

2 Samuel

David Learns About Saul's Death

1 David went back to Ziklag after defeating the Amalekites. This was just after Saul had been killed. David had been there two days. ²Then, on the third day, a young soldier came to Ziklag. This man was from Saul's camp. The man's clothes were torn, and he had dirt on his head.* The man came to David and bowed with his face to the ground.

³David asked the man, "Where have you come from?"

The man answered David, "I just came from the Israelite camp."

⁴David said to the man, "Please tell me, who won the battle?"

The man answered, "Our people ran away from the battle. Many of the people were killed in the battle. Even Saul and his son Jonathan are dead."

⁵David said to the young soldier, "How do you know Saul and his son Jonathan are dead?"

⁶The young soldier said, "I happened to be on Mount Gilboa. I saw Saul leaning on his spear. The Philistine chariots and horse soldiers were coming closer and closer to Saul. ⁷Saul looked back and saw me. He called to me and I answered him. ⁸Then Saul asked me who I was. I told him that I was an Amalekite. ⁹Then Saul said, 'Please kill me. I am hurt badly. And I am about to die anyway.' ¹⁰He was hurt so bad that I knew he wouldn't live. So I stopped and killed him. Then I took the crown from his head and the bracelet from his arm. And I brought them here to you, my lord."

¹¹Then David tore his clothes to show he was very sad. All the men with David did the same thing. ¹²They were very sad and cried. They did not eat until evening. They cried because Saul and his son Jonathan were dead. David and his men cried for the Lord's people [that had been killed], and they cried for Israel. They cried because Saul, his son Jonathan, and many Israelites had been killed in battle.

David Orders the Amalekite Killed

¹³Then David talked with the young soldier who had told him about Saul's death. David asked, "Where are you from?"

The young soldier answered, "I am the son of a foreigner. I am an Amalekite."

¹⁴David said to the young soldier, "Why were you not afraid to kill the Lord's chosen king?"

¹⁵⁻¹⁶Then David told the Amalekite, "You are responsible for your own death. You said you killed the Lord's chosen king, so your own words prove you are guilty." Then David called one of his young servants and told him to kill the Amalekite. So the young Israelite killed the Amalekite.

David's Song About Saul and Jonathan

¹⁷David sang a sad song about Saul and his son Jonathan. ¹⁸David told [his men] to teach the song to the people of Judah. [This song is called] *The Bow*. It is written in the *Book of Jashar*.*

clothes ... head This showed the man was very sad.

Book of Jashar An ancient book about the wars of Israel.

- 19 “Israel, your beauty was ruined
on your hills.
Oh, how those heroes fell!
20 Don’t tell the news in Gath,*
Don’t announce it in the streets of
Ashkelon.*
Those Philistine cities would be happy!
Those foreigners* would be glad.
- 21 I hope no rain or dew falls
on the mountains of Gilboa.
I hope there will be no offerings
coming from those fields.
The shields of the heroes rusted there.
Saul’s shield was not rubbed with oil.
- 22 Jonathan’s bow killed its share of
enemies.
And Saul’s sword killed its share!
They have spilled the blood
of men now dead.
They cut into the fat of strong men.
- 23 Saul and Jonathan
loved and enjoyed each other in life,
and even death did not separate them!
They were faster than eagles
and stronger than lions.
- 24 Daughters of Israel, cry for Saul!
Saul gave you beautiful red dresses
and covered them with gold jewelry!
- 25 Strong men have fallen in the battle.
Jonathan is dead on Gilboa’s hills.
- 26 Jonathan, my brother,
I miss you so much!
I enjoyed being with you so much.
Your love for me was more wonderful
than the love of women.
- 27 Strong men have fallen in battle.
The weapons of war are gone.”

David and His Men Move to Hebron

2 Later David asked the Lord for advice.
David said, “Should I take control* of any
of the cities of Judah?”
The Lord said to David, “Yes.”

Gath The Philistine capital city.

Ashkelon One of the five Philistine cities.

foreigners Literally, “uncircumcised.” This shows the
Philistines had not shared in Israel’s Agreement with God.

take control Literally, “go up against.”

David asked, “Where should I go?”
The Lord answered, “To Hebron.”

²So David and his two wives moved to
Hebron. (His wives were Ahinoam from
Jezreel and Abigail, the widow* of Nabal
from Carmel.) ³David also brought his men
and their families. All of them made their
homes in Hebron and the towns nearby.

David Thanks the People of Jabesh

⁴The men of Judah came to Hebron and
anointed* David to be the king of Judah. Then
they told David, “The men of Jabesh Gilead
buried Saul.”

⁵David sent messengers to the men of
Jabesh Gilead. These messengers told the men
in Jabesh: “The Lord bless you, because you
have shown kindness to your lord Saul by
burying [his ashes].* ⁶The Lord will be kind
and true to you. And I will also be kind to
you. ⁷Now be strong and brave. Your lord,
Saul, is dead. But the family group of Judah
has anointed* me to be their king.”

Ish Bosheth Becomes King

⁸Abner son of Ner was the captain of
Saul’s army. Abner took Saul’s son Ish
Bosheth to Mahanaim ⁹and made him king of
Gilead, Asher, Jezreel, Ephraim, Benjamin,
and all of Israel.*

¹⁰Ish Bosheth was Saul’s son. Ish Bosheth
was 40 years old when he began to rule over
Israel. He ruled two years. But the family
group of Judah followed David. ¹¹David was
king in Hebron. David ruled over the family
group of Judah for seven years and six months.

The Deadly Contest

¹²Abner son of Ner and the officers of
Saul’s son Ish Bosheth left Mahanaim and
went to Gibeon. ¹³Joab, Zeruihah’s son, and
the officers of David also went to Gibeon.

widow A woman whose husband has died.

anointed To pour olive oil on a person’s head to show he was
chosen by God to be a king, priest, or prophet.

his ashes The bodies of both Saul and Jonathan were burned.
See 1 Sam. 31:12.

Israel Sometimes this means the whole country, Judah and
Israel. Here it means only the family groups that were not
united with Judah.

They met Abner and Ish Bosheth's officers at the pool of Gibeon. Abner's group sat on one side of the pool. Joab's group sat on the other side of the pool.

¹⁴Abner said to Joab, "Let's have the young soldiers get up and have a contest here."

Joab said, "Yes, let's have a contest."

¹⁵So the young soldiers got up. The two groups counted their men for the contest. They chose twelve men from the family group of Benjamin to fight for Saul's son Ish Bosheth. And they chose twelve men from David's officers. ¹⁶Each of the men grabbed his opponent's head and stabbed him in the side with his sword, and then they fell down together. That is why the place is called "The Field of the Sharp Knives."* The place is in Gibeon.

Abner Kills Asahel

¹⁷That contest became a terrible battle and David's officers defeated Abner and the Israelites that day. ¹⁸Zeruiah had three sons, Joab, Abishai, and Asahel. Asahel was a fast runner. He was as fast as a wild deer. ¹⁹Asahel ran straight toward Abner and began chasing him. ²⁰Abner looked back and asked, "Is that you, Asahel?"

Asahel said, "Yes, it's me."

²¹Abner didn't want to hurt Asahel. So Abner said to Asahel, "Stop chasing me—go after one of the young soldiers. You could easily take his armor* for yourself." But Asahel refused to stop chasing Abner.

²²Abner again said to Asahel, "Stop chasing me or I will have to kill you. Then I won't be able to look your brother Joab in the face again."

²³But Asahel refused to stop chasing Abner. So Abner used the back end of his spear and pushed it into Asahel's stomach. The spear went deep into Asahel's stomach and came out of his back. Asahel died right there.

The Field of the Sharp Knives Or, "Helkath Hazzurim."

armor Clothing that had metal or hard things in it to protect the person wearing it in war.

Joab and Abishai Chase Abner

Asahel's body lay on the ground. All of the men that ran that way stopped to look at Asahel. ²⁴But Joab and Abishai* continued chasing Abner. The sun was just going down when they came to Ammah Hill. (Ammah Hill is in front of Giah on the way to Gibeon Desert.) ²⁵The men from the family group of Benjamin gathered around Abner at the top of the hill.

²⁶Abner shouted to Joab and said, "Must we fight and kill each other forever? Surely you know that this will only end in sadness. Tell the people to stop chasing their own brothers."

²⁷Then Joab said, "It is a good thing you said that. As sure as God is alive, if you had not said something, then people would still be chasing their brothers in the morning." ²⁸So Joab blew a trumpet, and his people stopped chasing the Israelites. They did not try to fight the Israelites any more.

²⁹Abner and his men marched all night through the Jordan Valley. They crossed the Jordan River and marched all day until they came to Mahanaim.

³⁰Joab stopped chasing Abner and went back. Joab had gathered his men and learned that 19 of David's officers were missing, including Asahel. ³¹But David's officers had killed 360 of Abner's men from the family group of Benjamin. ³²David's officers took Asahel and buried him in the tomb of his father at Bethlehem.

Joab and his men marched all night. The sun came up just as they reached Hebron.

War Between Israel and Judah

3 There was war for a long time between Saul's family and David's family. David became stronger and stronger. And Saul's family became weaker and weaker.

David's Six Sons Born at Hebron

²David had these sons that were born at Hebron. The first son was Ammon. Ammon's

Joab and Abishai Brothers of Asahel, the man that Abner killed. See verse 18.

mother was Ahinoam from Jezreel. ³The second son was Kileab. Kileab's mother was Abigail, the widow* of Nabal from Carmel. The third son was Absalom. Absalom's mother was Maacah daughter of Talmai, king of Geshur. ⁴The fourth son was Adonijah. Adonijah's mother was Haggith. The fifth son was Shephatiah. Shephatiah's mother was Abital. ⁵The sixth son was Ithream. Ithream's mother was David's wife Eglah. David had these [six sons] born at Hebron.

Abner Decides to Join David

⁶Abner became more and more powerful in Saul's army while the families of Saul and David fought each other. ⁷Saul had a woman servant* named Rizpah daughter of Aiah. Ish Bosheth said to Abner, "Why did you have sexual relations with my father's servant woman?"

⁸Abner was very angry because of what Ish Bosheth said. Abner said, "I have been loyal to Saul and his family. I did not give you to David—I did not let him defeat you. I am not a traitor working for Judah.* But now you are saying that I did this bad thing. ^{9–10}I make this promise—I will now make sure that the things God said will happen. The Lord said he would take the kingdom away from Saul's family and give it to David. The Lord will make David king of Judah and Israel. He will rule from Dan to Beersheba.* And I hope God does bad things to me if I don't make that happen!"

¹¹Ish Bosheth could not say anything to Abner. Ish Bosheth was too afraid of him.

¹²Abner sent messengers to David. Abner said, "Who do you think should rule this country? Make an agreement with me, and I will help you become the ruler of all the people of Israel."

widow A woman whose husband has died.

woman servant Or, "concubine," a slave woman who was like a wife to a man.

I am not a traitor working for Judah Literally, "Am I a dog's head of Judah?"

Dan to Beersheba This means the whole nation of Israel, north and south. Dan was a town in the northern part of Israel and Beersheba was in the southern part of Judah.

¹³David answered, "Good! I will make an agreement with you. But I ask you only one thing: I will not meet with you until you bring Saul's daughter Michal to me."

David Gets His Wife Michal Back

¹⁴David sent messengers to Saul's son Ish Bosheth. David said, "Give me my wife Michal. She was promised to me. I killed 100 Philistines to get her."*

¹⁵Then Ish Bosheth told the men to go and take Michal from a man named Paltiel son of Laish. ¹⁶Michal's husband [Paltiel] went with Michal. Paltiel was crying while he followed Michal to Bahurim. But Abner said to Paltiel, "Go back home." So Paltiel went back home.

Abner Promises to Help David

¹⁷Abner sent this message to the leaders of Israel. He said, "You have been wanting to make David your king. ¹⁸Now do it! The Lord was talking about David when he said, 'I will save my people the Israelites from the Philistines and all their other enemies. I will do this through my servant David.'"

¹⁹Abner said these things to David in Hebron. And he said these things to the people of the Benjamin family group. The things Abner said sounded good to the Benjamin family group and to all the people of Israel.

²⁰Then Abner came up to David at Hebron. Abner brought 20 men with him. David gave a party for Abner and for all the men who came with him.

²¹Abner said to David, "My lord and king, let me go bring all the Israelites to you. Then they will make an agreement with you. And you will rule over all Israel, like you wanted."

So David let Abner leave. And Abner left in peace.

Abner's Death

²²Joab and David's officers came back from battle. They had many valuable things that they had taken from the enemy. David

I killed ... to get her Literally, "I paid for her with 100 Philistine foreskins." See 1 Sam. 18:20–30; 25:44.

had just let Abner leave in peace. So Abner was not there in Hebron with David. ²³Joab and all his army arrived [at Hebron]. The army said to Joab, “Abner son of Ner came to King David, and David let Abner leave in peace.”

²⁴Joab came to the king and said, “What have you done? Abner came to you, but you sent him away without hurting him! Why? ²⁵You know Abner son of Ner. He came to trick you. He came to learn all about the things you are doing.”

²⁶Joab left David and sent messengers to Abner at the well of Sirah. The messengers brought Abner back, but David did not know this. ²⁷When Abner arrived at Hebron, Joab took him to one side in the middle of the gateway to talk with him in private. And then Joab stabbed Abner in the stomach, and Abner died. Abner had killed Joab’s brother Asahel. So now Joab killed Abner.

David Cries for Abner

²⁸Later David heard the news. David said, “My kingdom and I are innocent of the death of Abner son of Ner. The Lord knows this. ²⁹Joab and his family are responsible for this, and all his family are to be blamed. I hope many troubles will come to Joab’s family. I hope the people in his family will be sick with leprosy, and crippled, and killed in war, and not have enough food to eat!”

³⁰Joab and his brother Abishai killed Abner because Abner had killed their brother Asahel in the battle at Gibeon.

^{31–32}David said to Joab and to all the people with Joab, “Tear your clothes and put on clothes of sadness. Cry for Abner.” They buried Abner in Hebron. David went to the funeral. King David and all the people cried at Abner’s grave.

³³King David sang this sad song at Abner’s funeral:

“Did Abner die like some foolish criminal?
³⁴ Abner, your hands were not tied.
 Your feet were not put in chains.
 No, Abner, evil men killed you!”

Then all the people cried again for Abner. ³⁵All day long people came to encourage David to eat food. But David had made a

special promise. He said, “May God punish me and give me many troubles if I eat bread or any other food before the sun goes down.”

³⁶All the people saw what happened, and they were pleased with what King David had done.

³⁷All the people of Judah and Israel understood that King David had not killed Abner son of Ner.

³⁸King David said to his officers, “You know that a very important leader died today in Israel. ³⁹And it was on the very same day that I was anointed* to be the king. These sons of Zeruiah have caused me a lot of trouble. I hope the Lord gives these men the punishment they deserve.”

Troubles Come to Saul’s Family

4 Saul’s son (*Ish Bosheth*) heard that Abner had died at Hebron. Ish Bosheth and all his people became very scared. ²Two men went to see to Saul’s son (*Ish Bosheth*). These two men were captains in the army. They were Recab and Baanah, the sons of Rimmon from Beeroth. (They were Benjamites because the town Beeroth belonged to the family group of Benjamin. ³But all the people in Beeroth ran away to Gittaim. And they are still living there today.)

⁴Saul’s son Jonathan had a son named Mephibosheth. Mephibosheth was five years old when the news came from Jezreel that Saul and Jonathan had been killed. The woman who cared for Mephibosheth [was scared that the enemy was coming, so she] picked him up and ran away. But while running away, she dropped the boy. And he became crippled in both feet.

⁵Recab and Baanah, sons of Rimmon from Beeroth, went to Ish Bosheth’s house at noon. Ish Bosheth was resting because it was hot. ^{6–7}Recab and Baanah came into the house like they were going to get some wheat. Ish Bosheth was lying on his bed in his bedroom. Recab and Baanah stabbed and killed Ish Bosheth. Then they cut off his head and took it with them. They traveled all night by the

anointed To pour olive oil on a person’s head to show he was chosen by God to be a king, priest, or prophet.

way leading through the Jordan Valley. ⁸They arrived at Hebron. And they gave Ish Bosheth's head to David.

Recab and Baanah said to the King David, "Here is the head of your enemy, Ish Bosheth son of Saul. He tried to kill you. The Lord has punished Saul and his family for you today."

⁹But David told Recab and his brother Baanah, "As sure as the Lord is alive, he has saved me from all trouble. ¹⁰But once before a person thought he would bring me good news. He told me, 'Look! Saul is dead.' He thought I would reward him for bringing me the news. But I grabbed this man and killed him at Ziklag. ¹¹So I must kill you and remove you from this land. Why? Because you evil men killed a good man sleeping on his own bed, in his own house."

¹²So David commanded the young soldiers to kill Recab and Baanah. The young soldiers cut off the hands and feet of Recab and Baanah and hanged them by the pool of Hebron. Then they took the head of Ish Bosheth and buried it in the same place where Abner was buried at Hebron.

The Israelites Make David King

5 Then all the family groups of Israel came to David at Hebron. They said to David, "Look, we are one family!*" ²Even when Saul was our king, you were the one who led us into battle. And you were the one who brought Israel back home from war. And the Lord himself said to you, 'You will be the shepherd of my people, the Israelites. You will be the ruler over Israel.'"

³So all the leaders of Israel came to meet with King David at Hebron. King David made an agreement with these leaders in Hebron in front of the Lord. Then the leaders anointed* David to be the king of Israel.

⁴David was 30 years old when he began to rule. He was king for 40 years. ⁵In Hebron, he ruled over Judah for 7 years and 6 months. And in Jerusalem, he ruled over all of Israel and Judah for 33 years.

one family Literally, "Your flesh and blood."

anointed To pour olive oil on a person's head to show he was chosen by God to be a king, priest, or prophet.

David Wins the Town of Jerusalem

⁶The king and his men went to fight against the Jebusites living in Jerusalem. The Jebusites said to David, "You can't come into our city.* Even our blind and crippled people can stop you." (They said this because they thought that David would not be able to enter into their city. ⁷But David did take the fort of Zion. This fort became the City of David.*)

⁸That day David said to his men, "If you want to defeat the Jebusites, go up through the water shaft* and reach those 'crippled and blind' enemies."

This is why people say, "The blind and the crippled can't come into the house.*"

⁹David lived in the fort and called it "The City of David."* David built the area called the Millo.* He also built more buildings inside the city. ¹⁰David became stronger and stronger because the Lord All-Powerful was with him.

¹¹Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David. Hiram also sent cedar trees, carpenters and stonemasons. They built a house for David. ¹²Then David knew that the Lord had really made him king of Israel. And David knew that the Lord had made his kingdom very important to God's people, the people of Israel.

¹³David moved from Hebron to Jerusalem. In Jerusalem, David got more women servants* and wives. Some more of David's children were born in Jerusalem. ¹⁴These are the names of David's sons that were born in Jerusalem: Shammua, Shobab, Nathan,

You can't come ... city The city of Jerusalem was built on a hill. And the city had high walls around it. So it was very hard to capture.

City of David The southeast and oldest part of the city of Jerusalem.

water shaft There was a tunnel with water in it that went under the wall of the ancient city of Jerusalem, and then a narrow shaft (tunnel) went straight up into the city. People in the city used it as a well. One of David's men probably climbed up the shaft to get into the city.

house This probably means the king's palace or the temple.

Millo Probably one of the strong places that made up the ancient fort of Zion.

women servants Or, "concubines," slave women who were like wives to a man.

Solomon, ¹⁵Ibhar, Elishua, Nepheg, Japhia, ¹⁶Elishama, Eliada, and Eliphelet.

David Fights Against the Philistines

¹⁷The Philistines heard that the Israelites had anointed* David to be the king of Israel. So the Philistines went to look for David [to kill him]. But David heard about this and went into the fort [at Jerusalem]. ¹⁸The Philistines came and camped in the Rephaim Valley.

¹⁹David asked the Lord, saying, “Should I go to war against the Philistines? Will you help me defeat the Philistines?”

The Lord said to David, “Yes. I will certainly help you defeat the Philistines.”

²⁰Then David went to Baal Perazim and defeated the Philistines in that place. David said, “The Lord broke through my enemies like water breaking through a broken dam.” That is why David named that place “Baal Perazim.”* ²¹The Philistines left the statues of their gods behind at Baal Perazim. David and his men took those statues away.

²²Again the Philistines came and camped in Rephaim Valley.

²³David prayed to the Lord. This time the Lord told David, “Don’t go up there. Go around them to the back of their army. Attack them from the other side of the balsam trees. ²⁴From the top of the balsam trees you will be able to hear the Philistines marching into battle. Then you must act quickly, because at that time the Lord will go ahead of you and defeat the Philistines for you.”

²⁵David did what the Lord commanded him to do. And he defeated the Philistines. He chased them and killed them all the way from Geba to Gezer.

anoint(ed) To pour olive oil on a person’s head to show he was chosen by God to be a king, priest, or prophet.

Baal Perazim This name means “The Lord breaks through.”

God’s Holy Box Is Moved to Jerusalem

⁶David again gathered all of the best soldiers in Israel. There were 30,000 men. ²Then David and all his men went to Baalah in Judah.* They took God’s Holy Box* from Baalah in Judah [and moved it to Jerusalem]. People go to the Holy Box to worship the Lord. [The Holy Box is like the Lord’s throne.] There are statues of Cherub angels* on top of the Holy Box. And the Lord sits as king on these angels. ³David’s men brought the Holy Box out of Abinadab’s house on the hill. Then they put God’s Holy Box on a new wagon. Uzzah and Ahio, sons of Abinadab, were driving the new wagon.

⁴So they carried the Holy Box* out of Abinadab’s house on the hill. [Uzzah was on the wagon] with God’s Holy Box. And Ahio was walking in front of the Holy Box. ⁵David and all the Israelites were dancing in front of the Lord and playing all kinds of musical instruments. There were lyres,* harps, drums, rattles, instruments made from cypress wood, and cymbals.* ⁶When David’s men came to the threshing floor* of Nacon, the cows stumbled, and God’s Holy Box began to fall off the wagon. Uzzah caught the Holy Box. ⁷But the Lord was angry at Uzzah and killed him.* Uzzah showed he did not honor God when he touched the Holy Box. Uzzah died there by God’s Holy Box. ⁸David was upset because the Lord had killed Uzzah. David

Baalah in Judah Another name for Kiriath Jearim. See 1 Chron. 13:6.

Holy Box The Box of the Agreement. Also called “The Ark of the Covenant,” the box containing the stone tablets with the Ten Commandments written on them and the other things that proved God was with the people of Israel during their time in the Sinai Desert.

Cherub angels Special angels from God. Statues of these angels were on top of the Box of the Agreement.

lyres Musical instruments that are like small harps.

cymbals Brass plates that were hit together to make a loud noise.

threshing floor A place where grain is beaten or walked on to remove the hulls from the grain.

the Lord ... killed him Only the Levites could carry God’s Holy Box or any other furniture from the Holy Tent. Uzzah was not a Levite. Read Num. 1:50.

called that place “Perez Uzzah.”* That place is still called Perez Uzzah today.

⁹David became afraid of the Lord that day. David said, “How can I bring God’s Holy Box* here now?” ¹⁰So David would not move the Lord’s Holy Box into the City of David.* David put the Holy Box at the house of Obed Edom from Gath. David carried the Holy Box off the road to the house of Obed Edom of Gath.* ¹¹The Lord’s Holy Box stayed in Obed Edom’s house for three months. The Lord blessed Obed Edom and all his family.

¹²Later, people told David, “The Lord has blessed the family of Obed Edom and everything he owns, because God’s Holy Box* is there.” So David went and brought God’s Holy Box from Obed Edom’s house. David was very happy and excited. ¹³When the [men] that carried the Lord’s Holy Box had walked six steps, [they stopped and] David sacrificed a bull and a fat calf. ¹⁴David was dancing in front of the Lord. David was wearing a linen ephod.*

¹⁵David and all the Israelites were excited—they shouted and blew the trumpet as they brought the Lord’s Holy Box* into the city. ¹⁶Saul’s daughter Michal was looking out the window. While the Lord’s Holy Box was being carried into the city, David was jumping and dancing before the Lord. Michal saw this, and she was upset at David. [She thought he was making a fool of himself.]

¹⁷David put up a tent for the Holy Box.* The Israelites put the Lord’s Holy Box in its place under the tent. Then David offered burnt offerings and fellowship offerings before the Lord.

¹⁸After David had finished offering the burnt offerings and the fellowship offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the Lord

Perez Uzzah This name means “The Punishment of Uzzah.”

Holy Box The Box of the Agreement. Also called “The Ark of the Covenant,” the box containing the stone tablets with the Ten Commandments written on them and the other things that proved God was with the people of Israel during their time in the Sinai Desert.

City of David A part of the city of Jerusalem.

Obed Edom of Gath A person from the family group of Levi that lived near Jerusalem.

ephod A vest usually worn by priests.

All-Powerful. ¹⁹David also gave a share of bread, a raisin cake and some date bread, to every man and woman of Israel. Then all the people went home.

Michal Scolds David

²⁰David went back to bless his house. But Saul’s daughter Michal came out to meet him. Michal said, “The king of Israel did not honor himself today! You took off your clothes in front of your servants’ girls.* You were like a fool who takes off his clothes without shame!”

²¹Then David said to Michal, “The Lord chose me, not your father or any person from his family. The Lord chose me to be leader of his people, the Israelites. So I will continue dancing and celebrating in front of the Lord. ²²I might do things that are even more embarrassing! Maybe you won’t respect me, but the girls you are talking about are proud of me!”

²³Saul’s daughter Michal never had a child. She died without having any children.

David Wants to Build a Temple

7 After King David moved into his new house the Lord gave him peace from all of his enemies around him. ²King David said to Nathan the prophet, “Look, I am living in a fancy house made of cedar wood, but God’s Holy Box* is still kept in a tent! [We should build a nice building for the Holy Box.]”

³Nathan said to King David, “Do whatever you want to do. The Lord will be with you.”

⁴But that night, the Lord’s word came to Nathan. The Lord said, ⁵“Go and tell my servant David, ‘This is what the Lord says: You are not the person to build a house for me to live in. ⁶I did not live in a house at the time I took the Israelites out of Egypt. No, I traveled around in a tent. I used the tent for my home. ⁷I never told any of the family groups of Israel to build me a fancy house made from cedar wood.’”

You took off ... girls David had on only a holy coat (ephod). We don’t know how much of his body was covered.

⁸“You must say this to my servant David: ‘This is what the Lord All-Powerful says: I chose you while you were out in the pasture following the sheep. I took you from that job and made you the leader of my people, the Israelites. ⁹I have been with you every place you went. I have defeated your enemies for you. I will make you one of the most famous people on earth. ^{10–11}And I chose a place for my people, the Israelites. I planted the Israelites—I gave them their own place to live. I did that so they will not have to move from place to place any more. In the past, I sent judges to lead my people of Israel. But evil people gave them many troubles. That will not happen now. I am giving you peace from all of your enemies. I promise that I will make your family a family of kings.*

¹²“When your life is finished, you will die and be buried with your ancestors. But then I will make one of your own children become the king. ¹³He will build a house (*temple*) for my name. And I will make his kingdom strong forever. ¹⁴I will be his father, and he will be my son.* When he sins, I will use other people to punish him. They will be my whips. ¹⁵But I will never stop loving him. I will continue to be loyal to him. I took away my love and kindness from Saul. I pushed Saul away when I turned to you. I will not do that to your family. ¹⁶Your family of kings will continue—you can depend on that! For you, your kingdom will continue forever! Your throne (*kingdom*) will stand forever!”

¹⁷Nathan told David about that vision.* He told David everything God had said.

David Prays to God

¹⁸Then King David went in and sat in front of the Lord. David said, “Lord, my Master, why am I so important to you? Why is my family important? Why have you made me so important? ¹⁹I am nothing but a servant. I And

you have been so kind to me. But you have also said these kind things about my future family. Lord, my Master, you don’t always talk like this to people, do you? ²⁰How can I continue talking to you? Lord, my Master, you know that I am only a servant. ²¹You will do all these wonderful things because you said you would do them and because you want to do them. And you decided to let me know about all these things. ²²Lord, my Master, that is why you are so great! There is no one like you. There is no god except you! We know that because of what we ourselves have heard about the things you did.

²³“And there is no nation on earth like your people, the people of Israel. They are a special people. They were slaves, but you took them out of Egypt and made them free. You made them your people. You did great and wonderful things for the Israelites. You did wonderful things for your land. ²⁴You made the people of Israel your very own people forever. And Lord, you became their God.

²⁵“Now, Lord God, you promised to do things for me, your servant, and for my family. Now please do the things you promised—make my family a family of kings forever! ²⁶Then your name will be honored forever. People will say, ‘The Lord God All-Powerful rules Israel! And may the family of your servant David continue to be strong in serving you.’

²⁷“You, Lord All-Powerful, the God of Israel, have shown things to me. You said, ‘I will make your family great.’ That is why I, your servant, decided to pray this prayer to you. ²⁸Lord my Master, you are God. And I can trust the things you say. And you said that these good things will happen to me, your servant. ²⁹Now, please, bless my family. Let them stand before you and serve you forever. Lord my Master, you yourself said these things. You yourself blessed my family with a blessing that will continue forever.”

David Wins Many Wars

8 Later, David defeated the Philistines. The Philistine capital city had controlled a large area of land. David took control of that land. ²David also defeated the people of

make ... family of kings Literally, “make a house for you.”
father, and he will be my son God “adopted” the kings from David’s family, and they became his “sons”. See Ps. 2:7.
vision Like a dream. God gave messages to his special people by letting them see and hear things in visions.

Moab. At that time he forced them to lie on the ground. Then he used a rope to separate them into rows. Two rows of men were killed, but the whole third row was allowed to live. In that way, the people of Moab became servants of David. They paid tribute* to him.

³Hadadezer son of Rehob was king of Zobah. David defeated Hadadezer when David went to take control* of the area near the Euphrates River. ⁴David took 1,700 horse soldiers and 20,000 foot soldiers from Hadadezer. David crippled all but 100 of the chariot horses.*

⁵Arameans from Damascus came to help Hadadezer king of Zobah. But David defeated those 22,000 Arameans. ⁶Then David put groups of soldiers in Damascus, Aram. The Arameans became David's servants and brought tribute.* The Lord gave victory to David in every place he went.

⁷David took the gold shields that had belonged to Hadadezer's servants. David took those shields and brought them to Jerusalem. ⁸David also took many, many things made of bronze from Tebah* and Berothai. (Tebah and Berothai were cities that had belonged to Hadadezer.)

⁹Toi king of Hamath heard that David had defeated Hadadezer's whole army. ¹⁰So Toi sent his son Joram to King David. Joram greeted David and blessed him because David had fought against Hadadezer and defeated him. (Hadadezer had fought wars against Toi before.) Joram brought things made of silver, gold, and bronze. ¹¹David took these things and dedicated* them to the Lord. He put them with the other things that he dedicated to the Lord. David had taken those things from the nations that he had defeated. ¹²David defeated Aram, Moab, Ammon, Philistia, and Amalek. David also defeated Hadadezer son of Rehob,

king of Zobah. ¹³David defeated 18,000 Arameans in Salt Valley. He was famous when he came home. ¹⁴David put groups of soldiers in Edom. He put these groups of soldiers through all the land of Edom. All the people of Edom became servants of David. The Lord gave victory to David every place he went.

David's Rule

¹⁵David ruled over all of Israel. And David made good and fair decisions for all of his people. ¹⁶Joab son of Zeruiah was the captain over the army. Jehoshaphat son of Ahilud was the historian. ¹⁷Zadok son of Ahitub and Ahimelech son of Abiathar were priests. Seraiah was secretary. ¹⁸Benaiah son of Jehoiada was in charge of the Kerethites and Pelethites.* And David's sons were important leaders.*

David Is Kind to Saul's Family

9 David asked, "Is there any person still left in Saul's family? I want to show kindness to this person. I want to do it for Jonathan."

²There was a servant named Ziba from Saul's family. David's servants called Ziba to David. King David said to Ziba, "Are you Ziba?"

Ziba said, "Yes, I am your servant Ziba."

³The king said, "Is there any person left in Saul's family? I want to show God's kindness to this person."

Ziba said to King David, "Jonathan has a son still living. He is crippled in both feet."

⁴The king said to Ziba, "Where is this son?"

Ziba said to the king, "He is at the house of Makir son of Ammiel in Lo Debar."

⁵Then King David sent some of his officers to Lo Debar to bring Jonathan's son from the house of Makir son of Ammiel. ⁶Jonathan's son Mephibosheth came to David, and bowed with his face low to the floor.

tribute Money that a people gave to a king that defeated them.

take control Literally, "set up his marker." Kings often set up stone markers to show they had won a war or conquered a certain place.

David crippled ... horses Or, "David destroyed all but 100 chariots."

Tebah The Hebrew has, "Betah." See 1 Chron. 18:8.

dedicated To give for a special use.

Kerethites and Pelethites These were David's special bodyguards. An ancient Aramaic translation has "the archers and stonethrowers." This would mean these men were specially trained in using bows and arrows and slings.

important leaders Literally, "priests."

David said, “Mephibosheth?”

Mephibosheth said, “Yes sir, it is I, your servant Mephibosheth.”

⁷David said to Mephibosheth, “Don’t be afraid. I will be kind to you. I will do this because of your father Jonathan. I will give back to you all of the land of your grandfather Saul. And you will always be able to eat at my table.”

⁸Mephibosheth bowed to David again. Mephibosheth said, “I am no better than a dead dog, but you are being very kind to me.”

⁹Then King David called Saul’s servant Ziba. David said to Ziba, “I have given Saul’s family and everything he owns to your master’s grandson (*Mephibosheth*). ¹⁰You will farm the land for Mephibosheth. Your sons and servants will do this for Mephibosheth. You will harvest the crops. Then your master’s grandson (*Mephibosheth*) will have plenty of food to eat. But Mephibosheth, your master’s grandson, will always be able to eat at my table.”

Ziba had 15 sons and 20 servants. ¹¹Ziba said to King David, “I am your servant. I will do everything that my lord the king commands.”

So Mephibosheth ate at David’s table like one of the king’s sons. ¹²Mephibosheth had a young son named Mica. All the people in Ziba’s family became Mephibosheth’s servants. ¹³Mephibosheth was crippled in both feet. Mephibosheth lived in Jerusalem. Every day Mephibosheth ate at the king’s table.

Hanun Shames David’s Men

10 Later [Nahash] king of the Ammonites died. His son Hanun became the new king after him. ²David said, “Nahash was kind to me. So I will be kind to his son Hanun.” So David sent his officers to comfort Hanun about his father’s death.

So David’s officers went to the land of the Ammonites. ³But the Ammonite leaders said to Hanun, their lord, “Do you think that David is trying to honor your father by sending some men to comfort you? No! David sent these men to secretly study and learn things about your city. They plan to make war against you.”

⁴So Hanun took David’s officers and shaved off one half of their beards. He cut their clothes in the middle down to their hips. Then he sent them away.

⁵When the people told David, he sent [messengers] to meet his officers. He did this because these men were very ashamed. King David said, “Wait at Jericho until your beards grow again. Then come back [to Jerusalem].”

War Against the Ammonites

⁶The Ammonites saw that they had become David’s enemies. So the Ammonites hired Arameans from Beth Rehob and Zobah. There were 20,000 Aramean foot soldiers. The Ammonites also hired the king of Maacah with 1,000 men and 12,000 men from Tob.

⁷David heard about this. So he sent Joab and the whole army of powerful men. ⁸The Ammonites came out and got ready for the battle. They stood at the city gate. The Arameans from Zobah and Rehob, and the men from Tob and Maacah did not stand together with the Ammonites in the field.

⁹Joab saw that there were enemies in front of him and behind him. So Joab chose some of the best Israelite soldiers and lined them up for battle against the Arameans. ¹⁰Then Joab gave the other men to his brother Abishai to lead against the Ammonites. ¹¹Joab said [to Abishai], “If the Arameans are too strong for me, you will help me. If the Ammonites are too strong for you, I will come and help you. ¹²Be strong, and let us fight bravely for our people and for the cities of our God. The Lord will do what he decides is right.”

¹³Then Joab and his men attacked the Arameans. The Arameans ran away from Joab and his men. ¹⁴The Ammonites saw that the Arameans were running away, so they ran away from Abishai and went back to [their] city.

So Joab came back from [the battle with] the Ammonites and went back to Jerusalem.

The Arameans Decide to Fight Again

¹⁵The Arameans saw that the Israelites had defeated them. So they came together [into

one big army. ¹⁶Hadadezer* sent messengers to bring the Arameans that lived on the other side of the Euphrates River. These Arameans came to Helam. Their leader was Shobach, the captain of Hadadezer's army.

¹⁷David heard about this. So he gathered all of the Israelites together. They crossed over the Jordan River and went to Helam.

There the Arameans prepared for battle and attacked. ¹⁸But David defeated the Arameans, and the Arameans ran away from the Israelites. David killed 700 chariot drivers and 40,000 horse soldiers. David also killed Shobach the captain of the Aramean army.

¹⁹The kings that served Hadadezer* saw that the Israelites had defeated them. So they made peace with the Israelites and became their servants. The Arameans were afraid to help the Ammonites again.

David Meets Bathsheba

11 In the spring, at the time when kings go out to war, David sent Joab, his officers, and all of the Israelites out to destroy the Ammonites. Joab's army also attacked their capital city, Rabbah.

But David stayed in Jerusalem. ²In the evening, he got up from his bed. He walked around on the roof of the king's house. While David was on the roof, he saw a woman bathing. The woman was very beautiful. ³So David sent for his officers and asked them who the woman was. An officer answered, "That woman is Bathsheba daughter of Eliam. She is the wife of Uriah the Hittite."

⁴David sent messengers to go and bring Bathsheba to him. When she came to David, he had sexual relations with her. She washed herself, and then went back to her house. ⁵But Bathsheba became pregnant. She sent word to David. She told him, "I am pregnant."

David Tries to Hide His Sin

⁶David sent a message to Joab. "Send Uriah the Hittite to me."

So Joab sent Uriah to David. ⁷Uriah came to David. David talked with Uriah. David asked Uriah how Joab was, how the soldiers

were, and how the war was. ⁸Then David said to Uriah, "Go home and rest.*"

Uriah left the king's house. The king also sent a gift to Uriah. ⁹But Uriah did not go home. Uriah slept outside the door of the king's house. He slept there like all the king's servants did. ¹⁰The servants told David, "Uriah did not go home."

Then David said to Uriah, "You came from a long trip. Why did you not go home?"

¹¹Uriah said to David, "The Holy Box* and the soldiers of Israel and Judah are staying in tents. My lord Joab, and my lord's (*King David's*) officers are camping out in the field. So it is not right for me to go home to drink, and sleep with my wife."

¹²David said to Uriah, "Stay here today. Tomorrow I will send you back to the battle."

Uriah stayed in Jerusalem that day. He stayed until the next morning. ¹³Then David called Uriah to come and see him. Uriah ate and drank with David. David made Uriah drunk. But Uriah still did not go home. That evening, Uriah went to sleep with the king's servants outside the king's door.

David Plans Uriah's Death

¹⁴The next morning, David wrote a letter to Joab. David made Uriah carry the letter. ¹⁵In the letter, David wrote: "Put Uriah on the front lines where the fighting is the hardest. Then leave him there alone, and let him be killed in battle."

¹⁶Joab watched the city and saw where the bravest Ammonites were. He chose Uriah to go to that place. ¹⁷The men of the city (*Rabbah*) came out to fight against Joab. Some of David's men were killed. Uriah the Hittite was one of those men.

¹⁸Then Joab sent a report to David about what happened in the battle. ¹⁹Joab told the messenger to tell King David what had happened in the battle. ²⁰"Maybe the king will

rest Literally, "wash your feet."

Holy Box The Box of the Agreement. Also called "The Ark of the Covenant," the box containing the stone tablets with the Ten Commandments written on them and the other things that proved God was with the people of Israel during their time in the Sinai Desert.

Hadadezer The ancient Greek has Hadarezer.

become upset. Maybe the king will ask, ‘Why did Joab’s army go that close to the city to fight? Surely he knows that there are men on the city walls who can shoot arrows down at his men?’²¹ Surely he remembers that a woman killed Abimelech son of Jerub Besheth? It was at Thebez. The woman was on the city wall and threw the top part of a grinding stone down on Abimelech. So why did he go that close to the wall?’ [If King David says something like that], then you must tell him this message: ‘Your officer Uriah the Hittite also died.’”

²²The messenger went in and told David everything Joab told him to say. ²³The messenger told David, “The men [of Ammon] attacked us in the field. We fought them and chased them all the way to the city gate. ²⁴Then the men on the city wall shot arrows at your officers. Some of your officers were killed. Your officer Uriah the Hittite also died.”

²⁵David said to the messenger, “Give this message to Joab: ‘Don’t be too upset about this. A sword can kill one person as well as the next. Make a stronger attack against Rabbah and you will win.’ Encourage Joab with these words.”

David Marries Bathsheba

²⁶Bathsheba heard that her husband Uriah was dead. Then she cried for her husband. ²⁷After she had finished her time of sadness, David sent servants to take her to his house. She became David’s wife and gave birth to a son for David. But the Lord did not like the bad thing David had done.

Nathan Speaks to David

12 The Lord sent Nathan to David. Nathan went to David. Nathan said, “There were two men in a city. One man was rich. But the other man was poor. ²The rich man had very many sheep and cattle. ³But the poor man had nothing, except one little female lamb that he bought. The poor man fed the lamb. The lamb grew up with this poor man and his children. The lamb ate from the poor man’s food and drank from the poor man’s cup. The lamb slept on the poor man’s chest.

The lamb was like a daughter to the poor man.

⁴“Then a traveler stopped to visit the rich man. [The rich man wanted to give food to the traveler.] But the rich man did not want to take anything from his own sheep or cattle to feed the traveler. No, the rich man took the lamb from the poor man. The rich man [killed the lamb] and cooked it for his visitor.”

⁵David became very angry against the rich man. He said to Nathan, “As the Lord lives, surely the man who did this should die! ⁶He must pay four times the price of the lamb because he did this terrible thing and because he had no mercy.”

Nathan Tells David About His Sin

⁷Then Nathan said to David, “You are that [rich] man! This is what the Lord God of Israel says: ‘I chose* you to be the king of Israel. I saved you from Saul. ⁸I let you take his family and his wives. And I made you king of Israel and Judah. As if that were not enough, I gave you more and more. ⁹So why did you ignore the Lord’s command? Why did you do the thing which he says is wrong? You let the Ammonites kill Uriah the Hittite, and you took his wife. In this way, you killed Uriah with a sword. ¹⁰So the sword will never leave your family. You took Uriah the Hittite’s wife. In this way, you showed that you did not care for me.’

¹¹“This is what the Lord says: ‘I am bringing trouble against you. This trouble will come from your own family. I will take your wives from you and give them to a person who is very close to you. This person will sleep with your wives, and everyone will know it!’* ¹²You [slept with Bathsheba] in secret. But I will punish you so all the people of Israel can see it.’”*

¹³Then David said to Nathan, “I have sinned against the Lord.”

chose Literally, “anointed,” to pour a special oil on a person’s head to show that he was chosen by God to be a king, priest, or prophet.

and everyone will know it Literally, “in the sight of the sun.”

so all ... can see it Literally, “before all of Israel and before the sun.”

Nathan said to David, “The Lord will forgive you, even for this sin. You will not die. ¹⁴But you did things that made the Lord’s enemies lose their respect for him! So your new baby son will die.”

David and Bathsheba’s Baby Dies

¹⁵Then Nathan went home. And the Lord caused the baby boy that was born to David and Uriah’s wife to become very sick. ¹⁶David prayed to God for the baby. David refused to eat or drink. He went into his house and stayed there. He lay on the ground all night.

¹⁷The leaders of David’s family came and tried to pull David up from the ground. But David refused to get up. He refused to eat food with these leaders. ¹⁸On the seventh day, the baby died. David’s servants were afraid to tell him that the baby was dead. They said, “Look, we tried to talk to David while the baby was alive. But he refused to listen to us. If we tell David that the baby is dead, maybe he will do something bad to himself.”

¹⁹But David saw his servants whispering. Then David understood that the baby was dead. So David asked his servants, “Is the baby dead?”

The servants answered, “Yes, he is dead.”

²⁰Then David got up from the floor. He washed himself. He changed his clothes and got dressed. Then he went into the Lord’s house to worship. Then he went home and asked for something to eat. His servants gave him some food, and he ate.

²¹David’s servants said to him, “Why are you doing this thing? When the baby was still living you refused to eat. You cried. But when the baby died you got up and ate food.”

²²David said, “While the baby was still living, I refused to eat and I cried because I thought, ‘Who knows? Maybe the Lord will feel sorry for me and let the baby live.’ ²³But now the baby is dead. So why should I refuse to eat? Can I bring the baby back to life? No! Some day I will go to him, but he can’t come back to me.”

Solomon Is Born

²⁴Then David comforted Bathsheba his wife. He slept with her and had sexual relations with her. Bathsheba became pregnant again. She had another son. David named the boy Solomon. The Lord loved Solomon. ²⁵The Lord sent word through Nathan the prophet. Nathan gave Solomon the name, Jedidiah.* Nathan did this for the Lord.

David Captures Rabbah

²⁶Rabbah was the capital city of the Ammonites. Joab fought against Rabbah and captured it. ²⁷Joab sent messengers to David and said, “I have fought against Rabbah. I have captured the City of Waters. ²⁸Now bring the other people together and attack this city (*Rabbah*). Capture this city before I capture it. If I capture this city, it will be called by my name.”

²⁹So David gathered all of the people and went to Rabbah. He fought against Rabbah and captured the city. ³⁰David took the crown off their king’s head.* The crown was gold and weighed about 75 pounds.* This crown had precious stones in it. They put the crown on David’s head. David took many valuable things out of the city.

³¹David also brought out the people of the city Rabbah and made them work with saws, iron picks, and axes. He also forced them to build things with bricks. David did the same thing to all of the Ammonite cities. Then David and all of his army went back to Jerusalem.

Amnon And Tamar

13 David had a son named Absalom. Absalom’s sister was named Tamar. Tamar was very beautiful. Another one of David’s sons, Amnon,* ²was in love with Tamar. Tamar was a virgin.* Amnon did not

Jedidiah This name means “loved by the Lord.”

their king’s head Or, “Milcom’s head.” Milcom was a false god that the Ammonite people worshiped.

75 pounds Literally, “one talent.”

Amnon Amnon was half-brother to Absalom and Tamar. They all had David as their father, but Amnon had a different mother. See 2 Sam. 3:2,3.

virgin A woman who has not had sexual relations with anyone.

think he should do anything bad to her. But Amnon wanted her very much. Amnon thought about her so much that he made himself sick.*

³Amnon had a friend named Jonadab son of Shimeah. (Shimeah was David’s brother.) Jonadab was a very clever man. ⁴Jonadab said to Amnon, “Every day you look thinner and thinner! You are the king’s son! [You have plenty to eat, so why are you losing weight?] Tell me!”

Amnon told Jonadab, “I love Tamar. But she is the sister of my half-brother Absalom.”

⁵Jonadab said to Amnon, “Go to bed. Act like you are sick. Then your father will come to see you. Tell him, ‘Please let my sister Tamar come in and give me food to eat. Let her make the food in front of me. Then I will see it, and eat it from her hand.’”

⁶So Amnon lay down in bed and acted like he was sick. King David came in to see Amnon. Amnon said to King David, “Please let my sister Tamar come in. Let her make two cakes for me while I watch. Then I can eat from her hands.”

⁷David sent messengers to Tamar’s house. The messengers told Tamar, “Go to your brother Amnon’s house and make some food for him.”

Tamar Makes Food for Amnon

⁸So Tamar went to the house of her brother Amnon. Amnon was in bed. Tamar took some dough, pressed it together with her hands, and cooked the cakes. She did this while Amnon watched. ⁹Then Tamar took the cakes out of the pan and set them out for Amnon. But Amnon refused to eat. Amnon said to his servants, “Get out of here. Leave me alone!” So all of his servants left the room.

Amnon Rapes Tamar

¹⁰Then Amnon said to Tamar, “Bring the food into the bedroom and feed me by hand.”

So Tamar took the cakes she had made and went into her brother’s bedroom. ¹¹She started

Amnon ... sick Or, “Amnon thought up a plan to pretend he was sick.”

to feed Amnon, but he grabbed her hand. He said to her, “Sister, come and sleep with me.”

¹²Tamar said to Amnon, “No, brother! Don’t force me to do this! Don’t do this shameful thing! Terrible things like this should never be done in Israel! ¹³I would never get rid of my shame. And people would think that you are just a common criminal. Please, talk with the king. He will let you marry me.”

¹⁴But Amnon refused to listen to Tamar. He was stronger than Tamar. He forced her to have sexual relations with him. ¹⁵Then Amnon began to hate Tamar. Amnon hated her much more than he had loved her before. Amnon said to Tamar, “Get up and get out of here!”

¹⁶Tamar said to Amnon, “No! Don’t send me away like this. That would be even worse than what you did before!”

But Amnon refused to listen to Tamar. ¹⁷Amnon called his servant and said, “Get this girl out of this room, now! And lock the door after her.”

¹⁸So Amnon’s servant led Tamar out of the room and locked the door after her.

Tamar was wearing a long robe with many colors.* The king’s virgin daughters wore robes like this. ¹⁹Tamar tore her robe of many colors and put ashes on her head. Then she put her hand on her head and began crying.*

²⁰Then, Tamar’s brother Absalom said to her, “Have you been with your brother Amnon? Did he hurt you? Now, calm down sister. Amnon is your brother, [so we will take care of this]. Don’t let it upset you too much.” So Tamar did not say anything. She quietly went to live at Absalom’s house.*

²¹King David heard the news and became very angry. ²²Absalom began to hate Amnon. Absalom did not say one word, good or bad, to Amnon. Absalom hated Amnon because Amnon had raped his sister Tamar.

many colors Or, “stripes.”

Tamar tore ... crying This was the way people showed how very sad and upset they were.

Tamar ... Absalom’s house Or, “Tamar lived in her brother Absalom’s house, a ruined woman.”

Absalom's Revenge

²³Two years later, Absalom had some men come to Baal Hazor to cut the wool from his sheep. Absalom invited all of the king's sons to come and watch. ²⁴Absalom went to the king and said, "I have some men coming to cut the wool from my sheep. Please come with your servants and watch."

²⁵King David said to Absalom, "No, son. We will not all go. It will be too much trouble for you."

Absalom begged David to go. David did not go, but he did give his blessing.

²⁶Absalom said, "If you don't want to go, then please let my brother Amnon go with me."

King David asked Absalom, "Why should he go with you?"

²⁷Absalom kept begging David. Finally, David let Amnon and all of the king's other sons go with Absalom.

Amnon Is Murdered

²⁸Then Absalom gave this command to his servants, "Watch Amnon. When he is drunk and feeling good from the wine, I will give you the command. You must attack Amnon and kill him. Don't be afraid of being punished. After all, you will only be obeying my command. Now, be strong and brave."

²⁹So Absalom's young soldiers did what he said. They killed Amnon. But all of David's other sons escaped. Each son got on his mule and escaped.

David Hears About Amnon's Death

³⁰The king's sons were still on their way into town. But King David got a message about what happened. But the message was, "Absalom has killed all of the king's sons! Not one of the sons was left alive."

³¹King David tore his clothes and lay on the ground.* All of David's officers standing near him also tore their clothes.

³²But then David's brother, Jonadab son of Shimeah, said, "Don't think that all of the

king's sons were killed! Only Amnon is dead. Absalom has been planning this from the day that Amnon raped his sister Tamar. ³³My lord and king, don't think that all of your sons are dead. Only Amnon is dead."

³⁴Absalom ran away.

There was a guard standing on the city wall. He saw many people coming from the other side of the hill. ³⁵So Jonadab said to King David, "Look, I was right! The king's sons are coming."

³⁶The king's sons came in just after Jonadab said that. They were crying loudly. David and all of his officers began crying. They all cried very hard. ³⁷David cried for his son (*Amnon*) every day.

Absalom Escapes to Geshur

Absalom ran away to Talmai son of Ammihud, king of Geshur.* ³⁸After Absalom had run away to Geshur, he stayed there for three years. ³⁹King David was comforted after Amnon died, but he missed Absalom very much.

Joab Sends a Wise Woman to David

14 Joab son of Zeruiah knew that King David missed Absalom very much. ²So Joab sent [messengers] to Tekoa to bring a wise woman from there. Joab said to this wise woman, "Please pretend to be very sad. Put on clothes of sadness. Don't dress up. Act like a woman who has been crying many days for someone that died. ³Go to the king and talk to him using these words [that I tell you]." Then Joab told the wise woman what to say.

⁴Then the woman from Tekoa talked to the king. She bowed with her face to the ground. Then she said, "King, please help me!"

⁵King David said to her, "What's your problem?"

The woman said, "I am a widow. My husband is dead. ⁶I had two sons. They were out in the field fighting. There was no one to stop them. One son killed the other son. ⁷Now the whole family is against me. They said to

tore his clothes ... ground This showed that he was very sad and upset.

Talmai ... king of Geshur Talmai was Absalom's grandfather. See 2 Sam. 3:3.

me, ‘Bring us the son who killed his brother and we will kill him. Why? Because he killed his brother.’ My son is like the last spark of a fire. If they kill my son, then that fire will burn out and be finished. He is the only son left alive to get his father’s property. So my [dead] husband’s property will go to someone else and his name will be removed from the land.”

⁸Then the king said to the woman, “Go home. I will take care of things for you.”

⁹The woman of Tekoa said to the king, “Let the blame be on me, my lord and king! You and your kingdom are innocent.”

¹⁰King David said, “If someone is saying bad things to you, then bring that person to me. He won’t bother you again.”

¹¹The woman said, “Please, use the name of the Lord your God and swear (*promise*) that you will stop those people. They want to punish my son for murdering his brother. Swear that you won’t let them destroy my son.”

David said, “As the Lord lives, [no one will hurt your son]. Not even one hair from your son’s head will fall to the ground.”

¹²The woman said, “My lord and king, please let me say something else to you.”

The king said, “Speak.”

¹³Then the woman said, “Why have you planned these things against the people of God? Yes, when you say these things, you show you are guilty. Why? Because you have not brought back the son that you forced to leave home. ¹⁴We will all die some day. We will be like water that is spilled on the ground. No person can gather this water back from the ground. You know God forgives people. God made plans for people who are forced to run away for safety—God doesn’t force them to run away from him! ¹⁵My lord and king, I came to say these words to you. Why? Because the people made me afraid. I said to myself, ‘I will talk to the king. Maybe the king will help me. ¹⁶The king will listen to me and save me from the man who wants to kill me and my son. That man just wants to keep us from getting the things God gave us.’ ¹⁷I know that the words of my lord the king will give me rest, because you are like an angel from God. You know what is good

and what is bad. And the Lord your God is with you.”

¹⁸King David answered the woman, “You must answer the question I will ask you.”

The woman said, “My lord and king, please ask your question.”

¹⁹The king said, “Did Joab tell you to say all these things?”

The woman answered, “As you live, my lord and king, you are right! Your officer Joab did tell me to say these things. ²⁰Joab did these things] so that you would see things differently. My lord, you are as wise as God’s angel. You know everything that happens on earth.”

Absalom Returns to Jerusalem

²¹The king said to Joab, “Look, I will do what I promised. Now please bring back the young man Absalom.”

²²Joab bowed with his face on the ground. He blessed King David, and said, “Today I know that you are pleased with me. I know because you have done what I asked.”

²³Then Joab got up and went to Geshur and brought Absalom to Jerusalem. ²⁴But King David said, “Absalom can go back to his own house. He can’t come to see me.” So Absalom went back to his own house. Absalom could not go to see the king.

²⁵People really bragged about how good-looking Absalom was. No man in Israel was as handsome as Absalom. There was not a blemish on Absalom—from his head to his feet. ²⁶At the end of every year, Absalom cut the hair from his head and weighed it. The hair weighed about five pounds.* ²⁷Absalom had three sons and one daughter. This daughter’s name was Tamar. Tamar was a beautiful woman.

Absalom Forces Joab to Come See Him

²⁸Absalom lived in Jerusalem for two full years without being allowed to visit King David. ²⁹Absalom sent [messengers] to Joab. [These messengers asked Joab to] send

five pounds Literally, “200 shekels by the king’s weight.”

Absalom to the king. But Joab would not come to Absalom. Absalom sent ¹a message_J a second time. But Joab still refused to come.

³⁰Then Absalom said to his servants, “Look, Joab’s field is next to my field. He has barley growing in that field. Go burn the barley.”

So Absalom’s servants went and started a fire in Joab’s field. ³¹Joab got up and came to Absalom’s house. Joab said to Absalom, “Why did your servants burn my field?”

³²Absalom said to Joab, “I sent a message to you. I asked you to come here. I wanted to send you to the king. I wanted you to ask him why he asked me to come home from Geshur. ¹I can’t see him, so_J it would have been better for me to stay in Geshur. Now let me see the king. If I have sinned, then he can kill me!”

Absalom Visits King David

³³Then Joab came to the king and told him ¹what Absalom said_J. The king called for Absalom. Absalom came to the king and bowed low on the ground before the king. The king kissed Absalom.

Absalom Makes Many Friends

15 After this, Absalom got a chariot* and horses for himself. He had 50 men run in front of him ¹while he drove the chariot_J. ²Absalom got up early and stood near the gate.* Absalom watched for any person with problems who was going to King David for judgment. Then Absalom would talk to that person. Absalom would say, “What city are you from?” The man would answer, “I am from such and such family group in Israel.” ³Then Absalom would say to this man, “Look, you are right, but King David won’t listen to you.”

⁴Absalom would also say, “Oh, I wish someone would make me a judge in this country! Then I could help every man who comes to me with a problem. I would help him get a fair solution to his problem.”

⁵And if a person came to Absalom and started to bow down to him, Absalom would ¹treat him like a close friend_J—Absalom would reach out and touch that person and kiss him. ⁶Absalom did that to all the Israelites who came to King David for judgment. In this way, Absalom won the hearts of all the people of Israel.

Absalom Plans to Take David’s Kingdom

⁷After four years,* Absalom said to King David, “Please let me go to complete my special promise that I made to the Lord at Hebron. ⁸I made that promise while I was still living in Geshur, Aram. I said, ‘If the Lord brings me back to Jerusalem, then I will serve the Lord.’”

⁹King David said, “Go in peace.”

Absalom went to Hebron. ¹⁰But Absalom sent spies through all the family groups of Israel. These spies told the people, “When you hear the trumpet, then say, ‘Absalom has become the king at Hebron!’”

¹¹Absalom invited 200 men to go with him. Those men left Jerusalem with him, but they did not know what he was planning. ¹²Ahithophel was one of David’s advisers. Ahithophel was from the town of Giloh. While Absalom was offering sacrifices,* he called Ahithophel to come from his city (Giloh). Absalom’s plans were working very well and more and more people began to support him.

David Learns About Absalom’s Plans

¹³A man came in to tell the news to David. The man said, “The people of Israel are beginning to follow Absalom.”

¹⁴Then David said to all of his officers who were with him in Jerusalem, “We must escape! ¹If we don’t escape_J, then Absalom will not let us get away. Let’s hurry before Absalom catches us. He will destroy us all. And he will kill the people of Jerusalem.”

¹⁵The king’s officers told him, “We will do anything you tell us.”

chariot(s) A small wagon used in war.

gate This was where people came to do all of their business. This was also where many court cases were held.

four years Some ancient writings say “40 years.”

sacrifice(s) A gift to God. Usually it was a special animal that was killed and burned on an altar.

David and His People Escape

¹⁶King David went out with all of the people in his house. The king left ten of his wives* to take care of the house. ¹⁷The king went out with all of his people following him. They stopped at the last house. ¹⁸All of his officers passed by the king. And all of the Kerethites, all of the Pelethites, and the Gittites (600 men from Gath) passed by the king.

¹⁹The king said to Ittai from Gath, “Why are you also going with us? Turn back and stay with the new king (*Absalom*). You are a foreigner. This is not your homeland. ²⁰Only yesterday you came to join me. Must you now wander from place to place with me? No! Take your brothers and go back. May kindness and loyalty be shown to you.”

²¹But Ittai answered the king, “As the Lord lives, and as long as you live, I will stay with you. I will be with you in life or death!”

²²David said to Ittai, “Come, let’s go cross Kidron Brook.”

So Ittai from Gath and all of his people and their children crossed over [Kidron Brook]. ²³All the people* were crying loudly. King David crossed over Kidron Brook. Then all of the people went out to the desert. ²⁴Zadok and all of the Levites with him were carrying the Box of God’s Agreement.* They set down God’s Holy Box. And Abiathar said prayers* until all of the people had left Jerusalem.

²⁵King David said to Zadok, “Take God’s Holy Box* back to Jerusalem. If the Lord is pleased with me, then he will bring me back and let me see Jerusalem and his temple. ²⁶But if the Lord says that he is not pleased with me, then he can do anything he wants to me.”

wives Literally, “concubines,” women servants that were like wives.

people Literally, “country.”

Box of God’s Agreement, God’s Holy Box Also called “The Ark of the Covenant,” the box containing the stone tablets with the Ten Commandments written on them and the other things that proved God was with the people of Israel during their time in the Sinai Desert.

said prayers Literally, “went up.” This could mean, “burn incense,” “offer sacrifices,” or it might simply mean that Abiathar stood to one side, by the Holy Box, until all of the people passed by.

²⁷The king said to Zadok the priest, “You are a seer.* Go back to the city in peace. Take your son Ahimaaz and Jonathan the son of Abiathar. ²⁸I will be waiting near the places where people go across the river into the desert. I will wait there until I hear from you.”

²⁹So Zadok and Abiathar took God’s Holy Box* back to Jerusalem and stayed there.

David’s Prayer Against Ahithophel

³⁰David went up the Mount of Olives. He was crying. He covered his head and he went without shoes on his feet. All of the people with David also covered their heads. They went with David, crying.

³¹A person told David, “Ahithophel is one of the people who made plans with Absalom.” Then David prayed, “Lord, I ask you to make Ahithophel’s advice useless.” ³²David came to the top of the mountain. This was where he often worshiped God. At that time, Hushai the Arkite came to him. Hushai’s coat was torn, and there was dust on his head.*

³³David said to Hushai, “If you go with me, then you will be just one more person to care for. ³⁴But if you go back to Jerusalem, you can make Ahithophel’s advice become useless. Tell Absalom, ‘King, I am your servant. I served your father, but now I will serve you.’ ³⁵The priests Zadok and Abiathar will be with you. You must tell them everything you hear in the king’s house. ³⁶Zadok’s son Ahimaaz and Abiathar’s son Jonathan will be with them. You will send them to tell me everything you hear.”

³⁷Then David’s friend Hushai went into the city. And Absalom arrived at Jerusalem.

Ziba Meets David

16 David went a short way over the top [of the Mount of Olives] and met Ziba, the servant of Mephibosheth. Ziba had two donkeys with saddles on them. The donkeys also carried 200 loaves of bread, 100 bunches of raisins, 100 summer fruits, and a wineskin

seer Another name for a prophet.

coat was torn ... head This showed he was very sad.

full of wine. ²King David said to Ziba, “What are these things for?”

Ziba answered, “The donkeys are for the king’s family to ride on. The bread and the summer fruit are for the servants to eat. And the wine is refreshment for whoever begins to feel weak in the desert.”

³Then the king asked, “And where is Mephibosheth?”*

Ziba answered the king, “Mephibosheth is staying in Jerusalem. He thinks, ‘Today the Israelites will give my grandfather’s* kingdom back to me.’”

⁴Then the king said to Ziba, “[Because of that,] I now give you everything that belonged to Mephibosheth.”

Ziba said, “I bow [to you]. I hope I will always be able to please you.”

Shimei Curses David

⁵David came to Bahurim. A man from Saul’s family came out from Bahurim. This man’s name was Shimei son of Gera. Shimei came out saying bad things to David. And he kept saying bad things again and again.

⁶Shimei began throwing stones at David and his officers. But the people and the soldiers gathered around David—they were all around him. ⁷Shimei cursed David. He said, “Get out, get out, you no-good murderer!* ⁸The Lord is punishing you. Why? Because you killed people in Saul’s family. You stole Saul’s place as king. But now the same bad things are happening to you. The Lord has given the kingdom to your son Absalom. Why? Because you are a murderer.”*

⁹Abishai son of Zeruiah said to the king, “Why should this dead dog curse you, my lord the king? Let me go over and cut off Shimei’s head.”

¹⁰But the king answered, “What can I do, sons of Zeruiah? Sure, Shimei is cursing me. But the Lord told him to curse me.”

¹¹David also said to Abishai and all his servants, “Look, my very own son (*Absalom*)

is trying to kill me. This man (*Shimei*) from the family group of Benjamin has more right to kill me. Let him alone. Let him keep on saying bad things to me. The Lord told him to do this. ¹²Maybe the Lord will see the wrong things that are happening to me. Then maybe the Lord will give me something good for every bad thing that Shimei says today.”

¹³So David and his men went on [their way] down the road. But Shimei kept following David. Shimei walked on the other side of the road by the side of the hill. Shimei kept saying bad things to David on his way. Shimei also threw stones and dirt at David.

¹⁴King David and all his people came to [the Jordan River]. The king and his people were tired. So they rested and refreshed themselves there.

¹⁵Absalom, Ahithophel, and all the people of Israel came to Jerusalem. ¹⁶David’s friend, Hushai the Arkite, came to Absalom. Hushai said to Absalom, “Long live the king! Long live the king!”

¹⁷Absalom answered, “Why are you not loyal to your friend [David]? Why did you not leave [Jerusalem] with your friend?”

¹⁸Hushai said, “I belong to the person that the Lord chooses. These people and the people of Israel chose you. I will stay with you. ¹⁹In the past, I served your father. So, now I should serve David’s son. I will serve you.”

Absalom Asks Ahithophel for Advice

²⁰Absalom said to Ahithophel, “Please tell us what we should do.”

²¹Ahithophel said to Absalom, “Your father left some of his wives* here to take care of the house. Go and have sexual relations with them. Then all the Israelites will hear that your father hates you. And all of your people will be encouraged to give you more support.”

²²Then they put up a tent for Absalom on the roof of the house.* And Absalom had sexual relations with his father’s wives.* All

Mephibosheth Literally, “your master’s grandson.”

grandfather’s Literally, “father’s.”

murderer Literally, “man of blood.”

wives Literally, “concubines,” women servants that were like wives.

roof of the house The houses had flat roofs which were often used as an extra room.

the Israelites saw it. ²³At that time, the advice of Ahithophel was very [important] to both David and Absalom. It was as [important as] God’s word to a man.

Ahithophel’s Advice About David

17 Ahithophel also said to Absalom, “Let me now choose 12,000 men. Then I will chase David tonight. ²¹I will catch him while he is tired and weak. I will scare him. And all his people will run away. But I will kill only King David. ³Then I will bring all the people back to you. If David is dead, then all the people will come back in peace.”

⁴This plan seemed good to Absalom and all the leaders of Israel. ⁵But Absalom said, “Now call Hushai the Arkite. I also want to hear what he says.”

Hushai Ruins Ahithophel’s Advice

⁶Hushai came to Absalom. Absalom said to Hushai, “This is the plan Ahithophel gave. Should we follow it? If not, tell us.”

⁷Hushai said to Absalom, “Ahithophel’s advice is not good this time.” ⁸Hushai added, “You know that your father and his men are strong men. They are as dangerous as a wild bear when something has taken its babies. Your father is a skilled fighter. He will not stay [all night] with the people. ⁹He is probably already hiding in a cave or some other place. If your father attacks your men first, then people will hear the news. And they will think, ‘Absalom’s followers are losing!’ ¹⁰Then even the people who are as brave as a lion will become scared. Why? Because all the Israelites know that your father is a strong fighter and that his men are brave.

¹¹“This is what I suggest: You must gather all the Israelites together from Dan to Beersheba.* Then there will be many people, like the sand by the sea. Then you yourself must go into the battle. ¹²We will catch David in the place where he is hiding. We will attack David with many soldiers—We will be like the many drops of dew that cover the ground. We

will kill David and all of his men. No man will be left alive. ¹³But if David escapes into a city, then all the Israelites will bring ropes to that city. We will pull down the walls of that city. We will pull them down into the valley. There won’t be even a small stone left [in that city].”

¹⁴Absalom and all the Israelites said, “The advice of Hushai the Arkite is better than Ahithophel’s advice.” [They said this] because it was the Lord’s plan. The Lord had planned to make Ahithophel’s good advice useless. That is how the Lord would punish Absalom.

Hushai Sends a Warning to David

¹⁵Hushai told those things to the priests, Zadok and Abiathar. Hushai told them about the things that Ahithophel suggested to Absalom and the leaders of Israel. Hushai also told Zadok and Abiathar about the things that he himself had suggested. [Hushai said], ¹⁶“Quickly! Send [a message] to David. Tell him not to stay tonight at the places where people cross into the desert. Tell him to go across the Jordan River at once. If he crosses the river, then the king and all his people will not be caught.”

¹⁷[The priests’ sons,] Jonathan and Ahimaaz, waited at En Rogel. They did not want to be seen going into the town, so a servant girl came out to them. She gave them the message. Then Jonathan and Ahimaaz went and told those things to King David.

¹⁸But a boy saw Jonathan and Ahimaaz. The boy ran to tell Absalom. Jonathan and Ahimaaz ran away quickly. They arrived at a man’s house in Bahurim. The man had a well in his courtyard.* Jonathan and Ahimaaz went down into this well. ¹⁹The man’s wife spread a sheet over the well. Then she covered the well with grain. [The well looked like a pile of grain,] so no person could know [that Jonathan and Ahimaaz were hiding there]. ²⁰Absalom’s servants came to the woman at the house. They asked, “Where are Ahimaaz and Jonathan?”

Dan to Beersheba This means all the people of Israel. Dan was the town farthest north, and Beersheba was in the south.

courtyard An open area outside the house. Many houses were built around courtyards so people could work, cook, or eat outside.

The woman said to Absalom's servants, "They have already crossed over the brook."

Absalom's servants then went to look for Jonathan and Ahimaaz. But they could not find them. So Absalom's servants went back to Jerusalem.

²¹After Absalom's servants left, Jonathan and Ahimaaz came up out of the well. They went and told King David. They said to David, "Hurry, go across the river. Ahithophel is planning to do these things against you."

²²Then David and all his people crossed over the Jordan River. Before the sun came up, all of David's people had already crossed the Jordan River.

Ahithophel Kills Himself

²³Ahithophel saw that the Israelites did not accept his advice. Ahithophel put a saddle on his donkey and went back to his home town. He made plans for his family and then he hanged himself. After Ahithophel died, the people buried him in his father's tomb.*

Absalom Crosses the Jordan River

²⁴David arrived at Mahanaim.

Absalom and the Israelites that were with him went across the Jordan River. ²⁵Absalom had made Amasa the new captain of the army. Amasa took Joab's place.* Amasa was the son of Ithra the Ishmaelite.* Amasa's mother was Abigail, the daughter of Nahash sister of Zeruiah.* (Zeruiah was Joab's mother.)

²⁶Absalom and the Israelites made their camp in the land of Gilead.

Shobi, Makir, and Barzillai

²⁷David arrived at Mahanaim. Shobi, Makir, and Barzillai were at that place. (Shobi son of Nahash was from the Ammonite town

of Rabbah. Makir son of Ammiel was from Lo Debar. Barzillai was from Rogelim in Gilead.) ^{28–29}Those three men said, "The people in the desert are tired, hungry and thirsty." So they brought many things to David and the people that were with him. They brought them beds, bowls, and other kinds of dishes. They also brought wheat, barley, flour, roasted grain, beans, lentils, dried seeds, honey, butter, sheep, and cheese made from cow's milk.

David Gets the Battle Ready

18 David counted his people. He chose captains over 1,000 and captains over 100 to lead these people. ²David separated the people into three groups. And then David sent the people out. Joab led one third of the people. Joab's brother, Abishai son of Zeruiah led another third of the people. And Ittai from Gath led the last third of the people.

King David said to the people, "I will also go with you."

³But the people said, "No! You must not go with us. Why? Because if we run away in the battle, Absalom's men will not care. Even if half of us are killed, Absalom's men will not care. But you are worth 10,000 of us! It is better for you to stay in the city. Then, if we need help, you can help us."

⁴The king said to his people, "I will do what you think is best."

Then the king stood at the side of the gate. The army went out. They went out in groups of 100 and 1,000.

"Be Gentle With Young Absalom!"

⁵The king gave a command to Joab, Abishai, and Ittai. He said, "Do this for me: Be gentle with young Absalom!"

All the people heard the king's orders about Absalom to the captains.

David's Army Defeats Absalom's Army

⁶David's army went out into the field against Absalom's Israelites. They fought in the forest of Ephraim. ⁷David's army defeated the Israelites. There were 20,000 men killed that day. ⁸The battle spread through all the

tomb A cave or a building where dead people are buried.

Amasa took Joab's place Joab still supported David. Joab was one of the three captains in David's army when David was running away from Absalom. See 2 Sam. 18:2.

Ishmaelite The Hebrew has "Israelite," but see 1 Chron 2:17 and the ancient Greek translation.

Amasa's mother ... Zeruiah Literally, "Ithra had sexual relations with Abigail, the daughter of Nahash sister of Zeruiah."

country. But that day more men died in the forest than by the sword.

⁹It happened that Absalom met David's officers. Absalom jumped on his mule and tried to escape. The mule went under the branches of a large oak tree. The branches were thick, and Absalom's head got caught in the tree. His mule ran out from under him, so Absalom was hanging above the ground.*

¹⁰A man saw this happen. He told Joab, "I saw Absalom hanging in an oak tree."

¹¹Joab said to the man, "Why did you not kill him and let him fall to the ground? I would have given you a belt and ten pieces of silver!"

¹²The man said to Joab, "I would not try to hurt the king's son even if you gave me 1,000 pieces of silver. Why? Because we heard the king's command to you, Abishai, and Ittai. The king said, 'Be careful not to hurt young Absalom.' ¹³If I had killed Absalom, the king himself would find out. And you would punish me."

¹⁴Joab said, "I will not waste my time here with you!"

Absalom was still alive and hanging in the oak tree. Joab took three spears and threw them at Absalom. The spears went through Absalom's heart. ¹⁵Joab had ten young soldiers who helped him in battle. These ten men gathered around Absalom and killed him.

¹⁶Joab blew the trumpet and called the people to stop chasing Absalom's Israelites. ¹⁷Then Joab's men took Absalom's body and threw it into a large hole in the forest. They filled the large hole with many stones.

All the Israelites that followed Absalom ran away and went home.

¹⁸While Absalom was alive he put up a pillar in King's Valley. Absalom said, "I have no son to keep my name alive." So he named the pillar after himself. That pillar is called "Absalom's Monument" even today.

Joab Sends the News to David

¹⁹Ahimaaz the son of Zadok said to Joab, "Let me now run and bring the news to King

David. I'll tell him the Lord has destroyed the enemy for him."

²⁰Joab answered Ahimaaz, "No, you will not bring the news to David today. You can bring the news another time, but not today. Why? Because the king's son is dead."

²¹Then Joab said to a man from Ethiopia, "Go, tell the king about the things you have seen."

So the Ethiopian bowed to Joab and ran to tell David.

²²But Ahimaaz son of Zadok begged Joab again, "No matter what happens, please let me also run after the Ethiopian!"

Joab said, "Son, why do you want to carry the news? You will not get any reward for the news you bring."

²³Ahimaaz answered, "No matter what happens, I will run to David."

Joab said to Ahimaaz, "Fine, run to David!"

Then Ahimaaz ran through Jordan Valley and passed the Ethiopian.

David Hears the News

²⁴David was sitting between the two gates of the city. The watchman went up to the roof over the gate walls. The watchman looked up and saw a man running alone. ²⁵The watchman shouted to tell King David.

King David said, "If the man is alone, he is bringing news."

The man came closer and closer to the city. ²⁶The watchman saw another man running. The watchman called to the gatekeeper, "Look! Another man is running alone."

The king said, "He is also bringing news."

²⁷The watchman said, "I think the first man runs like Ahimaaz son of Zadok."

The king said, "Ahimaaz is a good man. He must be bringing good news."

²⁸Ahimaaz called to the king, "All is fine!" Ahimaaz bowed with his face to the ground in front of the king. Ahimaaz said, "Praise the Lord your God! The Lord has defeated the men who were against you, my lord and king."

²⁹The king asked, "Is young Absalom all right?"

above the ground Literally, "between heaven and earth."

Ahimaaz answered, “When Joab sent me, I saw some great excitement. But I don’t know what it was.”

³⁰Then the king said, “Step over here and wait.” Ahimaaz went there and stood there waiting.

³¹The Ethiopian arrived. He said, “News for my lord and king. Today the Lord has punished the people who were against you!”

³²The king asked the Ethiopian, “Is young Absalom all right?”

The Ethiopian answered, “I hope your enemies and all people who come against you to hurt you will be [punished] like this young man (*Absalom*).”

³³Then the king knew Absalom was dead. The king was very upset. He went up to the room over the gate and cried. He kept crying again and again as he walked to that room. He was saying, “O my son Absalom, my son Absalom! I wish I had died instead of you. O Absalom, my son, my son!”

Joab Scolds David

19 People told the news to Joab. They told Joab, “Look, the king is crying and very sad for Absalom.”

²[David’s army] had won the battle that day. But the joy of victory had turned to sadness for all the people. It was a very sad day because the people heard, “The king is very sad for his son.”

³The people came into the city quietly. They were like people who had been defeated in battle and had run away. ⁴The king had covered his face. He was crying loudly, “O my son Absalom, O Absalom, my son, my son!”

⁵Joab came into the king’s house. Joab said to the king, “You are humiliating every one of your officers! Look, those officers saved your life today. And they saved the lives of your sons and daughters and your wives and women servants.* ⁶You love the people who hate you, and you hate the people who love you. Today you have made it clear that your

officers and men mean nothing to you. I can see that you would be perfectly happy if Absalom had lived and all of us had been killed today! ⁷Now get up and go speak to your officers. Encourage them! I swear by the Lord that if you don’t go out and do that right now, you won’t have one man with you tonight. And that will be worse than all the trouble you have had since you were a child.”

⁸Then the king went to the city gate.* The news spread that the king was at the gate. So all the people came to see the king.

David Is King Again

All the Israelites [that followed Absalom] had run away and went home. ⁹All the people in all the family groups of Israel began to argue. They said, “King David saved us from the Philistines and our other enemies. David ran away from Absalom. ¹⁰So we chose Absalom to rule us. But now Absalom is dead. He was killed in battle. So we should make David the king again.”

¹¹King David sent [a message] to Zadok and Abiathar the priests. David said, “Speak to the leaders of Judah. Say, ‘Why are you the last family group to bring King David back to his house? See, all the Israelites are talking about bringing the king back to his house. ¹²You are my brothers, you are my family. Then why are you the last family group to bring back the king?’ ¹³And say to Amasa, ‘You are part of my family. May God punish me if I don’t make you captain of the army in Joab’s place.’”

¹⁴David touched the hearts of all the people of Judah, so that they agreed like one man. The people of Judah sent [a message] to the king. They said, “You and all your officers come back!”

¹⁵King David came to the Jordan River. The people of Judah came to Gilgal to meet the king and take him across the Jordan River.

Shimei Asks David to Forgive Him

¹⁶Shimei son of Gera was from the family group of Benjamin. He lived in Bahurim.

women servants Or, “concubines,” slave women who were like a wives to a man.

city gate This was where the public meetings were held.

Shimei hurried down to meet King David. Shimei came with the people of Judah. ¹⁷About 1,000 people from the family group of Benjamin came with Shimei. Ziba the servant from Saul's family also came. Ziba brought his 15 sons and 20 servants with him. All these people hurried to the Jordan River to meet King David.

¹⁸The people went across the Jordan River to help bring the king's family back to Judah. The people did anything the king wanted. While the king was crossing the river, Shimei son of Gera came to meet him. Shimei bowed down on the ground in front of the king. ¹⁹Shimei said to the king, "My lord, don't think about the wrong things I did. My lord and king, don't remember the bad things I did when you left Jerusalem. ²⁰You know that I sinned. That is why today I am the first person from Joseph's family* to come down and meet you, my lord and king."

²¹But Abishai son of Zeruiah said, "We must kill Shimei because he asked for bad things to happen to the Lord's chosen king."

²²David said, "What should I do with you, sons of Zeruiah? Today you are against me. No person will be put to death in Israel. Today I know I am king over Israel."

²³Then the king said to Shimei, "You will not die." The king made a promise to Shimei that he himself would not kill Shimei.*

Mephibosheth Goes to See David

²⁴Mephibosheth, Saul's grandson,* came down to meet King David. From the time the king had left Jerusalem until he came back in peace, Mephibosheth had not cared for his feet, trimmed his mustache, or washed his clothes. ²⁵When Mephibosheth met the king at Jerusalem, the king said, "Mephibosheth, why didn't you go with me [when I ran away from Jerusalem]?"

Joseph's family This probably means the Israelites that followed Absalom. Many times the name Ephraim (a son of Joseph) is used for all of the family groups in northern Israel.

The king ... not kill Shimei David did not kill Shimei. But a few years later, David's son Solomon ordered Shimei to be put to death. See 1 Kings 2:44–46.

grandson Literally, "son."

²⁶Mephibosheth answered, "My lord and king, my servant tricked me. I am crippled so I said to my servant, Ziba, 'Go put a saddle on a donkey. Then I will ride on it and go with the king.' ²⁷But my servant tricked me. He [only went to you and] said bad things about me. But my lord and king, you are like an angel from God. Do whatever you think is right. ²⁸You could have killed all my grandfather's* family. But you did not do this. You put me with the people who eat at your own table. So I don't have a right to complain to the king about anything."

²⁹The king said to Mephibosheth, "Don't say anything more about your problems. This is what I decide: You and Ziba will divide the land."

³⁰Mephibosheth said to the king, "My lord and king, it is enough that you have come home in peace. Let Ziba have the land!"

David Asks Barzillai to Come with Him

³¹Barzillai of Gilead came down from Rogelim. He came to the Jordan River with King David. He went with the king to lead him across [the river]. ³²Barzillai was a very old man. He was 80 years old. He had given the king food and other things when David was staying at Mahanaim. Barzillai [could do this because] he was a very rich man. ³³David said to Barzillai, "Come across [the river] with me. I will take care of you if you will live in Jerusalem with me."

³⁴But Barzillai said to the king, "Do you know how old I am? Do you think I can go with you to Jerusalem? ³⁵I am 80 years old! I am too old to tell which is bad and which is good. I am too old to taste the things I eat or drink. I am too old to hear any more the voices of men and women that sing. Why should you want to be bothered with me? ³⁶I don't need any of the things that you want to give me. I will go across the Jordan River with you. ³⁷But please, let me go back home. Then I can die in my own town and be buried

grandfather's Literally, "father's."

in the grave of my father and mother. But here, Kimham can be your servant; let him go back with you, my lord and king. Do whatever you want with him.”

³⁸The king answered, “Kimham will go back with me. I will be kind to him for you. I will do anything for you.”

David Goes Back Home

³⁹The king kissed Barzillai and blessed him. Barzillai went back home. And the king and all the people went across the river.

⁴⁰The king crossed the Jordan River to Gilgal. Kimham went with him. All the people of Judah and half the people of Israel led David across the river.

Israelites Argue with the People of Judah

⁴¹All the Israelites came to the king. They said to the king, “Our brothers, the people of Judah, stole you away and brought you and your family across the Jordan River with your men. Why?”

⁴²All the people of Judah answered the Israelites, “Because the king is our close relative. Why are you angry with us about this thing? We have not eaten food at the king’s expense. The king did not give us any gifts.”

⁴³The Israelites answered, “We have ten shares in David.* So we have more right to David than you do. But you ignored us. Why? We were the ones that first talked about bringing our king back.”

But the people of Judah made a very ugly answer to the Israelites. The words of the people of Judah were more ugly than the words of the Israelites.

Sheba Leads Israel Away From David

20 At that place, there was a man named Sheba son of Bicri. Sheba was a good-for-nothing troublemaker from the family group of Benjamin. Sheba blew a trumpet to gather the people together. Then he said,

ten shares in David Judah and Benjamin were two of the family groups that later became the kingdom of Judah after the kingdom split. The other ten family groups were in the kingdom of Israel.

“We have no share in David.

We have no part in the son of Jesse.

Israel, let’s all go home to our own tents.”

²So all the Israelites* left David and followed Sheba son of Bicri. But the people of Judah stayed with their king all the way from the Jordan River to Jerusalem.

³David went back to his house in Jerusalem. David had left ten of his wives* to take care of the house. David had put these women in a special house.* He put guards around this house. The women stayed in this house until they died. David took care of the women and gave them food, but he did not have sexual relations with them. They lived like widows until they died.

⁴The king said to Amasa, “Tell the people of Judah to meet with me in three days. And you must also be here.”

⁵Then Amasa went to call the people of Judah together. But he took longer than the time that the king had told him.

David Tells Abishai to Kill Sheba

⁶David said to Abishai, “Sheba son of Bicri is more dangerous to us than Absalom was. So take my officers and chase Sheba. Hurry before Sheba gets into cities with walls. If Sheba gets into the well protected cities, we won’t be able to get him.”

⁷So Joab left Jerusalem to chase after Sheba son of Bicri. Joab brought his own men and the Kerethites and Pelethites* and the other soldiers with him.

Joab Kills Amasa

⁸When Joab and the army came to Big Rock at Gibeon, Amasa came out to meet them. Joab was wearing his uniform. Joab had on a belt, and his sword was in its sheath.* As Joab was walking to meet Amasa, Joab’s

Israelites Here this means the family groups not united with Judah.

wives Or, “concubines,” women servants who were like wives.

David ... special house David’s son Absalom had ruined David’s concubines by having sexual relations with them. See 2 Sam. 16:21–22.

Kerethites and Pelethites David’s special group of fighting men.

sheath A leather or metal case for carrying a sword or knife.

sword fell out of its sheath. Joab picked up the sword and was holding it in his hand. Joab asked Amasa, “How are you doing, brother?”

Then Joab reached out with his right hand and grabbed Amasa by the beard to kiss him hello. Amasa didn’t pay any attention to the sword that was in Joab’s left hand. But then Joab stabbed Amasa in the belly with his sword. Amasa’s inside parts spilled out on the ground. Joab didn’t have to stab Amasa again—he was already dead.

David’s Men Continue to Look for Sheba

Then Joab and his brother Abishai again started to chase after Sheba son of Bicri. One of Joab’s young soldiers stood by Amasa’s body. This young soldier said, “All of you men who support Joab and David, let’s follow Joab.”

Amasa was there in the middle of road, lying in his own blood. The young soldier noticed that all the people kept stopping to look at the body. So the young soldier rolled the body off the road and into the field. Then he covered the body with a cloth. After Amasa’s body was taken off the road, the people just passed it by and followed Joab. They joined Joab and chased after Sheba son of Bicri.

Sheba Escapes to Abel Beth Maacah

Sheba son of Bicri passed through all the family groups of Israel on his way to Abel Beth Maacah. All the Berites also came together and followed Sheba.

Joab and his men came to Abel Beth Maacah. Joab’s army surrounded the town. They piled dirt up against the city wall. They did this so they could climb over the wall. Then Joab’s men also began breaking stones out of the wall to make it fall down.

But there was a very wise woman in that city. She shouted out from the city. She said, “Listen to me! Tell Joab to come here. I want to talk with him.”

Joab went to talk with the woman. The woman asked him, “Are you Joab?”

Joab answered, “Yes, I am.”

Then the woman said, “Listen to me.”

Joab said, “I am listening.”

Then the woman said, “In the past people would say, ‘Ask for help in Abel and you will get what you need.’ I am one of many peaceful, loyal people in this town. You are trying to destroy an important city of Israel. Why do you want to destroy something that belongs to the Lord?”

Joab answered, “Hey, I don’t want to destroy anything! I don’t want to ruin your town. But there is a man in your city from the hill country of Ephraim. He is named Sheba son of Bicri. He has rebelled against King David. Bring him to me, and I will leave the city alone.”

The woman said to Joab, “All right. His head will be thrown over the wall to you.”

Then the woman spoke very wisely to all the people of the city. The people cut off the head of Sheba son of Bicri. Then the people threw Sheba’s head over the city wall to Joab.

So Joab blew the trumpet and the army left the city. The soldiers went home, and Joab went back to the king in Jerusalem.

The People on David’s Staff

Joab was captain of all the army of Israel. Benaiah son of Jehoiada led the Kerethites and Pelethites. Adoniram led the men who were forced to do hard work. Jehoshaphat son of Ahilud was the historian. Sheva was the secretary. Zadok and Abiathar were the priests. And Ira the Jairite was David’s chief servant.*

Saul’s Family Punished

21 There was a famine while David was king. This time of hunger continued for three years. David prayed to the Lord, and the Lord answered. The Lord said, “Saul and his family of murderers* are the reason for this time of hunger. This famine came because Saul killed the Gibeonites.” (The Gibeonites were not Israelites. They were a group of Amorites. The Israelites had promised them that they would not hurt the Gibeonites).* But

chief servant Or, “advisor.” Literally, “priest.”

family of murderers Literally, “house of blood.”

The Israelites ... Gibeonites This happened in Joshua’s time when the Gibeonites tricked the Israelites. See Josh. 9:3–15.

Saul tried to kill the Gibeonites. He did this because of his strong feelings for the people of Israel and Judah.)

King David called the Gibeonites together and talked to them. ³David said to the Gibeonites, “What can I do for you? What can I do to take away Israel’s sin, so you can bless the Lord’s people?”

⁴The Gibeonites said to David, “There isn’t enough gold and silver for Saul’s family to pay for what they did. But we don’t have the right to kill any person in Israel.”

David said, “Well, what can I do for you?”

⁵The Gibeonites said to King David, “Saul made plans against us. He tried to destroy all our people living in the land of Israel. ⁶Give us seven of Saul’s sons. Saul was the Lord’s chosen king. So we will hang his sons in front of the Lord on Mount Gibeah of Saul.”

King David said, “Fine, I will give them to you.” ⁷But the king protected Jonathan’s son, Mephibosheth. Jonathan was Saul’s son, but David had made a promise in the Lord’s name to Jonathan.* So the king did not let them hurt Mephibosheth. ⁸David gave them Armoni and Mephibosheth.* These were the sons of Saul and his wife Rizpah. Saul also had a daughter named Merab. She was married to a man named Adriel son of Barzillai from Meholah. So David took the five sons of Merab and Adriel. ⁹David gave these seven men to the Gibeonites. The Gibeonites brought them to Mount Gibeah and hanged them in front of the Lord. Those seven men died together. They were put to death during the first days of harvest. This was [in the spring] at the beginning of the barley harvest.

David and Rizpah

¹⁰Rizpah the daughter of Aiah took the cloth of sadness and put it on the rock.* That

David had made ... to Jonathan David and Jonathan promised each other that they would not harm each other’s families. Read 1 Sam. 20:12–23,42.

Mephibosheth This is another man named Mephibosheth, not Jonathan’s son.

rock This might be the Big Rock at Gibeon (2 Sam. 20:8), the rock that the bodies were lying on, or a rock that marked the place where her sons were buried.

cloth stayed on the rock from the time the harvest began until the rains came. Rizpah watched the bodies day and night. She did not let the wild birds get the bodies during the day. And she did not let the wild animals get them at night.

¹¹People told David what Saul’s woman servant* Rizpah was doing. ¹²Then David took the bones of Saul and Jonathan from the men of Jabesh Gilead. (The men of Jabesh Gilead got these bones after Saul and Jonathan were killed at Gilboa. The Philistines had hanged the bodies of Saul and Jonathan on a wall in Beth Shan.* But the men of Beth Shan went there and stole the bodies out of that public area.)

¹³David brought the bones of Saul and his son Jonathan from Jabesh Gilead. They also got the bodies of the seven men who were hanged. ¹⁴They buried the bones of Saul and his son Jonathan in the area of Benjamin. They buried them in one of the tunnels in the grave of Saul’s father Kish. God listened to the prayers of the people in that land because they did everything the king commanded.

War with the Philistines

¹⁵The Philistines started another war with Israel. David and his men went out to fight the Philistines. But David became very tired and weak. ¹⁶Ishbi Benob was one of the giants.* Ishbi Benob’s spear weighed about 7 1/2 pounds.* Ishbi Benob had a new sword. He tried to kill David. ¹⁷But Abishai son of Zeruah killed the Philistine and saved David’s life.

Then David’s men made a special promise to David. They said to him, “You can’t go out with us to battle any more. If you do, Israel might lose its greatest leader.”

¹⁸Later, there was another war with the Philistines at Gob. Sibbecai the Hushathite killed Saph, another one of the giants.*

woman servant Or, “concubine,” a slave woman who was like a wife to a man.

Beth Shan Or, “Beth Shean.”

one of the giants Or, “a son of Rapha (Rephaim).”

7 1/2 pounds Literally, “300 shekels of bronze.”

¹⁹Later, there was another war at Gob against the Philistines. Elhanan the son of Jaare Oregim from Bethlehem killed \lfloor Lahmi, the brother of \rfloor Goliath from Gath.* His spear was as big as a post.*

²⁰There was another war at Gath. There was a very large man. This man had six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot. He had 24 fingers and toes in all. This man was also one of the giants.* ²¹This man challenged Israel and made fun of them. But Jonathan killed this man. (This was Jonathan, the son of David's brother Shimei.)

²²All four of these men were giants* from Gath. They were killed by David and his men.

David's Song of Praise to the Lord

22* David sang this song at the time the Lord saved him from Saul and all his other enemies.

- 2 The Lord is my Rock,*
my Fortress,*
my Place of Safety.
- 3 He is my God,
the Rock I run to for protection.
God is my shield.
His power saves me.*
The Lord is my hiding place,
my place of safety,
high in the hills.
He saves me from the cruel enemy.
- 4 They made fun of me.
But I called to the Lord for help,
and I was saved from my enemies!
- 5 \lfloor My enemies were trying to kill me! \rfloor
Waves of death were crashing around me.
I was caught in a flood
carrying me to that place of death.*

Lahmi ... Gath See 1 Chron. 20:5.

post Literally, "a weaver's rod," the large beam across a loom.

one of the giants Or, "a son of Rapha (Rephaim)."

giants Or, "sons of Rapha (Rephaim)."

Chapter 22 This song is also found in Ps. 18.

Rock A name for God. It shows he is like a fortress or a strong place of safety.

Fortress A building or city with tall, strong walls for protection.

His power saves me Literally, "He is the horn of my salvation."

place of death Or, "the place of no return, the grave."

- 6 Ropes of the grave were all around me.
Traps of death lay before me.
- 7 Trapped, I called to the Lord for help.
Yes, I called to my God.

God was in his temple.

He heard my voice.

He heard my cry for help.

- 8 Then the earth shook. It trembled.
The foundations of heaven shook.
Why? Because the Lord was angry!

- 9 Smoke came from God's nose.
Burning flames came from his mouth,
Burning sparks flew from him.

- 10 The Lord tore open the sky
and came down!

He stood on a thick, dark cloud!

- 11 He was flying,
riding on the flying Cherub angels,
riding on the wind.

- 12 The Lord wrapped the dark clouds
around him like a tent.

He gathered the water
into the thick thunder clouds.

- 13 Sparks like burning coal \lfloor flew \rfloor
from the bright light around him!

- 14 The Lord thundered from the sky!
God Most High let his voice be heard.

- 15 The Lord shot his arrows*
and scattered the enemy.
The Lord sent out lightning,
and the people scattered in confusion.

- 16 Lord, you spoke strongly,
a powerful wind blew from
your mouth*

\lfloor and the water was pushed back \rfloor .

We could see the bottom of the sea.

We could see the earth's foundations.

- 17 \lfloor The Lord helped me like that too! \rfloor
The Lord reached down from above.
The Lord grabbed me and pulled me
out of the deep water (*trouble*).

- 18 My enemies were stronger than me.
Those people hated me.
My enemies were too strong for me,
so God saved me.

arrows That is, "lightning."

mouth Or, "nostrils."

- 19 I was in trouble
and my enemies attacked me.
But the Lord was there to support me!
- 20 The Lord loves me,
so he rescued me.
He took me to a safe place.
- 21 The Lord will give me my reward
Because I did what is right,
I did nothing wrong,
so he will do good things for me.
- 22 Why? Because I obeyed the Lord!
I did not sin against my God.
- 23 I always remember the Lord's decisions.
I obey his laws!
- 24 I keep myself pure and innocent before
him.
- 25 So the Lord will give me my reward!
Why? Because I did what is right!
The way he sees it,
I did nothing wrong,
so he will do good things for me.
- 26 If a person really loves you,
then you show your true love to him.
If a person is true to you,
then you will be true to him.
- 27 Lord, you are good and pure
to people who are good and pure.
But, you can outsmart
the smartest, sneakiest crook.
- 28 Lord, you help humble people.
But you bring shame to proud people.
- 29 Lord, you are my lamp.
The Lord lights up the darkness
around me!
- 30 With your help, Lord,
I can run with the soldiers.
With God's help,
I can climb over enemy walls.
- 31 God's power is complete.*
The Lord's word has been tested.
He protects people who trust him.
- 32 There is no God except the Lord.
There is no Rock* except our God.
- 33 God is my strong fort.
He helps pure people live right.*
- 34 God helps me run fast like a deer!
He keeps me steady in high places.
- 35 God trains me for war,
so my arms can shoot a powerful bow.*
- 36 God, you protected me
and helped me win.
You helped me defeat my enemy.
- 37 Make my legs and ankles strong
so I can walk fast without stumbling.
- 38 I want to chase my enemies,
until I destroy them!
I won't come back
until they are destroyed!
- 39 I destroyed my enemies.
I defeated them!
They won't get up again.
Yes, my enemies fell under my feet.
- 40 God, you made me strong in battle.
You made my enemies fall before me.
- 41 You gave me a chance at my
enemy's neck,
and I cut my opponent down!
- 42 My enemies looked for help,
but there was no one to save them.
They even looked to the Lord,
but he did not answer them.
- 43 I beat my enemies into pieces.
They were like dust on the ground.
I crushed my enemies.
I walked on them
like mud in the streets.
- 44 You saved me from the people
who fought against me.
You kept me as ruler of those nations.
People I didn't know now serve me!
- 45 People from other lands obey me!
When they hear my command,
they quickly obey me.
Those foreigners are afraid of me!
- 46 Those foreigners wilt with fear.
They come out of their hiding places
shaking with fear.

God's power ... complete Or, "God's way is perfect."

Rock A name for God. It shows he is like a fortress or a strong place of safety.

live right Literally, "walk in his ways."

shoot a powerful bow Or "string a bronze bow." Evidently this is a bow made of wood, sinew, horn and possibly bronze.

47 The Lord is alive.
I praise my Rock!*

God is great!
He is the Rock who saves me.

48 He is the God who punished my enemies
for me.
He put people under my rule.

49 God, you saved me from my enemies!
You helped me defeat the people
who stood against me.
You save me from cruel men!

50 Lord, that is why I praise you to the nations.
This is why I sing songs about your name.

51 The Lord helps his king win many battles!
The Lord shows his true love
for his chosen king.
He will be loyal to David
and to his descendants forever!

David's Last Words

23 These are the last words of David:

This message is from
David son of Jesse.
This message is from
the man that God made great,
the king chosen by the God of Jacob,
the sweet singer of Israel.

2 The Lord's Spirit spoke through me.
His word was on my tongue.

3 The God of Israel spoke.
The Rock of Israel said to me,
"The person who rules people fairly,
the person who rules with respect for God,
4 that person will be
like the morning light at dawn;
like a morning without clouds;
like sunshine after a rain—
the rain that makes tender grass
grow from the ground."

5 God made my family strong and secure.*
He made an agreement with me forever!
God made sure this agreement was
good and secure in every way.
So surely he will give me every victory.
He will give me everything I want!

Rock A name for God. It shows he is like a fortress or a strong place of safety.

God ... secure Or, "Hasn't God made my family strong?"

6 But bad people are like thorns.
People don't hold thorns.
They throw them away.

7 If a person touches them,
it hurts like a spear
made of wood and iron.
⌊ Yes, those people are like thorns.⌋
They will be thrown in the fire,
and they will be completely burned!

The Three Heroes

⁸These are the names of David's soldiers:
Josheb Basshebeth the Tahkemonite.*
Josheb Basshebeth was captain of the Three
Heroes. Josheb Basshebeth used his spear
against 800 men at one time and killed them.*

⁹Next, there was Eleazar son of Dodai*
from Ahoah. Eleazar was one of the Three
Heroes that were with David at the time they
challenged the Philistines. They had gathered
for a battle, but the Israelite soldiers had run
away. ¹⁰Eleazar fought the Philistines until he
was very tired. But he kept holding on to the
sword tightly ⌊ and continued fighting⌋. The
Lord gave Israel a great victory that day. The
people came back after Eleazar had won the
battle, but they only came to take things from
the dead enemy soldiers.

¹¹Next, there was Shammah son of Agee
from Harar. The Philistines came together to
fight. They fought in a field of lentils.* The
people ran away from the Philistines. ¹²But
Shammah stood in the middle of the field and
defended it. He defeated the Philistines. The
Lord gave Israel a great victory that day.

¹³Once, David was at the cave of Adullam
and the Philistine army was down in Rephaim
Valley. Three of the Thirty Heroes* crawled
flat on the ground all the way to that cave to
join David.*

Josheb Basshebeth the Tahkemonite Or, "Jashobeam the Hacmonite." See 1 Chron. 11:11.

Josheb ... killed them The Hebrew text has, "He was also called, Adino the Eznite."

Eleazar son of Dodai Or, "Eleazar his cousin."

lentils Small round beans.

Thirty Heroes These men were David's famous group of very brave soldiers.

Three ... David The Hebrew is hard to understand here, but compare 1 Chron. 11:15.

¹⁴Another time, David was in the fortress,* and a group of Philistines soldiers was in Bethlehem. ¹⁵David was thirsty [for some water from his hometown]. David said, “I wish someone could give me some water from the well near the city gate in Bethlehem!” [David did not really want this, he was only talking.]

¹⁶But the Three Heroes* fought their way through the Philistine army. These three men got some water from the well near the city gate in Bethlehem. Then the Three Heroes brought the water to David. But David refused to drink the water. He poured it on the ground as an offering to the Lord. ¹⁷David said, “Lord, I can’t drink this water. It would be like drinking the blood of the men who risked their lives for me.” This is why David refused to drink the water. The Three Heroes did many brave things like that.

Other Brave Soldiers

¹⁸Abishai was the brother of Joab son of Zeruiah. Abishai was the leader of the Three Heroes.* Abishai used his spear against 300 [enemies] and killed them. He became as famous as the Three. ¹⁹Abishai was as famous as the Three Heroes. He became their leader, even though he was not one of them.

²⁰Then there was Benaiah son of Jehoiada. He was the son of a powerful man. He was from Kabzeel. Benaiah did many brave things. Benaiah killed the two sons of Ariel from Moab. One day when it was snowing, Benaiah went down into a hole in the ground and killed a lion. ²¹Benaiah also killed a big Egyptian soldier. The Egyptian had a spear in his hand. But Benaiah only had a club in his hand. Benaiah grabbed the spear in the Egyptian’s hand and took it away from him. Then Benaiah killed the Egyptian with his own spear. ²²Benaiah son of Jehoiada did many brave things like that. Benaiah was as famous as the Three Heroes.* ²³Benaiah was even more famous than the Thirty Heroes,*

fortress A building or city with tall, strong walls for protection.

Three Heroes These were David’s three bravest soldiers.

Thirty Heroes These men were David’s famous group of very brave soldiers.

but he did not become a member of the Three Heroes. David made Benaiah leader of his bodyguards.

The Thirty Heroes

²⁴Asahel, the brother of Joab, was one of the Thirty Heroes.* [Other men in the group of Thirty Heroes were:] Elhanan son of Dodo from Bethlehem; ²⁵Shammah the Harodite; Elika the Harodite; ²⁶Helez the Paltite; Ira son of Ikkesh from Tekoa; ²⁷Abiezer from Anathoth; Mebunnai the Hushathite; ²⁸Zalmon the Ahohite; Maharai from Netophah; ²⁹Heled son of Baanah from Netophah; Ithai son of Ribai from Gibeah of Benjamin; ³⁰Benaiah the Pirathonite; Hiddai from the Brooks of Gaash; ³¹Abi Albon the Arbathite; Azmaveth the Barhumite; ³²Eliabha the Shaalbonite; the sons of Jashen; Jonathan ³³the son of Shammah from Harar; Ahiam son of Sharar from Harar; ³⁴Eliphelet son of Ahasbai the Maacathite; Eliam son of Ahithophel the Gilonite; ³⁵Hezro the Carmelite; Paarai the Arbite; ³⁶Igal son of Nathan of Zobah; Bani the Gadite; ³⁷Zelek the Ammonite; Naharai from Beeroth (Naharai carried the armor for Joab son of Zeruiah); ³⁸Ira the Ithrite; Gareb the Ithrite; ³⁹and Uriah the Hittite. There were 37 in all.

David Decides to Count His Army

24 The Lord was angry against Israel again. The Lord caused David to turn against the Israelites. [David] said, “Go count the people of Israel and Judah.”

²King David said to Joab, the captain of the army, “Go through all the family groups of Israel from Dan to Beersheba,* and count the people. Then I will know how many people there are.”

³But Joab said to the king, “May the Lord your God give you 100 times as many people, no matter how many there are! And may your eyes see this thing happen. But why do you want to do this?”

⁴King David very strongly commanded Joab and the captains of the army to count the people. So Joab and the captains of the army

Dan to Beersheba This means all the people of Israel. Dan was the town farthest north, and Beersheba was in the south.

went out from the king to count the people of Israel. ⁵They crossed over the Jordan River. They made their camp in Aroer. Their camp was on the right side of the city. (The city is in the middle of the valley of Gad, on the way to Jazer.)

⁶Then they went [east] to Gilead, all the way to Tahtim Hodshi. Then they went [north] to Dan Jaan and around to Sidon. ⁷They went to the fort of Tyre. They went to all the cities of the Hivites and of the Canaanites. Then they went south to Beersheba in the southern part of Judah. ⁸It took them nine months and 20 days for them to go through the country. After nine months and 20 days they came back to Jerusalem.

⁹Joab gave the list of the people to the king. There were 800,000 men in Israel that could use the sword. And there were 500,000 men in Judah.

The Lord Punishes David

¹⁰Then David felt ashamed after he had counted the people. David said to the Lord, “I have sinned greatly in what I did! Lord, I beg you, forgive me for my sin. I have been very foolish.”

¹¹When David got up in the morning, the Lord’s word came to Gad, David’s seer*. ¹²The Lord told Gad, “Go and tell David, ‘This is what the Lord says: I offer you three things. Choose the one that I will do to you.’”

¹³Gad went to David and told him. Gad said to David, “[Choose one of these three things:]

1. Seven years of famine for you and your country.
2. Your enemies will chase you for three months.
3. Three days of disease in your country.

Think about it, and choose one of these things. And I will tell the Lord about your choice. The Lord sent me to you.”

¹⁴David said to Gad, “I am really in trouble! But the Lord is very merciful. So let

the Lord punish us. Don’t let my punishment come from people.”

¹⁵So the Lord sent a disease against Israel. It began in the morning and continued until the chosen time [to stop]. From Dan to Beersheba* 70,000 people died. ¹⁶The angel raised his arm over Jerusalem to destroy it. But the Lord felt very sorry about the bad things that had happened. The Lord said to the angel that destroyed the people, “That’s enough! Put down your arm.” The Lord’s angel was by the threshing floor* of Araunah* the Jebusite.

David Buys Araunah’s Threshing Floor

¹⁷David saw the angel that killed the people. David spoke to the Lord. David said, “I sinned! I did wrong! And these people only did what I told them—they only followed me like sheep. They did nothing wrong. Please let your punishment be against me and my father’s family.”

¹⁸That day Gad came to David. Gad told David, “Go and build an altar* to the Lord on the threshing floor* of Araunah* the Jebusite.”

¹⁹So David did what Gad told him to. David did what the Lord wanted. David went [to see Araunah]. ²⁰Araunah looked and saw King David and his officers coming to him. Araunah went out and bowed his face to the ground. ²¹Araunah said, “Why has my lord and king come to me?”

David answered, “I came to buy the threshing floor* from you. Then I can build an altar* to the Lord. Then the disease will stop.”

²²Araunah said to David, “My lord and king, you can take anything you want for a sacrifice.* Here are some cows for the burnt offering, and the threshing boards* and the

Dan to Beersheba This means all the people of Israel. Dan was the town farthest north, and Beersheba was in the south.

threshing floor A place where grain is beaten or walked on to remove the hulls from the grain.

Araunah Also spelled “Ornan.”

altar(s) A stone table used for burning sacrifices offered as gifts to God.

sacrifice(s) A gift to God. Usually it was a special animal that was killed and burned on an altar.

threshing boards A place where grain is beaten or walked on to remove the hulls from the grain.

seer Another name for a prophet.

yokes* for the wood. ²³O King, I give everything to you!” Araunah also said to the king, “May the Lord your God be pleased with you.”

²⁴But the king said to Araunah, “No! I tell you the truth, I will pay you for the land. I will not offer burnt offerings to the Lord my God that cost me nothing.”

So David bought the threshing floor* and the cows for 50 shekels of silver. ²⁵Then David built an altar* to the Lord there. David offered burnt offerings and peace offerings.

The Lord answered his prayer for the country. The Lord stopped the disease in Israel.

yoke(s) A pole that was put on the shoulders of men or animals to help them carry or pull things. This often showed that a person was a slave.

threshing floor A place where grain is beaten or walked on to remove the hulls from the grain.

altar(s) A stone table used for burning sacrifices offered as gifts to God.

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