

2 SAMUEL

Conversational Yahveh Covenant

David Learns of Saul's Death

1:¹After Saul died, David came back from massacring the Amalekites and stayed two days in Ziklag. **2**The third day, a man came from Saul's camp with torn clothes and dust on his head, and prostrated himself to David.

3David said, “*Where have you come from?*”

“*I've escaped from Israel's camp.*”

4“*How did things go?*”

“*They've fled from the battle; many have fallen. Saul and his sons Jonathan are dead.*”

5“*How do you know?*”

6“*I happened to be on Mount Gilboa, and Saul was leaning on his spear. The chariots and cavalry were coping up on him. 7When he looked back, he called out to me, 8“Who are you?”*

‘*I'm an Amalekite.*’

9He begged me, ‘*Please finish me off. I'm in agony; my life lingers on.*’

10“*So I stood beside him and killed him. I knew he couldn't live. I took the crown off his head and the armband from his arm and brought them to you.*”

2 Sam 1:1-10

11David and his men tore their clothes. **12**They mourned and cried and fasted till evening for Saul, Jonathan, Yahveh's people, and for Israel, because they'd fallen by the sword.

13David asked the young man, “*Where are you from?*”

“*I'm the son of a foreigner, an Amalekite.*”

14David said, “*How is it you weren't afraid to destroy Yahveh's anointed?*”

He called one of the young men, “*Cut him own.*”

So he struck him down.

16David told him, “Your blood is on your own head. You testified against yourself that you killed Yahveh's anointed.” **17**David chanted this dirge over Saul and Jonathan. **18**He told them to teach Judah *The Song of the Bow*; The Book of Jashar records it.

2 Sam 1:11-18

David's Lament for Saul and Jonathan

19“Your beauty, Israel, is slain on your high places!

How the strong have fallen!

20Don't tell it in Gath

or announce it in the streets of Ashkelon;
the Philistines would celebrate;

the uncircumcised would be elated.

21 Mountains of Gilboa,

may there be no dew on you

or fields to produce offerings,

because the shield of strong men was defiled there,

Saul's shield, not anointed with oil.

22 From the blood of the slain, from the fat of the strong,

Jonathan's bow didn't retreat;

Saul's sword didn't come back empty.

2 Sam 1:19-22

23 Saul and Jonathan, beloved and pleasant in life,

died together.

They were faster than eagles,

stronger than lions.

24 Young women of Israel, mourn for Saul

who dressed you luxuriously in scarlet,

who put gold sequins on your clothes.

25 How the strong have fallen in battle!

Jonathan, slain on your high places.

26 I'm distressed over you, Jonathan my brother;

you were so pleasant to me.

Your love for me was more wonderful

than the love of women.

27 How the powerful have fallen,

and the weapons of war have perished!

2 Sam 1:23-27

David Anointed King of Judah

2:1 Afterward David asked Yahveh, "Should I go up to one of the towns in Judah?"

"Go on up."

Where?"

"To Hebron."

2 David and his two wives went there. **3** He brought his men up with their families, and they lived in towns around Hebron. **4** Then the people in Judah came and anointed him king over Judah.

They told him, "The men in Jabesh-gilead have buried Saul."

5 David sent them messengers,

"Yahveh bless you; you've been kind to Saul your lord and buried him.

6 May Yahveh show you enduring love and truth. I'll also show you goodness for

doing that. ⁷Be strong and brave. Your lord is dead, and Judah has anointed me king.”

2 Sam 2:1-7

War Between Israel and Judah

⁸But Abner, commander of Saul’s army, had taken Ish-bosheth, Saul’s son, to Mahanaim ⁹and made him king over Gilead, the Ashurites, Jezreel, Ephraim, Benjamin—all Israel. ¹⁰Ish-bosheth was 40 and ruled for 2 years, but Judah followed David. ¹¹For 7½ years he ruled Judah from Hebron.

¹²Abner went from Mahanaim to Gibeon with the troops of Ish-bosheth. ¹³Joab Ben Zeruiah and David’s troops went to meet them by the pool of Gibeon. They sat on opposite sides of the pool. ¹⁴Abner told Joab, “*Let’s have the young men have a contest.*”

Joab said, “*Let them get up.*”

¹⁵They got up and went over by count, 12 for Benjamin and Ish-bosheth and 12 for David’s troops. ¹⁶Each one grabbed his opponent by the hair and thrust his sword in the other’s side, so they fell down together. So the place was called Helkath-hazzurim, in Gibeon. ¹⁷That day the battle became intense. David’s forces beat Abner and the men of Israel. **2 Sam 2:8-17**

¹⁸Zeruiah’s three sons were: Joab, Abishai, and Asahel. Asahel was as fast as a gazelle in the field. ¹⁹He kept chasing Abner and wouldn’t turn aside.

²⁰Abner glanced back, “*Is that you, Asahel?*”

“Yes.”

²¹“*Turn aside and grab one of the young men and take his spoil.*”

But Asahel wouldn’t do it.

²²Abner repeated, “*Turn aside. Why should I strike you to the ground? How could I face your brother Joab?*”

²³But he wouldn’t do it. So Abner jabbed him in the stomach with the butt of the spear, and it came out of his back. He fell there and died. Everybody that came to where he died stood still. **2 Sam 1:18-23**

²⁴But Joab and Abishai kept chasing Abner. As the sun was going down, they came to the hill of Ammah by Gath by way of the Wilderness of Gibeon. ²⁵The Benjamites gathered behind Abner, became one band, and stood on a hilltop.

²⁶He called to Joab,

“Will the sword devour forever? Don’t you know it will be bitter in the end? How long will you hold back from telling the people to quit chasing their brothers?

²⁷Joab said,

“As God lives, if you hadn’t said something, the people would have gone away in the morning, each from following his brother.”

²⁸Joab blew the ram's horn, and the people quit chasing Israel and fighting. ²⁹Abner and his men went through the Arabah all night, crossed the Jordan, and walked all morning to Mahanaim."

³⁰Joab came back from chasing Abner. When he'd gathered the people, 19 of David's troops besides Asahel were missing. ³¹But David's troops had struck down 360 of Benjamin and Abner's men. ³²They picked up Asahel and buried him in his father's tomb in Bethlehem. Then Joab and his men traveled all night till dawn in Hebron.

2 Sam 2:24-32

3:1A long war had gone on between Saul and David. David had grown stronger; Saul had grown weaker.

²David had six sons in Hebron: Amnon his oldest by Ahinoam of Jezreel, ³Chileab second by Abigail, the widow of Nabal of Carmel; Absalom third by Maacah Bat-Tahmai, king of Geshur; ⁴ Adonijah fourth by Haggith, Shephatiah fifth by Abital, ⁵and Ithream sixth by Eglah.

Abner Joins David

⁶During the war between Saul and David, Abner was making himself stronger in Saul's house. ⁷Saul had a concubine named Rizpah Bat-Aiah. Ish-bosheth said, "Why have you had relations with my father's concubine?" ⁸That made Abner mad,

"Am I a dog's head that belongs to Judah? I've been kind to your father's family, to his brothers and friends, and haven't delivered you to David. Yet you charge me with guilt over this woman. ⁹God do so to me and more if, since Yahveh has sworn to David, I don't ¹⁰transfer the kingdom from Saul to David to rule Israel and Judah from Dan to Beersheba."

¹¹He couldn't talk to Abner anymore; he was afraid of him.

2 Sam 3:1-11

¹²Abner sent messengers to David, "Who does the land belong to? Make a treaty with me, and I'll bring Israel over to you."

¹³He said, "Okay! I'll make a treaty with you, but I demand one thing: you won't see me unless you bring Michal, Saul's daughter, when you come." ¹⁴David sent messengers to Ish-bosheth, "Give me my wife Michal that I was engaged to for 100 Philistine foreskins." ¹⁵Ish-bosheth sent and took her from her husband Paltiel Ben-Laish. ¹⁶But her husband went crying as he followed her as far as Bahurim. Then Abner said, "Go back"; so he did.

¹⁷Abner contacted the elders in Israel,

"Before, you were looking for David to be your king. ¹⁸Now do it! Yahveh has said, 'By my servant David I'll save my people from the Philistines and their other enemies.'"

¹⁹Abner talked to the Benjamites and went to tell David in Hebron everything that seemed good to Israel and the House of Benjamin. 2 Sam 3:12-19

²⁰He and 20 men came to David in Hebron, and David held a feast for them. ²¹Abner said, “*Let me gather Israel to you so you’ll rule everything you desire.*” David sent him away on good terms.

Joab Murders Abner

²²Some of David’s troops and Joab came from a raid and brought lots of spoil, but Abner wasn’t with David in Hebron, because he’d sent him away on good terms. ²³When Joab and the part of the army that was with him arrived, they told Joab, “*Abner came to the king, and he sent him away on good terms.*”

²⁴Joab came to the king and said,

“*What have you done? Abner came to you. Why send him away already?*”

²⁵*You ought to know he came to deceive you and to find out about your routine and what you’re doing.”*

²⁶When Joab came out from David, he sent messengers after Abner. They brought him back from the well at Sirah without David knowing it. ²⁷When Abner came back to Hebron, Joab took him aside to the middle of the gate to talk privately. He struck Abner in the stomach, and he died because he’d killed Joab’s brother Asahel. ²⁸When David heard it, he said,

“*In Yahweh’s presence, my kingdom and I are not guilty of Abner’s blood.*”

²⁹*May that fall on Joab and his father’s family. May every one of them have running sores or leprosy, use crutches, die by the sword, or go hungry.”*

³⁰Joab and Abishai killed Abner because he’d killed their brother Asahel in the skirmish at Gibeon. 2 Sam 3:20-30

³¹David told Joab and everybody there, “*Tear your clothes and put on burlap; lament over Abner.*” King David walked behind the bier. ³²They buried Abner in Hebron, and the king wailed at his grave and the people cried. ³³He chanted a lament for Abner,

“*Should Abner die like a fool?*”

³⁴*Your hands were not bound or your feet in stocks; you’ve been murdered by wicked men.”*

The people cried for him again. ³⁵They came to persuade David to eat while it was still daylight, but David vowed, “*God do so to me and more if I taste anything before sunset.*” ³⁶The people noticed, and it pleased them like everything he did. ³⁷They and all Israel understood that it hadn’t been the king’s idea to kill Abner. ³⁸He told his officials,

“*Don’t you know that a prince, a great man, has fallen in Israel today?*”

³⁹*Even though I’m anointed as king, these sons of Zeruiah are too much for me. Yahweh repay the evildoer according to his evil deed!”* 2 Sam 3:31-39

Ish-Bosheth Murdered

4:1When Ish-bosheth heard that Abner had died in Hebron, his courage failed, and Israel lost courage too. **2**Saul's son had two men that were commanding raiding bands: Baanah and Rechab, sons of Rimmon, a Benjamite from Beeroth (considered part of Benjamin). **3**The people of Beeroth fled to Gittaim and still live there as foreigners.

4Jonathan had a son Mephibosheth that was lame in both feet. He was five when the news about Saul and Jonathan arrived from Jezreel. His nurse picked him up and fled. As she hurried, he fell and became lame.

2 Sam 4:1-4

5Baanah and Rechab left and arrived at Ish-bosheth's house about noon while he was resting. **6LXX**The doorkeeper had been cleaning wheat, but she got drowsy and nodded off. Rechab and Baanah slipped in,⁷ struck him and killed him in bed, and cut off his head. They took his head and went by way of the Arabah all night. **8**They brought it to David in Hebron, "Here's the head of Ish-bosheth, who was trying to kill you. Yahveh has avenged you on Saul and his offspring today." **9**But David answered them,

"As sure as Yahveh lives who has redeemed me from every adversity,
10when a man told me Saul was dead and thought he was bringing me good news,
I seized him and executed him at Ziklag. That's the reward I gave him for his news! **11**How much more when bad men kill a good man in his own house in bed!
Won't I require his blood from you now and destroy you from the earth?"

12David commanded his young men to kill them. They cut off their hands and feet, and hung them beside the pool in Hebron. But they buried Ish-bosheth's head in Abner's tomb in Hebron.

2 Sam 4:5-12

David Becomes King of Israel

5:1All the tribes came to David in Hebron and said,

"We're your flesh and bones. **2**When Saul was king, you were the one that led Israel out and back. Yahveh told you you'd shepherd his people."

3Israel's elders came, and King David made a treaty with them in Yahveh's presence. They anointed him king over Israel. **4**David was 30 and ruled for 40 years. **5**He ruled Judah for 7½ years in Hebron and ruled Judah and Israel for 33 years in Jerusalem.

David Conquers Jerusalem

6The king and his men went to Jerusalem against the Jebusites. They told David. "You won't get in here. The blind and lame will stop you." They thought he couldn't do it,⁷but he captured the Zion fortress, The City of David. **8**He said that day, "Whoever strikes the Jebusites, reach 'the lame and blind' [that David hated] through the water tunnel." That's why people say, "The blind and lame' won't get into the house." **9**David lived in the fortress and named it

The City of David [*Ir-David*]. He built all around from the Millo inward. ¹⁰He kept getting greater because Yahveh God of Hosts was with him.

2 Sam 5:1-10

¹¹Then Hiram, king of Tyre, sent ambassadors to David with cedar timber, carpenters, and stonemasons to build him a palace. ¹²He realized that Yahveh had established him as king and that he'd honored his kingdom for Israel's sake.

¹³Meantime, David took more concubines and wives from Jerusalem after he came from Hebron and had more sons and daughters. ¹⁴The ones born in Jerusalem were Shammua, Shobab, Nathan, Solomon, ¹⁵Ibhar, Elishua, Nepheg, Japhia, ¹⁶Elishama, Eliada, and Eliphelet.

2 Sam 5:11-16

David Defeats the Philistines

¹⁷When the Philistines heard they'd anointed David king over Israel, they went up to look for him. He heard about it and went down to the fortress. ¹⁸The Philistines came and spread out in the Valley of Rephaim. ¹⁹David asked Yahveh, “*Should I attack the Philistines? Will you deliver them to me?*”

“Yes.”

²⁰He went to Baal-perazim and defeated them, “*Yahveh has broken through' my enemies like a flash flood*”; so he named the place Baal-perazim. ²¹*The Philistines abandoned their idols; David and his men carried them away.*

²²The Philistines came up again and spread out in the Valley of Rephaim. ²³When David asked Yahveh, he said,

“Don't go up directly. Circle around behind them and come at them by the balsam trees. ²⁴When you hear marching in the balsam treetops, act immediately.

I will have gone out ahead of you to strike them.”

²⁵David did that and struck them down from Geba to Gezer.

2 Sam 5:17-25

The Ark Brought to Jerusalem

^{6:1}David gathered elite troops from Israel again, 30,000. ²He and the troops went to Baale-judah to bring up God's Ark called The Name: Yahveh of Hosts Enthroned Above the Cherubs. ³They placed the Ark on a new cart to bring it from Abinadab's house that was on the hill. Uzzah and Ahio, Abinadab's sons, ⁴were bringing the Ark on the cart; Ahio was walking ahead of it. ⁵Meanwhile, David and the House of Israel were celebrating enthusiastically in Yahveh's presence with all kinds of instruments made out of fir: lyres, harps, tambourines, castanets, and cymbals.

⁶But when they came to Nacon's threshing floor, Uzzah grabbed the Ark because the oxen nearly upset it. ⁷Yahveh lashed out and struck him down for his disrespect. He died there by the Ark. ⁸David was mad because Yahveh had “lashed out against Uzzah.” The place is still

called Perez-uzzah.⁹David was afraid of Yahveh that day, “*How can the Ark come to me?*”¹⁰He wasn’t willing to take it to The City of David. He took it aside to the house of Obed-edom of Gath.¹¹It stayed there three months, and Yahveh blessed him and his family. 2 Sam 6:1-11

¹²King David heard that Yahveh had blessed Obed-edom’s house and everything he had because of the Ark, so he brought it to The City of David with celebration.¹³When the ones carrying the Ark had gone six steps, he sacrificed an ox and a grain-fed calf.¹⁴He was dancing in Yahveh’s presence with all his energy, wearing a linen ephod.¹⁵He and the House of Israel were bringing up the Ark with shouting and the sound of rams’ horns.¹⁶As it came into the city, Michal, Saul’s daughter, looked out the window and saw him leaping and dancing, and she despised him.¹⁷They brought the Ark and set it in its place inside the tent David pitched for it, and he offered burnt offerings and peace offerings.¹⁸When he’d finished offering them, he blessed the people in the name of Yahveh of hosts.¹⁹He passed a cake of bread, a portion of meat, and a cake of raisins to every man and woman in the crowd. Then everybody went home.

2 Sam 6:12-19

²⁰When David went back to bless his household, Michal came out,
“How Israel’s king distinguished himself today, exposing himself in front of his servant girls like a shameless fool!”

²¹He told her,

“I celebrated in front of Yahveh, who chose me over your father and his family, and appointed me to rule his people. ²²I’ll be even less dignified than this and humble in my own eyes, but I’ll be respected by the servant girls you’ve mentioned.”

²³Michal didn’t have any children the rest of her life. 2 Sam 6:20-23

God’s Promise to David

^{7:1}The king was living in his palace, and Yahveh had given him rest from his enemies.
²He told Nathan the prophet, “*I live in a cedar palace, but God’s Ark sits in tent curtains.*”

³Nathan said, “*Do everything you’re thinking; Yahveh’s with you.*”

⁴But that night a message from Yahveh came to him,

⁵*“Go tell my servant David, ‘Yahveh says, ‘Are you the one that should build me a temple? ⁶I haven’t lived in a temple since I brought Israel out of Egypt. I’ve moved around in a tent, a Tabernacle. ⁷Wherever I’ve gone with Israel, did I ever say to any judge that I commanded to shepherd my people, ‘Why haven’t you built me a cedar temple?’’”*

⁸*“Tell David, ‘I took you out of the pasture from following sheep, to make you ruler over Israel. ⁹I’ve been with you wherever you’ve gone and got rid of*

your enemies. I'll make you as famous as anyone that's ever lived in the world.

10 *I'll appoint a place to plant my people so they can live there undisturbed, and sinful people won't oppress them anymore. 11 Like when I appointed judges over them, I'll give you rest from your enemies.'*

"Yahveh also says he'll make a dynasty from you. 12-13 When you die, I'll raise up your descendant and establish his kingdom permanently. 13 He'll build me a temple. 14 I'll be his father, and he'll be my son. When he sins, I'll correct him with rods like people do. 15 But my enduring love won't leave him like it did Saul, that I removed before you. 16 Your family and kingdom will endure. I'll establish your dynasty permanently."

2 Sam 7:1-16

17 Nathan told David those things about the vision.

David's Prayer

18 David went in and sat in Yahveh's presence,

"Who am I, Lord Yahveh, and what's my family that you've brought me this far? 19 Yet it wasn't a great thing to you, because you've also talked about my family far into the future according to human custom. 20 What more can I tell you? You know me, Lord Yahveh! 21 For your word and according to your heart, you've shown how great you are in letting me know. 22 That's why you're great. There's nobody like you, no God besides you that we've heard of. 23 What nation is like Israel that you went to redeem for yourself, to make a name for yourself, to do a great thing for yourself and awesome things for your land, in front of the people you've redeemed from Egypt, from nations and their gods? 24 You've established your people forever and become their God. 25 So confirm forever what you've said about me and my family. Do it 26 so you can be honored forever by saying, 'Yahveh of Hosts is Israel's God.' 27 You've revealed to me that you'll build me into a dynasty; so I've found the courage to offer this prayer. 28 You're God, your words are true, your promise is good. 29 Bless my family so it can continue permanently like you've said."

2 Sam 7:17-29

David's Victories

8:1 After that, David defeated the Philistines and took Methgammah.

2 He defeated Moab and counted them off in lines and made them lie down on the ground. Two lines he counted off to be put to death, and one line he let live. The Moabites served him and brought tribute.

³David also defeated Hadadezer Ben-Rehob, king of Zobah, as he went to restore his power at the *Euphrates* River. ⁴He took 1,700 cavalry and 20,000 infantry. He hamstrung the chariot horses but left enough for 100 chariots.

⁵When the Arameans from Damascus came to help Hadadezer, David killed 22,000 of them ⁶and put garrisons around Damascus, the Aramean capital. The Arameans served him and paid tribute money. ⁷The gold shields that Hadadezer's officers carried, he took to Jerusalem. ⁸He took a large store of bronze from Betah and Berothai, towns that belonged to Hadadezer.

2 Sam 8:1-8

⁹Toi/*Tou*, king of Hamath, heard that David had defeated Hadadezer's whole army. ¹⁰He sent his son Joram to greet him and congratulate him. *Hadadezer* had fought several wars with Toi/*Tou*. Joram brought articles made out of silver, gold, and bronze. ¹¹David dedicated them to Yahveh together with the silver and gold from the nations he subdued: ¹²Aram, Moab, the Ammonites, the Philistines, Amalek, along with the spoils from Hadadezer.

¹³David's reputation kept growing. When he came back, he killed 18,000 Edomites in the Valley of Salt. ¹⁴He put garrisons all over Edom, and the Edomites served him. Yahveh gave him victory wherever he went.

David's Officials

¹⁵David ruled Israel and administered justice fairly to his people.

¹⁶Joab Ben-Zeruiah was general over the army;

Jehoshaphat Ben-Ahilud was recorder;

¹⁷Zadok Ben-Ahitub and Ahimelech Ben-Abiathar were priests;

Seraiah was secretary;

¹⁸Benaiah Ben-Jehoiada was captain of David's bodyguard;

David's sons were chief administrators.

2 Sam 8:9-18

David's Kindness to Mephibosheth

^{9:1}Then David asked if anybody was left from Saul's house that he could show kindness out of regard for Jonathan. ²There was a servant named Ziba. They called him to David, and the king said, "You are Ziba?"

"I'm your servant."

³"Is anybody left in Saul's family I can show God's kindness?"

"There's still a son of Jonathan that's crippled in both feet."

⁴"Where is he?"

"In the house of Machir Ben-Ammiel in Lo-debar."

⁵David had him brought in. ⁶He came and prostrated himself.

David said, “*Mephibosheth,⁷ you don’t have to be afraid. I’ll treat you well out of regard for your father Jonathan, and give you back the land that belonged to your grandfather Saul; you’ll eat at my table regularly.*”

2 Sam 9:1-7

⁸Again he prostrated himself and said, “*What am I that you should care about a dead dog like me?*”

⁹The king called Ziba,

“*I’ve given your master’s grandson what belonged to Saul and his family.¹⁰ You, your sons, and servants can cultivate his land for him and bring in the crops and produce so he has food, but he’ll eat regularly at my table.*”

Ziba had 15 sons and 20 servants. ¹¹⁻¹³He told the king he’d do it. Mephibosheth lived in Jerusalem and ate regularly at David’s table like one of his sons. (Mephibosheth had a young son Mica.) Everybody in Ziba’s family was Mephibosheth’s servant.

2 Sam 9:8-13

David Defeats the Ammonites

10:¹The king of the Ammonites died, and his son Hanun became king. ²David said, “*I’ll be kind to Hanun Ben-Nahash like his father was kind to me.*” David sent some ambassadors to console him about his father. But when they got there, ³the Ammonite officials said to Hanun, “*Do you think David is honoring your father because he sent consolers? Hasn’t he sent them to look over the city, spy it out, and overthrow it?*” ⁴Hanun took David’s ambassadors and shaved off half their beards, cut off their cloaks as high as their hips, and sent them away. ⁵When David found out, he sent to meet them because they were really humiliated. He told *them* to stay at Jericho till their beards grew, and then come back.

⁶When the Ammonites saw they’d become repugnant to David, they hired the Arameans from Beth-rehab and Zobah with 20,000 foot soldiers, and the king of Maacah with 1,000 men, and the men of Tob with 12,000 men. ⁷David heard about it, and sent Joab and the whole army, the powerful men. ⁸The Ammonites came out and drew up in battle formation at the entrance to the city. The Arameans of Zobah and Rehob and the men of Tob and Maacah were by themselves in the field.

2 Sam 10:1-8

⁹When Joab saw he’d have to fight in front and in back, he selected elite men from Israel and deployed them against the Arameans. ¹⁰The rest he put under the command of his brother Abishai against the Ammonites,

¹¹“*If the Arameans are too strong for me, come and help me. If the Ammonites are too strong for you, I’ll come help you.*” ¹²*Let’s be strong and courageous for our people and the towns of our God. May Yahveh do what seems good to him.*”

¹³Joab and his people advanced against the Arameans, and they ran. ¹⁴When the Ammonites saw them flee, they retreated into the city. Then Joab came back from fighting Ammon’s descendants and went to Jerusalem.

2 Sam 10:9-14

¹⁵When the Arameans saw that Israel had defeated them, they gathered together. ¹⁶Hadadezer brought out the Arameans beyond the River and came to Helam. Shobach, commander of Hadadezer's army, led them. ¹⁷David found out and gathered all Israel and crossed the Jordan to Helam. The Arameans put themselves in battle formation, ¹⁸but they fled from Israel. David killed 700 charioteers, 40,000 cavalry, and struck down Shobach; he died there. ¹⁹When the kings, Hadadezer's allies, saw Israel had defeated them, they surrendered and served Israel. The Arameans were afraid to help the Ammonites anymore. 2 Sam 10:15-19

David and Bathsheba

¹¹In the spring when kings normally go to war, David sent Joab and Israel's army to fight the Ammonites and lay siege to Rabbah. David stayed in Jerusalem.

²When evening came, David got up from his bed and walked around on the roof of his palace. From the roof he saw a woman taking a bath; she was beautiful. ³David sent and asked about her. Someone said, "*Isn't this Bathsheba Bat-Eliam, wife of Uriah the Hittite?*" ⁴David sent messengers and took her. When she came to him, he slept with her. When she'd purified herself, she went home. ⁵She got pregnant and sent and told David. 2 Sam 11:1-5

⁶He sent to Joab, "*Send me Uriah the Hittite.*" ⁷When he came, David asked how Joab and the people were doing and how the war was going. ⁸Then he told him, "*Go down to your house and wash your feet.*" He left the king's palace, and a present was sent after him. ⁹But Uriah slept at the door of the king's palace with David's palace guard and didn't go home. ¹⁰When they told David, "*Uriah didn't go home,*" he asked Uriah, "*Haven't you come from a journey? Why didn't you go home?*"

¹¹He said,

"The Ark, Israel, and Judah are staying in temporary shelters, and my commander Joab and his troops are camping in the open field. Would I go eat and drink and be with my wife? By your life and the life of your soul, I wouldn't do that."

¹²David told him, "*Stay here today; I'll let you go tomorrow.*"

Uriah stayed in Jerusalem that day and the next. ¹³David called him; he ate and drank with him and got him drunk. In the evening he went out to sleep on his bed with David's palace guard and didn't go home. 2 Sam 11:6-13

¹⁴In the morning, David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it with Uriah, ¹⁵*"Put Uriah in the front of the fiercest battle and withdraw from him so he can be struck down."* ¹⁶As Joab kept watch on the city, he put Uriah where he knew there were trained soldiers. ¹⁷Men came out of the city to fight, and some of David's soldiers fell, including Uriah. ¹⁸Joab sent a report to David about the war ¹⁹and charged the messenger,

"When you've told the king everything,²⁰ if he's angry and says, 'Why get so close to the city to fight? Didn't you know they'd shoot from the wall?'²¹ Who struck down Abimelech Ben-Jerubbesheth? Wasn't it a woman that threw an upper millstone on him from the wall and he died at Thebez? Why get so close to the wall?'—then say, 'Uriah the Hittite is dead too.'"

²²The messenger reported,

"The men prevailed against us and came out against us in the field, but we pressed them up to the entrance of the gate.²⁴ The archers shot from the wall and killed some of your soldiers, including Uriah."

²⁵David said,

"Tell Joab, 'Don't let this get you down. The sword takes one as well as another. Intensify your battle against the city and overthrow it.' Encourage him that way."

²⁶When Uriah's wife heard he was dead, she mourned for him. ²⁷When the time for mourning ended, David had her brought to his house; she became his wife and had a son. But what David had done Yahveh considered evil.

2 Sam 11:14-27

Nathan Rebukes David

12:1Then Yahveh sent Nathan to David to say,

"Two men were in a town, one rich, the other poor. ²The rich man had lots of flocks and herds,³ but the poor man had nothing but one little ewe lamb that he'd bought and raised. It grew up with him and his children; it used to eat his bread and drink from his cup and lie in his lap; it was like a daughter to him. ⁴A traveler came to the rich man, and he wasn't willing to take one of his own flock or herd to fix a meal for him. He took the poor man's lamb and fixed it."

David was mad and swore to Nathan, "As sure as Yahveh lives, that man deserves to die. ⁶He'll restore the lamb fourfold because he did that without mercy."

2 Sam 12:1-6

⁷Nathan told David,

"You're that man.

"This is what Yahveh God of Israel, says, 'I anointed you king, and delivered you from Saul. ⁸I gave you your master's family, his wives, and Israel and Judah. If that wasn't enough, I would have doubled it. ⁹Why have you despised my message and done what I consider evil? You've killed Uriah with the Ammonites' sword and took his wife to be your wife. ¹⁰The sword will never leave your family because you've despised me by taking her. ¹¹I'll raise up evil against you in your own family. I'll take your wives in your presence and give them to your neighbor. He'll lie with them in broad daylight. ¹²You did it secretly, but I'll do it in front of all Israel right out in the sun.'"

¹³David said, “I’ve sinned against Yahveh.”

Nathan said, “Yahveh has set your sin aside; you won’t die. ¹⁴But by doing this, you’ve completely scorned him. The child will die.”

¹⁵Nathan left.

2 Sam 12:7-15a

Yahveh struck the child, and it got sick. ¹⁶David asked God for the child and fasted. He went in and lay all night on the floor. ¹⁷The elders in his palace stood beside him, trying to get him up off the floor. But he wouldn’t *get up* and didn’t eat with them. ¹⁸The seventh day, the baby died. David’s advisors were afraid to tell him. They said, “*While the child was still alive, we talked to him, and he didn’t listen. How can we tell him the child has died? He may harm himself.*” ¹⁹But when he saw them whispering, he sensed that the child had died, “*Is he dead?*”

“Yes.”

²⁰Then David got up off the floor, took a bath, anointed himself, and changed clothes. He went to Yahveh’s Tabernacle and worshiped and went home. When he asked, they gave him some food and he ate. ²¹His advisors said, “*What have you done? You fasted and cried about the child while he was alive; but when he died, you got up and ate.*”

²²He said,

“*While he was still alive, I fasted and cried because I didn’t know if Yahveh would be gracious to me and let it live. 23But now that he’s dead, why fast? Can I bring him back? He won’t come back to me, but I’ll go to him.*”

²⁴Then David comforted his wife Bathsheba and had relations with her. She had a son he named Solomon. Yahveh loved him ²⁵and sent word through Nathan the prophet to name him Jedidiah [Beloved of Yah] for Yahveh’s sake.

2 Sam 12:15b-25

²⁶Joab fought the Ammonites in Rabbah and captured the royal city. ²⁷He sent messengers to David,

“*I’ve attacked Rabbah and seized the city’s water supply. 28Gather the rest of the army and capture the city so I won’t, and people name it after me.*”

²⁹David gathered the rest of the army, went to Rabbah, and captured it. ³⁰He took their king’s crown off his head. It weighed 75½ lbs ^{one talent} of gold and was set with precious stones. They put it on David’s head. He brought large amounts of spoil out of the city. ³¹He also brought out its people, and put them under saws, iron picks and axes; and made them pass through the brick kilns. That’s what he did to all the Ammonite towns. Then he and the whole army went back to Jerusalem.

2 Sam 12:26-31

Amnon and Tamar

^{13:1}David’s son Absalom had a beautiful sister named Tamar, and David’s son Ammon was in love with her. ²Amnon was so frustrated because of his sister that he made himself ill,

because she was a virgin and it seemed hard to do anything to her.³ But Amnon had a friend Jonadab Ben-Shimeah, David's brother, and Jonadab was a shrewd fellow.

⁴He said to him, “Son of the king, why are you so depressed morning after morning? Won't you tell me?

Amnon said, “I'm in love with Tamar, the sister of my half-brother Absalom.”

⁵Jonadab said, “Lie down on your bed and act like you're sick. When your father comes to see you, say to him, 'Let my sister come and give me something to eat, and let her fix the food so I can see it and she can hand it to me.'

⁶Amnon lay down and pretended to be ill. When the king went to see him, Amnon said, “Please let my sister Tamar come and make me a couple cakes.”

2 Sam 13:1-6

⁷David sent for Tamar, and said, “Go to your brother Amnon's house and fix him some food.”⁸ So Tamar went to his house, and he was lying down. She took dough, kneaded it, made cakes while he watched, and baked the cakes.⁹ She took the pan and dished them out for him, but he refused to eat. He said, “Have everybody leave me.” So everybody left.

¹⁰Amnon said, “Bring the food into the bedroom so you can give it to me to eat.”

Tamar took the cakes and brought them into his bedroom.

¹¹When she brought them to him, he took hold of her and said, “Come, lie with me.”

¹²She answered him,

“No, don't violate me! Such a thing is not done in Israel. Don't do this awful thing!¹³ Where could I get rid of my disgrace? And you'll be like one of the fools in Israel. Please speak to the king. He won't withhold me from you.”

¹⁴But he wouldn't listen to her. Since he was stronger than she was, he violated her and lay with her.

2 Sam 13:7-14

¹⁵Then Amnon hated her more than he'd loved her. He told her, “Get up, go away!”

¹⁶She told him, “No! Sending me away is worse than the other sin you've done to me!”

But he wouldn't listen to her.¹⁷ He called the young man that attended him and said, “Throw this woman out and lock the door behind her.”¹⁸ She was wearing a long-sleeved robe, because that's the way the king's virgin daughters dressed in robes. His attendant took her out and locked the door behind her.¹⁹ Tamar put ashes on her head and tore her long-sleeved garment. She put her hand on her head and went away, wailing as she went.

²⁰Then Absalom asked her, “Has Amnon been with you? Keep quiet for now, my sister, he's your brother. Don't take this matter to heart.” Tamar stayed as a desolate woman in her brother's house.²¹ When King David heard about this, he was angry.²² Absalom wouldn't speak to Amnon because of what he'd done to his sister.

2 Sam 13:15-22

Absalom Kills Amnon

²³Two years later Absalom had sheepshearers in Baal-hazor near Ephraim and invited all the royal sons. ²⁴He went to the king and said, “*I have sheep-shearers. You and your officials go with me.*”

²⁵“*No, son, we shouldn’t all go. We’d be a burden to you.*”

²⁶“*If not, let my half-brother Amnon go with us.*”

“*Why?*”

²⁷But when Absalom kept urging him, he let Amnon and the king’s sons go with him.

²⁸Absalom told his men,

“When Amnon is half drunk with wine and I say, ‘Strike him down,’ put him to death. Don’t be afraid. Haven’t I commanded you? Be courageous and brave.”

²⁹Absalom’s men did what he said, and the king’s sons got on their mules and fled.

2 Sam 13:23-29

³⁰While they were on their way, the report came to David, “*Absalom struck down your sons; there’s not a one left.*” ³¹The king got up, tore his clothes, and lay down on the ground. His servants stood by him with torn clothes. ³²Jonadab, son of David’s brother Shimeah, answered,

“Don’t suppose they’ve killed all your sons—just Amnon. Absalom has intended to do that ever since Ammon violated his sister Tamar.” [33]

³⁴Absalom had fled. The young man that was the watchman looked up and saw many people coming from the road behind him beside the mountain. ³⁵Jonadab told the king, “*Your sons are here. It’s what I said would happen.*” ³⁶As soon as he’d finished talking, the king’s sons came and cried out loud. The king and his servants also cried bitterly.

³⁷⁻³⁸Absalom fled to Talmai Ben-Ammihud, king of Geshur, for 3 years. David mourned for him every day. ³⁹He really wanted to go out to Absalom, because he was at peace over Amnon, since he was dead.

2 Sam 13:30-39

Absalom Returns to Jerusalem

^{14:1}Joab sensed that the king yearned for Absalom. ²So he sent to Tekoa and brought a wise woman, and told her,

“Act like you’re in mourning. Put on mourning clothes, don’t anoint yourself with oil. Act like a woman that’s been mourning for the dead for many days. ³Then go to the king and say such and such.”

⁴When she spoke to the king, she fell on her face and said, “*Help me, my king.*”

⁵“*What’s your trouble?*”

“I’m a widow; my husband’s dead. ⁶I had two sons, but they quarreled in the field, and no one was there to separate them. One struck the other and killed him. ⁷Now the whole family has risen up and told me to hand over the one that

struck his brother so they can put him to death for the life of his brother, and destroy the heir too. They'll put out my ember that's left and won't leave my husband a name or a remnant."

8 "Go on home. I'll give orders about you."

2 Sam 14:1-8

9 The woman said, "My lord, the sin is on me and my father's family. You and your throne are innocent."

10 He said, "Bring me whoever says anything. He won't bother you again."

11 She said, "Invoke Yahveh your God so the avenger won't destroy my son."

"As sure as Yahveh lives, not one of his hairs will fall to the ground." **2 Sam 14:9-11**

12 Then she said, "Let me say something."

"Go ahead."

13 "Why plan such a thing then against God's people? In saying this, you've convicted yourself for not bringing back the one you've banished. **14** We'll die like water spilled on the ground that can't be retrieved. Yet God doesn't take away life but plans ways to bring back the one he banishes. **15** I've come to you because the people have made me afraid. I thought, 'I'll speak to the king. Maybe he'll do what I ask. **16** He'll deliver me from the man that would destroy me and my son from God's inheritance.' **17** Then I thought, 'My lord's word will comfort me, because he's like an angel of God in discerning good and bad.' Yahveh your God be with you."

18 He answered, "Don't hide anything I'm about to ask you. **19** Is Joab involved in this with you?"

"As sure as you're alive, nobody can stray away from anything you've said. Joab told me to say that. **20** He did it to change how things are going. But you are wise, like an angel of God. You know what's going on in the world."

21 The king told Joab, "I'll do it. Bring him back."

22 Joab fell on his face and blessed him. "I know you're pleased with me today. You've done what I asked."

23 Joab went to Geshur and brought Absalom to Jerusalem. **24** But the king said, "Have him come back to his own house without seeing me." He came back without seeing David.

2 Sam 14:12-24

25 In all Israel there wasn't anybody as handsome as Absalom—so highly praised. There wasn't a flaw in him from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot. **26** When he cut his hair (at the end of every year because it was so thick), he weighed it at 5 lbs ²⁰⁰ shekels, royal standard. **27** He had three sons and one daughter, Tamar, a beautiful woman.

²⁸Absalom lived in Jerusalem for two years without seeing the king. ²⁹Then he sent for Joab so he could send him to the king, but Joab wouldn't come. He sent again and he wouldn't come. ³⁰Absalom told his servants, "Joab's barley field is next to mine. Set it on fire."

³¹Joab went to Absalom's house and asked, "Why did your servants burn my field?"

³²"I sent for you so I could send you to ask the king why I've come back from Geshur. It'd be better for me to still be there. Let me see him. If I've sinned, he can put me to death."

³³When Joab went to the king and told him, he called for Absalom. He came and prostrated himself, and the king kissed him.

2 Sam 14:25-33

Absalom's Conspiracy

^{15:1}After that, Absalom provided himself a chariot, horses, and 50 men to run ahead of him. ²He'd get up early and stand by the road to the gate. When anybody had a suit to come to the king for judgment, Absalom would call to him and say,

"What city are you from?"

He'd say, "I'm from a tribe in Israel."

³Then Absalom would say,

"Your claims are right, but everybody with the king is ignoring you. ⁴If only somebody would appoint me judge in the land, everyone that has a suit could come to me for justice."

⁵When somebody came near to prostrate himself before him, he'd put out his hand and take hold of him and kiss him. ⁶That's how he dealt with everyone in Israel that came to the king for judgment. He stole away the hearts of Israel.

2 Sam 15:1-6

⁷At the end of four years, Absalom said to the king,

"Let me go pay the vow I made to Yahweh in Hebron. ⁸I took a vow while I was living at Geshur in Aram that if Yahweh brought me back to Jerusalem, I'd serve him."

⁹"Go ahead."

He went to Hebron. ¹⁰But he sent spies throughout the tribes and said, "As soon as you hear the ram's horn, say, 'Absalom is king in Hebron!'" ¹¹Then 200 men went with him from Jerusalem. They went innocently, not knowing what was going on. ¹²Absalom sent for Ahithophel, David's advisor, from his city Giloh, while he was offering sacrifices. The conspiracy was growing strong; the people continually increased with Absalom.

David Flees

¹³Then a messenger came to David, "The hearts of Israel are with Absalom."

¹⁴David told his aides in Jerusalem, “*Let’s flee. Otherwise, none of us will escape from him. Hurry so he won’t overtake us right away, bring down catastrophe on us, and strike the city with the sword.*”

¹⁵The king’s aides told him, “*We’re ready to do whatever you decide.*” **2 Sam 15:7-15**

¹⁶So he and his whole house left except for 10 concubines to take care of the palace. ¹⁷He and the people with him went out and stopped at the last house. ¹⁸His aides passed on beside him, the Cherethites, Pelethites, and the men of Gath. The 600 men that had come with him from Gath passed on ahead of him.

¹⁹The king said to Ittai of Gath,

“Why go with us? Go back to King Absalom. You’re a foreigner and an exile; go back to your own place. ²⁰You just came yesterday; will I make you wander with us today while I don’t know where I’m going? Go back and take back your brothers. Mercy and truth be with you.”

²¹But Ittai answered, “*As sure as Yahveh lives and you live, I’ll be wherever you are, for life or death.*”

²²David said, “*Go on across.*”

So Ittai crossed with his people and little ones. ²³While the whole country cried out loud, the people passed over. The king and the people crossed the Kidron toward the countryside.

2 Sam 15:16-23

²⁴Zadok and the Levites with him came carrying the Ark of the covenant. They set it down, and Abiathar came up till the people had finished leaving the city. ²⁵The king told Zadok,

“Take the Ark back to the city. If I’m pleasing to Yahveh, he’ll bring me back, and show me it and his dwelling place. ²⁶But if he doesn’t delight in me, here I am. Let him do to me what seems good to him.”

²⁷He also said to Zadok,

“Aren’t you a seer? Go back to the city in peace, you and your two sons, Ahimaaz and Jonathan Ben-Abiathar. ²⁸I’ll wait at the fords in the open country till you send me word.”

²⁹Zadok and Abiathar took the Ark back to Jerusalem and stayed there. **2 Sam 15:24-29**

³⁰David went up the Mount of Olives and cried as he went. He covered his head and walked barefoot. Then the people that were with him covered their heads and went up crying as they went. ³¹Someone told David, “*Ahitophel is among the conspirators with Absalom.*”

David said, “*Yahveh, turn Ahithophel’s advice into foolishness.*” ³²As David was coming to the summit, where God was worshiped, Hushai the Archite met him with his coat torn and dust on his head. ³³David told him,

“If you pass over with me, you’ll be a burden to me. ³⁴But if you go back to the city and tell Absalom, ‘I’ll serve you, king, like I served your father,’ you

can thwart Ahithophel's advice for me. ³⁵*Whatever you hear from the king's palace, report to Zadok and Abiathar the priests.* ³⁶*Their two sons are with them, Ahimaaz, Zadok's son, and Jonathan, Abiathar's son. Use them to send me everything you hear."*

³⁷Hushai, David's personal advisor, went into the city as Absalom got to Jerusalem.

2 Sam 15:30-37

David and Ziba

^{16:1}When David had gone a little past the summit, Ziba, Mephibosheth's steward, met him with a couple saddled donkeys. They were carrying 200 loaves of bread, 100 clusters of raisins, 100 summer fruits, and a skin of wine.

²The king asked, "Why do you have these?"

"The donkeys are for the king's family to ride. The bread and summer fruit are for the young men to eat. The wine is for anybody to drink that's become exhausted in the country."

³"Where's Mephibosheth?"

"In Jerusalem; he said Israel would restore his father's kingdom to him today."

⁴He told Ziba, "You can have everything Mephibosheth owns."

"My lord the king, I prostrate myself. Thanks for being gracious to me."

2 Sam 16:1-4

Shimei Curses David

⁵When David got to Bahurim, Shimei Ben-Gera, a man from Saul's family, came out cursing ⁶and throwing stones at David and his aides. The troops and bodyguard were all around him. ⁷He cursed,

"Get out of here, you bloody, worthless fellow! Yahweh has brought back on you the bloodshed of Saul's family in whose place you've ruled. He's given the kingdom to Absalom. You're caught in your own evil; you're a murderer."

⁹Abishai asked the king, "Why should this dead dog curse you? Let me go over and cut off his head."

¹⁰"What do I have to do with you, sons of Zeruiah? If Yahweh has told him to curse me, why interfere?"

¹¹Then David told Abishai and his aides,

"My own son wants to kill me. How much more this Benjamite! Let him curse; Yahweh has told him to. Maybe Yahweh will regard my suffering and return me good for his cursing."

¹³David and his men followed the road. Shimei went along on the hillside parallel to him, cursing and throwing stones and dirt at him. ¹⁴The king and the people with him arrived exhausted, and he refreshed himself there.

2 Sam 16:5-14

The Advice of Hushai and Ahithophel

¹⁵Then Absalom, Ahithophel, and the men of Israel went to Jerusalem. ¹⁶Hushai the Archite, David's personal advisor, went to Absalom and said, "Long live the king!"

¹⁷"Is this loyalty to your friend? Why didn't you go with him?"

¹⁸"I'm for the one Yahveh and his people have chosen. ¹⁹Besides, shouldn't I serve in your presence as I've served in your father's presence?"

²⁰Absalom asked Ahithophel, "What's your advice?"

²¹Ahithophel said,

"Have relations with your father's concubines that he left to keep the house. Then all Israel will hear that you've made yourself repugnant to your father beyond reconciliation. That will encourage everybody that's with you to strengthen their support for you."

²²They pitched a tent for Absalom on the roof, and he had relations with his father's concubines right out in the open for all Israel to see. ²³By both David and Absalom, Ahithophel's advice in those days was considered the same as inquiring from God's oracle.

2 Sam 16:15-23

^{17:1}In addition, Ahithophel told Absalom,

"Let me choose 12,000 men to pursue David tonight. ²I'll attack him while he's exhausted and terrify him. The people with him will run. I'll only strike down the king ³and bring the people back to you. Everybody's return depends on the man you're looking for. Then the people will be at peace."

⁴The plan pleased Absalom and Israel's elders.

⁵Then Absalom said, "Call Hushai. Let's hear what he has to say." ⁶When Hushai came, Absalom said, "

That's what Ahithophel said. Should we do it? If not, tell us what you think."

⁷Hushai said,

"That's not a good idea. ⁸Your father and his men are strong warriors, as fierce as a bear robbed of her cubs out in the open. He's an expert in warfare. He won't spend the night with the people. ⁹He's probably already hid in a cave or someplace. When he falls on your men in the first attack, whoever hears about it will say he's slaughtered your followers. ¹⁰Even a man with a lion's heart will completely lose heart. All Israel knows your father is a strong warrior, and everybody with him is brave. ¹¹I advise you to gather Israel from Dan to Beersheba, like sand by the sea, and go personally into battle. ¹²We'll come to him in a place where he can be found. We'll descend on him like dew on the ground and not leave a man with him. ¹³If he withdraws into a city, Israel will bring ropes and drag it into the valley till there's not a small stone left there."

2 Sam 17:1-13

¹⁴Absalom and the men of Israel said, “*Hushai’s advice is better than Ahithophel’s.*” That happened because Yahveh had ordained to thwart Ahithophel’s good advice so Yahveh could bring catastrophe on Absalom.

¹⁵Hushai told Zadok and Abiathar the priests,

“*This is what Ahithophel advised Absalom and Israel’s elders to do, and this is what I’ve advised.*” ¹⁶*Quick, send and tell David not to spend the night at the fords in the open country; he needs to cross over so he and his people won’t get destroyed.*”

2 Sam 17:14-16

¹⁷Jonathan and Ahimaaz were staying at En-rogel. A servant girl would go tell them, and they’d tell David, because it was dangerous for them to be seen going into the city. ¹⁸But a lad did see them and told Absalom. *Jonathan and Ahimaaz* left in a hurry and came to the house of a man in Bahurim that had a well in his courtyard, and they got down into it. ¹⁹The man’s wife had covered the well’s mouth and scattered grain on it so you couldn’t tell it was there. ²⁰Absalom’s men came to her at the house, “*Where are Ahimaaz and Jonathan?*” She said, “*They’ve crossed the river.*” When they searched and couldn’t find them, they went back to Jerusalem.

2 Sam 17:17-20

²¹After they left, the men came up out of the well and went to tell David. “*Quick, get up and cross the water because Ahithophel has advised against you.*” ²²David and every person with him crossed the Jordan by sunup. ²³When Ahithophel saw that Absalom hadn’t followed his advice, he saddled his donkey and went to his town. He set his house in order and hanged himself. They buried him in his father’s grave.

²⁴David went to Mahanaim. Absalom and his men crossed the Jordan. ²⁵Absalom set Amasa over the army in place of Joab. Amasa was Joab’s cousin and son of Jithra the Israelite, who’d married Abigail Bat-Nahash and sister of Zeruiah, Joab’s mother. ²⁶Israel and Absalom camped in Gilead.

²⁷When David got to Mahanaim, Shobi Ben-Nahash from Rabbah of the Ammonites, Machir Ben-Ammiel from Lo-debar, and Barzillai of Gilead from Rogelim, ²⁸brought David and the ones with him sleeping mats, basins, pottery, wheat, barley, flour, parched grain, beans, lentils, parched seeds, ²⁹honey, curds, sheep, and cheese from the herd. They said, “*The people are surely hungry, exhausted, and thirsty here in the countryside.*”

2 Sam 17:21-29

The Death of Absalom

^{18:1}Then David counted his people and set over them commanders of thousands and hundreds. ²He sent out the troops, a third each under Joab, Abishai, and Ittai. He told them, “*I’ll go out with you too.*”

³They said,

“*You shouldn’t go out. If we flee, they won’t care even if half of us die. You’re worth 10,000 of us. It’s better for you to be ready to help us from town.*”

⁴He said, “*I'll do what you think's best.*” He stood beside the gate, and the troops went out by hundreds and thousands. ⁵He charged Joab, Abishai, and Ittai, “*For my sake, deal gently with young Absalom.*” The troops heard it.

⁶The troops went out, and the battle took place in the Forest of Ephraim. ⁷David's men defeated the people of Israel with a great slaughter—20,000 men. ⁸The battle spread out over the whole countryside, and more people died because of the forest than died from the sword.

2 Sam 18:1-8

⁹Absalom happened to meet *some of* David's men. He was trying to escape on his mule, and it went under the thick branches of a big terebinth tree. His hair got tangled up in them and left him hanging as the mule kept going. ¹⁰One fellow told Joab, “*I saw Absalom hanging from a terebinth tree.*”

¹¹Joab said, “*You saw him! Why didn't you strike him to the ground? I would've given you 10 pieces of silver and a belt.*”

¹²The man said,

“Even if you'd given me 1,000, I wouldn't have attacked the king's son. He charged you, Abishai, and Ittai for his sake to protect young Absalom!

“Otherwise, if I'd have dealt deviously with him (and there's nothing hidden from the king), you wouldn't have gotten involved.”

¹⁴Joab said, “*I'm not wasting time here with you.*” He took three spears and thrust them through Absalom's heart while he was still alive in the tree. ¹⁵Ten young men that carried Joab's armor gathered around Absalom and killed him.

2 Sam 18:9-15

¹⁶Joab blew the ram's horn, and his troops came back from chasing Israel. ¹⁷They threw Absalom in a deep pit in the forest and piled a big mound of rocks over him. Israel fled home. ¹⁸Absalom had set up a marker in the King's Valley. He said, “*I don't have a son to carry on my name.*” So he named the marker after himself; it's still called Absalom's Monument.

David Mourns Absalom's Death

¹⁹Then Ahimaaz said, “*Let me run to the king with the news that Yahveh has freed him from his enemies.*”

²⁰Joab told him, “*You're not the one to carry news today. You'll carry it another day. The king's son is dead.*”

²¹Joab told the Nubian, “*Go tell him what you've seen.*” He bowed to Joab and ran.

²²Ahimaaz said again, “*Whatever happens, let me run too.*”

Joab said, “*Why would you run, son, since you won't get anything for it?*”

²³“*Whatever happens, I'll run.*”

“*Go ahead.*”

2 Sam 18:16-23a

Ahimaaz ran by way of the plain and outran the Nubian.²⁴ David was sitting between the inner and outer gates of the town. The watchman went up to the roof of the gate by the wall and saw a man running by himself.²⁵ He called it out to the king.

He said, “If he’s by himself, he has good news.”

He came closer and closer.²⁶ Then the watchman saw another man running. He called to the gatekeeper, “There’s another man running by himself.”

The king said, “That one is bringing good news too.”

²⁷ The watchman said, “The first runner looks like Ahimaaz.”

The king said, “He’s a good man, bringing good news.”

²⁸ Ahimaaz called out to the king, “All’s well.” He prostrated himself to the king. “Blessed is Yahveh your God, who has delivered up the rebels.”

²⁹ “Is Absalom all right?”

Ahimaaz answered, “When Joab sent the king’s servant and me, I saw a big great disturbance, but I didn’t know what was going on.”

2 Sam 18:23b-29

³⁰ The king said, “Come over and stand here.”

³¹ The Nubian arrived and said, “Receive good news. Yahveh has freed you today from your attackers.”

³² “Is Absalom all right?”

The Nubian answered, “Let everyone who opposes you be like that young man!”

³³ The king was deeply moved and went up to the room above the gate and cried. He said as he walked, “Absalom! My son! My son Absalom! Oh that I’d have died instead of you, Absalom! My son! My son!”

2 Sam 18:30-33

^{19:1} Then Joab heard, “The king is crying and mourning for Absalom.”² The victory that day turned into mourning because those who heard about it said, “The king is grieving for his son.”³ So the people slipped into the city like humiliated people sneak away from battle.⁴ The king covered his face and cried out, “Absalom! My son! My son!”

⁵ Then Joab went into the house and told the king,

“You’ve shamed your men today. They’ve saved your life, the lives of your sons and daughters, your wives and concubines.⁶ By loving the ones that hate you and hating the ones that love you, you’ve shown that officers and troops don’t mean anything to you. If Absalom was alive and all of us dead, you’d be pleased.⁷ Get up; go speak graciously to them. I swear by Yahveh, if you don’t, not a man will spend the night with you. This will be worse than all the bad things that have come on you since you were young.”

2 Sam 19:1-7

⁸ The king got up and sat in the gate. When they told the people, “The king is sitting in the gate,” they went to him.

The Israelites that followed Absalom had fled home,⁹ and the people were quarreling throughout the tribes,

"The king delivered us from our enemies and saved us from the Philistines, but now he has fled out of the land from Absalom. ¹⁰But Absalom that we anointed has died in battle. Why be silent about bringing David back as our king?"

¹¹Then King David sent to Zadok and Abiathar the priests,

"Say to the elders in Judah, 'Why are you the last to bring the king back to his palace, since the word of all Israel has come to the king and to his house?

'12 You're my kin, my flesh and bone. Why then are you the last to welcome him back?' ¹³Tell Amasa, 'Aren't you my flesh and bone? God do so to me and more if you won't command my army continually in place of Joab.'"

¹⁴He convinced the people in Judah to agree; they sent word for the king and the ones with him to come back.

2 Sam 19:8-14

David Returns to Jerusalem

¹⁵The king started back and got as far as the Jordan. Judah came to Gilgal to meet him and escort him across.

¹⁶Then Shimei Ben-Gera, the Benjaminite from Bahurim, hurried down with the men of Judah to meet David. ¹⁷1,000 Benjamites came with him, with Ziba the steward of Saul's household, and Ziba's own 15 sons and 20 servants. They rushed to the Jordan ahead of the king. ¹⁸They kept going *back and forth across* the ford to escort the king's household over and do what pleased him. Shimei fell down to him as he was about to cross the Jordan,

¹⁹“Forgive me. Don't take to heart what I did when you were leaving Jerusalem. ²⁰I know I've sinned; I've come down, the first from the House of Joseph, to meet you.”

²¹But Abishai Ben-Zeruiah answered, "Shouldn't we put him to death for cursing Yahweh's anointed?"

²²David said, "What do I have to do with you that you should disagree with me? Should any man be put to death in Israel today? Don't I know I'm king?"

²³He swore to Shimei, "You won't die."

2 Sam 19:15-23

²⁴Then Saul's son Mephibosheth came down to meet the king. He hadn't taken care of his feet, trimmed his mustache, or washed his clothes since David left. ²⁵When he came to Jerusalem to meet the king, the king asked him, "Why didn't you go with me, Mephibosheth?"

²⁶He answered,

"My lord the king, my servant deceived me. I said, 'I'll saddle a donkey so I can go with the king,' because I'm lame. ²⁷He slandered me to you, but you're like an angel of God. Do what you think's right. ²⁸All my father's family was

nothing but dead men; yet you set me among the ones that ate at your own table. What right do I have to complain?"

29The king said, "Why are you still talking about your affairs? I've decided that you and Ziba will divide the land."

30Mephibosheth said, "Let him have it all since you've come home safely." **2 Sam 19:24-30**

31Barzillai of Gilead had come down from Rogelim and went on with the king to escort him across the Jordan. **32**He was old and had sustained the king while he was staying at Mahanaim because he was a really wealthy man. **33**The king told Barzillai,

"Cross over with me, and I'll take care of you in Jerusalem."

34But he said,

*"How long do I have left to live that I should go up with you to Jerusalem? **35**I'm 80 years old. Can I distinguish good from bad, or taste what I eat, or still hear men and women singing? Why should I be an added burden to you? **36**I'd simply be crossing over the Jordan with you. Why should you compensate me with this reward? **37**Let me go back so I can die in my own town near my parents' grave. But here is my son Chimham. Let him cross over with you, and you can do for him what seems good."* **2 Sam 19:31-37**

38The king answered, "Chimham will cross over with me, and I'll do for him what seems good to you and whatever you need me to do for you."

39The king and the people crossed the Jordan. He kissed Barzillai and blessed him, and he went back home.

40The king and Chimham went on over to Gilgal. Judah and half of Israel crossed with the king. **41**The men from Israel came to the king and said, "Why did our fellow Jews in Judah steal you away and bring you, your family, and your men across the Jordan?"

42The men from Judah answered, "Because the king is a close relative of ours. Why are you mad about that? Have we eaten at all at the kings' expense, or has anything been taken for us?"

43But the men of Israel said, "We have ten parts in the king, so we have more claim on David than you do. Why then did you dishonor us? Wasn't it our advice first to bring him back?" Yet the men from Judah were more adamant than the men from Israel. **2 Sam 19:38-43**

Sheba Rebels Against David

20:1A troublemaker happened to be there—Sheba Ben-Bicri, a Benjamite. He blew the ram's horn and said,

*"We don't have any part with David
or any inheritance in Jesse's son.
Everybody, back to your homes, Israel!"*

²The men from Israel deserted David and followed Sheba. But Judah stayed firmly committed to their king *and escorted him* from the Jordan to Jerusalem.

³David went to his palace in Jerusalem. The ten concubines he'd left behind to keep the house, he put under guard and took care of them; but didn't have relations with them. They lived like widows till they died. 2 Sam 20:1-3

⁴Then the king told Amasa, "*Call out Judah's army within three days and be present here with them.*" ⁵Amasa went to call them out, but it took him longer than the appointed time. ⁶David told Abishai, "*Sheba will do us more damage than Absalom. Take my troops and chase him he gets into fortified towns and escape from me.*" ⁷So Joab's men, along with the king's bodyguard and the strong warriors, left to pursue Sheba. ⁸When they were at the large boulder at Gibeon, Amasa came to meet them. Joab was dressed in his military attire, and over it was a belt with a dagger in its sheath fastened at his waist. As he stepped forward, it came out. ⁹Joab said to Amasa, "*Are you doing well, brother?*" Joab took Amasa by the beard with his right hand to kiss him. ¹⁰Amasa wasn't on guard against the dagger in Joab's *left* hand. He struck him in the stomach just once and poured out his entrails on the ground, and he died. Then Joab and Abishai his brother pursued Sheba. ¹¹One of Joab's young men stood by him and said, "*Whoever is for Joab and David, follow Joab.*" ¹²But Amasa lay wallowing in his blood on the road. When the young man saw that everybody was standing still, he took Amasa off the road into the field and threw a cloak over him. ¹³Then the men went on behind Joab to pursue Sheba. 2 Sam 20:4-13

¹⁴*Sheba* went through the tribes of Israel to Abel, as far as Beth-maacah and the Berites. They gathered and went with him too. ¹⁵*Joab's forces* laid siege to *Sheba* in Abel Beth-maacah and threw a siege ramp up against the city's fortifications. The people that were with Joab were starting to knock down the wall.

¹⁶But a wise woman called out from the town, "*Tell Joab to come here so I can talk to him.*"

¹⁷He approached and she said, "*Are you Joab?*"

"*Yes*"

"*Listen to me.*"

"*I'm listening.*"

¹⁸"*People have always said, 'They'll certainly ask advice at Abel.' That's how they settled disputes.*" ¹⁹*I'm among the peaceful and faithful in Israel. You're trying to destroy a city and a mother in Israel. Why swallow up Yahweh's inheritance?*" 2 Sam 20:14-19

²⁰Joab answered, "*I'd never swallow up or destroy you!*" ²¹*Sheba Ben-Bicri, from the hill country of Ephraim, has risen up against King David. Hand him over and I'll leave.*"

The woman said, "*We'll throw his head to you over the wall.*"

²²The woman wisely went to the people. They cut off Sheba's head and threw it to Joab. He blew the ram's horn, and they pulled back from the city and went home. Joab went back to the king at Jerusalem.

²³Joab commanded Israel's whole army,
Benaiah Ben-Jehoiada was captain of the king's bodyguard,
²⁴Adoram managed forced labor,
Jehoshaphat Ben-Ahilud was royal historian,
²⁵Sheva was secretary,
Zadok and Abiathar were priests, and
²⁶Ira, descendant of Jair, was David's personal priest.

2 Sam 20:20-26

David Avenges the Gibeonites

^{21:1}In David's time, a famine came that lasted three years. He sought Yahveh, and Yahveh said, "*It's because Saul and his bloody family murdered the people in Gibeon.*" ²(The inhabitants of Gibeon weren't part of Israel but a remnant of the Amorites. The Israelites had made a treaty with them, but Saul had intended to kill them off in his zeal for Israel and Judah.) The king called them,

³*"How can I make amends to you so you can bless Yahveh's inheritance again?"*

⁴*"It's not a matter of silver or gold between us and Saul or his family. It's not for us to put anybody to death in Israel."*

"I'll do whatever you say."

⁵They told him,

"Give us seven descendants of the man that tried to destroy us and eliminate us from staying inside Israel's border. ⁶We'll hang them in Yahveh's presence in Gibeath of Saul, Yahveh's chosen one."

"I'll give them to you."

2 Sam 21:1-6

⁷But the king spared Mephibosheth because of Yahveh's oath between David and Saul's son Jonathan. ⁸The king took Armoni and Mephibosheth [Merib-baal], the two sons of Rizpah Bat-Aiah; and the five sons of Merab Bat-Saul that she had for Adriel Ben-Barzillai of Meholah. ⁹He gave them to the Gibeonites, who hanged them on the mountain in Yahveh's presence. All seven died together at the beginning of barley harvest.

¹⁰Rizpah spread burlap on the rock, from the beginning of harvest till it rained on them. She wouldn't let birds get to them during the day or wild animals at night. ¹¹When David found out what Saul's concubine had done, ¹²he took Saul and Jonathan's bones away from the men of Jabesh-gilead, who had taken them from the open square in Beth-shan. That's where the Philistines had hung them the day they struck Saul down in Gilboa. ¹³He brought their bones and the bones of the ones they hanged. ¹⁴He buried Saul and Jonathan's bones in the country of

Benjamin in Zela in the grave of Kish, *Saul's* father. They did everything the king commanded. After that God was moved by petition for the land.

2 Sam 21:7-14

Wars with the Philistine Giants

15The Philistines were at war again with Israel. When David and his men went down and fought them, David got tired. **16**Ishbi-benob, a descendant of the giants in Gath—whose spearhead weighed 7½ lbs ³⁰⁰ shekels—was armed with a new sword and tried to kill David. **17**But Abishai Ben-Jeruiah helped him, struck the Philistine, and killed him. Then David's men swore to him, “*You're not going out with us again to battle so you don't snuff out the lamp in Israel.*”

18There was war again with the Philistines at Gob. Sibbecai the Hushathite struck down Saph, a descendant of the giants *in Gath*. **19**Another war with the Philistines took place at Gob. Elhanan Ben-Jaare-oregim from Bethlehem killed Lahmi, *the brother of Goliath of Gath*, the shaft of whose spear was like a weaver's beam. **20**In another war at Gath, there was a very big man with six digits on each hand and foot. He, too, was a descendant of the giants *in Gath*. **21**When he defied Israel, Jonathan, son of David's brother Shimei, struck him down. **22**Those four sons of the giants in Gath fell by David and his troops.

2 Sam 21:15-22

David's Song of Praise (Psalm 18)

22:1David sang this song to Yahveh when he delivered him from his enemies and from Saul:

2“*Yahveh is my rock, my fortress, my deliverer,*

3*my God, my refuge, my shield,*

the horn of my salvation, my fortress,

my savior who saves me from violence.

4*I called on him who deserves praise,*

and he saved me from my enemies.

5*The waves of death entangled me;*

the torrents of destruction flooded over me;

6*the cords of Sheol tied me down;*

the snares of death trapped me.

7*In my desperation I cried out to Yahveh,*

and he heard me in his temple.

2 Sam 22:1-7

8*Then the earth quaked and the mountains shook*

because he was angry.

9*Smoke poured out of his nostrils;*

*consuming fire flared from his mouth;
glowing coals erupted from him.*

10*He lowered the sky too
and came down with dense darkness under his feet.*

11*He rode on a cherub
and came flying on the wings of the wind.*

12*He made blackness a canopy around him,
a mass of moisture, dark clouds in the sky.*

13*Coals of fire flamed out
from the brightness in front of him.*

14*Yahveh thundered from the sky;
the Most High raised his voice.* **2 Sam 22:8-14**

15*He shot arrows and scattered my enemies;
lightning flashes routed them.*

16*Then the water in the sea receded;
the seabed was exposed at his rebuke,
at the blast from his nostrils.*

17*He reached down from on high and grabbed me,
and pulled me out of the path of the raging tsunami.*

18*He delivered me from powerful enemies
that hated me,
that were too strong for me.*

19*They attacked me in a time of catastrophe,
but Yahveh supported me.*

20*He brought me out into a safe place
and rescued me because he delighted in me.* **2 Sam 22:15-20**

21*“Yahveh has rewarded me according to my goodness,
according to my innocence—*

22*because I’d kept his ways
and hadn’t sinned by leaving him,*

23*because his ordinances all stayed with me;
I hadn’t shoved any of his statutes away.*

24*I stood blameless in front of him
and kept away from sin.*

25*So Yahveh has rewarded me according to my goodness—
according to my godliness toward him.*

26 “With the kind you’re kind;
 with the blameless you’re blameless;
27 with the pure you’re pure;
 the devious you torture.
28 You rescue the humble,
 but bring down the haughty.
29 You’re my lamp, Yahveh,
 and shine light into my darkness.
30 With your help I can crush a battalion;
 I can scale a wall.
31 God’s way is perfect;
 Yahveh’s promise proves true;
 he’s a shield for everyone that depends on him for protection.

2 Sam 22:21-31

32 “Who is God except Yahveh?
 Who is a rock except our God,
33 who wraps me in strength
 and makes my way safe,
34 who makes my feet like red deer’s hooves
 and sets me securely on high ground,
35 who trains my hands for battle
 and strengthens my arms to draw a bronze bow,
36 who gives me his deliverance as a shield
 and helps make me great,
37 who widens the path for my feet
 so they don’t slip.

2 Sam 22:32-35

38 I chased my enemies and overtook them;
 I didn’t turn back till I’d eliminated them.
39 I thrust them through so they couldn’t get up again.
 They fell under my feet
40 because you’ve wrapped me in strength for battle;
 and subdued my assailants under me.
41 You’ve made my enemies retreat;
 I destroyed the ones that hated me.
42 They looked around for help, but there wasn’t any;
 they even cried out to Yahveh, but he didn’t answer them.

43 *I pulverized them like dust,
crushed and stomped on them like dirt in the street.*

2 Sam 22:36-43

44 *You delivered me from conflict with my own people
and placed me at the head of nations;
people I didn't know serve me now.*

45 *Foreigners pretend to submit as soon as they hear me;*

46 *they retreat and come cringing out of their fortresses.*

2 Sam 22:44-46

47 *"Yahveh lives; blessed be my Rock;
exalted be God, the rock that saves me,*

48 *the God that carries out vengeance for me
and subdues nations under me,*

49 *who brought me out from my enemies
and lifted me above my attackers,
who rescued me from violent people.*

50 *So I'll thank you among the Gentiles, Yahveh,
and sing praises to you.*

51 *You're a tower of victory for your king
and show enduring love to your anointed one—
David and his descendants forever."*

2 Sam 22:2-51 [= Ps 18:2-50]

23:1 David's last words

*"The oracle of David Ben-Jesse,
the oracle of the man God honored,
the one anointed by Jacob's God,
the sweet psalmist of Israel.*

2 *"The Spirit of Yahveh speaks by me;
his message is on my tongue.*

3 *The God of Israel said,
the Rock of Israel told me,
'He that rules justly,
that rules in respect for God,*

4 *is like the morning light from the rising sun
on a cloudless morn,
when tender grass sprouts from the soil
in the sunshine after rain.'*

2 Sam 23:1-4

⁵*Is not my family that way with God?
He has made an everlasting covenant with me,
ordered in every respect and secure.
Won't he make grow
my salvation and my desire?*

⁶*But godless people every one will be thrown aside like briers,
because you can't handle them.*

⁷*If you touch them,
you have to arm yourself with iron and the shaft of a spear.
They'll be completely burned up where they are.”* **2 Sam 23:5-7**

David's Greatest Warriors

⁸These are David's most elite soldiers: **Josheb-basshebeth**, a Tahchemonite [a *Hachmonite* in 1 Chronicles 11:11], chief of The Three. He was called Adino the Eznite because he killed 800 men in one battle.

⁹After him was **Eleazar** son of Dodo, a descendant of Ahoah, another of The Three elite soldiers. He and David defied the Philistines that gathered for battle and Israel's army retreated. ¹⁰He arose and struck the Philistines till his hand was worn out and cramped onto the sword. The LORD brought about a great victory that day. The rest of the army only returned to strip *the slain*.

¹¹After him was **Shammah** Ben-Agee, from Harar. The Philistines had gathered into a troop on a plot of ground full of lentils, and the rest of Israel's army had fled. ¹²But he took his stand in the middle of the plot, defended it, and struck the Philistines. Yahveh brought about a great victory.

¹³Then The Three among The Thirty chief men went down to David at harvest time to the cave near Adullam, while a troop of Philistines was camping in the Valley of Rephaim. ¹⁴David was in the stronghold while the garrison of Philistines was in Bethlehem. ¹⁵David had a yearning, “*If only somebody would give me a drink from the well of Bethlehem by the gate!*” ¹⁶So The Three broke through the Philistines' camp and drew water from the well and brought it to him. But he wouldn't drink it. He poured it out to Yahveh, ¹⁷“*I couldn't do that, Yahveh. Am I going to drink the blood of men who jeopardized their lives?*” Those are some things The Three most elite soldiers did. **2 Sam 23:8-17**

¹⁸**Abishai**, brother of Joab and son of Zeruiah, was chief of The Thirty. He handled his spear against 300 and killed them and had a name alongside The Three. ¹⁹He was the most honored of The Thirty, so he became their commander, but he didn't measure up to The Three.

²⁰Then **Benaiah** Ben-Jehoiada—son of a great warrior from Kabzeel, who had done amazing things—killed the two sons of Ariel of Moab. He also went down and killed a lion in a pit on a snowy day. ²¹He killed an Egyptian, an impressive man. The Egyptian had a spear in his

hand, but *Benaiah* went down to him with a club and took the spear away from him and killed him with it. ²²He had a name as well as The Three. ²³He was honored among The Thirty, but he didn't measure up to The Three. David appointed him over his guard.

2 Sam 23:18-23

²⁴**Asahel**, Joab's brother, was among the 30 *as well as*
Elhanan Ben-Dodo from Bethlehem;
²⁵**Shammah** and **Elika** from Harod,
²⁶**Helez** from Pelon,
Ira Ben-Ikkesh from Tekoa,
²⁷**Abiezer** from Anathoth,
Mebunnai from Hushah,
²⁸**Zalmon** from Ahoah,
Maharai and ²⁹**Heleb** Ben-Baanah from Netophah,
Ittai Ben-Ribai from Gibeah in Benjamin,
³⁰**Benaiah** from Pirathon,
Hiddai from Nahale-gaash,
³¹**Abialbon/Abiel**^{LXX} from Arabah,
Azmaveth from Bahurim,
³²**Eliahba** from Shaalbon,
the sons of Jashen,
Jonathan ³³*Ben-Shagee* and **Ahiam** Ben-Sharar from Harar [1 Ch 11:34],
³⁴**Eliphelet** Ben-Ahasbai from Maacah,
Eliam Ben-Ahithophel from Giloh,
³⁵**Hezro** from Carmel,
Paarai from Arba,
³⁶**Igal** Ben-Nathan from Zobah,
Bani from Gad,
³⁷**Zelek** from Ammon,
Naharai from Beeroth, armor bearer for Joab Ben-Zeruiah;
³⁸**Ira** and **Gareb** the Jattir,
³⁹**Uriah** the Hittite—37 in all.

2 Sam 23:24-39

David's Ill-Advised Census

24:1 Again Yahveh's anger burned against Israel, and he aroused David to count the people in Israel and Judah.

²The king told Joab the commander of the army, “*Go through the tribes from Dan to Beersheba, and register the people so I can know how many there are.*”

³But Joab said, “*May Yahveh your God multiply the people 100 times while you can still see it, but why delight in this?*”

⁴But the king’s word prevailed over Joab and his commanders; so they spread out to register the people. ⁵They crossed the Jordan and camped south of Aroer in the middle of the Valley of Gad and then went on toward Jazer. ⁶They went to Gilead and the area around Tahtim-hodshi, to Dan-jaan and on around to Sidon, ⁷to the fortress of Tyre and the towns of the Hivites and Canaanites; and to the south of Judah to Beersheba. ⁸When they’d cycled through the country, they came to Jerusalem after 9 months and 20 days, ⁹and Joab reported the number of the census.

2 Sam 24:1-9

God’s Judgment on David’s Sin

¹⁰David’s conscience got to bothering him after he’d counted the people. He told Yahveh, “*I’ve committed a serious sin, but please take away my guilt. I’ve acted foolishly.*” ¹¹When he got up in the morning, a message from Yahveh came to the prophet Gad, David’s seer, ¹²“*Tell David I’m offering him three choices.*”

¹³Gad went and asked David,

“Will three [1 Chronicles 21:12] years of famine come on you and your land? Will you flee from your enemies for three months? Or will there be a three-day plague in your land? Which answer will I take back to the One who sent me?”

¹⁴David told Gad,

“I’m really distressed. Let’s fall into Yahveh’s hand. He has great mercy; don’t let me fall into human hands.”

2 Sam 24:10-14

¹⁵So Yahveh sent a plague on Israel from morning till the appointed time; 70,000 people died from Dan to Beersheba. ¹⁶When the angel held out his hand out toward Jerusalem to destroy it, Yahveh relented, “*That’s enough. Relax your hand.*” The angel of Yahveh was by the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite. ¹⁷When David saw the angel, he said to Yahveh, “*I’m the one that sinned. I did wrong. What have these sheep done? Put yourself against me and my father’s family.*”

2 Sam 24:15-17

David Builds an Altar

¹⁸Gad went to David that day and said, “*Go build an altar to Yahveh on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite.*” ¹⁹David went up like he said. ²⁰Araunah looked down and saw him and his men crossing over toward him. He went out and bowed to the ground. ²¹He said, “*Why have you come to me?*”

“To buy your threshing floor and build an altar to Yahveh so he’ll hold back the plague from the people.”

²²Araunah told him,

“Take and offer what you want to: the oxen for the burnt offering, the threshing sledges and yokes for wood. ²³You can have it all. May Yahveh your God accept you.”

²⁴“No, I’ll buy it from you. I won’t offer burnt offerings that don’t cost me anything.”

He bought the threshing floor and oxen for 20 oz ⁵⁰ shekels of silver. ²⁵He built an altar and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. Yahveh was moved by *David’s* petition for the country and held back the plague.

2 Sam 24:18-25

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