two lion-like heroes of Moab.”
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- b. Benaiah also had gone down into a pit on another occasion and slew a lion. This was at a time when snow was on the ground. Truly, this man was strong, courageous, and skilled!
- c. He also slew an Egyptian who was armed with a spear, while Benaiah had only a staff. He used his staff to pluck the spear from the Egyptian warrior, and slew him with his own spear. A staff was a formidable weapon in the hands of one who was skilled in its use.
- d. He was more honorable than the thirty which are named below, but he was not part of the first three. However, David set him over his guard. "Now Joab *was* over all the host of Israel: and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada *was* over the Cherethites and over the Pelethites" (2 Sam. 20:23).

C. 2 Samuel 23:24-37: The Rest of David's Mighty Men.

1. Verses 24-27: "Asahel the brother of Joab *was* one of the thirty; Elhanan the son of Dodo of Bethlehem, Shammah the Harodite, Elikah the Harodite, Helez the Paltite, Ira the son of Ikkesh the Tekoite, Abiezer the Anethothite, Mebunnai the Hushathite."
 - a. Asahel the brother of Joab. He was David's nephew, being the son of Zeruah, David's sister [or aunt: see earlier comments]. He was slain by Abner (2 Sam. 2:18-23).
 - b. Elhanan the son of Dodo of Bethlehem. Could this man be the one who killed the brother of Goliath (2 Sam. 21:19; 1 Chron. 20:5)? The names of the fathers are different, but there seems to be some question about the father's name of the one in chapter 21:19.
 - c. Shammah the Harodite. This name appears in 2 Samuel 5:11 and 5:33.
 - d. Elikah the Harodite. We know nothing else about this man.
 - e. Helez the Paltite. See also 1 Chronicles 11:27 and 1 Chronicles 27:10.
 - f. Ira the son of Ikkesh the Tekoite. He is also named in 1 Chronicles 11:28.
 - g. Abiezer the Anethothite. See 1 Chronicles 27:12.
 - h. Mebunnai the Hushathite. Cf. 1 Chronicles 20:4; 2 Samuel 21:18.
 2. Verses 28-31: "Zalmon the Ahohite, Maharai the Netophathite, Heleb the son of Baanah, a Netophathite, Ittai the son of Ribai out of Gibeah of the children of Benjamin. Benaiah the Pirathonite, Hiddai of the brooks of Gaash, Abialbon the Arbathite, Azmaveth the Barhumite."
 - a. Zalmon the Ahohite. Cf. 1 Chronicles 11:29.
 - b. Maharai the Netophathite. 1 Chronicles 11:30.
 - c. Heleb the son of Baanah, a Netophathite. Cf. 1 Chronicles 11:30; 27:15.
 - d. Ittai the son of Ribai out of Gibeah of the children of Benjamin. Cf. 1 Chronicles 11:31.
 - e. Benaiah the Pirathonite. 1 Chronicles 11:31; 27:14.
 - f. Hiddai of the brooks of Gaash. 1 Chronicles 11:32.
 - g. Abialbon the Arbathite. 1 Chronicles 11:32.
 - h. Azmaveth the Barhumite. 1 Chronicles 11:33; cf. 1 Chronicles 27:25.
 3. Verses 32-35: "Eliabha the Shaalbonite, of the sons of Jashen, Jonathan, Shammah the Hararite, Ahiam the son of Sharar the Hararite, Eliphelet the son of Ahasbai, the son of the Maachathite, Eliam the son of Ahithophel the Gilonite, Hezrai the Carmelite, Paarai the Arbite."
 - a. Eliabha the Shaalbonite. 1 Chronicles 11:33.
 - b. Jonathan. 1 Chronicles 11:34.
 - c. Shammah the Harite. 1 Chronicles 11:27; 27:8.
 - d. Ahiam the son of Sharar the Hararite. 1 Chronicles 11:35.
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- e. Eliphelet the son of Ahasbai, the son of the Maachathite.
 - f. Eliam the son of Ahithophel the Gilonite. “This man, the father of Bathsheba, stood in relation to David as father-in-law....The presence of Bathsheba's father in the list of David's thirty heroes adds further to David's shame in violating her. Her grandfather Ahithophel was David's principal counsellor; her father and her husband (Uriah) were both among his thirty mighty men” (Coffman, p.324).
 - g. Hezrai the Carmelite. 1 Chronicles 11:37.
 - h. Paarai the Arbite. 1 Chronicles 11:37.
4. Verses 36-39: “Igal the son of Nathan of Zobah, Bani the Gadite, Zelek the Ammonite, Nahari the Beerothite, armourbearer to Joab the son of Zeruah, Ira an Ithrite, Gareb an Ithrite, Uriah the Hittite: thirty and seven in all.”
- a. Igal the son of Nathan of Zobah. In 1 Chronicles 11:37, he is called Joel, the brother of Nathan.
 - b. Bani the Gadite. He is not named in 1 Chronicles 11.
 - c. Zelek the Ammonite. 1 Chronicles 11:39.
 - d. Naharai the Beerothite. 1 Chronicles 11:39. He is called the armorbearer of Joab.
 - e. Ira the Hittite. 1 Chronicles 11:40.
5. There were thirty-seven of these mighty men.
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2 SAMUEL 24

A. 2 Samuel 24:1-9: David Numbers the Nation.

1. Verse 1: "And again the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel and Judah."
 - a. The anger of God was directed against Israel, not David. The cause for this anger is not specified, but doubtless included their rebellion against David in the cases of Absalom and Sheba, which was in reality, an insurrection against God's rule.
 - b. Another question the answer of which is unspecified in the text is why the numbering of the people constituted an act of sin. This is significant in view of the fact that on certain occasions God directed that the people be numbered (cf. Num. 1).
 - 1) Some scholars have suggested that the census was wrong because David was seeking to use the large numbers to glorify himself.
 - 2) Others have thought that David sought the census for the purpose of better organizing the nation for tax-collecting.
 - 3) Others have supposed that David intended the census to be the basis of seeing how large an army he could raise for the purpose of conquest, and thus to change Israel from a theocratic state into a world power.
 - c. Keil gave this as his view: "The true kernel of David's sin was to be found, no doubt, in self-exaltation, inasmuch as he sought for the strength and glory of his kingdom in the number of the people and their readiness for war" (p.502). This conclusion is probably the correct one. God had ordered that the future kings of Israel were not to multiply horses; horses were used primarily for warfare, and represented a powerful weapon, which if relied upon, would place the safety of Israel in the power of their military, instead of in the hands of God.
 - d. We are expressly told that God moved David against the Israelites by directing him to give the order to his subordinates to number the citizens of Israel. We must interpret this thought in such a way as to keep from concluding that God punished Israel for doing the very thing he commanded!
 - 1) The case is parallel with the matter of Pharaoh's hard heart. By whom was it hardened? We are told that God hardened his heart, but that statement of fact does not identify how God did it. If he did it directly, then Pharaoh had no choice in the matter, and consequently, God would have been coercing his disobedience by making it impossible for him to comply with God's order that he release the Israelites. Other passages in Exodus state plainly that Pharaoh hardened his own heart. It can be said that God hardened his heart only in the sense that he issued an order to the Egyptian king which that pagan was unwilling to obey.
 - 2) In Numbers 22:35, God told Balaam to go with the men who wanted him to curse Israel, and then punished him for going. The correct understanding of the passage is to found in earlier verses, in which God had told Balaam that he was not to go with them. When Balaam persisted in asking God whether he should go, God told him to go ahead. This was not an order, but a recognition of Balaam's free choice. Since he was intent on going, and receiving the reward promised, God simply allowed him to do what he had already decided to do.
 - 3) The same thing is true in regards to Christ's words to Judas: "And after the sop Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly" (John 13:27). Judas had determined in his heart what he was going to do, so the Lord merely acquiesced to his right to do what he had decided to do.
 - 4) In each of these cases, the individual had the freedom to do what he had resolved in his heart to do, but each of these sinful acts had a penalty that must be faced.

- e. Other passages enter into the context of this verse. God cannot be tempted to do evil, and he tempts no man to do evil (James 1:13). "But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death" (James 1:14-15).
- 1) Temptations come through the work of Satan, who uses evil men, situations, the lustful appetites of the flesh, and other such means to entice men to commit sin. Each of these temptations comes through one of these three avenues:
 - 2) "Love not the world, neither the things *that are* in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that *is* in the world, **the lust of the flesh**, and **the lust of the eyes**, and **the pride of life**, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (1 John 2:15-17; cf. Gen. 3:1-6; Matt. 4:1-11).
- f. We are not surprised, therefore, to learn from the parallel passage, of Satan's complicity in this temptation of David.
- 1) "And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel" (1 Chron. 21:1). The work of tempting men is the devil's work, not God's. He permitted the devil to bring this temptation to David, just as he had earlier allowed him to bring certain losses and afflictions upon Job (Job 1-2). In the divine order of things, God has given Satan room to operate in the affairs of men, but God is not responsible for the evil outcome.
 - 2) "Men are acceptable to God only by a conscious choice to serve the Creator; he offers many inducements to convince men to obey, and the devil offers many counter-inducements to convince men to rebel against God.
- g. With these truths in mind, we can see that David ordered his servants to conduct the census because it was something he wanted to do, even though the act constituted a violation of God's will. God allowed David to be tempted to give the order, but he did not coerce him to do so. God used this sinful operation to be the occasion for punishing Israel for sins of which they were already guilty.
2. Verse 2: "For the king said to Joab the captain of the host, which *was* with him, Go now through all the tribes of Israel, from Dan even to Beersheba, and number ye the people, that I may know the number of the people. And Joab said unto the king, Now the LORD thy God add unto the people, how many soever they be, an hundredfold, and that the eyes of my lord the king may see *it*: but why doth my lord the king delight in this thing?"
- a. It was to Joab that David gave instructions for the census to be made. The count was to be taken from the northern extremity of the country (Dan) to its southernmost limit (Beersheba). "From Dan to Beersheba" was a proverbial description of the northern and southern boundaries, and refers to the whole nation.
 - b. "The order was given to Joab, who, though not generally restrained by religious scruples, did not fail to represent in strong terms...the sin and danger of this measure, and used every argument to dissuade the king from his purpose. The sacred history has not mentioned the objections which he and other distinguished officers urged against it in the council of David. But it expressly states that they were all overruled by the inflexible resolution of the king" (JFB, p.287).
 - c. 1 Chronicles 21:3-4: "And Joab answered, The LORD make his people an hundred times so many more as they *be*: but, my lord the king, *are* they not all my lord's servants? why then doth my lord require this thing? why will he be a cause of trespass to Israel? Nevertheless the king's word prevailed against Joab. Wherefore Joab departed, and went throughout all Israel, and came to Jerusalem."
 - d. Joab stated that the number of the Israelites, whether great or small, were all subject to the king; there was no need, therefore, for the count to be made.
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3. Verse 4: “Notwithstanding the king's word prevailed against Joab, and against the captains of the host. And Joab and the captains of the host went out from the presence of the king, to number the people of Israel.”
 - a. The king's mind was fully set on having the count made; he would not change his mind; there was no other course but to make the count. Joab was capable of giving sensible counsel, but this time his wise advice was rejected.
 - b. Joab and the captains of the host went forth to conduct the census. “This very bad man saw that the measure now recommended by the king was a wrong one, and might be ruinous to the people, and therefore he remonstrates against it in a very sensible speech; but the king was infatuated, and would hear no reason” (Clarke, p.377).
4. Verses 5-7: “And they passed over Jordan, and pitched in Aroer, on the right side of the city that *lieth* in the midst of the river of Gad, and toward Jazer: Then they came to Gilead, and to the land of Tahtimhodshi; and they came to Danjaan, and about to Zidon, And came to the strong hold of Tyre, and to all the cities of the Hivites, and of the Canaanites: and they went out to the south of Judah, *even* to Beersheba.”
 - a. “This census was taken first in the eastern parts of the Hebrew kingdom; and it would seem that Joab was accompanied by a military force, either to aid in this troublesome work or to overawe the people, who might display reluctance or opposition” (JFB, p.287). “But Levi and Benjamin counted he not among them: for the king's word was abominable to Joab” (1 Chron. 21:6).
 - b. “In order to distinguish *Aroer* from the place of the same name on the Arnon, in the tribe of Reuben (Josh. 12:2; Num. 32:34, etc.), it is defined more precisely as 'the town in the brook-valley of Gad,' *i.e.* Aroer of Gad before Rabbah (Josh. 13:25; Judg. 11:33)...to the north-east of Amman...” (Keil, p.504).
 - c. “The fact of its not being mentioned here does not contradict the truth that, in all probability, this preliminary move toward mustering an army of more than a million men by David must have encountered widespread opposition and dissatisfaction in Israel. It appears possible that such an unpopular move by David might have helped to open his eyes regarding his sin in the numbering of the people” (Coffman, p.333).
5. Verses 8-9: “So when they had gone through all the land, they came to Jerusalem at the end of nine months and twenty days. And Joab gave up the sum of the number of the people unto the king: and there were in Israel eight hundred thousand valiant men that drew the sword; and the men of Judah *were* five hundred thousand men.”
 - a. The tribes of Levi and Benjamin were not counted (1 Chron. 21:6); but in the nine months and twenty days that had passed, they were able to take the number of the other eleven tribes.
 - b. Judah had 500,000 men of fighting age; the other ten tribes had 800,000 such men. An army of more than a million men (1.3 million) was available to David.
 - c. “When they had traversed the whole land, they came back to Jerusalem, at the end of nine months and twenty days, and handed over to the king the number of the people mustered: viz., 800,000 men of Israel fit for military service, drawing the sword, and 500,000 men of Judah.
 - 1) “According to the Chronicles (v. 5), there were 1,100,000 Israelites and 470,000 Judaeans. The numbers are not given by thousands, and therefore are only approximative statements in round numbers....
 - 2) “There is no ground, however, for regarding the numbers as exaggerated, if we only bear in mind that the entire population of a land amounts to about four times the number of those who are fit for military service, and therefore 1,300,000, or even a million and a half, would only represent a total population of five or six millions—a number which could undoubtedly have been sustained

in Palestine, according to thoroughly reliable testimony as to its unusual fertility..." [Keil & Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament: New Updated Edition, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1996 by Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.].

B. 2 Samuel 24:10-14: David Repents for this Error.

1. Verse 10: "And David's heart smote him after that he had numbered the people. And David said unto the LORD, I have sinned greatly in that I have done: and now, I beseech thee, O LORD, take away the iniquity of thy servant; for I have done very foolishly."
 - a. Following these events, David perceived the error in the affair of the census. His heart smote him, which is another way of saying that his conscience bothered him greatly.
 - b. Confessing his folly in this matter, he asked the Lord to take away his iniquity. "Having now come to a knowledge of his sin, he prayed to the Lord for forgiveness, because he had acted foolishly. The sin consisted chiefly in the self-exaltation which had led to this step..." (Keil, p.506).
2. Verses 11-12: "For when David was up in the morning, the word of the LORD came unto the prophet Gad, David's seer, saying, Go and say unto David, Thus saith the LORD, I offer thee three *things*; choose thee one of them, that I may *do it* unto thee."
 - a. 2 Samuel 24:11-12: "And when David rose up in the morning, the word of Jehovah came unto the prophet Gad, David's seer, saying, Go and speak unto David, Thus saith Jehovah, I offer thee three things: choose thee one of them, that I may do it unto thee" (ASV).
 - b. According to the ASV, it appears that David's penitence came during the night, and that the next morning, the prophet Gad was sent to him with the information that follows. The wording of the KJV suggests that David repented after he was given the information by the prophet.
 - c. The information Gad brought to David from God was to identify the three choices which the Lord gave the king, from which he was to choose one. The choices were three different punishments which the Lord could bring upon Israel; David was given the option of choosing which of the three was to be applied.
3. Verse 13: "So Gad came to David, and told him, and said unto him, Shall seven years of famine come unto thee in thy land? or wilt thou flee three months before thine enemies, while they pursue thee? or that there be three days' pestilence in thy land? now advise, and see what answer I shall return to him that sent me."
 - a. The choices given were:
 - 1) Seven years of famine upon the land of Israel.
 - 2) David fleeing for three months from his enemies.
 - 3) Three days of pestilence in the land.
 - b. Naturally David wanted the least severe of the three, but which would that be? It appears that the first was the most grievous, for what land could survive after seven years of famine? He had spent a good portion of his earlier years fleeing from one or another of his enemies. Apparently, he was now an older man, and thus might find it difficult to evade a cunning, determined enemy. The flight would be brought about by defeat on the battlefield, after which he and his army would have to try to avoid the enemy who pursued them. But even a three-day pestilence could wreak great havoc on the nation.
 - c. "In the instances of Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, and others, effectual means were taken to humble their pride. They would doubtless have preferred any other means of punishment than that which was inflicted; but the choice was not permitted to them, as to David. Observe the difference of the two cases, and why a choice was in this latter instance granted. Before David was thus permitted to choose, or the Lord had announced by the seer what the three judgments were to be, he had himself turned to the Lord....He had already seen his error, he had repented of it, and turned again humbly to

his God, and a choice was then in mercy granted to him” (JFB, p.288).

- d. There is again a difference in the numbers, between the account given here and that of Chronicles. "Either three years of famine; or three months to be consumed before thy foes, while the sword of thine enemies overtaketh thee; or else three days the sword of Jehovah, even pestilence in the land, and the angel of Jehovah destroying throughout all the borders of Israel. Now therefore consider what answer I shall return to him that sent me" (1 Chron. 21:12).
4. Verse 14: “And David said unto Gad, I am in a great strait: let us fall now into the hand of the LORD; for his mercies *are* great: and let me not fall into the hand of man.”
 - a. David was wise enough to place the choice back in the hands of the Lord. He could not decide for himself what the punishment ought to be, but knowing the great merciful nature of God, he asked that the Lord make the choice. It is far better, in such a case, to trust the Lord for the proper penalty than to be judged by mortal men.
 - b. “Had he chosen war, his own personal safety was in no danger, because there was already an ordinance preventing him from going to battle. Had he chosen famine, his own wealth would have secured his and his own family's support. But he showed the greatness of his mind in choosing the pestilence, to the ravages of which himself and household were exposed equally with the meanest of his subjects” (Clarke, p.378). However, was it not God's choice that the pestilence was the option selected?
 - c. By asking God to make the selection, David exposed himself to the punishment of greatest possible effect on himself. As Clarke noted, the first two choices would not have been as great a hardship on the king as the last.

C. 2 Samuel 24:15-17: God Sends Punishment upon Israel.

1. Verse 15: “So the LORD sent a pestilence upon Israel from the morning even to the time appointed: and there died of the people from Dan even to Beersheba seventy thousand men.”
 - a. God sent a pestilence on the Israelites, beginning on the morning of the first of the three days. In the ordeal, 70,000 men died, from Dan to Beersheba.
 - b. “...But it seems that the plague was terminated before the conclusion of the third day, for Jerusalem might have been destroyed, but it was not. Throughout the land, independently of the city, seventy thousand persons were slain! This was a terrible mortality in the space of less than three days” (Clarke, p.378).
 - c. “What a dreadful agony must David have endured during these horrible three days and nights! The whole land was converted into a vast lazarus-house. Thus, by the sad removal of such multitudes of his subjects in all grades of society, was the pride of the self-willed and vain-glorious monarch, confiding in the extent of his population, deeply humbled” (JFB, p.289).
 - d. Our nation was convulsed with sadness over the loss of 55,000 of our soldiers during the decade-long war in Viet Nam. What would our reaction have been if 70,000 had died in three days!
 2. Verse 16: “And when the angel stretched out his hand upon Jerusalem to destroy it, the LORD repented him of the evil, and said to the angel that destroyed the people, It is enough: stay now thine hand. And the angel of the LORD was by the threshingplace of Araunah the Jebusite.”
 - a. 1 Chronicles 21:15-16: "And God sent an angel unto Jerusalem to destroy it: and as he was about to destroy, Jehovah beheld, and he repented him of the evil, and said to the destroying angel, It is enough; now stay thy hand. And the angel of Jehovah was standing by the threshing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite. And David lifted up his eyes, and saw the angel of Jehovah standing between earth and heaven, having a drawn sword in his hand stretched out over Jerusalem. Then David and the elders, clothed in sackcloth, fell upon their faces" (ASV).
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- b. "The pestilence seems to have broken out at the opposite extremities of the country, and to have advanced with gigantic strides from all points, till it was ready to concentrate its violence upon Jerusalem" (JFB, p.289).
 - c. At this point, when the hand of the pestilence-dealing angel was about to strike Jerusalem, God took action to preclude this final blow. God repented in the sense that he changed his mind regarding the extent of the pestilence.
 - d. The angel was by the threshing-floor that belonged to Araunah the Jebusite when God stayed his hand. "These words affirm most distinctly that the destroying angel was visible. According to ver. 17, David saw him there. The visible appearance of the angel was to exclude every thought of a natural land plague. The appearance of the angel is described more minutely in the Chronicles: David saw him standing by the threshing-floor of Aravnah between heaven and earth with a drawn sword in his hand, stretched out over Jerusalem" (Keil, p.509).
 - e. "The threshing-floor of Aravnah was situated, like all other threshing-floors, outside the city, and upon an eminence, or, according to the more precise statement which follows, to the north-east of Zion, upon Mount Moriah...." (Keil, p.509).
3. Verse 17: "And David spake unto the LORD when he saw the angel that smote the people, and said, Lo, I have sinned, and I have done wickedly: but these sheep, what have they done? let thine hand, I pray thee, be against me, and against my father's house."
- a. 1 Chronicles 21:17: "And David said unto God, Is it not I that commanded the people to be numbered? even I it is that have sinned and done very wickedly; but these sheep, what have they done? let thy hand, I pray thee, O Jehovah my God, be against me, and against my father's house; but not against thy people, that they should be plagued" (ASV).
 - b. David, in contriteness, admits here that he was the guilty party, and asks why the people have to suffer for his crime. Of course, the wrath of God was primarily directed against the people (verse 1), for they had been guilty of rebelling against God in following Absalom's insurrection. They had every reason to know that David was God's choice to sit on the throne. David pictures himself as the shepherd, and the citizens of his kingdom as the sheep. It is not a demeaning description.
 - c. "The sin had been quite as much that of the people as of the king; for the war lust had entered into the very heart of the nation. But David, with that warmth of feeling which makes his character so noble, can see only his own fault. It is not a true repentance when the sinner looks for excuses, and apportions the blame between himself and others. To David the people seemed innocent, or, if at all to blame, he felt that it was he who had set them the example and led them on" [The Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 2001 by Biblesoft].
 - d. David was also being punished for his instigation of the census. The pestilence had its intended effect on him, for his penitence was genuine beyond question. And the people were surely impressed with the powerful hand of Jehovah.
 - e. The passage plainly affirms the fact that David saw the angel. This was no figment of his fevered mind, but was the report of an eyewitness. The verse does not say that the angel was seen by the general population.

D. 2 Samuel 24:18-25: David Offers a Sacrifice.

1. Verse 18: "And Gad came that day to David, and said unto him, Go up, rear an altar unto the LORD in the threshingfloor of Araunah the Jebusite."
 - a. The prophet Gad, who had earlier approached the king (verse 11), returned to the king with another message. He instructed him to erect an altar at the place where he saw the angel.
 - b. Araunah was a Jebusite. He was from the nation which had formerly occupied Jerusalem, and from
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whom the city was taken by David (2 Sam. 5:6-10).

- c. The plague was not completely ended until David followed these instructions. "And Araunah said, Wherefore is my lord the king come to his servant? And David said, To buy the threshing-floor of thee, to build an altar unto Jehovah, that the plague may be stayed from the people" (2 Sam. 24:21, (ASV).
2. Verses 19-21: "And David, according to the saying of Gad, went up as the LORD commanded. And Araunah looked, and saw the king and his servants coming on toward him: and Araunah went out, and bowed himself before the king on his face upon the ground. And Araunah said, Wherefore is my lord the king come to his servant? And David said, To buy the threshingfloor of thee, to build an altar unto the LORD, that the plague may be stayed from the people."
 - a. Araunah (who is called Ornan in 1 Chronicles 21:18) was threshing wheat at the site of the altar. This very fact shows that he and his workmen had not seen the angel. It would seem that if they had seen the angel, they would not have remained there!
 - 1) But we are plainly told in the parallel account that Araunah saw the angel: "Then the angel of the LORD commanded Gad to say to David, that David should go up, and set up an altar unto the LORD in the threshingfloor of Ornan the Jebusite. And David went up at the saying of Gad, which he spake in the name of the LORD. And Ornan turned back, and saw the angel; and his four sons with him hid themselves. Now Ornan was threshing wheat. And as David came to Ornan, Ornan looked and saw David, and went out of the threshingfloor, and bowed himself to David with his face to the ground" (1 Chron. 21:18-21).
 - 2) He beheld the angel and he also saw David approaching, This full picture evidently kept Arunah and his sons from fleeing in terror from the angel, knowing of the good standing David had with Jehovah.
 - b. Araunah bowed before David as the king approached, and inquired of the cause for the visit. David told him he had come to buy the threshing-floor from him so that he could erect the altar, and thereby bring an end to the plague. The reference to the plague went without explanation, indicating that this Jebusite was well aware of it devastation of the land.
 3. Verses 22-23: "And Araunah said unto David, Let my lord the king take and offer up what *seemeth* good unto him: behold, *here be* oxen for burnt sacrifice, and threshing instruments and *other* instruments of the oxen for wood. All these *things* did Araunah, *as a king*, give unto the king. And Araunah said unto the king, The LORD thy God accept thee."
 - a. Araunah offered David free use of the threshing-floor, plus the oxen for the sacrifice and the threshing implements to be used for fuel.
 - b. All of these Araunah offered to David without charge, and stated his hope that they would be acceptable to "the Lord thy God." This last statement apparently implies that Araunah was not presently a worshiper of Jehovah. Jamieson thinks his piety may imply that he was a proselyte.
 - c. Araunah is spoken of as though he himself was a king. Perhaps he was in the lineage of the previous monarchs of Jerusalem.
 4. Verse 24: "And the king said unto Araunah, Nay; but I will surely buy *it* of thee at a price: neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the LORD my God of that which doth cost me nothing. So David bought the threshingfloor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver."
 - a. David politely declined the gift, stating that he would not offer to God a sacrifice that did not cost him. What a noble statement! What a great example for the selfish of our age!
 - b. He paid the Jebusite fifty shekels of silver for the threshing-floor and the oxen. "...The large sum, 1 Chr. 21:25, was paid afterwards for the whole hill on which David made preparations for building the

temple” (JFB, p.290).

5. Verse 25: “And David built there an altar unto the LORD, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. So the LORD was entreated for the land, and the plague was stayed from Israel.”
 - a. David built the altar and offered thereon the proper burnt offering and peace offerings. The Lord then removed the plague from the land.
 - b. Apparently, this site became the place where the temple was built by Solomon.
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