

Dickson Old Testament Commentary

2 SAMUEL

WRITER

It is possible that Nathan, the prophet, or Gad, the seer, wrote this book (See 1 Ch 29:29,30). The writer referred to other writings that were not a part of the Bible, such as the Book of Jasher (2 Sm 1:18) and the Chronicles of King David (1 Ch 27:24). These two records of the events in the history of Israel have been lost. They were not inspired books.

DATE

The history of 2 Samuel covers the period of the 40-year reign of King David, which is from about 1,055 to 1,015 B.C. It was a period of struggle as the kingdom had transition from the reign of Saul, to the end of the reign of David.

BOOK

The books of 1 & 2 Samuel were originally one book in the Jewish canon of Scriptures. The events at the end of 1 Samuel, therefore, continue with the events of 2 Samuel 1. The historical events from 1 Samuel 31 to the end of 2 Samuel are parallel with 1 Chronicles 10 – 29. 2 Samuel continues the theme of how God preserved the seedline nation of Israel, and in particular, the seed of David through whom He would bring the Messiah into the world (See comments 2 Sm 7).

Reign Of David Over Judah

(1:1 – 4:12)

Outline: (1) David mourns Saul and Jonathan (1:1-27), (2) David crowned as king (2:1-4), (3) David's message of appreciation (2:5-32), (4) Early beginnings in reign (3:1-5), (5) The death of Abner (3:6-39), (6) Assassination of Ish-bosheth (4:1-12)

Chapter 1

DAVID MOURNS SAUL & JONATHAN

1:1-10 *Clothes torn ... dust on head:*

These were the traditional signs of one in mourning. The story that is told here by the young Amalekite is different than the account given in 1 Samuel 31:4-6. We would suppose that this young man changed some of the details of the events simply for the purpose of receiving money for his report. ***I stood over him and slew him:*** It could be that when Saul committed suicide that he did not instantly die from his self-inflicted wound. When the Amalekite passed by, Saul

asked that he slay him. Whatever the case, the Amalekite was surely seeking a reward for the news that he brought to David of his killing Saul.

1:11-16 The response of David to the death of Saul and Jonathan was remorse over the fact that an anointed king of Israel had been slain by uncircumcised hands. David's grief was compounded by the death of his dear friend, Jonathan. **A stranger, an Amalekite:** He was an alien residing in Israelite territory. Since he showed little respect or concern for the death of Saul, we would assume that he was not a true convert to the God of Israel. If he were a true believer, he would have been afraid, as Saul's armorbearer, to strike God's anointed (1 Sm 31:4). Because he felt no guilt in striking the anointed of God, David immediately ordered the execution of one who showed no respect for God's anointed. Since God had before ordered the death of all Amalekites, we would presume that this command was still on the mind of David.

1:17-27 Book of Jasher: This was probably an Israelite record of poems and eulogies of the heroes of Israel. It was not an inspired record (Ja 10:12,13). No portion of this book has survived history, for the only record of its existence is mentioned here in the Bible. David's lamentation over Saul and Jonathan is in beautiful Hebrew poetry. In the composition of such psalms, David became known as the "sweet psalmist of Israel" (23:1). In this eulogy David expressed his sincere grief over the death of Saul and Jonathan. He exalted the splendor of Israel as the

work of God. **Gath ... Ashkelon:** These were the two principal cities of the Philistines that here stand for the entire country of Philistia. **Gilboa:** This was where Israel was defeated and both Saul and Jonathan killed. David concluded the psalm with a special tribute to his friend, Jonathan. **Saul and Jonathan were loved:** The nature of this psalm reveals the character of David. He was a person with genuine feelings that he could express in beautifully written Hebrew poetry. We would assume that he would have rejoiced over the death of Saul, who had denied him his kingship and who pursued him as a fugitive from justice. But this was not the case. Though Saul had mistreated David throughout most of his life, David was not bitter. His words in this psalm express the nature of one who had within his heart the forgiveness of God.

Chapter 2

DAVID CROWNED AS KING

2:1-4 Anointed David king: David had already been anointed by Samuel. However, in this case, he was anointed by the people, and thus recognized as the rightful reigning king of Israel. The shepherd boy who killed the giant had finally arrived at the fulfillment of his destiny as the anointed king of Israel. One of his first acts was to show appreciation to those who had honored the anointed King Saul. The people of Jabesh Gilead had shown respect to the body of Saul by caring for it after it had been desecrated by the Philistines.

DAVID'S MESSAGE OF APPRECIATION

2:5-11 *Abner ... took Ishbosheth:*

Now that the theocracy of Israel had been set aside because Israel wanted a king to reign over them, history was changed. As in this case, men in Israel began anointing their own kings, ignoring the fact that God only would anoint the rightful kings of Israel. But Abner circumvents the will of God by personally anointing Ishbosheth (or, "Ish-Baal") as a king (1 Ch 8:33; 9:39). **Over all Israel:** It is probable that Ishbosheth was a figure-head king over all Israel who reigned from Mahanaim. He was never a God-anointed king, and thus any rule he had was only from the strength of those who were still aligned with the remnants of Saul's people. David continued to remain in Hebron for five and a half years after the death of Ishbosheth. He then moved to Jerusalem and centralized his government and the faith of Israel in the city of Jerusalem.

2:12-23 After establishing Ishbosheth as a king, Abner, Saul's former captain, took offensive action against Joab, the captain of David's army. **Play before us:** Twelve soldiers were chosen who would engage in combat against one another. The victors would determine which army would be considered victorious. The outcome of this skirmish was that all the young soldiers killed one another, and thus there was a draw. The result was a fierce battle between the army of Abner and the army of Joab. The battle set the stage for Joab, David's nephew (1 Ch 2:15,16), to develop a feud

with Abner. Joab had two brothers in David's army, Abishai (1 Sm 26:6) and Asahel. In the battle, Asahel ran after Abner. Abner, the more experienced soldier, killed Asahel. The death of Asahel at the hand of Abner would later lead to Abner's own death by Joab who would take his revenge out on Abner for the killing of his brother.

2:24-32 Though the soldiers of Joab had regrouped to continue the battle, Abner appealed to Joab for a truce. Joab agreed, lest many more die uselessly in this conflict between Israelites. It was at this time in history that Israelites began conflicts with one another, instead of with the remaining Canaanites that they were to drive from the land. The conflicts that they had with one another were centered around power, thus proving that their desire for a king on earth was a rejection of God ruling directly over them from heaven. **Unless you had spoken:** Joab could have meant that if Abner had spoken earlier the battle would never have occurred, and subsequently many lives would have been spared. Joab then took Asahel and buried him in the tomb of his father, but he never forgot what Abner had done. Joab would eventually get his revenge.

Chapter 3

EARLY BEGINNINGS IN REIGN

3:1-5 **A long war:** With the rise of the monarchy, those who sought power within Israel instigated internal conflicts among the Israelites. These initial conflicts were the beginning of the end of Israel as the people changed their focus

from God as their king to politics on earth between allegiances to kings. In the case of the conflicts between those who maintained their allegiance to Ishbosheth, and those who accepted the kingship of David, David became stronger as the conflicts continued. **Chileab:** Or, Daniel (1 Ch 3:1). One of the vices of David was his many wives, which was not uncommon among those of his day. From his wives he had many children (See 1 Ch 3:5-9). However, from his many wives were also many problems that developed out of such polygamist relationships.

THE DEATH OF ABNER

3:6-16 *Abner made himself strong:*

Abner was looking out for himself by strengthening himself with those who had formerly given their allegiance to Saul. Since the power behind the reign of Ishbosheth was based on Abner, then the reign of Ishbosheth was being weakened as Abner grew in strength. This could possibly have been the scheme of Abner to make himself king. **Abner was very angry:** He was angry that Ishbosheth had accused him of having a sexual relationship with one of Saul's concubines. Such would have meant that Abner was possibly making plans to seize the throne. In his anger, Abner threatened to give the throne to David, which threat silenced Ishbosheth. If Abner did such, then all Israel would be under the reign of David. This is exactly what Abner did. **Abner sent messengers to David:** It seems that Abner wasted no time in carrying out his plan to shift power from Ishbosheth to David. **Michal, Saul's daughter:** In or-

der to have his claim to the throne strengthened, David certainly realized that having Saul's daughter as his wife was politically correct in order to gain the favor of those who were Saul's former followers. **Weeping behind her:** It may have been that Michal had lost her love for David. David's call for Michal was not to have her once again at his side, but to bring under his reign those who formerly gave allegiance to Saul. Michal's husband fell victim to a political move on the part of David.

3:17-21 Abner's intentions were noble. He knew that there was no future in the kingship of Ishbosheth, who was weak in character. Only in David did Abner realize that Israel would be delivered from the Philistines. He also knew that David was anointed by God, whereas he had made Ishbosheth a king. In all this political maneuvering, Abner even approached Saul's former tribe, the Benjamites, in order to convince them that David must now reign over all Israel.

3:22-30 **Abner ... came to deceive you:** These words of Joab came from the heart of one who wanted revenge for the death of Asahel who had been killed by Abner (2:18-23). After expressing his outrage with David, Joab, with Abishai, pursued Abner and murdered him for killing their brother. When David heard of the murder, he proclaimed himself guiltless. At the same time he pronounced judgment on the house of Joab for his sinful deed in killing an innocent man. **Issue ... leper .. leans on a staff ... falls on the sword ... lacks bread:** This curse was certainly a pronouncement of some

very deplorable things that would happen to the descendants of Joab. There would always be someone in Joab's descendants who would have running sores. There would always be those with hemorrhages or leprosy, and those who would commit suicide or die of starvation. David's pronouncement was a prophecy from God. David expressed the feelings of God against such treachery that was carried out against Abner, though he was sincere in his efforts to bring all Israel under the reign of David.

3:31-39 Because Abner had previously shown great loyalty to God's anointed, Saul, David felt obligated to show respect to Saul by mourning the death of Abner. David's action in reference to the death of Abner signalled to the rest of Israel that he had nothing to do with his death. David did not want Israel to believe that he as a king would act in such a treacherous manner toward others. *Too hard for me:* David was not of the same character as Joab and Abishai. He was not one who sought vengeance or dealt treacherously with others. On the contrary, he was one of mercy and forgiveness.

Chapter 4 ASSASSINATION OF ISHBOSHETH

4:1-3 *His hands were feeble:* Ishbosheth knew that his days were numbered. Since his reign rested on the strength of Abner, he knew that with Abner gone, so was he and his reign. *Until this day:* This statement indicates

that the writing of the book of 2 Samuel occurred sometime before the Assyrian (721/22) and Babylonian (586) captivities.

4:4-8 *Mephibosheth:* Verse 4 is parenthetical in describing the fate of Mephibosheth, the only surviving heir of Saul's family. *Smote ... slew ... be-headed:* Treachery was again involved in the death of a king who would reign in Israel. In bringing the head of Ishbosheth, Rechab and Baanah presumed that they would receive a reward for killing a rival of David.

4:9-12 David's reaction to the murder of Ishbosheth was swift. He detested such murderous schemes by wicked men who presumed to gain political favor by their wicked deeds. The execution of Rechab and Baanah sent a signal to all Israel that under no circumstances would men of honor be murdered by treacherous men (See 1:14-16). Gaining the favor of David would not come by schemes of evil behavior.

Reign Of David Over All Israel (5:1 – 10:19)

Outline: (1) Crowning of David (5:1-5), (2) Jerusalem as the capital (5:6-16), (3) Defeat of the Philistines (5:17-25), (4) The ark moved to Jerusalem (6:1-23), (5) David's desire to build a temple (7:1-3), (6) Prophecy concerning David's house (7:4-17), (7) Prayer of thanksgiving (7:18-29), (8) Expansion of David's reign (8:1-18), (9) Mercy to Mephibosheth (9:1-13), (10) Defeat of Ammon and Syria (10:1-19)

Chapter 5

CROWNING OF DAVID

5:1-5 *Your bone and your flesh:*

This indicated the giving of allegiance to David by offering the service of one's family and nationality. Credit must be given to Abner for initiating this allegiance when he turned from Ishbosheth and brought all Israel to David. **A covenant:** David made an agreement with the people that he would do as they asked. Covenants were usually sealed with a sacrifice that was followed by a celebration feast between the parties who made the covenant. We would assume, therefore, that at this time there was great joy as David began his uncontested reign over Israel at the age of 30, the normal age at which a Levite priest assumed his duties.

5:6-10 It was at this time that David made a choice to centralize his government. He moved from Hebron to Jerusalem from where he functioned as king. Hebron, where he was at the time all Israel gave allegiance to his kingship, was too far south in Palestine. Jerusalem, or Jebus, was more toward the north. As a capital, it would be closer to the northern tribes, though it was still in the territory of Judah. The Jebusites, a remnant people of the Canaanites, still dwelt in the city. They were arrogant about their possession of this naturally fortified city on a plateau. **Watercourse:** It is not known exactly what the watercourse was. This could possibly have been a water drain, or gutter, from which sewer and water flowed from the city. Some have suggested that reference was to a tunnel

that led from a water source outside the walls into the city (Compare 1 Ch 11:4-7). Whatever the case, it was an unguarded entrance into the city. **Zion:** This familiar Old Testament reference is first mentioned here in the Bible. This was the hill upon which the fortified Jebusite city was located. **City of David:** This was another name by which Jerusalem became known. In the history of Israel this name became a principal name by which Jerusalem was also known. **Millo:** This term probably referred to the fortifications of the city of David. Zion, the city of David, and Millo became common references to Jerusalem throughout Hebrew history, and in prophecy became metaphors that signified God's future work with Israel.

5:11-16 Hiram, the king of Tyre, became a strong supporter of David (See 1 Kg 5:1). His allegiance to David was put into practice by his help of David to build a royal house in Jerusalem. **His people Israel's sake:** David understood that he was made king of Israel by God in order to preserve Israel. After Saul morally and emotionally digressed into sin in his latter years, David assumed his responsibility to be a spiritual leader for Israel. He had a great sense of destiny, which destiny was determined by God for the sake of Israel. David knew that he was God's man on behalf of Israel, and thus sought in his life to assume the responsibility that came with being a God-anointed king.

DEFEAT OF THE PHILISTINES

5:17-21 As long as Israel was di-

vided, the Israelites were not a threat to the Philistines. But with the final coronation of David, and the establishment of Jerusalem as the political and military capital of Israel, the Philistines moved to remove this threat. They saw Israel no longer as a divided and dispersed culture of farmers, but a significant military power that was now centered around David. **Valley of Rephaim:** This was the valley of the giants (Ja 15:8) that was just south of the city of Jerusalem. It is the valley of Hinnom. **Breakthrough of waters:** We do not fully understand the movement of David's men in this battle. However, it seems that David received advance notice of the intentions of the Philistines. He quickly took his army down to the "stronghold" (Adullam), and then surprised the Philistines with a swift attack from the east as they were approaching Jerusalem from the south.

5:22-25 Though defeated on their initial approach to Jerusalem, the Philistines regrouped in order to make another assault on the city. By the instructions of God who assumed the leadership of David's army, David was instructed to circle behind the Philistine army for his final blow. From His vantage point, the omnipresent God could "see" the location of the Philistines. **Geba:** This was a small city near Jerusalem. **Gazer:** Or, Gezer, which was far to the northwest of Jerusalem (See 1 Ch 14:8-17). The result of this victory was that the fear of David was in the hearts of the nations. If the warlike Philistines could not defeat David, then surely there was no other army who could do better in a military

confrontation with Israel.

Chapter 6 THE ARK MOVED TO JERUSALEM

6:1-5 Baale: This would be Kirjath Jearim or Baalah (1 Ch 13:6). **The ark of God:** The ark had been in Kirjath Jearim for 70 years. David's plan at this time was not only to make Jerusalem the political and military capital of Israel, but also the religious capital. His first move was to make Jerusalem the focus of Israel's faith by bringing the ark of God to Jerusalem. He would later solidify this focus by building a temple in Jerusalem. All these efforts were to consolidate the unity of Israel around the city of Jerusalem. Of course all these efforts were contrary to God's original plan for Israel, but in a state of apostasy, God allowed such arrangements in order to preserve Israel in their rejection of the theocracy by which the Israelites were originally meant to be governed. God intended that a theocracy prevail in Israel with Him reigning over them from heaven. In conjunction with this rule, no one tribe was to lay claim to the tabernacle in their particular territory. **On a new cart:** This movement of the ark was contrary to the manner by which the ark was always to be moved. It was to be borne on the shoulders of the priests. **Played before the Lord:** Though there was great joy on the occasion of moving the ark, no one thought that God's law was being violated, which violation needed strong discipline from the Lord. At this time in the history of Israel, if David wanted to

restore Israel to the will of God, then God had to unleash drastic measures in order to strike fear in the hearts of everyone. As God did at the beginning in the formation of the Israelite nation, in this new beginning punishment for the violation of law had to be administered immediately and openly.

6:6-11 Uzzah put forth his hand to the ark: A second violation of the law of God is here recorded. Not only was the ark being improperly moved, someone other than a Levitical priest touched the ark (Ex 25:14,15, Nm 4:15,20; 7:9). Uzzah was immediately struck dead because he put forth his hand and touched the ark (1 Ch 13:10). It may have been that because the ark was in the house of Abinadab that it had become a common thing. On this occasion it was treated as such in both transportation and handling. If Israel was to be religiously restored in the early days of David's reign, then the death of Uzzah certainly struck fear in the hearts of the people. In a real and demonstrated manner, the entire nation was reminded that God was still present among them. **How will the ark ... come to me:** It could have been that even David was ignorant concerning the correct manner by which the ark was to be moved. The Levites possibly failed to instruct the people concerning these matters, for clear instructions were given in the written law of God, the Torah. **Blessed the house of Obededom:** Because it is here mentioned that this house was blessed, but not the house of Abinadab, may indicate that as a Levitical priest, Obededom treated the ark with the respect that it deserved in

representing the presence of God. It is probable that Abinadab knew nothing of Levitical rules by which the ark was to be handled or moved. He thus did not reap the reward of its being in the presence of his house.

6:12-15 (1 Ch 15:1 – 16:43) He sacrificed oxen: David took no chances with the movement of the ark to Jerusalem on this occasion. Not only was it properly carried on the shoulders of the priests, David sacrificed oxen all the way to Jerusalem. **Danced before the Lord:** This was a religious ceremony in which much joy was expressed for the arrival of the ark.

6:16-19 Michal: It seems that Michal had no pleasure in celebrating the arrival of the ark. Because her heart was far from God's work, she was looking on the proceedings with disgust and not with joy. She was sarcastic in her remarks to David concerning his behavior (vs 20). **Midst of the tabernacle:** This would not have been the original tabernacle (tent) that Israel had made at the foot of Mt. Sinai, for this event took place about 400 years after the building of the first tabernacle (1 Ch 17:4-6). However, David did make a tent for the dwelling place of the ark. Unfortunately, he and the others had forgotten that the tabernacle and ark were to be moved continually throughout the territories of Israel in order that no one be continually too far from it for the annual sacrifices. God's original plan for the continual movement of the tabernacle and ark was eventually ignored when David decided to build a permanent house for the ark in Jerusalem. The

Levites had forgotten to implement the reconstruction of the tabernacle. Instructions on how to do such were given in great detail in the law, which instructions were to be used throughout the history of Israel to continually refurbish or reconstruct the tent structure of the tabernacle.

6:20-23 Michal resented David parading himself before the people. David had exchanged his royal clothing for the linen ephod of a priest. In doing such, he mingled with the common people in the celebration to bring the ark into Jerusalem. **Before the Lord:** What David did was not for his own pleasure, or for the pretense of gaining the favor of the people. He was totally convicted and moved in his behavior to show glory to God. **Chose me before your father:** This statement reveals that Michal probably resented David's assumption of his kingship. She could have been bitter over the rejection of her father, Saul, as king of Israel. She could also have resented David for taking her away from her husband. Michal's punishment for her resentful heart was the shame of being barren for the rest of her life (See 1 Sm 1:5).

Chapter 7

DAVID'S DESIRE TO BUILD A TEMPLE

The events recorded in chapters 7 and 8 are parallel with 1 Chronicles 17 & 18. The events here are not in chronological order, but are written in reference to a logical succession of events after the bringing of the ark to Jerusalem. We must understand that what follows is David's

efforts to centralize government and religion in Jerusalem. Though contrary to the original plan of God, we must understand that God was allowing such to happen. He accommodated Israel's desire to have a king over them as the nations around them. Israel's king, therefore, was a concession that was given by God. Now in the construction of a temple, He was accommodating David's desire to construct a temple as the religions around Israel who had done the same for their gods. God conceded to David's desire, but at the same time He knew that the permanent location of the ark of the covenant in Jerusalem would marginalize the northern tribes. They would be marginalized to the point that Jeroboam would later set up altars in the northern kingdom so that the people would not have to go to Jerusalem to appear before the Lord. Nevertheless, God often gives concessions that divert from His original plans, but wants men to understand that they will eventually pay the price for any deviations.

7:1-3 Dwells within curtains: This was what God originally intended. Since the construction of the "curtains" (the tabernacle) 400 years before, God intended that there be a continual movement of the tabernacle among the tribal territories in order that Israel not do what David here intends to do. At the time God gave the law on Mt. Sinai, He knew that Israel would eventually reject His theocratic rule over them and cry for a king. When Saul was anointed king of Israel, the theocracy ended. God had given instructions in the law concerning

the king that they would have rule over them. However, in reference to the tabernacle, there were no alternative plans given for a permanent facility as the temple. The tabernacle, and the continual refurbishing of it, was to continue throughout their history (1 Ch 17:4-6). The reason for this was obvious. Jesus referred to the reason in John 4, that God is not located in a physical structure, neither is He the God of Israel alone. He is worshiped in all places in all the world (Jn 4:21-24). Israel could not claim God for themselves by the construction of a temple. No one tribe of Israel could take ownership of the ark. Nevertheless, these things happened in Israel, which things eventually aided in Israel's division and apostasy from God. ***The Lord is with you:*** It was not that God had changed His original plan. He only conceded to what David desired. The temple was David's desire, not God's original plan. Though God knew where the kings of Israel would lead Israel, He still sanctioned their desire for kings on earth over Israel. God did the same thing in reference to the building of the temple. He knew that the centralization of the ark of the covenant in the temple would lead to the division of the tribes. Nevertheless, He allowed their desires to be carried out in order that we learn from their mistakes (See comments 1 Co 10:11; Rm 15:4).

PROPHECY CONCERNING DAVID'S HOUSE

7:4-11 *I have walked in a tent:* This, and the accompanying statements, make it very clear that God here chided David

in his plan to build a temple. God stated that He had "walked" in a tent for over 400 years with Israel (1 Ch 17:4-6). Why, He reasoned through Nathan to David, should a house of cedar be built for Him? He reasoned that if He could walk in a tent for over 400 years, then why could He not continue to do so in the future? These challenges by God made it very clear that the eventual construction of the temple in Solomon's day was never in the plan of God. Israel was to remain with the tabernacle structure throughout their history. Once a tabernacle was worn out, they were to construct another. For this reason intricate details were given for the structure in the law. The tabernacle was never meant to be a blueprint for the construction of the temple in Jerusalem. ***He will make you a house:*** This statement is made in the context of building "houses." In other words, God was saying, "Now that we are on the subject of 'houses,' let Me tell you about the real spiritual house that I am building."

7:12-17 *Your seed after you:* Here is a major prophecy surrounding the throne of David, which throne represented the authority of God on earth. God promised David that He would set up his seed after him and establish his kingdom (vs 12). There are actually two promises made in this context. God would set up David's descendants upon his throne. The singular pronoun "his" refers us to an individual, though there is a secondary fulfillment of the prophecy that referred to the Messiah. The first individual to sit on David's throne would be Solomon, but reference was also to the

Messiah who would come in the future. **Build a house for My name:** In His promise to David, God described what He would do through this One whom He would eventually raise up after David. He would build a house and establish a kingdom (vs 13). The house of David and the kingdom would be sure (forever) (vs 16). There are four key thoughts to this prophecy and promise to David: (1) One from David's seed would sit upon his throne. (2) The One who would sit on the throne of David would build a house for the Lord. (3) David's house would have an everlasting reign. (4) The throne and kingdom would be made certain forever. 2 Samuel 7 is thus a prophecy concerning the immediate reign of Solomon who would sit on David's throne after David. In the context, however, God was addressing David concerning the "One" who would far into the future sit on his throne and rule after him. The immediate fulfillment of the prophecy refers to Solomon. However, even David knew that reference was beyond his heirs, for David referred to the fulfillment of the prophecy as a "great while to come" (vs 19; compare the parallel promise of Ps 89:34-37). The first fulfillment of these prophecies was found in the reign of Solomon. Solomon, David's son, did reign upon David's throne. Solomon did build a temple for the Lord in Jerusalem. Solomon's reign was secure in the sense of being "forever." (The use of the word "forever" is used in this context as in many other contexts to refer to God firmly establishing His reign. The reign would not be termi-

nated until its intended time of duration had been completed.) Solomon's personal reign ceased when he died. The Davidic kings on earth did eventually cease. The nation of Israel eventually came to an end. When Israel disobeyed the will of God, she was taken from Palestine into both Assyrian and Babylonian captivity. With the final captivity of 586 B.C., the earthly reign of kings upon David's throne in Jerusalem was terminated. Jeremiah wrote of this in Jeremiah 22:30 concerning the reign of Jehoiachin (Coniah), the last earthly king of the Davidic line to reign on earth (See comments Jr 22:30). The final fulfillment of all that was stated in 2 Samuel 7 eventually came to pass by the time of the events that transpired in Acts 2. In Acts 2 Peter stated that David was a prophet and that he knew what God had sworn to him (At 2:30). This one inspired statement of Peter clearly affirms that Jesus was the fulfillment of God's promises to David, that He would set One upon his throne. Peter also stated that David did not ascend to heaven. However, David did prophesy of Jesus by saying, "*The LORD said to my Lord, Sit at My right hand...*" (At 2:34; see Ps 110:1). Jesus ascended to the right hand of God in order to receive sovereign rule. He is there now ruling all nations by the authority that the Father gave to Him when He was seated at His right hand (Ep 1:20-22). Therefore, God kept His oath to David that He swore in 2 Samuel 7. He raised Jesus up to seat Him at His right hand. Every statement of 2 Samuel 7 was finally fulfilled in Christ. Jesus was of

the seed of David. Jesus established His church, which is the house of God. The kingdom reign of Jesus is everlasting in the sense of being sure and certain, and will continue until Jesus returns all authority to God (1 Co 15:26-28). Thus His kingdom reign would last throughout its intended time of duration.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

7:18-29 *Who am I:* These words of David indicate the fact that he fully understood the magnitude of the prophecy concerning his house. Though he did not understand that to which reference was made concerning the Messiah to come, he did understand that God was going to do a great work through his lineage to accomplish something wonderful. David understood that these things were beyond the knowledge of men (See comments 1 Pt 1:10-12). For this reason he was exceedingly thankful to God for using him and his lineage to accomplish something wonderful in the future history of Israel. When one comprehends the spiritual legacy that he leaves to others, with great sobriety he will focus on his own spiritual development and faithfulness to God.

Chapter 8

EXPANSION OF DAVID'S REIGN

8:1-14 The events of chapters 8 – 10 transpired over a period of several years. In order to establish his kingdom reign, David had to defeat all the enemies of Israel who posed a threat to her security. The first threat was the Philistines who had been a thorn in the flesh to Israel since Israel's occupation of Pales-

tine. Starting with the Philistines, David's goal was to rid Palestine of all enemies of Israel, or at least to bring them into subjection. Through all these conquests, Israel was greatly enriched with the spoil that came from the many victories. David impoverished the nations while enriching Israel.

8:15-18 *Judgment and justice:*

Contrary to the latter years of Saul, David dealt fairly with the people. He had the people at heart, and not his own kingship. Good heads of state function in this manner. They do not see their power as an opportunity to use the people to enrich themselves, but as an occasion to serve the people. Government must always be for the people, lest the officials of government use the people for their own aggrandizement.

Chapter 9

MERCY TO MEPHIBOSHETH

9:1-13 *Mephibosheth:* He was probably about five years old when Saul and Jonathan were killed (4:4). This event took place after David had conquered the enemies of Israel and was settling down in his reign over Israel. It was a time when he remembered his covenant with Jonathan, and thus sought for anyone who might be an heir of Jonathan through whom he could preserve Jonathan's posterity. ***Fell on his face:*** Mephibosheth was apprehensive about the summons of the king, for the traditional practice was that the heirs to kingship were eliminated. ***A dead dog as I am:*** Mephibosheth was not summoned to be killed, but to be rewarded in order

that the name of Jonathan continue in Israel. Mephibosheth thus expressed his humble gratitude as one who felt that he did not deserve such mercy from the king. Because Mephibosheth was handicapped, Ziba was instructed to continue administering the property of Mephibosheth. However, he was to bring the produce of the fields to Mephibosheth. All that was the possession of Jonathan was to be returned to Mephibosheth.

Chapter 10

DEFEAT OF AMMON & SYRIA

10:1-5 See 1 Ch 19:1-19. The war to which reference was made in 8:12 is here explained. **Shave ... their beards:** Shaving any part of the beards of an Israelite was a humiliating gesture. The humiliation was intensified by cutting off half of their garments so they would be exposed. In their actions, Hanun was showing contempt for David. **Wait in Jericho:** In order to preserve their dignity, David allowed the men to live in obscurity until their beards grew back.

10:6-8 Hanun knew that what he did to the messengers of David would stir up a war with Israel. They thus prepared for David's retaliation.

10:9-14 The battle with the coalition of Ammon and Syria took place at the gate of Ammon, or Rabbah. Joab, with his brother, Abishai, led a united effort of Israelites with the belief that God was working for them against those who had stirred up an unjustified war. **Joab returned:** We do not know why Joab terminated the battle and returned to Jerusalem. It could have been that winter was

coming and he did not want to conduct an extended battle against Rabbah in the winter, for the winter was not the season when nations went out to battle with one another.

10:15-19 Hadarezer: Or, Hadadezer (8:3). This was Syria's most powerful leader under which the nation rallied again against Israel. However, David personally led this attack against the Syrians. He defeated them and subsequently subjected them to Israel to pay tribute.

David's Fall And Discipline

(11:1 – 18:33)

Outline: (1) Sin with Bathsheba (11:1 – 12:31), (2) Problems in David's house (13:1 – 14:33), (3) Absalom's rebellion (15:1 – 18:33)

Chapter 11

SIN WITH BATHSHEBA

11:1-5 Since Israel had subjected Syria, it was now time to subject Ammon. **David stayed at Jerusalem:** At a time when the king of Israel should have been with his men at the front of the attack against Ammon, he stayed home. We are not told why David stayed in Jerusalem, but his idleness in Jerusalem led to his temptation and fall with Bathsheba. **A woman washing herself:** Bathsheba was not cautious with her bathing, and David was in a position where he could see her. The encounter led to dire consequences as this story unfolded. **The wife of Uriah:** David fully knew that Bathsheba was a married woman when he allowed his lusts to be fulfilled in sin (See comments Js 1:1,14). **Hittite:** Uriah was a

prominent soldier in David's army. He was not an Israelite, but we would suppose that he was a proselyte to the God of Israel. ***Purified from her uncleanness:*** Compare Lv 15:19-30.

11:6-13 In this case one sin led to another as David sought to cover up his adultery. ***Uriah slept at the door:*** There is a contrast between the honor by which Uriah conducted himself during this event, and the depths to which sin took David. As a leader in the army of Israel, Uriah did not take advantage of his privilege of being summoned by the king to be in the comfort of his wife. At the same time, David should have been with his men, and outside the comfort of his own wives. Regardless of David's persistent efforts to have Uriah sleep with his wife, Uriah's dedication to his fellow soldiers was stronger. No effort on David's part was successful in having Uriah sleep with his wife in order that a deception could be stated that the conceived infant in the womb of Bathsheba was the result of Uriah's seed. Uriah's honor was greater than the twisted advice of a king who was following after his own lusts.

11:14-21 David's efforts to sin by deception now led to a plan for taking a life. The death of Uriah was to be indirect from David. It was David's scheme to have Uriah killed in the heat of a foolish move in battle. Though killed by an enemy in battle, God still held him accountable for the death of Uriah. Joab probably knew of the cover up scheme when he received the letter. To protect the reputation of David, he followed the unwise order to move valiant men close

to the wall of the city. In the move, Uriah and others were killed. ***There fell some of ... the servants of David:*** David's cover up for his own sin led to the death of more people than Uriah. Innocent people often die when kings go wrong.

11:22-27 Hearing the news of Uriah's death brought relief to David, for he thought that the cover up scheme had worked, and now he could take Bathsheba to be his wife. By this time we assume that Bathsheba was at least one month into pregnancy. ***Mourned for her husband:*** The traditional time of mourning was seven days. ***She became his wife:*** It may have been that this was the original intention of Bathsheba, for she did bathe in a place where she could be seen by David. She willingly came to David, either out of fear of the king or because she was ambitious to become a king's wife. We are not told all the story, but she did finally become one of the wives of the king. ***Displeased the Lord:*** When the leader of God's people morally falls, then the effects of his sins are greater than the ones who follow his sins. The people follow the morals of their leaders. In this case, David's sin was tragic for national morality, and thus specific measures were taken by God to rectify the problem by bringing direct judgment upon David.

Chapter 12

12:1-6 ***The Lord sent Nathan:*** We would suppose that Nathan had some apprehension about going to the king with a message of condemnation. Nevertheless, as true prophets of God, he had

no choice but to speak the word of God. In this case, Nathan gave a parable that would arouse the king to administer justice to himself by pronouncing judgment on one who committed a ruthless action against his fellow man. The sin committed in the parable was exemplified by the fact that it was a sin of the rich against the poor. David's reaction to the deed of the ruthless rich man was immediate and according to justice. Punishment by death was to be handed out, as well as restitution made to the poor man (See Ex 22:1).

12:7-12 *You are the man:* We assume that this statement of Nathan stunned David. ***I would moreover have given you much more:*** It seems that David took God's blessings for granted. In a moment of lust, David had forgotten that his kingship and what he had, even his own life, was the result of God's grace and mercy in his life. And yet, David's moment of ingratitude and lust led him to fulfill his lusts and kill an innocent man and some of his companions. The point is that the righteous must never arrogantly assume that where they are and what they have is by their own power. What they have and who they are does not give them the right to follow after their lusts into sin. When the righteous lose sight of the work of God in their lives, they often take credit for their accomplishments. In the bondage of their own self glory they often feel they have earned the right to sin. ***You have despised Me:*** As all sin, David's sin against Uriah was a sin against God. ***I will take your wives:*** David took the wife of another, and thus

God would take all his wives. ***Secretly:*** His efforts to conceal his sin would be punished by God's public judgment in a rebellion that would come from within his own family. For a moment of sin to gratify the lusts of the flesh, David would reap grief for the rest of his life. There is a high price to be paid for sin (See comments Ps 51).

12:13,14 *I have sinned:* David suddenly realized that though his sin was hidden from men, it was not hidden from God. At a time when he focused on things of this world, he forgot that he was naked before God. ***You will not die:*** David's own pronouncement of death to the ruthless rich man in Nathan's parable would now be meted out on himself. Grace and mercy from God would prevail. David knew that if another had done what he did, he would be deserving of death. God's mercy toward David for his sin with Bathsheba would teach him to be merciful to others. Though David's actions presented an opportunity for the enemies of Israel to blaspheme the God of Israel, God accepted the blasphemy in order to spare the fallible king of Israel for the sake of preserving His people. David was the best God had at the time to preserve Israel. ***Blaspheme:*** They would assign the work of God in Israel to be the work of a god that Israel had created after her own imagination. Because of David's sin, they would proclaim that the God of Israel was no better than the gods of their own wicked beliefs and behavior. ***The child ... will surely die:*** Possibly more than a year had transpired between the time of David's adultery with

Bathsheba and the time when Nathan came to David. Judgment in time for sin is often delayed, but it eventually comes. God's grace and mercy toward David would also cost the life of an innocent child. Justice was served by the death of the innocent. As in the case of Abraham being asked to offer his innocent son, Isaac, here again God seems to be preparing the minds of Israel for the offering of His own innocent Son on the cross for all our sins (See Gn 22).

12:15-23 *Inquired of God for the child:* This was a prayer that God would not answer. The death of the child was the judgment of God, and in this case, God would not change His judgment. ***Is the child dead:*** David perceived by the behavior of those around him that the child had died. When they informed him that he was dead, David washed himself and ate. His actions confused those of the court, for they presumed that he would mourn the death of the child. David's explanation revealed that he accepted the judgment of God, and thus prepared himself to move on. ***I will go to him:*** David understood that there was life after death, and in that life he would again be in the company of his child.

12:24-31 *Solomon:* Little did David know that God would bring forth from the womb of Bathsheba the most prominent king in the history of Israel. This would be the son through whom God would continue to fulfill the seedline promise that was initially stated in Genesis 3:15, and then to Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3. "Solomon," the name given by David, means "peaceable." But the

name given by God through Nathan was "Jedidiah," which means "beloved of the Lord." It seems that in God's punishment of David and Bathsheba through the death of their first son, there was a blessing from God in the birth of their second son, Solomon. All things work together for good to those who love the Lord (Rm 8:28).

Chapter 13

PROBLEMS IN DAVID'S HOUSE

13:1-6 God's curse of David's house, because of his adulterous relationship with Bathsheba, began to immediately occur after the pronouncement of God. David began to reap what he had sown in that his household morally degenerated. The polygamous marriages in which he was involved began to bring forth the bitter fruit of his morally degenerate offspring. ***Absalom ... Tamar:*** These were sons of David through his wife, Maacah, whom he married during his years of flight from Saul (3:2,3). ***Amnon:*** Amnon was the half brother of Tamar. His marriage with Tamar would have been forbidden by the law (Lv 18:11). ***Pretended to be sick:*** Since he could not go to her, Amnon, on the advice of Jonadab, his cousin, schemed a plan to have Tamar sent to him.

13:7-14 *Do not do this disgraceful thing:* At least Tamar was morally responsible. Though incest was practiced among the nations around Israel, it was to be abhorred in Israel. Amnon had little moral discretion. ***Where will I take my name:*** When fornication occurs, someone is always shamed. Some life is

changed forever. In this case, the selfish Amnon had no consideration for the one with whom he wanted to commit fornication. All that was on his mind was the fulfillment of his lusts of the flesh. ***He did not harken to her voice:*** He raped her, an act of the lowest and most vile nature of a degenerate man.

13:15-18 *Amnon hated her exceedingly:* The true character of a rapist was here manifested by Amnon whose uncontrollable passion turned to revulsion which manifested his vile character. When his uncontrollable passion was not rewarded with a favorable response from Tamar, his passion turned to hate.

13:19-22 *Tamar remained desolate:* Someone always pays the price for fornication. ***David... was very angry:*** However, he took no action. He probably took no action because he recalled his own sin with Bathsheba. Nevertheless, his lack of action would eventually lead to more sorrow, for Absalom's vengeance on Amnon would cause David grief. Absalom himself would eventually lead a rebellion against David.

13:23-29 Amnon surely suspected that Absalom would do something to avenge the rape of his sister, Tamar. For this reason, Absalom waited two full years before he schemed his revenge. A festival was planned. Knowing that Amnon would be apprehensive about coming, Absalom also invited the king, whom he knew would not leave Jerusalem in order to attend. Nevertheless, the scheme worked. Amnon was deceived into believing that David would be present, and thus he decided to go to

Absalom's festival. Amnon was subsequently murdered by the friends of Absalom. Since Absalom was the next oldest son of David, this put him first in line to be king after David. Absalom's murder of Amnon satisfied his revenge, as well as set him up to be the next king of Israel.

13:30-39 *Talmai, king of Geshur:* This king was the grandfather of Absalom (3:3). Geshur was far to the north of Jerusalem in Syria. It was here that Absalom waited until the time when David would be comforted concerning his act of revenge against Amnon. Since David mourned over Absalom, his forgiveness of Absalom was quicker than Absalom presumed. We would assume that in his heart David knew that Amnon received the judgment he deserved for his rape of Tamar.

Chapter 14

14:1-11 Joab, the captain of David's army, realized that David longed for Absalom. He thus recruited a woman of Tekoa to go to David with a parable about one brother murdering his brother. The story was told to David in order to stimulate his sympathies for Absalom. As with the case when Nathan, the prophet, came before David with a story whereby David pronounced judgment on a ruthless rich man, in this case David also pronounced just judgment. The judgment that David pronounced was also unknowingly against himself. The story of the woman was a plea for God's mercy, and thus David responded that mercy should be extended in the case of the offending brother.

14:12-17 *He devises means so that His banished ones not be expelled from Him:* This is mercy and grace. The “banished ones” were banished by law, but not expelled because of grace. Grace is the impetus by which mercy sets aside the just punishment of law. However, this principle is not in reference to those who completely reject law, for in rebellion against law, one cannot live under grace. The banished one can be brought back only if he forsakes his rebellion. Otherwise, he must remain banished if he remains rebellious.

14:18-24 *Bring the young man Absalom:* David understood that someone else was behind the presentation of the woman. She confessed that it was Joab, and subsequently David commanded that Absalom should be brought again to Jerusalem. By this time in the life of Absalom, it seems that he had gained the favor of the people, but in particular, the favor of Joab. It may have been that David saw a spirit of conspiracy in Absalom that the others did not. But to honor the request of his nephew, Joab, David gave the order that Absalom could return. Joab would later regret that he encouraged David to bring Absalom back to Jerusalem. In fact, Joab would later kill Absalom for his rebellion. *Let him not see my face:* The condition for Absalom’s return was that he was not to be brought into the king’s court. He was to live in his own house apart from the royal family.

14:25-27 *Hair of his head:* The handsome appearance of Absalom is here recorded in order to help us understand

why the people were so fickle in following him. It has been estimated that when his hair was annually cut, it weighed over two kilograms. It is stated that even Absalom’s daughter was very beautiful. In appearance, his family had a good physical presentation, which possibly aided in Absalom’s conspiracy to gain the favor of the people.

14:28-33 Absalom’s act of setting the field of Joab on fire revealed that he was somewhat unscrupulous and ungrateful in his dealings with others. At least in this act he proved that he was not one fit to be a king. Unfortunately, Joab had not at this time fully understood the ultimate goal of Absalom, that goal being a conspiracy against the reign of David.

Chapter 15

ABSALOM’S REBELLION

15:1-12 Nathan had prophesied that David would have troubles in his household. The next five chapters explain in detail the conspiracy of Absalom in detail in order to reveal the fulfillment of Nathan’s prophecy. *Absalom stole the hearts of the men:* There was no question concerning the motives of Absalom. He began his political campaign in order to gain the favor of the people, specifically those who were the leaders. He presented himself as a leader, and then campaigned for the allegiance of those he planned to use in his rebellion against the reign of his father. The seriousness of his scheme was in the fact that he was campaigning against the anointed of God, and thus his plan was doomed from the

beginning. He would receive no sympathy from God. He also manifested his true character, that it was the opposite of David's, since David would not lay his hand on God's anointed, Saul. But we must understand that Israel's character as a nation had now digressed to paying allegiance to kings on earth, not the King of heaven. Instead of considering God in this matter, Absalom considered only the allegiance of the people and his own selfish ambition. The people at this time in the history of Israel were concerned only for their leaders on earth, not the will of God. Throughout the remainder of Israel's history, this turn of the desires of the people from God to a king on earth would lead them further away from God, and eventually into captivity. It was for this reason that God did not plan for Israel to be ruled by a king on earth. **Four years:** There was an obvious scribal error of the date of 40 years in the *Textus Receptus* from which the KJV was translated. The Septuagint and Syriac versions have the correct reading of four years. **He ... went to Hebron:** The rebellion began from Hebron, from which city Absalom told messengers that they tell the leaders of Israel that his reign had already started from Hebron. Absalom assumed that Hebron would be the favored place from which to begin his reign, since it was from Hebron that David also began his reign (2:4; 5:3). Since Hebron was in the central region of the territory of Judah, he knew that he needed the allegiance of Judah before he could presume to reign over all Israel. **The conspiracy was strong:** We are not

told why a great number of people followed Absalom. It may have been that David was such a man after God's own heart, that the people craved a king who was arrogant and pompous as the kings of the nations around Israel. Their desires may not have been fulfilled in the "sweet psalmist of Israel." While David believed that God would guard his reign in his latter years, men thirsty for power found occasion to satisfy the political yearnings of the people. Absalom was politically correct in pleasing the desires of the people. He arrogantly presumed to be that which the people desired.

15:13-18 David was informed that the majority of Israel had given their allegiance to Absalom. Once informed, David again became a fugitive. We are not told why he chose to flee. But it could be that he submitted to the judgment of God that was pronounced by Nathan (See 12:10ff). **Cherethites ... Pelethites ... Gittites:** These were David's valiant men of war who had been with him in his former days as a fugitive from Saul (16:6; 20:7; 23:8).

15:19-23 Ittai: David did not want his men to again become fugitives with him. But this leader of the 600 loyal warriors of David pledged his life-or-death allegiance to David.

15:24-29 Ark of God: It could have been that here again the ark was being used as a fetish for the protection of those who had possession of it. But David said that the ark belonged in the tabernacle. David reassured Zadok and Abiathar that if God's favor was for him, he would again see the ark. He was more con-

cerned that the will of God be carried out in his life than for any reassurance that would come from having possession of the ark.

15:30-37 Mt. of Olives is just east of the city of Jerusalem across the Kidron valley. David and his group made their way across the Kidron to the Mt. of Olives. **Ahithophel:** The prayer of David that Ahithophel's counsel be turned into foolishness was eventually fulfilled. **Hushai:** Contrary to the treason of Ahithophel, Hushai came with great mourning concerning the conspiracy. David here commissioned him as a spy in the presence of those who would stand before Absalom.

Chapter 16

16:1-4 **Ziba the servant of Mephibosheth:** It seems that Ziba may have been scheming against Mephibosheth in order to gain the favor of David. He first brought David and his household donkeys on which to ride and food for his escape from Jerusalem. **The house of Israel will restore to me the kingdom of my Father:** These supposed words of Mephibosheth that were told to David by Ziba were a lie. Ziba seems to have been scheming for that which was granted to him by David, that is, the property of Mephibosheth.

16:5-14 Shimei was of the family of Saul. In this event Shimei vented his anger against David for the misfortunes that had befallen the house of Saul. Shimei expressed the feelings that were held by many people in Israel, for many were still loyal to Saul. It must be noted

that these loyalties continued to prevail for many years after the death of Saul. One reason why God did not want Israel to have a king over them was because of this very point. When kings succeeded kings, loyalty to former kings would always hinder the work of the reigning king. **This dead dog:** Abishai wanted to render immediate punishment to Shimei. However, David still assumed that his misfortune was the fulfillment of Nathan's prophecy, and thus he had to pay the price for the death of Uriah.

16:15-23 **God save the king:** These words of Hushai were stated to Absalom in order that he might bring himself into the confidence of Absalom. In this conversation between Hushai and Absalom, Hushai was bringing himself into the confidence of the king in order to accomplish the downfall of Absalom. **Go into your father's concubines:** This advice of Ahithophel was for two purposes. First, going into the concubines of David in a public manner would be Absalom's signal to the people that he was assuming all that belonged to David. Second, the action would also show to the people that there would be no reconciliation in the future between himself and David.

Chapter 17

17:1-14 Ahithophel was too ambitious in his advice to Absalom. Because he was, Absalom wanted to get a second opinion from Hushai. This was the opportunity for Hushai to turn the advice of Ahithophel against Absalom. Hushai counselled that David's men were crafty at warfare, and thus would be expecting

an attack from Absalom's men. If Absalom lost this battle, the people would turn against him. Hushai's advice was to wait until a great army could be gathered from all Israel in order to crush David and his men. Absalom took this advice, which advice led to his downfall.

17:15-23 The fact that the messengers to David were hidden by some of the Jerusalem residents reveals that not all in Jerusalem and the surrounding area had given allegiance to Absalom. What David needed was time to rally all those who had not followed in the rebellion. There were more who would rally around David than Absalom, and thus the delay was to the advantage of David. ***Hanged himself:*** The result of Ahithophel's betrayal of David was the same as Judas when he betrayed Jesus. Ahithophel realized that Hushai's advice would lead to the victory of David over Absalom, and thus he knew that David would punish him for his betrayal.

17:24-29 ***Mahanaim:*** Once the news of Absalom's rebellion reached the ears of the surrounding people who were loyal to David, a great number of people gathered to support David. David began to organize his men east of the Jordan for he knew that Absalom would soon follow with an attack.

Chapter 18

18:1-5 ***You will not go forth:*** This was a time when the cause of the nation was greater than the man who was the king. The people were certainly loyal to David. Their allegiance was to him as God's anointed king of the nation. They

recognized that the rebellion of Absalom was not just against David, but against the God-anointed king and Israel as a nation. For this reason they did not want David to put his life in any danger, for if he died in battle as the anointed king of Israel, the people would conclude that God was no longer with David, as He was no longer with Saul when he was killed in battle. ***Deal gently with ... Absalom:*** The commanders of David's army knew that this was not a defensive battle against Absalom. It was a full offensive attack to preserve the kingdom reign of God's anointed and the nation of Israel. Knowing that his commanders would fight to crush totally Absalom's rebellion, David commanded that when the battle was won, that they should spare Absalom.

18:6-8 ***The forest devoured more people:*** We are not told if the 20,000 dead were the total casualties of both sides. But we would assume that the total was composed primarily of the men of Absalom because of this statement. In fear, Absalom's men fled, but were cornered by the ravines and gorges in the forest. We assume that many jumped or fell to their deaths.

18:9-15 When faced with death from the warriors of David, Absalom fled for his own life. Unfortunately, as his mule passed under a tree, Absalom's head was caught in the fork of a tree limb. A certain man found Absalom in this condition. But because he greatly respected the charge of David that no one harm Absalom, he left Absalom hanging there and reported the matter to Joab. Joab remembered that he had earlier given bad

advice to David when Absalom had fled to the north after killing Amnon. He possibly did not want to make the same mistake by allowing Absalom to plan again for another insurrection. This time he wanted to rid Israel of one who had a rebellious spirit against the anointed of God.

18:19-33 The official result of the battle was initially sent to David through a Cushite. Following the sending of the Cushite, an unofficial report was sent through Ahimaaz. Since those with David saw one running alone, they presumed that it was a messenger, not a fugitive, for a fugitive would have been followed by others. It was Joab's purpose to send the Cushite first, but later send Ahimaaz who outran the Cushite. Ahimaaz arrived first, and gave the good news of the victory. However, David asked him to stand aside at the time the Cushite arrived. The Cushite gave the message that Absalom was dead. ***O my son Absalom:*** We would expect such a response from one who was after the nature of God's heart of grace and mercy. It seems that David's forgiveness had no limits. In this case, the justice of Joab prevailed over the forgiving nature of David.

David's Restoration

(19:1 – 20:26)

Outline: (1) The rebuke of Joab (19:1-8), (2) The return of David (19:9-39), (3) Strife between Judah and Israel (19:40-43), (4) The rebellion of Sheba (20:1-26)

Chapter 19

THE REBUKE OF JOAB

19:1-8 *You have shamed ... the faces of all your servants:* Joab, of course, was right. If David's response to the death of Absalom was more important than his people's victory over a rebellion, then in the future, if there were a rebellion, the people would not respond to help David. If Absalom were allowed to live, then Joab reasoned that there would be another rebellion, for Absalom had a thirst for power.

19:9-15 Because of the vacuum of leadership among the people, there was great confusion. It could have been that the people were blaming one another for the strife that had been allowed to enter Israel. In order to bring calm to the social confusion, David sent word to Zadok and Abiathar that they should bring him back to Jerusalem in a triumphal manner. *Amasa:* This was the rebel commander of Absalom whom David made the new commander of his army. This was probably a political move in order to bring the people and soldiers who had formerly given their allegiance to Absalom, back to David who willingly forgave all for the sake of reconciling the nation.

THE RETURN OF DAVID

19:16-39 The seriousness of the tyranny was reflected by the major events that happened in connection with the restoration of David to the throne. Several things occurred as David assumed his royal position as the anointed king of Is-

rael. **Shimei:** His approach to David certainly illustrated the manner by which many in Israel should at this time have approached David. Shimei begged for forgiveness. If the matter had been left to Abishai, he would have executed Shimei. But because of David's mercy, Shimei was allowed to live, knowing that he would have a greater ally in Shimei alive, than dead. The extreme by which Shimei had cursed David manifested the extreme by which David had mercy (19:24-39). **Mephibosheth:** In the restoration of David to Jerusalem, it was learned that Ziba had earlier lied concerning Mephibosheth's loyalty. Under David's questioning, Mephibosheth again manifested his humble nature and loyalty to David. **Barzillai:** This eighty year old man revealed his loyalty to David by making sure that David was safely across the Jordan to Mahanaim. In David's return to Jerusalem, he was offered a place in the king's court. Because of his age, Barzillai declined the offer, but asked if his son, Chimham, could enjoy the king's company.

STRIFE BETWEEN JUDAH & ISRAEL

19:40-43 The division between Judah and Israel had by this time started. It would eventually play out in the history of Israel in the lives of the grandchildren of David. In showing loyalty to David, the northern tribes of Israel complained that the tribe of Judah had stolen away the king. This complaint was not entirely the fault of the northern tribes being disgruntled. After all, it was David

who made the wrong decision to make his capital in the territory of Judah. Two previous decisions had at this time born sour fruit in reference to the unity of Israel. First, the tribes of Israel had rejected God's nationwide theocratic rule over them when they demanded that their loyalty be directed to a king on earth. Second, the king on earth established a central government in only one city of the land of promise. Jerusalem was chosen by David to be his capital. A third move on the part of David was yet to develop. During his reign he had already established a permanent location for the ark of the covenant. It was placed in Jerusalem. David had earlier asked to build a temple for the ark, but was chided by God for suggesting such. Later in David's life, however, God would concede to the request, but allow Solomon to build the temple. This act would centralize the faith of Israel around a temple in Jerusalem. This would eventually seal the fate for the division of the Israelites into the northern and southern kingdoms. After the death of Solomon, Rehoboam and Jeroboam would divide Israel, with two tribes in the south (Judah and Benjamin), and the rest in the northern part of Palestine under the rule of Jeroboam. The division of Israel was thus caused by men deciding to do that which God never intended for the twelve tribes. The seeds of the division were unknowingly planted by David. In his efforts to promote unity in Israel he actually established that which would eventually lead to the division of the tribes. It was for this reason that God never wanted an earthly king to

reign in Israel. He only accommodated a king in order that we learn from Israel's mistakes (See comments 1 Co 10:11; Rm 15:4).

Chapter 20

THE REBELLION OF SHEBA

20:1-4 *Sheba*: Sheba was a rebellious person, and thus after the fall of Absalom, he continued a minor rebellion against David. He possibly took advantage of the complaints of the northern tribes that they expressed in 19:40-43. The fact that a significant number of men followed Sheba indicated that the men of Judah had not fully appeased the complaints of the northern tribes. ***Living in widowhood*:** Since these concubines of David had been previously defiled by Absalom in public, David no longer slept with them. He confined them to a house and provided for them until the day of their deaths.

20:5-7 *Amasa ... delayed*: Amasa was the former rebel commander of Absalom's army. It may have been that he personally knew Sheba, and thus delayed in order to allow him time to escape, or muster an army to battle against those who were loyal to David. ***Abishai*:** When Amasa delayed, David immediately gave Abishai the responsibility of quickly assembling an army of men to put down the rebellion of Sheba.

20:8-13 Joab had been demoted when Amasa was appointed as the commander of David's army. On this occasion, however, the opportunity arose for Joab to rid himself of this one who had formerly given allegiance to Absalom and

led his army in rebellion against David. Under the pretense of being a friend, and on his way to those who rebelled, he murdered Amasa in the middle of the road that (Compare 3:27). Unfortunately, the dead body of their commander, Amasa, became an obstacle in the road to the soldiers who were in hot pursuit of Sheba. When he was removed from the road, all the people followed after the command of Joab.

20:14-22 *Bethmaachah*: This fortified city was in the far north of Palestine, near Dan, in the territory of Naphtali. Sheba had run as far north as possible away from the army that was led by Joab. ***Berites*:** Bichri was the father of Sheba (20:1). ***A woman*:** When the men would take no lead for the preservation of their city, a wise woman stepped forward to negotiate terms for peace. There was only one term for peace, the head of Sheba, which the men of Bethmaachah cut off and threw over the wall to Joab.

20:23-26 For the sake of posterity, the key people of David's government are here listed (See 8:16-18; 1 Ch 18:14-17). Some changes were made from earlier accounts of these key people, but the kingdom reign of David continued under the maintenance of those who exercised the leadership of his government.

Appendix To David's Reign

(21:1 – 24:25)

Outline: (1) Gibeonite revenge (21:1-14), (2) Heroic courage in battle (21:15-22), (3) Psalm of thanksgiving (22:1-51), (4) Final words of David (23:1-7), (5) David's mighty men (23:8-23), (6) Le-

gion of honor (23:24-39), (7) The sin of the census (24:1-25)

Chapter 21

The remaining events that are listed in the last four chapters of 2 Samuel are principal events that took place during the reign of David. These seven events are not necessarily in chronological order.

GIBEONITE REVENGE

21:1-14 What the Gibeonites requested and were granted by David was not by the commandment of God. In fact, such was against the law of God (See Nm 35:33; Dt 24:16). Nevertheless, the Gibeonites with whom Joshua and Israel had made a covenant upon Israel's entrance into the land of Palestine (Ja 9:15), wanted their revenge on the house of Saul. Except for Mephibosheth with whom David had sworn to protect, those whom the Gibeonites had requested were delivered to them. What David allowed in the request for revenge on the part of the Gibeonites may have been the reason for the "bloody man" accusation that came from Shimei (16:7,8). We are not told exactly when this event occurred during the reign of David. It probably occurred some time before the rebellion of Absalom. If so, David's motives may have been that he was weary of rebellion, and thus had executed through the demand of the Gibeonites anyone of Saul's heritage who might instigate a rebellion. He may have thought that there may still come a rebellion from the house of Saul. Unfortunately, according to the

prophecy of Nathan, the rebellion came from David's own house. **God was moved by prayer:** After the final purge of those who would pose a possible rebellion, there was prayer in the land. The prayer of David and the people brought into Israel the power of God to preserve the people and the land. Foreign forces were stayed, and thus under the reign of David there was peace from those outside the land of Palestine.

HEROIC COURAGE IN BATTLE

21:15-22 Four brave men who gave their allegiance to David changed the history of Israel, and possibly changed world history. They were Abishai, Sibbechai, Elhanan and Jonathan. The deliverance of David by these four men occurred early in the reign of David in Israel's war against the Philistines. Because of the loyalty of these men of courage, David was saved and the history of Israel was changed. Because of their courage, the Holy Spirit inspired the writer of this text to list their names for the posterity of Israel. Sometimes insignificant battles of history change world history. Since these men were named by the Holy Spirit, we assume that their efforts to save David had historical consequences in the history of mankind.

Chapter 22

PSALM OF THANKSGIVING

This entire chapter is found in Psalm 18. These words were probably written by David in the days of his early deliverance from Saul and his victories over the Philistines.

22:1-4 David used metaphors of the wilderness where he was in his flight as a refugee. He used these metaphors in order to express his feelings for the protection of God. Notice the following metaphors: rock, fortress, shield, high tower, refuge.

22:5-7 In flight from Saul, David was in deep distress. He fled from the threats of the ungodly. On every side he was confronted by death.

22:8-19 Regardless of the threat of his environment, God came to the rescue of David. Natural forces (darkness, wind, thunder, lightning) were used by the omnipotent God to save David from death. Though confronted with the gravest of dangers, God's powers overcame every obstacle that would bring destruction to His anointed.

22:20-25 Because of his obedience to the will of God, God came to the rescue of David. God protects those who show their allegiance to Him through their obedience to His will. Though David walked through the valley of the shadow of death, his blessing from God was that troublesome events in his life were used by God to mold his character.

22:26-30 God's help for man is conditional. It is conditioned on the obedience of men to the will of God. In this way He is the Savior of His people who are in trouble, but an obstacle to those who are rebellious. He is a lamp for direction only to those who follow after His commandments.

22:31-35 God is the strength and power of the one who has given himself to the direction of His word. One's way

is perfect, or complete, when he follows the perfect, or complete will of God.

22:36-46 In this historical context, David gave all credit to God for his victories in wars against those who opposed him. He knew that he was the anointed king of Israel, and thus any who would oppose him were working against the will of God. Even if people schemed against God's anointed, their schemes would be brought to naught simply because of the obedience of God's anointed. As long as the anointed walked in the ways of God, God would walk with him and work for him.

22:47-51 David ends this song with praise of God and prayer for His continued help. David realized that he retained his kingship only because it was God working to preserve His anointed. He realized that his own sovereignty over the nation of Israel rested in the authority of God. His kingship was the desire of the people that was accommodated by the anointing of God.

Chapter 23

FINAL WORDS OF DAVID

23:1-7 These were the last inspired words of David, the sweet psalmist of Israel. His inspired psalms are recorded in the book of Psalms. *The Spirit of God spoke by me:* David said that "*the Spirit of the Lord spoke by me, and His word was on my tongue.*" The Spirit here spoke words by use of David's mouth. He did the same by all the inspired prophets (See Is 1:1,2; Ps 95:7-10). Jesus said of David, "*For David himself said by the Holy Spirit ...*" (Mk 12:36). When the

prophet spoke by inspiration, therefore, it was the Spirit speaking. Peter defined it thus, "... *the Holy Spirit spoke before by the mouth of David ...*" (At 1:16). In the same way "*the Holy Spirit spoke rightly through Isaiah ...*" (At 28:25). When an Old Testament prophet is quoted in the New Testament, it is often stated, "*as the Holy Spirit says ...*" (See Hb 3:7). Credit is given to the Spirit for the speaking. **He who rules:** The king who is anointed by God must rule with justice and fear of God. **Morning without clouds:** Those who rule nations determine the morals of the nation. The citizens behave according to their chiefs, presidents and kings. In his life, David confessed that he had fallen short of the moral platitude that God expected. **Everlasting covenant:** The covenant was steadfast in that God would bring about the promises that He made when He established the covenant with Israel (See Is 55:3; At 13:34). In contrast, those who live in rebellion against God will find their certain punishment in the fire of hell (See Mt 25:41).

DAVID'S MIGHTY MEN

23:8-23 The list of mighty men here is also found in 1 Ch 11:11-25. There are some variations in spelling between the two texts, which we would attribute to the time of writing between this account and the writing of the Chronicles that was possibly in the middle of the 5th century B.C. Since language and pronunciation change, the names of this list changed from the time 2 Samuel and the

Chronicles were written. **Mighty men:** These were the men who were loyal to the anointing of David as king of Israel. The record of these men here is a memorial to their success in bringing David to the throne of Israel, as well as maintaining his reign. The record of these men teaches that the foundation upon which any king would reign is the bravery and loyalty of those who follow him. There would have been no King David of Israel if it were not for the men listed here who loyally stood behind him as the anointed of God. Their loyalty to the anointed king, therefore, affected history because of David's effect on history.

LEGION OF HONOR

23:24-39 We would assume that these men changed throughout the 40-year reign of David, thus explaining why there are some differences between this list and the one presented in 1 Ch 11:26-47. This special legion of honorable men brought David to the throne of Israel. Throughout his reign, men as these sustained his reign. The strength of men as this certainly intimidate those who would rebel against David. Their strength thus maintained peace. This record was also for those throughout the history of Israel who would follow the example of these heroes. It was necessary that the nation of Israel have a record of her heroes. The preservation of Israel depended on those who would in the future follow the bravery of those who sustained the reign of David.

Chapter 24

THE SIN OF THE CENSUS

24:1-9 *The anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel:* When this statement is made in Scripture, dire consequences result from the sin that is committed. *He moved David against them:* The difficulty in understanding this verse and what happened in this context, is in determining the antecedent of the pronoun "he." If reference were to David, then the verse would be saying that God moved David to do that which was sinful in order that He might have an occasion to punish Israel for some sin that is not mentioned. However, 1 Chronicles 21:1 would probably be the commentary on the statement that is made here. "*Now Satan stood up against Israel, and moved David to number Israel.*" The two statements together would mean that God allowed Satan to tempt David as He allowed Satan to tempt Job (See Jb 1). *Number Israel:* We would assume that the numbering was a manifestation of a lack of faith in the protecting hand of God. It could have been that this occurred at a spiritually low point in David's life, and thus God sought to teach all Israel that her strength was not in the might of her army, but in the work of God through her army. It seems that Israel had forgotten the days when God worked through Israel's army to conquer the land of Palestine. The numbering of the army, therefore, was an insult to the omnipotence of God's work through the army of

Israel. *Dan even to Beersheba:* See Jg 20:1; 1 Sm 3:20; 2 Sm 3:20; 17:11. *The king's word prevailed:* The numbering was evidently the plan of David alone, not Joab or the captains of the army who disagreed with the numbering.

24:10-17 *David's heart troubled him:* David came to his spiritual senses. In this case, it was he who first confessed his sin, not God who approached him as He did through Nathan. Consequences had to be suffered for the sin. David had a choice. Israel could endure seven years of famine. David could endure three months as a fugitive. Or, Israel could suffer three days of pestilence. Since David desired to fall into the hands of the Lord, and not man, he chose the pestilence. The result was the death of 70,000 people. The plague was checked only when it reached Jerusalem at the threshing floor of Araunah, the Jebusite.

20:18-25 *Altar to the Lord:* David purchased from Araunah the place where the plague was stopped. This was the site on which he built an altar of remembrance to the Lord. The altar was David's thanksgiving to God for sparing the nation. *Fifty shekels:* This price was the price of the site, plus the oxen and instruments of the threshing floor. The 600 shekels mentioned in 1 Chronicles 21:25 would have been the price for the entire surrounding area, for it was upon this entire site that the temple was eventually built.