

PART THREE

TROUBLE IN
DAVID'S FAMILY

10:1—14:33

SECOND SAMUEL

A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 10

- Vv. 1- 5 *David's Ambassadors shamed.* The king of Ammon died and David sent ambassadors to express his sympathy. The princes of the country persuaded the new king that David was really seeking opportunity to spy out their land. They treated his ambassadors shamefully and this was taken as a cause for war.
- Vv. 6-19 *David's army was divided into two companies.* One was under the direction of Joab, and the other was led by Abishai. The armies of Israel were victorious, and the Syrians from Damascus came to aid the Ammonites. David then gathered his entire host together and crossed over the Jordan himself to direct the campaign. The Israelites were victorious and the Syrians withdrew.

LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. "*Ambassadors for Christ*" (II Corinthians 5:20). The treatment of a country's ambassadors is tantamount to the same treatment of the country. When the people of Ammon cut off the beard of David's ambassadors and sheared their robes just slightly below the waist, they caused the men to be so ashamed that they were not willing to be seen in public. David took this treatment to be the same as shameful treatment of himself and of his entire nation. He therefore went to war. We are sometimes surprised to read that Jesus said to Saul, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest" (Acts 9:5). As far as we know Saul never saw Jesus; but when he persecuted the followers of Jesus, it was as if he were persecuting Jesus. We need to realize that our treatment of God's workers is equal to the same treatment of God himself.

2. *Playing the man.* When the armies of Israel saw that the Syrians had joined with the Ammonites, they knew that the odds were overwhelmingly against them. Joab said, "Be of good courage and let us play the men for our people and for the cities of our God" (v. 12). When Christians are overwhelmed by the forces of evil, they need to begin playing the men for the sake of their brethren and for their God whom they serve.

III. TROUBLE IN DAVID'S FAMILY, 10:1—14:33.

1. The War With Ammon, 10:1-19.

David's Ambassadors Shamed. 10:1-5

And it came to pass after this, that the king of the children of Ammon died, and Hanun his son reigned in his stead.

2 Then said David, I will show kindness unto Hanun the son of Nahash, as his father showed kindness unto me. And David sent to comfort him by the hand of his servants for his father. And David's servants came into the land of the children of Ammon.

3 And the princes of the children of Ammon said unto Hanun their lord, Thinkest thou that David doth honor thy father, that he hath sent comforters unto thee? hath not David *rather* sent his servants unto thee, to search the city, and to spy it out, and to overthrow it?

4 Wherefore Hanun took David's servants, and shaved off the one half of their beards, and cut off their garments in the middle, *even* to their buttocks, and sent them away.

5 When they told *it* unto David, he sent to meet them, because the men were greatly ashamed: and the king said, Tarry at Jericho until your beards be grown, and *then* return.

1. *Who was Hanun?* 10:1

Hanun was the new king over the people of Ammon. David had subdued these people in one of his campaigns

(II Samuel 8:12). As the son and successor of Nahash, the king of the Ammonites in the days of Saul, he showed himself to be of the same warlike nature. He was not able to withstand the agitation of courtiers who misjudged the object of David's mission, and he treated David's ambassadors shamefully.

2. *Who was Nahash? 10:2*

A man named Nahash is mentioned in I Samuel 11:1-3. We cannot be sure that this is the same Nahash mentioned in II Samuel 10:2. We suppose that it was the same person. It may have been that the latter mention of the name refers to a son of the man formerly mentioned. It would be hard to understand how this man had helped David, since no specific mention of it is made. He may have befriended David during the time that David was in hiding from the presence of Saul. Nahash could have helped David in order to spite Saul, who had wreaked such vengeance on the Ammonites after they had gone out against the men of Jabesh-gilead.

Other tribes had fallen under the sword of David and Hanun was afraid to trust David because the other tribes had suffered such a fate. When the Ammonites mistreated the ambassadors from Israel, ample cause for war was present. The abuse of an ambassador was considered a just cause for war.

3. *Why did they doubt David's motives? 10:3*

The young prince was ready to act on suspicion. His advisors thought that David would hardly be so sympathetic as to send ambassadors to console the king when his father died. They thought that he had come to search out the city, to spy on it, and to overthrow it. The record in Chronicles indicates that they thought that he had come to spy out the entire land. This was the same motive attributed to Abner by Joab who came on a mission of peace to David at Hebron. Their suspicions are a reflection upon their own attitudes and motives, but David had

given them no reason to have such fears. Their suspicions were founded on national hatred and enmity which had possibly been increased by David's treatment of Moab and other neighbors of Ammon.

4. *How did Hanun treat David's servants?* 10:4

Hanun treated David's servants shamefully. He shaved off half of their beards and cut off their garments in the middle. Whether the men were shaved down one side of their faces or their beards were cut off so that they were only half as long as they were designed to be cannot be determined. Their garments were cut off so that they were ashamed to be seen in public. For that reason, David told them to stay in Jericho, near the Jordan river, and wait until their beards were grown and they could be outfitted with other clothes. They would then be free to return to Jerusalem and make a report of their mission.

David's Army Divided Into Two Companies. 10:6-19

6 And when the children of Ammon saw that they stank before David, the children of Ammon sent and hired the Syrians of Beth-rehob, and the Syrians of Zoba, twenty thousand footmen, and of king Maacah a thousand men, and of Ishtob twelve thousand men.

7 And when David heard of *it*, he sent Joab, and all the host of the mighty men.

8 And the children of Ammon came out, and put the battle in array at the entering in of the gate: and the Syrians of Zoba, and of Rehob, and Ishtob, and Maacah, *were* by themselves in the field.

9 When Joab saw that the front of the battle was against him before and behind, he chose of all the choice *men* of Israel, and put *them* in array against the Syrians:

10 And the rest of the people he delivered into the hand of Abishai his brother, that he might put *them* in array against the children of Ammon.

11 And he said, If the Syrians be too strong for me, then thou shalt help me: but if the children of Ammon be too strong for thee, then I will come and help thee:

12 Be of good courage, and let us play the men for our people, and for the cities of our God: and the Lord do that which seemeth him good.

13 And Joab drew nigh, and the people that *were* with him, unto the battle against the Syrians: and they fled before him.

14 And when the children of Ammon saw that the Syrians were fled, then fled they also before Abishai, and entered into the city. So Joab returned from the children of Ammon, and came to Jerusalem.

15 And when the Syrians saw that they were smitten before Israel, they gathered themselves together.

16 And Hadarezer sent, and brought out the Syrians that *were* beyond the river: and they came to Helam; and Shobach the captain of the host of Hadarezer *went* before them.

17 And when it was told David, he gathered all Israel together, and passed over Jordan, and came to Helam. And the Syrians set themselves in array against David, and fought with him.

18 And the Syrians fled before Israel; and David slew *the men of* seven hundred chariots of the Syrians, and forty thousand horsemen, and smote Shobach the captain of their host, who died there.

19 And when all the kings *that were* servants to Hadarezer saw that they were smitten before Israel, they made peace with Israel, and served them. So the Syrians feared to help the children of Ammon any more.

5. *What caused the war with the Ammonites?* 10:6

When a nation treats ambassadors shamefully, it is all the same as though they had treated the country in the

same way. David was furious, and then these steps were taken:

- a. Ammonites hired the Syrians—verse six
- b. The enemy's army divided—verse eight
- c. Israel's army divided to meet the enemy—verses nine and ten
- d. Joab routed the Syrians (verse thirteen); Ammonites fled before Abishai as a result—verse fourteen

Although the Ammonites hired Syrians to fight for them, they were unable to overcome the Israelites. The Ammonites and Syrians put an army into the field under separate commands and in segregated positions. To meet this strategy, Joab delivered a part of the army of the Israelites to the command of Abishai. Joab thought of the God of Israel as a God of battle and so trusted His deliverance. When Joab pressed the battle against the Syrians which were before him, the Syrians fled. The heart of the Ammonites failed within them when they saw that the Syrians were being defeated. They, too, retreated before the onrushing forces of Abishai.

Had the Israelites been prepared for a siege, they might have come to final grips with the Ammonites and Syrians soon after this first encounter. The Israelites were not ready to besiege the city, however, and the Ammonites were able to find refuge in Rabbath-Ammon. It was not until later that the siege was laid.

6. *Who was King Maacah?* 10:6 b

The Ammonites not only were able to hire men from the Syrians of Beth-rehob and Zobah, but they were able to get men from Maacah. Maacah was a city and small Syrian kingdom at the foot of Mount Hermon near Geshur (Joshua 13:13; I Chronicles 19:7). This territory was the land around the southern and eastern slopes of Hermon; it also took in a portion of the rocky plateau called Iturea. The land really belonged to Israel, but it was not possessed by them in Joshua's day. Its king con-

tributed 1,000 men to the Ammonites as they fought against David, but they were all defeated (verse 19).

7. *Who were the men of Tob? 10:6 b*

Isb-Tob is not to be considered as one word and translated as a proper noun, but rather it should be thought of as a reference to the "men of Tob." Tob was a district between Assyria and Ammon. Jephthah had taken refuge here when he fled from his brethren (Judges 11:3). Hanun was able to band all the Syrians together to stave off the attack David was about to make.

8. *Who were hosts of mighty men? 10:7*

David mustered all his mighty men. These mighty men were more than those listed as David's heroes (II Samuel 23:8-39). Here is a reference to the fact that David called all his army into this battle. This naturally meant that the militia was considered a different body from the veteran force. Later on, David was able to count 1,300,000 men of military age (II Samuel 24:9).

9. *What was Joab's strategy? 10:9*

Joab saw that two fronts were being formed by the enemy. One group was closing in before him; another was chasing him from the rear. He therefore took the best fighters from the men of Israel, and set them in a battle line against the better equipped and more experienced Syrians. He put the rest of the men under the leadership of Abishai and ordered them to go out against the Ammonites. Joab felt that the Syrians were the real threat and that it was important to beat them. Probably the bulk of the army went against the Ammonites.

10. *What was the meaning of Joab's remark to Abishai? 10:12*

Joab was a good soldier; he urged his men to be courageous. He exhorted them to fight like men. This was the battle cry of the Philistines when they learned that the ark had been brought out into the field of battle against them (I Samuel 4:9). They exhorted one another saying:

"Be strong and quit yourselves like men." Joab's reference to fighting for the "cities of our God" is very unusual, leading some to conjecture as to whether the original text made reference to the Ark of God. There is no real evidence for making any change in the word, however, and it appears that Joab was encouraging his people to fight for their towns. He did say that they ought to play the men, "for our people." He left the outcome of the battle in the hands of God saying, "The Lord do that which seemeth Him good."

11. What was the outcome of the battle? 10:13

Joab was victorious over the Assyrians, and they fled from him. The children of Ammon saw that the Syrians were beaten and then gave way before Abishai. The Ammonites withdrew to their city; probably the city of Rabbah. Joab called off the battle and he and his men returned to Jerusalem. The Israelites were not prepared for a siege; they had come out for a battle in the open field.

12. Who was Hadadezer? 10:16

Hadadezer was the king of Zobah. Having been defeated once by the Israelites, he was not satisfied until he had gathered another Syrian army which included the Syrians beyond the River Euphrates. The extent of the Syrian principality cannot be exactly ascertained, but it is generally concluded to have extended from the border of the Ammonites to the Euphrates River and beyond.

13. Where was Helam? 10:17

Helam is a spot that is not known for sure today. The Hebrew was rendered "their army," by Thenius. Cornill, an Old Testament scholar, restores the name to the text in Ezekiel 47:16, which would place it on the boundary of Hamath and Damascus. Hoffmann, another Old Testament geographer, identifies it with Aleppo. Another spot known as Alema (1 Maccabees 5:26), now the modern Alma in Hauran, is a third suggested location. Undoubt-

edly it was on the northeast border of David's territory and centrally located to those who had come together to avenge the initial defeat handed them by the Israelites under Joab and Abishai.

14. What caused David to go out to battle? 10:17

Hadadezer sought help from other Syrians. David considered the second engagement important enough to demand his own time and leadership. Naturally, the Israelites would be more valiant in the presence of their king. It was said that the courage of the men of England was so much greater when the Duke of Wellington was on the field that his presence was equal to an additional troop of one thousand men.

15. Who won the second battle? 10:18

Once again the Israelites were victorious over the Syrians. There is no word in the text for *men*, the original reading would say David slew seven hundred chariots. The object of this throughout the Bible is always something that has life. The King James translators have rightfully supplied the word *men* here, and indicated that David slew seven hundred charioteers. In addition, he slew 40,000 horsemen and also killed Shobach, their captain. It was a decisive victory.

16. What was the outcome of the war? 10:19

Syria was made a vassal of Israel. The Syrians were afraid to enter into a league with the Ammonites after this campaign. David still had a matter to settle with Ammon, and this was the reason for the campaign mentioned in the following text. The fact that David was able to subdue these Syrians makes it clear that he was indeed a very strong ruler. Israel was coming to her most prosperous time. The indication is that all the Syrian kings were servants to Haderezer. This implies that he was the chief ruler and had subject monarchs under him. Once David had subdued him and his coalition, he had nothing to fear from the Syrians.

STUDIES IN SAMUEL

CHAPTER 10 IN REVIEW

1. What king died in Ammon? _____
2. What was the name of the new king? _____
3. What officers of David's were treated shamefully by the Ammonites? _____
4. Where did David's officers tarry before returning to Jerusalem? _____
5. What other people joined the Ammonites to fight Israel? _____
6. Who led David's men against Ammon? _____
7. What other captain led part of David's men? _____
8. Who won the battle? _____
9. Did David himself go to the battle? _____
10. How many horsemen did David slay? _____

A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 11

- Vv. 1- 5 *David's sin with Bathsheba.* David was in Jerusalem while his army was besieging Rabbah in Ammon. He was attracted to Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah, one of his soldiers. He brought her to his court and committed adultery with her.
- Vv. 6-11 *David's attempt to cover his sin.* In an effort to hide the fact that Bathsheba was to bear a child which David had fathered, he called Uriah to Jerusalem from the field of battle. He attempted to get him to go to his own house while he was in Jerusalem, but Uriah refused and thwarted David's attempt to make it appear that the child was Uriah's.
- Vv. 12-21 *Uriah killed in battle.* A last desperate effort was made by David. Uriah carried instructions back to Joab which resulted in his own death. Uriah was sent to the front of the battle near the city walls, and then Joab

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ordered the other troops to withdraw. Uriah fought valiantly on and was killed.

Vv. 22-27 *Bathsheba becomes David's wife.* As a widow, Bathsheba was free to marry David. After the period of mourning for Uriah was ended, Bathsheba became David's wife.

LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *In idle brain is the Devil's workshop.* The armies of Israel were in the field, but their leader was at home in Jerusalem. In this period of idleness, David was lured into a trap which meant the ultimate downfall of his period of prosperity. No doubt he may have wished many times that he had been in the field of battle rather than free to walk on the walls of his palace in Jerusalem. We need to be busy for the Lord, lest in our periods of laxity we are led into sin.
2. *Sin bears compound interest.* After adultery came the enticing of a man to become drunk and ultimately the committing of murder. One sin led to another. As it was with David, so it is often in the everyday life of a Christian. The wages of sin, of course, is death (Romans 6:23b).
3. *"So they wrap it up"* (Micah 7:3). The devious ways of a sinner are so intertwined and so interwoven that it is difficult to discern his path. David's sinful ways were so camouflaged that the man on the street did not know what was happening. Only the pure white light of God renders accurate judgment on such devious ways.

2. David's Sin With Bathsheba, 11:1-27.

David's Sin With Bathsheba, 11:1-5

And it came to pass, after the year was expired, at the time when kings go forth *to battle*, that David sent Joab,

and his servants with him, and all Israel; and they destroyed the children of Ammon, and beseiged Rabbah. But David tarried still at Jerusalem.

2 And it came to pass in an eventide, that David arose from off his bed, and walked upon the roof of the king's house: and from the roof he saw a woman washing herself; and the woman *was* very beautiful to look upon.

3 And David sent and inquired after the woman. And *one* said, *Is* not this Bath-sheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?

4 And David sent messengers, and took her; and she came in unto him, and he lay with her; for she was purified from her uncleanness: and she returned unto her house.

5 And the woman conceived, and sent and told David, and said, *I am* with child.

1. *When did the kings go out to battle? 11:1*

Certain seasons of the year were not suited to the most efficient prosecution of a campaign. At the right time during the year the kings would ordinarily go forth to battle. When this most suitable season came around, David set out to settle his score with the Ammonites.

2. *Where was Rabbah? 11:1 b*

Rabbah was the chief city of Ammon. It lay twenty miles east of the Jordan and was east by north of Jericho. The city is first mentioned in the Bible as the location of the bed of Og (Deuteronomy 3:11). The land around the town was not included in the territory at Aroer which faced Rabbah (Joshua 15:25). Joab had pursued the Ammonites to this point at the conclusion of the first campaign against the Ammonites. The city became the main point of attack at the beginning of the second campaign.

3. *Why did David tarry in Jerusalem? 11:1 c*

David had gone against the Syrians and Ammonites only because it appeared that a major coalition was being formed against the Israelites by the united powers of their enemies

east of the Jordan. When Israel had successfully beaten the Syrians and the Syrians had demonstrated that they were afraid to enter into another league with the Ammonites, David must have felt that he was not needed on the field of battle. Later on in his career, David was subjected to some very fierce treatment at the hands of the enemies, being rescued once and again by his valiant mighty men. These people thereafter insisted that he not go into battle with them any more (II Samuel 21:17). Joab did not let David go into the battle against Absalom, and at that time he said that the enemy would rather kill David than kill hundreds of them (II Samuel 18:3). Since David had been away from his capital while he led the former campaigns, his services were likely more needed with regard to the affairs of state than on the battlefield, and for that reason he must have remained in Jerusalem while Joab led the army against Rabbah.

4. *In what way was Bathsheba washing herself? 11:2*

From the mention of the fact that she was purified from her uncleanness (verse four), Bathsheba's washing must have been one of ceremonial nature. In Jesus' day, the Jews had many practices of ceremonial nature. Mark says that the "Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash their hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders. And when they come from the market, except they wash they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, as the washing of cups, and pots, brasen vessels, and of tables" (Mark 7:3, 4).

5. *Who was Uriah? 11:3*

This man's name means "Jehovah is my light." Uriah was a great foreign warrior in the service of David. He was a man of fixed purpose. Through the narrative we can well imagine that he exhibited great loyalty to his fellow soldiers on the field of battle as well as off. As a Hittite, he was a descendant of Heth, a descendant of Canaan (Genesis 10:15).

6. *Who was Bathsheba?* 11:3

Bathsheba is called Bath-shuah in I Chronicles 3:5. She is introduced as the daughter of Eliam, or Ammiel. According to II Samuel 23:32, Eliam was the son of Ahithophel, the Gilonite. Ahithophel entered into Absalom's revolt against David and became his counselor (II Samuel 17:1). If he were the grandfather of Bathsheba, he may have had a settled hatred for David on account of his associations with Bathsheba. This animosity may explain why he aided Absalom in his rebellion. Bathsheba was already married; she was the wife of Uriah, the Hittite, one of David's valiant soldiers.

7. *Why is this sin recorded?* 11:4

Strange is the action of David. Holy men of God writing as they were moved of the Holy Spirit would not be so dishonest as to attempt to cover up for the subject of their narrative. The truthfulness of the narratives is upheld by the fairness exhibited. Men today can only sit and ponder the terrible results of sin coming into their lives. This happened to David. David's sin with Bathsheba was intensified by his purpose to send Uriah into the thick of the battle. David ordered Joab to get rid of Uriah. Joab was strong-minded and daring, and although he was not always easily controlled, he was faithful to David. Because he must have realized that some sin or some intense hatred lay back of David's action, he was constrained to do David's bidding.

David's Attempt to Cover His Sin. 11:6-11

6 And David sent to Joab, saying, Send me Uriah the Hittite. And Joab sent Uriah to David.

7 And when Uriah was come unto him, David demanded of him how Joab did, and how the people did, and how the war prospered.

8 And David said to Uriah, Go down to thy house, and wash thy feet. And Uriah departed out of the king's

house, and there followed him a mess *of meat* from the king.

9 But Uriah slept at the door of the king's house with all the servants of his lord, and went not down to his house.

10 And when they had told David, saying, Uriah went not down unto his house, David said unto Uriah, Camest thou not from *thy* journey? why *then* didst thou not go down unto thine house?

11 And Uriah said unto David, The ark, and Israel, and Judah, abide in tents; and my lord Joab, and the servants of my lord, are encamped in the open fields; shall I then go into mine house, to eat and to drink, and to lie with my wife? *as* thou livest, and *as* thy soul liveth, I will not do this thing.

8. *Why did David send for Uriah? 11:6*

David called Uriah back from the battlefield in an effort to have him in Jerusalem at a time when the public would think that the child born to Bathsheba was fathered by Uriah. It was the desperate effort of a desperate man to cover up his sin. David underestimated the valiant nature of Uriah. He thought that he would be glad to have a furlough from the battlefield and that he would go down to his own house as a matter of course. Little did David realize the outcome of this move on his part. It marked the turning point in his life. From this point forward his reign was marked with adversity and hardship. His first false move was to send for Bathsheba and to lay with her. His second false move was to call Uriah back from the battlefield; ever after this his hand seems to shake as he holds the reins of government.

9. *What inquiries did David made of Uriah? 11:7*

David made general inquiries about the outcome of the fighting. He asked how Joab was conducting the campaign. He asked how the soldiers were getting along, and in general he asked if the war was going in Israel's favor.

David was evading the real issue which was before him; he made these normal inquiries in order to cover up his fiendish purposes.

10. Why did Uriah disobey the king? 11:8

David told Uriah to go down to his house and to enjoy a bit of leave from the hardships of the battlefield. No significance should be attached to his telling him to wash his feet; it would be the normal way of relaxing and preparing to enjoy normal domestic and civilian life. The privilege of bathing was often denied men on the field of battle, and he thought that Uriah would relish this routine convenience. David tried to show his goodwill towards Uriah by sending a mess of meat to his home for his meal. Uriah went out from the king's house, but he slept at the entrance with the guards of the palace and did not go down to his own house. Uriah was a loyal subject of his king; he was also a faithful soldier, unwilling to forsake his companions in the field and to enjoy the pleasures of civilian life while his comrades were fighting.

11. Why did David's servants report Uriah's actions? 11:10

David's servants could hardly have known the purposes of the king in telling Uriah to go to his house. His affair with Bathsheba was not generally known at that time. But Uriah's actions had been very strange; one would hardly expect a soldier to sleep with the guards of the palace when he had the opportunity to go down to his own house. When David heard what Uriah had done, he called him back to his palace and asked him about his activities.

12. What reason did Uriah give for his actions? 11:11

Uriah said that the men of Israel and Judah were out in the battlefield living in tents. He also made mention of the Ark abiding in a tent. It is doubtful from this reference that the Ark was really taken into battle. When the sons of Eli had carried the Ark into battle against the Philistines, the results were catastrophic. The Philistines stiffened their resistance and not only beat the Israelites

but captured the Ark itself (I Samuel 4:10, 11). David had given this reason for wanting to build the temple. He said that the Ark of God was dwelling within curtains (II Samuel 7:2-6). Uriah said that Joab and the other captain of the hosts were encamped in the open fields. He, therefore, felt it quite out of place for him to go down to his own house to enjoy the good food that was provided for him and to enjoy his wife's company. Uriah abhorred the idea of his doing anything like this.

Uriah Killed in Battle. 11:12-21

12 And David said to Uriah, Tarry here today also, and tomorrow I will let thee depart. So Uriah abode in Jerusalem that day, and the morrow.

13 And when David had called him, he did eat and drink before him; and he made him drunk: and at even he went out to lie on his bed with the servants of his lord, but went not down to his house.

14 And it came to pass in the morning, that David wrote a letter to Joab, and sent *it* by the hand of Uriah.

15 And he wrote in the letter, saying, Set ye Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle, and retire ye from him, that he may be smitten, and die.

16 And it came to pass, when Joab observed the city, that he assigned Uriah unto a place where he knew that valiant men *were*.

17 And the men of the city went out, and fought with Joab: and there fell *some* of the servants of David; and Uriah the Hittite died also.

18 Then Joab sent and told David all the things concerning the war;

19 And charged the messenger, saying, When thou hast made an end of telling the matters of the war unto the king,

20 And if so be that the king's wrath arise, and he say unto thee, Wherefore approached ye so nigh unto the city

when ye did fight? knew ye not that they would shoot from the wall?

21 Who smote Abimelech the son of Jerubbesheth? did not a woman cast a piece of millstone upon him from the wall, that he died in Thebez? why went ye nigh the wall? then say thou, Thy servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also.

13 Why did David keep Uriah for two more days? 11:12

David dismissed Uriah from his presence for the time being, but asked him to stay in Jerusalem for the rest of that day and for the next day. David evidently needed time to collect his thoughts and to devise a plan. David's new plan was as wicked as his first. He conceived the idea of having Uriah to eat and to drink with him. He encouraged him to drink intemperately and then dismissed him from his presence. Even though Uriah was in a drunken state, he still did not go down to his own house. He went out to sleep with the guards of the palace, the servants of David. The old rabbis of Israel said that the soldiers divorced their wives when they went out to battle. No evidence can be gathered to support this from the Scripture, but it is true that a man who had recently married was exempted from going to battle (Deuteronomy 20:7). The apostle Paul also stated a general truth when he said, "No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life that he may please him, who hath chosen him to be a soldier" (II Timothy 2:4). Uriah was of this mind. As long as he was engaged in a battle, he did not want to divert his attention to domestic affairs. David was completely stymied by Uriah's actions.

14. What was David's final plan? 11:14

David wrote a letter to Joab, the captain of his army, and sent it back to the commander by Uriah himself. In the letter he wrote that Joab should send Uriah in the place where the battle was most severe. Joab was then to

order the rest of the men to withdraw, leaving Uriah to fight and die. David hoped that Uriah would be killed and then he would be free to marry Bathsheba. When the child was born, it would be thought to be the legitimate child of David and Bathsheba.

15. *Why did Joab comply? 11:16*

Joab was an unscrupulous soldier but completely loyal to David. Joab was David's nephew and therefore inclined to do his uncle's bidding, even had David not been king. Joab himself had killed Abner without just cause, and he was not above murdering in order to achieve the ends he had in mind. Joab therefore took careful note of the city and of the battle. He assigned Uriah to a place where he knew the most capable soldiers of the Ammonites were defending their town. As Israel drew near, the men of the city fought fiercely. Some of the Israelites were killed, and Uriah was among them. David's scheme was succeeding.

16. *How did Joab send the news to David? 11:18*

Joab sent a messenger from the battlefield to Jerusalem to tell David about the outcome of the battle. He gave the messenger only general news; since he could hardly justify sending a messenger all the way back to the king simply to tell him that Uriah was dead. Joab carefully instructed the messenger to observe the king's reaction; and if he became angry when he learned that the Ammonites had defeated Israel in the battle near the city, he was to give him additional news. This additional news would include the fact that even Uriah was killed. All of this was done to prevent arousing the suspicions of the messenger—or anybody else.

17. *Who was Abimelech? 11:21*

The folly of Abimelech was well known in Israel. He was Israel's first king. He had seized the throne unlawfully in the days of Gideon. The people of Israel wanted Gideon to rule over them, but Gideon had refused and

reminded the people that God was their king. Abimelech had gone to Thebez to put down a revolt there. A strong tower was in the city, and some of the men fled to it along with their women and children. As Abimelech drew near to the city to fight against them, a certain woman dropped a piece of millstone on his head and crushed his skull (Judges 9:53). Such action was poor military strategy, and Joab expected David to mention this when he became furious over the way the battle had gone at Rabbah.

Bathsheba Becomes David's Wife. 11:22-27

22 So the messenger went, and came and showed David all that Joab had sent him for.

23 And the messenger said unto David, Surely the men prevailed against us, and came out unto us into the field, and we were upon them even unto the entering of the gate.

24 And the shooters shot from off the wall upon thy servants; and *some* of the king's servants be dead, and thy servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also.

25 Then David said unto the messenger, Thus shalt thou say unto Joab, Let not this thing displease thee, for the sword devoureth one as well as another: make thy battle more strong against the city, and overthrow it: and encourage thou him.

26 And when the wife of Uriah heard that Uriah her husband was dead, she mourned for her husband.

27 And when the mourning was past, David sent and fetched her to his house, and she became his wife, and bare him a son. But the thing that David had done displeased the Lord.

18. What was David's reaction? 11:25

When David got the full message delivered by the man sent by Joab, he sent word back to Joab in order to allay any suspicions which may have been aroused. He told the

messenger to assure Joab that the king understood the reason for the strategy. He urged him not to be displeased on account of the outcome of the battle and became quite philosophical as he said, "For the sword devoureth one as well as another." He sent word then that they should fight more valiantly against the city and overthrow it. Such would have been the normal message of a good king to a valiant soldier, and probably the messenger did not suspect anything.

19. *What was the apparent outcome of the matter?*
11:26, 27

Bathsheba entered into the usual period of mourning for her husband. Her mourning may have been sincere, for she was a victim of circumstances to a great degree. After the period of mourning was over, David sent for her and brought her to his palace. Bathsheba became his wife, and the child which was to be born would have been considered as theirs rightfully. The final verses of the chapter point out the true circumstances. What they had done was a sin against God. "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good" (Proverbs 15:3). "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight but all things are naked and open unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do" (Hebrews 4:13).

CHAPTER 11 IN REVIEW

1. What city of Ammon did Israel besiege? _____
2. Where did David abide? _____
3. Who was Bathsheba's husband? _____
4. What was her father's name? _____
5. What was Uriah's nationality? _____
6. How many nights did Uriah spend in Jerusalem? _____
7. How was Uriah killed? _____
8. What man in Israel's earlier history had died beneath a city wall? _____

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9. Did Bathsheba mourn for her husband? _____
10. Did David marry Bathsheba? _____

A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 12

- Vv. 1- 6 *Nathan's parable.* Nathan came into David's presence to tell him a story that brought out a great truth. The story so intrigued David that he was caught in his own judgments.
- Vv. 7-23 *God's judgment.* Nathan delivered to David the judgment of God upon David's sin. David was not able to hide his sin from God. The child born to David and Bathsheba out of their adulterous union was smitten. Eventually it died.
- Vv. 24-25 *The Birth of Solomon.* David repented of his sin and God blessed his marriage with Bathsheba. Solomon's other name, Jedidiah, means "Beloved of the Lord."
- Vv. 26-31 *The final siege of Rabbah.* The armies of Israel were finally victorious over the Ammonites. The citizens of Rabbah, their leading city, were besieged and finally put under the strictest kind of servitude. We can well imagine that David may have wished he had never heard of the country of Ammon.

LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *A beam in the eye* (Matthew 7:1-5). David wanted to punish a man who had killed another man's lamb. He did not realize that Nathan was talking about him, but he was one who was guilty of a far greater sin.
2. *"Thou are the man"* (v. 7). The apostle Paul urged the preachers of the gospel to be sure that they did not

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12:1

condemn themselves when they condemned others (Romans 2:21-24).

3. *The iniquities of the fathers* (Exodus 20:5). God does not visit the ultimate condemnation of a father's sin upon the children, but many fathers cause much suffering for the children. David and Bathsheba in their sin brought on the death of their first child.

3. David's Repentance, 12:1-31.

Nathan's Parable. 12:1-6

And the Lord sent Nathan unto David. And he came unto him, and said unto him, There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor.

2 The rich *man* had exceeding many flocks and herds:

3 But the poor *man* had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up: and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter.

4 And there came a traveler unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him; but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him.

5 And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this *thing* shall surely die:

6 And he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity.

1. *What kind of story did Nathan tell?* 12:1

The story that Nathan told David was a parable. A parable is an earthly story with a heavenly meaning. It is a story of what actually did happen or could have happened. It is different from a fable, inasmuch as a fable

is generally some kind of story that is quite definitely fictitious. Whether or not there were two men in a city of Nathan's acquaintance should not alter the meaning of the story. The setting is typical of life. One man was rich, the other was poor. This parable was the setting for a message that God had given Nathan to deliver to David.

2. *Who was the rich man?* 12:2

The rich man in the parable must have been David. Although we must be careful lest we err in forcing all the points of a parable to have some significance, this central truth is clear. The parable was directed against David. Later, Nathan said, "Thou art the man" (verse seven). David certainly fit the picture; he had exceeding many flocks and herds. God had given him prosperity above anything he could have hoped for or imagined in his fondest dreams.

3. *Who was the poor man?* 12:3

The poor man who had nothing save the one little ewe lamb must have been Uriah. Uriah was a Hittite. He was a foreigner to the commonwealth of Israel and was a soldier in David's army. Naturally, the rest of the picture does not fit exactly. Uriah had not raised Bathsheba in his own home, and it does not seem appropriate to view her being with his children as one of his own family. Neither is it appropriate to liken Bathsheba to a poor man's daughter.

4. *Who was the poor man's lamb?* 12:4

Even though we cannot make all points of the parable fit the true life situation, the poor man's lamb must have been a reference to Bathsheba. David had taken Bathsheba away from Uriah just as the rich man had stolen the poor man's lamb. Of course David did not "dress" the "lamb" and serve it to his guests, as did the rich man in the parable when the traveler came to him. Pressing the points of the parable too far would make Bathsheba absolutely innocent and of the same nature as a lamb.

Although Bathsheba did not lure David into the sinful situation that was theirs, we cannot absolve her of all blame completely. She apparently made no resistance, and entered into the adulterous union without revealing the heinous nature of the crimes that had been committed.

5. *What was David's reaction?* 12:5

David's anger was greatly kindled. He thought Nathan was telling him a true story of the events transpiring in his kingdom. As ruler of the land, he judged that the man who had done this terrible thing was worthy of death. He pronounced the sentence of death upon him. He also ordered that the lamb be restored fourfold. This was the statute laid down in Exodus 22:1. If an ox had been involved, then five oxen were to be used to make restitution. In the case of sheep, only four sheep were to be repaid. This quick action on David's part is typical of him when he was at his best. He was a man of action and took immediate steps to rectify wrongs which were done in his kingdom.

God's Judgment. 12:7-23

7 And Nathan said to David, Thou *art* the man. Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul;

8 And I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah; and if *that had been* too little, I would moreover have given unto thee such and such things.

9 Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the Lord, to do evil in his sight? thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife *to be* thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon.

10 Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house; because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife.

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11 Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give *them* unto thy neighbor, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun.

12 For thou didst *it* secretly: but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun.

13 And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the Lord. And Nathan said unto David, The Lord also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die.

14 Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child also *that is* born unto thee shall surely die.

15 And Nathan departed unto his house. And the Lord struck the child that Uriah's wife bare unto David, and it was very sick.

16 David therefore besought God for the child; and David fasted, and went in, and lay all night upon the earth.

17 And the elders of his house arose, *and went* to him, to raise him up from the earth: but he would not, neither did he eat bread with them.

18 And it came to pass on the seventh day, that the child died. And the servants of David feared to tell him that the child was dead: for they said, Behold, while the child was yet alive, we spake unto him, and he would not hearken unto our voice: how will he then vex himself, if we tell him that the child is dead?

19 But when David saw that his servants whispered, David perceived that the child was dead: therefore David said unto his servants, Is the child dead? And they said, He is dead.

20 Then David arose from the earth, and washed, and anointed *himself*, and changed his apparel, and came into the house of the Lord, and worshiped: then he came to his own house; and when he required, they set bread before him, and he did eat.

21 Then said his servants unto him, What thing *is* this that thou hast done? thou didst fast and weep for the child, *while it was* alive; but when the child was dead, thou didst rise and eat bread.

22 And he said, While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept: for I said, Who can tell *whether* God will be gracious to me, that the child may live?

23 But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.

6. *What was Nathan's announcement? 12:7*

Nathan said to David, "Thou art the man." The Septuagint in one of its texts adds, "Who has done this!" Nathan would hardly have needed to add this latter clause, when he said that David was the man that he was talking about. David caught the point. The robbery of the darling is the real point of the parable, but the guilt of the man was the thing that Nathan brought to David's attention. David had judged the man worthy of death, and then Nathan told him that he was the man he was talking about.

7. *Why did Nathan recall God's blessing on David? 12:8*

God had made David like the rich man of the parable who had herds and flocks. Nathan reminded David that God had given him his master's house. He had inherited everything that had been Saul's except for the bit of land that was his family's heritage. Nathan even said that David had been given Saul's wives. We have no other indication of David's possessing the concubines of Saul. Rizpah, one of Saul's concubines, had been in the care of Ish-bosheth, and Abner was charged with having tried to take her for his wife (II Samuel 3:7). More than likely, this is a reference to the fact that David had received Michal, Saul's daughter, as his wife, since there is no specific mention of David having any of Saul's wives or concubines.

8. *How had David despised the command of the Lord?*
12:9

One of the Ten Commandments was "thou shalt not commit adultery" (Exodus 20:14). David had broken this commandment. He had lain with another man's wife. Another commandment was "thou shalt not kill" (Exodus 20:13). David had brought about the death of Uriah. It was specifically stipulated in the law that a man should not covet his neighbor's house, his neighbor's wife, his manservant, his maidservant, his ox, his ass, or anything that was his neighbor's (Exodus 20:17). David had broken all these commandments and conducted himself in a very sinful way.

9. *What penalties were pronounced? 12:10, 11, 14*

The penalties pronounced on David were manifold. Some were personal and immediate; some general and to be fulfilled in the future. All brought grief to David. This is a list of them:

- a. The sword should never depart from David's house.
- b. God would raise up evil against David in his own house.
- c. David's own wives were to be taken from him by a neighbor.
- d. The child which was to be born was doomed to die.
- e. The penalty of death was put away for the time, yet David suffered the indirect consequences of it.

10. *How did David receive these penalties? 12:13*

David cried out, "I have sinned against the Lord." Echoes of this cry are found in Psalm 32:5, where David said, "I acknowledge my sin unto thee, and my iniquity have I not hid. I said I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord, and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin," and in Psalm 51:4 where David said, "Against Thee and Thee

only have I sinned and done this evil in thy sight, that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest and be clear when thou judgest." One can only wonder if this were also in the mind of Solomon as he wrote, "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper, but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy" (Proverbs 28:13).

11. How would the enemies of the Lord blaspheme? 12:14

David was a "man of God." He was a man chosen by God to lead the people of Israel. Men round about would come to hold God Himself in disrepute because of His selection of such a man as David. It is the old story of people blaspheming the name of God as they say, "Look at the preacher. See how sinful he is. Surely the God he talks about is not righteous or just." A Christian is often the only "Bible" a careless world will read. What if the type is crooked? What if the print is blurred?

12. Why did David pray against God's decree? 12:16

God's promises are sometimes conditional. When man changes, God's purposes are seen in a different light. Jonah went into Nineveh preaching that in forty days the great city would be destroyed. The king and all his subjects repented of their wickedness and clothed themselves in sackcloth putting ashes upon their bodies, and fasting before the Lord. They prayed mightily unto God and repented of their evil. They stopped the wicked things which they were doing, saying, "Who can tell if God will turn and repent and turn away from his fierce anger that we perish not?" (Jonah 3:9). God saw their works and Nineveh was spared. The tense of the verb used in describing David's beseeching God on behalf of the child, his fasting, his going in and lying all night upon the earth, points to the fact that he made a habit of doing these things. It became his daily routine.

13. Why did the elders interfere? 12:17

The leaders of the kingdom had great influence on David and they were concerned for his physical and mental

well-being. Their concern was on his behalf, but they were not trying to interfere with his spiritual life. It was the same kind of concern that Saul's servants had for him when he had eaten nothing as he made his ill-fated trip to see the witch of Endor (I Samuel 28:23).

14. Why did the servants think David's actions were strange? 12:18-21

The crisis came on the seventh day, and the child died. The servants were afraid to tell David that the child was dead. They had seen his extreme grief and agony while the child was ill, and they were afraid that he would not be able to stand the shock of the news that the child had died. David heard the servants whispering, and reached the conclusion that the child had died. He asked them directly if this were so, and they affirmed that it was. At that point, David arose from the earth where he had been lying, bathed himself, anointed himself, changed his clothing, and went to the house of God to worship. After that he came back to the palace and ordered that they should give him something to eat. David's journey to the house of the Lord must have been to the temporary tabernacle which David had made to house the Ark of the Covenant. All of this was contrary to what the servants had expected. They had expected that after the child had died he would be even more vexed and grieved.

15. Did David believe in a future state? 12:23

None will doubt that David had faith in prayer. None will doubt that David believed that God could be prevailed upon to answer a fervent, earnest prayer. None can doubt that David believed in a peaceful, complete home in heaven. Did David not say, "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me"? (II Samuel 12:23). His conduct after the death of the child was therefore only what might be expected. While the child lived, he was in deep anguish of soul, hoping that God would spare him. When the child

died, David knew that he could not bring him back to life. His hope was thereafter fixed on a reunion in Heaven.

The Birth of Solomon. 12:24, 25

24 And David comforted Bath-sheba his wife, and went in unto her, and lay with her: and she bare a son, and he called his name Solomon: and the Lord loved him.

25 And he sent by the hand of Nathan the prophet; and he called his name Jedidiah, because of the Lord.

16. Why call Solomon Jedidiah? 12:24, 25

In some way God must have shown that He loved the second child born to David of her who had been the wife of Uriah. The name Jedidiah means "beloved of Jehovah." Perhaps God had again spoken to Nathan, who in turn spoke to David, telling him of God's good intentions for Solomon. Solomon's birth was the fulfillment of a promise (see I Chronicles 28:8-10). Solomon was to be a man of rest. It was he who was to build the temple.

17. What is the purpose in giving this narrative? 12:1-31

The Old Testament is a "tutor" to lead us to a better understanding of Christ and His mission and message. Christ died for our sins. A black narrative like this should teach all men everywhere that if men like David were not spared the consequences of sin, no man can expect more. Only the blood of Christ can cleanse man from his sin. Furthermore, as men of good will read the account, they are assured of its trustworthiness. No fabricated account of the lives of Israel's heroes would contain a notice of sin like this.

The Final Siege of Rabbah. 12:26-31

26 And Joab fought against Rabbah of the children of Ammon, and took the royal city.

27 And Joab sent messengers to David, and said, I have fought against Rabbah, and have taken the city of waters.

28 Now therefore gather the rest of the people together, and encamp against the city, and take it: lest I take the city, and it be called after my name.

29 And David gathered all the people together, and went to Rabbah, and fought against it, and took it.

30 And he took their king's crown from off his head, the weight whereof *was* a talent of gold with the precious stones: and it was *set* on David's head. And he brought forth the spoil of the city in great abundance.

31 And he brought forth the people that *were* therein, and put *them* under saws, and under harrows of iron, and under axes of iron, and made them pass through the brickkiln: and thus did he unto all the cities of the children of Ammon. So David and all the people returned unto Jerusalem.

18. *Explain Rabbah's being called "the city of waters."*

12:26

The river Jabbok flows near the city of Rabbah. This river would supply water to sustain many people. There was, as a matter of fact, a higher as well as a lower city. The city nearer the river was of lesser importance. The city sitting back some 300 feet higher in elevation was the principal city. The city was probably built to protect the formation. The unusual site of the city prompted the name. It was a royal city since it was the residence of the king. Once it was taken, the Ammonites were beaten.

19. *Why was Joab so considerate?* 12:28

Joab preferred that David have the glory which would come from capturing the city. He said that if he were to take it the city might later be called after his name. Conquerors quite often named cities after themselves. In other cases of historical note, the people have acclaimed

the liberator by naming their city after the man who drove out their enemies. Such names as Caesarea, Tiberias, and Philippi bear testimony of the fact that the Romans captured and ruled over these places. Joab may have thought the king's fortunes were ebbing and he needed this additional boost to his popularity.

20. *Why did the king have such a great crown?* 12:30

After the Israelites conquered the Ammonites, they took the king's crown from off his head, so that he had either been taken a prisoner or slain at the time of the capture of the city. The weight is mentioned specifically, and it has been calculated to be something like eighty-three pounds. The strongest man could hardly have worn a crown of this weight on his head, even for a short time; and David would scarcely place it upon his own head. The crown must have been more for ornamental purposes than for actual use, but it would have symbolized the king's greatness and was very befitting to David's exalted position. It may have been placed on his head in ceremonial fashion as men stood around to hold it, and this would signify that David was the ruler over this vassal state in the land east of the Jordan.

21. *How did David treat the captives?* 12:31

David treated the people very harshly, but he did not torture them. Some commentators view this as David's actually sawing the people into pieces, and dragging harrows of iron over their bodies, or chopping them with axes. They even view this punishment as one of severe torture whereby they were caused to walk through heated brick kilns. David only made these people to do all kinds of servile work. He made them to serve as woodsmen. They dragged harrows through the field, and labored at the debilitating work at the brick kilns. They literally performed slave labor and thus, augmented the services available to the kingdom of Israel.

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CHAPTER 12 IN REVIEW

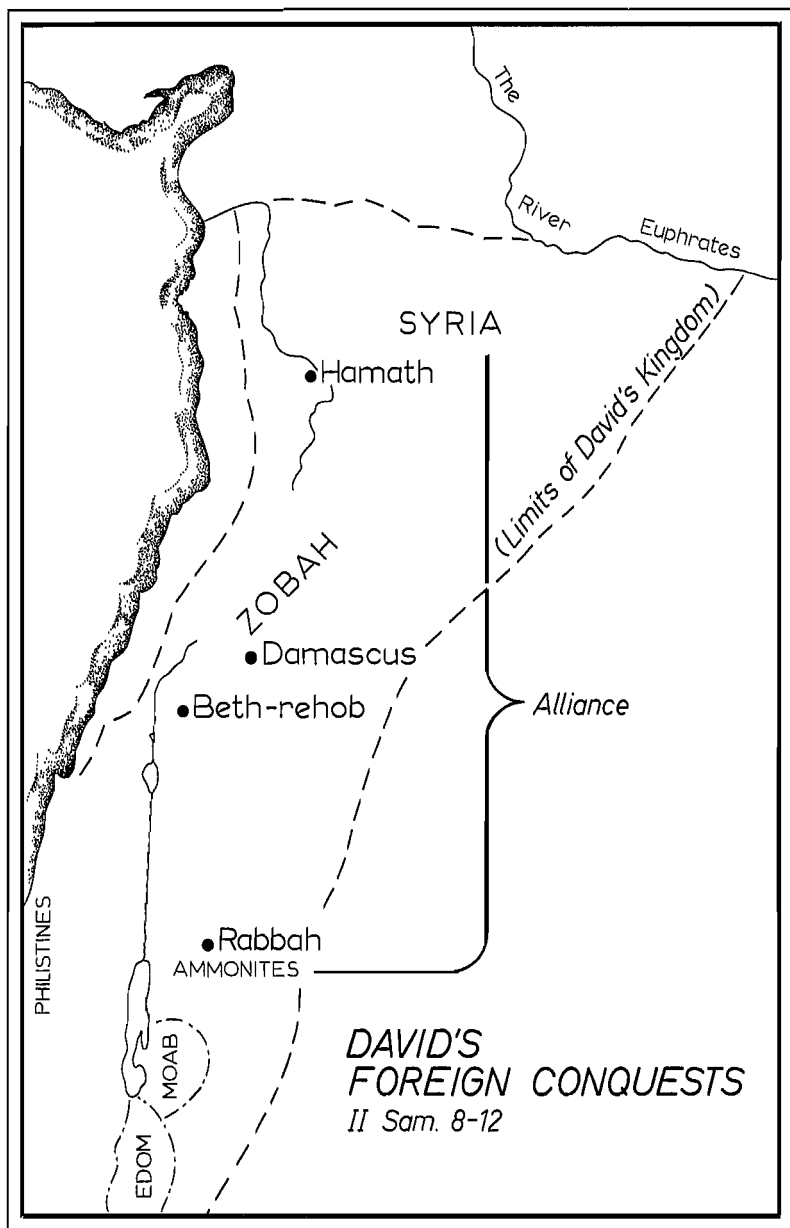
1. What kind of story did Nathan tell David? _____
2. Whom did the poor man represent? _____
3. Whom did the rich man represent? _____
4. Whom did the lamb represent? _____
5. What did Nathan say David had caused God's enemies to do? _____
6. What did Nathan say would happen to David's son by Bathsheba? _____
7. Did David admit he had sinned? _____
8. How many days did the child live? _____
9. What was the name of the second child of David and Bathsheba? _____
10. What name did Nathan give to the child? _____

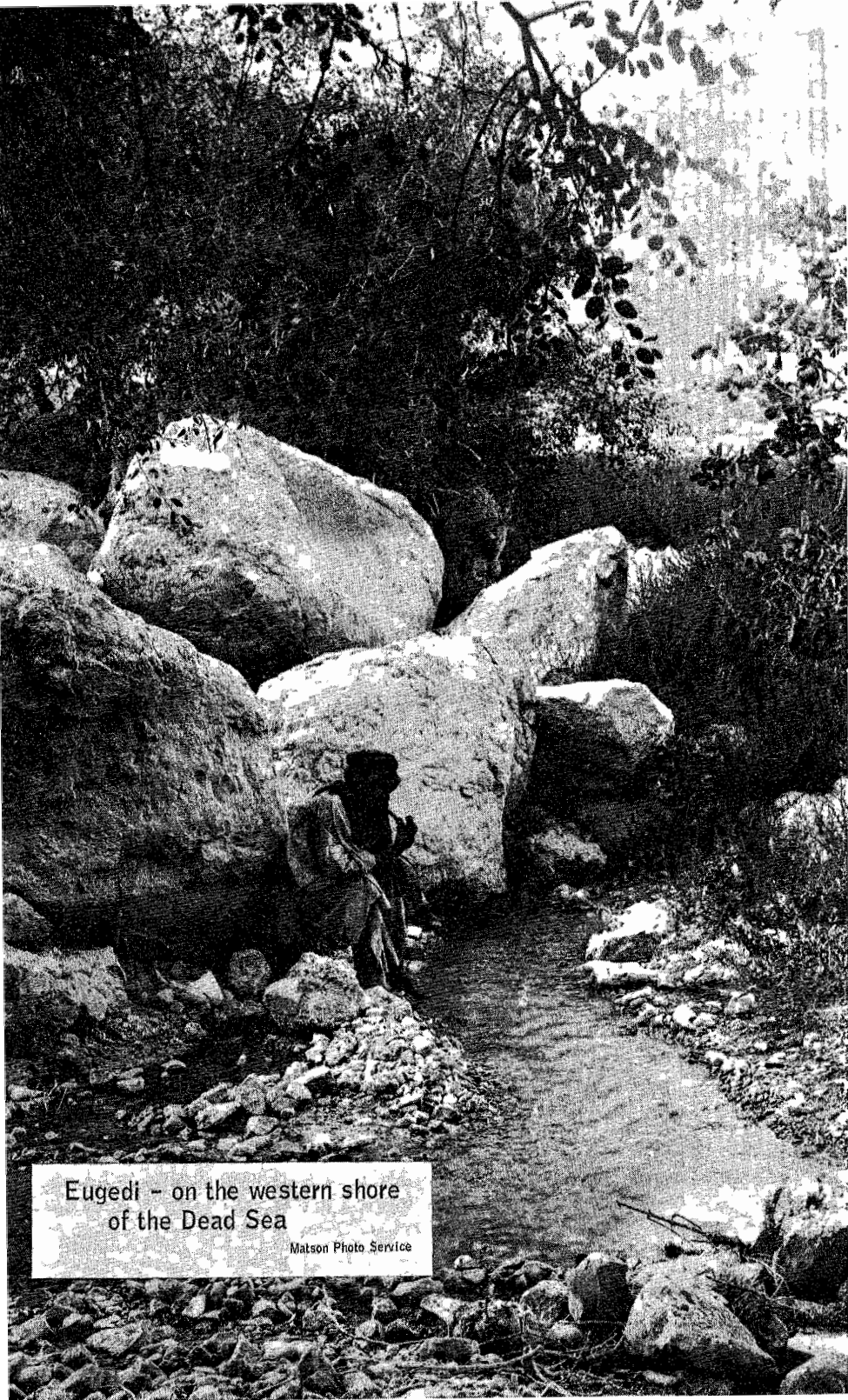
A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 13

- Vv. 1-14 *Amnon's sin with Tamar.* Amnon was David's oldest son by Ahinoam, his Jezreelite wife. Tamar was the daughter of David and his wife Maacah. Tamar was the sister of Absalom. Amnon was a vicious young man and forced Tamar and lay with her.
- Vv. 15-29 *Absalom kills Amnon.* Absalom took judgment into his own hands. He waited for an opportune time and then killed his half-brother, Amnon.
- Vv. 30-39 *Absalom flees to Talmai.* Realizing that his own life was in danger because he had killed Amnon, he fled to his grandfather, Talmai, the king of Geshur. Here he found refuge.

LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *Forbidden fruit is bitter.* Immediately after Amnon had committed his heinous crime against Tamar, we





Eugedi - on the western shore
of the Dead Sea

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read that "he hated her exceedingly so that the hatred wherewith he hated her was greater than the love wherewith he had loved her" (v. 15). This is often true in life today. Temptation is very alluring, but the fruit of sin is dust, ashes, and death.

2. *Like father, like son.* David had committed adultery with Bathsheba. Amnon committed fornication with his half-sister. Absalom killed Amnon. We are left to wonder if Amnon would have been bold enough to commit his crime if David had lived a holier life. We also doubt that Absalom would have taken judgment into his own hands if his father had acted to punish Amnon. Too often the sins of the children are but reflections of the sins of the parents.

4. Amnon's Death, 13:1-39.

Amnon's Sin With Tamar. 13:1-14

And it came to pass after this, that Absalom the son of David had a fair sister, whose name *was* Tamar; and Amnon the son of David loved her.

2 And Amnon was so vexed, that he fell sick for his sister Tamar; for she *was* a virgin; and Amnon thought it hard for him to do any thing to her.

3 But Amnon had a friend, whose name *was* Jonadab, the son of Shimeah David's brother; and Jonadab *was* a very subtle man.

4 And he said unto him, Why *art* thou, *being* the king's son, lean from day to day? wilt thou not tell me? And Amnon said unto him, I love Tamar, my brother Absalom's sister.

5 And Jonadab said unto him, Lay thee down on thy bed, and make thyself sick: and when thy father cometh to see thee, say unto him, I pray thee, let my sister Tamar

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come, and give me meat, and dress the meat in my sight, that I may see *it*, and eat *it* at her hand.

6 So Amnon lay down, and made himself sick: and when the king was come to see him, Amnon said unto the king, I pray thee, let Tamar my sister come, and make me a couple of cakes in my sight, that I may eat at her hand.

7 Then David sent home to Tamar, saying, Go now to thy brother Amnon's house, and dress him meat.

8 So Tamar went to her brother Amnon's house; and he was laid down. And she took flour, and kneaded *it*, and made cakes in his sight, and did bake the cakes.

9 And she took a pan, and poured *them* out before him; but he refused to eat. And Amnon said, Have out all men from me. And they went out every man from him.

10 And Amnon said unto Tamar, Bring the meat into the chamber, that I may eat of thine hand. And Tamar took the cakes which she had made, and brought *them* into the chamber of Amnon her brother.

11 And when she had brought *them* unto him to eat, he took hold of her, and said unto her, Come lie with me, my sister.

12 And she answered him, Nay, my brother, do not force me; for no such thing ought to be done in Israel: do not thou this folly.

13 And I, whither shall I cause my shame to go? and as for thee, thou shalt be as one of the fools in Israel. Now therefore, I pray thee, speak unto the king; for he will not withhold me from thee.

14 Howbeit he would not hearken unto her voice: but, being stronger than she, forced her, and lay with her.

1. *Who was Tamar?* 13:1

Tamar was the full sister of Absalom, both being the children of David by Maacah (II Samuel 3:3). Amnon was the son of David and Ahinoam, the Jezreelitess, and David's first-born, thereby the heir apparent to the throne,

and Israel's crown-prince. Tamar was therefore the half-sister of Amnon. A significant notice of Tamar's beauty was made; for the handsome features of Absalom, her brother, were also outstanding.

2. *Why was Amnon vexed?* 13:2

Amnon's lust for Tamar was so intense that he literally became ill as he harbored these wicked thoughts. Later on, he added a sickness that was feigned to his natural sickness (verses 5, 6). Klostermann, a commentator of some years back, suggested that the root word was very close to another word which means "to become insane." It is doubtful that Amnon became an idiot, but his illness was brought on by his state of mind. His vexation was caused by the fact that Tamar was a virgin, and he thought it would be impossible for him to seduce her and lay with her, since being a virgin Tamar had less public freedom. She was kept closer to home, as a matter of custom, and for her own protection. Amnon seems to have no personal inhibitions about forcing her and lying with her, and it probably did not seem hard to him to do anything to her because of his own conscience. Rather, he was stymied by the circumstances of the situation.

3. *Who was Jonadab?* 13:3

Jonadab was another of David's nephews. He makes the fourth nephew to be connected with David's rule—Joab, Abishai, and Asahel all being in David's army. Shimeah, Jonadab's father, was the third of Jesse's sons to pass by Samuel when Samuel was seeking the Lord's anointed to be king over Israel (I Samuel 16:9). Such a circumstance would point to his being the third-born of Jesse's sons and David's older brother. Jonadab is described as being a subtle man, and it is better to consider him full of subtlety and guile, than to think of him as being the possessor of actual wisdom.

4. What did Jonadab ask Amnon? 13:4

Jonadab asked Amnon why he was thin and haggard from morning to morning. Jonadab had noticed the way in which Amnon was becoming lean and haggard but did not know the cause of it. Amnon told him that it was because of his misplaced affection for Tamar, his half-sister, and Absalom's full sister. Jonadab thought that such a condition was not becoming to a king's son. The royal family should have the appearance of being well-fed and properly nourished. Amnon's vexed condition led Jonadab to make his inquiry.

5. What was Jonadab's scheme? 13:5

Jonadab advised Amnon to go to bed and pretend that he was ill. David's concern over his condition would bring the king to visit him, and this would afford Amnon an opportunity to make his request. Amnon followed Jonadab's instructions and laid the trap for Tamar. His request for his sister's coming to him to prepare his food might have seemed quite unusual, but David would think it only the whim of a sick man.

6. How could Amnon carry out such a dastardly plot? 13:6

There was a bit of plausibility in his request. First, he was sick. Second, anyone would know that a sick man often has peculiar whims especially with regard to food. He simply decided that it was right to grant the sick man's request. The actual preparation of the meat in the house would fill the dwelling with the appetizing aromas and add to the appeal of the food. One of the king's own household might well be more careful in the preparation of the food. The plot seemed logical, and the arrangements were made.

7. What kind of cakes did Tamar make? 13:7

Some evidence is gathered from the text to support the belief that the cakes were heart-shaped. The Greek trans-

lation indicates that they were cylindrical-shaped cakes. The original text described the cakes with a word which was at the root of our English word for the heart. Too much cannot be made of this, and it would be a stretching of the actual indication of the text to make them any kind of love-cakes. They were, no doubt, appropriate. The verb used to describe the preparation of the cakes generally means "to boil." The Greek translation has a word which often means to "set fire to," but the translation in the King James is accurate. They were baked, or boiled, and prepared in such a way as to make them tasty and appetizing.

8. *Why did Amnon refuse to eat? 13:9*

Amnon acted very strangely. He must have taken steps to insure that all his servants were gone from the house. If Tamar sent the food to him by the servants, he may have sent it back to her with instructions that these men were to leave, and she was to bring the food into his bedchamber. The fact that she baked the cakes "in his sight" (verse eight) would not mean that he had only one room in his dwelling and that she baked the cakes where he was lying in his bed or that he was in the room where food was prepared. Her being in his house would suffice for the meaning of the phrase. Her pouring them out "before him" might have been done in the room where food was prepared and not necessarily where he was lying.

9. *Why did Tamar yield to Amnon's request? 13:10*

Amnon's refusal to eat the food which was set before him was not an unusual action for a sick man. Once again, he was acting whimsical; she could hardly suspect anything when he asked that she personally feed him his meal. This is in keeping with the way sick people act, often refusing to eat their meals unless it is fed to them by a certain person or in a certain way. By this fiendish scheme, Amnon was able to entice Tamar into his bed-

chamber, and at the same time, be sure that all others were out of the room. When she brought his food to him, he grabbed her, and forced her to lie with him.

10. *Why did Tamar suggest speaking to David?* 13:13

There was nothing particularly effective in Tamar's suggestion that Amnon ask for her hand in marriage from her father, the king. She was probably devising some way to escape for the time. She had remonstrated with Amnon saying that such a crime ought not to be committed in Israel, thereby implying such may have been customary among the Canaanites. She looked upon his actions as folly, but all of this was to no avail. She appealed to Amnon on her own behalf, saying that she would be ashamed if he carried out his intentions. She even told him that he would be as one of the fools in Israel. Amnon refused to listen to her. Since he was a man and stronger than she was, he forced her and lay with her. The description of his crime is similar to that committed by Shechem with Dinah the daughter of Jacob (Genesis 34:2).

Absalom Kills Amnon. 13:15-29

15 Then Amnon hated her exceedingly; so that the hatred wherewith he hated her *was* greater than the love wherewith he had loved her. And Amnon said unto her, Arise, be gone.

16 And she said unto him, *There is* no cause: this evil in sending me away *is* greater than the other that thou didst unto me. But he would not hearken unto her.

17 Then he called his servant that ministered unto him, and said, Put now this *woman* out from me, and bolt the door after her.

18 And *she had* a garment of divers colors upon her: for with such robes were the king's daughters *that were* virgins appareled. Then his servant brought her out, and bolted the door after her.

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19 And Tamar put ashes on her head, and rent her garment of divers colors that *was* on her, and laid her hand on her head, and went on crying.

20 And Absalom her brother said unto her, Hath Amnon thy brother been with thee? but hold now thy peace, my sister: he *is* thy brother; regard not this thing. So Tamar remained desolate in her brother Absalom's house.

21 But when king David heard of all these things, he was very wroth.

22 And Absalom spake unto his brother Amnon neither good nor bad: for Absalom hated Amnon, because he had forced his sister Tamar.

23 And it came to pass after two full years, that Absalom had sheepshearers in Baal-hazor, which *is* beside Ephraim: and Absalom invited all the king's sons.

24 And Absalom came to the king, and said, Behold now, thy servant hath sheepshearers; let the king, I beseech thee, and his servants go with thy servant.

25 And the king said to Absalom, Nay, my son, let us not all now go, lest we be chargeable unto thee. And he pressed him: howbeit he would not go, but blessed him.

26 Then said Absalom, If not, I pray thee, let my brother Amnon go with us. And the king said unto him, Why should he go with thee?

27 But Absalom pressed him, that he let Amnon and all the king's sons go with him.

28 Now Absalom had commanded his servants, saying, Mark ye now when Amnon's heart is merry with wine, and when I say unto you, Smite Amnon; then kill him, fear not: have not I commanded you? be courageous, and be valiant.

29 And the servants of Absalom did unto Amnon as Absalom had commanded. Then all the king's sons arose, and every man gat him up upon his mule, and fled.

11. *What were the effects of this sin on the parties affected? 13:15*

The following after-effects of Amnon's sins are typical of those seen in the lives of those who commit similar crimes today:

1. Amnon despised Tamar. With the intensity that he had before seemed to love her, he now hated her. It is usually true that men hate those whom they have injured. Here is proof that lust is not love.
2. Absalom spoke kindly to his sister to comfort her. There was nothing he could do immediately, but he was very angry.
3. David was angry. His hands were tied. He could not punish his son for this crime, when he himself had only recently committed a similar, but worse, one.
4. Tamar was utterly humiliated. She put ashes on her head, tore her beautiful robe, laid her hand on her head, and went away crying. Her sorrow and shame were overwhelming.

Such scenes are often repeated—the criminal hates his victim, the brothers of the wronged sister seek revenge, the parents are angry but helpless, and the victim is shamed.

12. *Why was Amnon's sending Tamar away a greater evil? 13:16*

When Amnon tried to get rid of Tamar, she rebuked him saying that it was worse for him to send her away than to force her and lie with her in the first place. If Amnon's love had been sincere, he would not have treated her this way under any circumstance. Tamar was a very clear-minded girl; and although she knew that it was not customary for a half-brother to marry his half-sister, she would certainly have considered this less of a folly than what Amnon was doing. His abrupt command, "Arise,

be gone," indicates that he was contemptuous of her and that her presence was burdensome to him. He could hardly wait to get rid of her after he had humbled her. His twisted state of mind is further brought out in the fact that he finally called his household servant and commanded him to put Tamar out and to bolt the door so that she could not return. He was thus left alone in the cesspool of sin that he had made for himself.

13. What was her garment of many colors? 13:18

Tamar's coat of many colors reminds the Bible reader of the coat which Jacob made for Joseph (Genesis 37:3). Bible translators have understood this description in various ways. Aquila, in his Greek translation, rendered the phrase as describing a long coat with sleeves. It was also viewed this way by Jerome in the Vulgate. Tamar's garment was probably an upper coat reaching to the wrists and ankles and was a distinctive garment of the noblemen and king's daughters. Tamar rent this coat as a sign of her deep grief.

14. What action did Tamar take? 13:19

Tamar did not know what to do. In her bewildered state, she left Amnon's house in tears. Like the captives described in Babylon (Ezekiel 27:30), "she cast up dust upon her head." Her beautiful princess' robe was ripped in the customary way of showing deep grief. She held her head as if it were to burst and went through the streets weeping.

15. Why did Absalom suspect Amnon? 13:20

Jonadab had been observant of Amnon's strange actions, and it would not be unlikely that Absalom was also aware of something unusual in his conduct. He calls him Amnon, a diminutive of contempt. Absalom asked Tamar if "little Amnon" had forced her. He asked her not to do anything about it, but let him take vengeance.

His motive for asking Tamar to hold her peace, grew out of his desire to prevent Tamar from interfering with his designs. He tried to comfort her by asking her not to regard the thing or to make any plans on her own. Tamar was therefore kept in seclusion in Absalom's house while he sought an opportunity to avenge the crime.

16. What did David do about the situation? 13:21

David's conduct reminds one of the conduct of Jacob when Dinah was defiled at Shechem. Jacob held his peace when he heard about the sin and waited until his sons had come in from the field (Genesis 34:5). Jacob seemed more concerned for his reputation and physical safety among the Canaanites and Perizzites than he was for the punishment of the sinners. David was very angry when he heard what had happened to Tamar, but he did nothing about it. Perhaps he felt that he was helpless, since he had committed a similar sin himself. On this account his rebuke of Amnon would be ineffective. The Septuagint has an additional statement indicating that David did not rebuke Amnon because he was his first-born son and he loved him. As a matter of fact, if David had really loved the boy, he would have rebuked him. The father chastens the son whom he loves (Hebrews 12:6, 7). David was probably overindulgent towards his son, especially the one he thought would succeed him to the throne.

*17. Why did Absalom refuse to say anything to Amnon?
13:22*

Absalom was so angry about the crime which was committed and hated Amnon so much that he was afraid to say anything to him either good or bad for fear that he would reveal his intentions to him. His motive for silence would seem to be a desire that his designs would not be suspected, and he kept this silent attitude as he laid plans to kill Amnon.

18. *In what way did Absalom take revenge? 13:23*

Absalom slew Amnon. He did not take revenge personally. He commanded his servants to slay Amnon when his heart was merry with wine and he was not cautious. Amnon was slain at the time of sheep-shearing. Sheep-shearing time was a time of feasting (I Samuel 25:36). Absalom showed himself to be a crafty, cunning, hypocritical sort of fellow. For a long time he hid his anger of heart and spoke softly to Amnon and Tamar. He deceived David.

Absalom was just as guilty of the murder of his brother as if he had taken the life himself. What a man does through his agents may be charged to him.

19. *Why did Absalom invite the king and all his sons? 13:24, 25*

The king's sons were the chief rulers of the land (II Samuel 8:18). The Greek translation again has an additional statement that Absalom asked the king and his sons as well as his servants to go to the sheep-shearing feast. David refused saying that if all went there would be great inconvenience to Absalom. Even though Absalom insisted, David refused to go. He did send him away with his blessing suspecting nothing of Absalom's real motive for holding the feast.

20. *Why should Amnon especially be invited? 13:26, 27*

The request for Amnon's presence seems to have aroused David's suspicion, because he asked why he should go. Absalom did not give a direct reason, according to the record, but he continued to urge that he be allowed to go. It may have been that he asked for him and the other sons to be present since David himself had refused to go. Amnon was the heir-apparent to the throne, and Absalom could ask for his presence especially without arousing too much suspicion. David was satisfied by Absalom's explanation and finally gave his consent. Once again, the Greek translation has a phrase which has not come down

to us in our English translations. This phrase states that Absalom made a feast that was fit for a king.

21. *Why did the king's sons ride on mules?* 13:29

Baal-hazor (verse 23) was in Ephraim, some twenty miles north of Jerusalem. Such a long distance to travel would necessitate the king's sons having some means of transportation. The employment of these animals not only for war (II Samuel 18:9), but also in times of peace was an indication of growing luxury in David's kingdom. Previously the ass had been the customary mount for persons of dignity (Judges 5:19; 10:4; 12:14). The horse was used largely for military purposes. The rearing of hybrid animals was prohibited (Leviticus 19:19). Absalom was especially fond of the mule as a means of transportation and employed it when he made his effort to steal the hearts of the men of Israel. He was riding on a mule when his head was caught in the branches of a tree and he was left suspended (II Samuel 18:9). When Absalom gave the order to kill Amnon and his servants actually killed the crown prince, the other princes might have thought that all were destined to be slain; and for that reason, they all fled immediately.

Absalom Flees to Talmai. 13:30-39

30 And it came to pass, while they were in the way, that tidings came to David, saying, Absalom hath slain all the king's sons, and there is not one of them left.

31 Then the king arose, and tare his garments, and lay on the earth; and all his servants stood by with their clothes rent.

32 And Jonadab, the son of Shimeah David's brother, answered and said, Let not my lord suppose *that* they have slain all the young men the king's sons; for Amnon only is dead: for by the appointment of Absalom this hath been determined from the day that he forced his sister Tamar.

33 Now therefore let not my lord the king take the thing to his heart, to think that all the king's sons are dead: for Amnon only is dead.

34 But Absalom fled. And the young man that kept the watch lifted up his eyes, and looked, and, behold, there came much people by the way of the hillside behind him.

35 And Jonadab said unto the king, Behold, the king's sons come: as thy servant said, so it is.

36 And it came to pass, as soon as he had made an end of speaking, that, behold, the king's sons came, and lifted up their voice and wept: and the king also and all his servants wept very sore.

37 But Absalom fled, and went to Talmai, the son of Ammihud, king of Geshur. And *David* mourned for his son every day.

38 So Absalom fled, and went to Geshur, and was there three years.

39 And *the soul* of king David longed to go forth unto Absalom: for he was comforted concerning Amnon, seeing he was dead.

22. *Why did anyone think that all had been killed? 13:30*

Rumor exaggerated the calamity. Confusion reigned at the feast; and by the time word got to David, twenty miles away, the report was made that Absalom had killed all the king's sons. Such catastrophic news left the king in deep mourning. Like Tamar, David tore his garments and lay on the earth. He was brought low, as he was when his son died. The servants stood by helplessly in a similarly bereaved condition.

23. *How did Jonadab know the truth? 13:32, 33*

Jonadab was deeply involved since he had helped Amnon in the original plot. He may have heard expressions from Absalom's lips which made him certain of how the matter stood. He knew that murder was committed according to

the orders given by Absalom. He did not imply by his report that Absalom had, from the first, avowed his purpose of killing Amnon. As matters had developed, the conclusion was reached by an observant man like Jonadab, and he was correct in what he had surmised.

24. *Why would David "take the thing to his heart"?*

13:33

David might well be expected to blame himself for what had happened. Jonadab was anxious, however, that David know the truth. Only Amnon was dead. It is easy to see that David's punishment for his own sin in slaying Uriah is increasing. David was not able to punish Amnon; therefore a double punishment comes on him for his own sin. His son born to Bathsheba died in infancy, and his heir to the throne was killed by another of David's sons.

25. *Why did Absalom flee to Talmi? 13:37*

In II Samuel 3:3 is the note: (speaking of David's sons) ". . . and the third, Absalom, the son of Maacah, the daughter of Talmi king of Geshur." Absalom fled to the home of his mother's father, his maternal grandfather. Here he hoped to find protection against any punishment David might seek to mete out to him.

26. *What did David do after Absalom fled? 13:39*

David did not send messengers to bring Absalom back; he did not take any overt action. He longed to go forth himself to Absalom. The verb is in a feminine form, to indicate that David's spirit, or his soul, longed to go forth; and the King James translators rightfully show the insertion of the phrase, "the soul of," in italics, meaning that they supplied this subject of the verb. He wanted to do something. He pined away over it, but he did not do anything immediately.

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CHAPTER 13 IN REVIEW

1. What was the name of David's daughter? _____
2. Who was her full brother? _____
3. What was the name of David's son who forced her? _____
4. What was the name of David's nephew who encouraged his sinful son? _____
5. What kind of food did David's daughter prepare for his evil son? _____
6. What kind of distinctive garment did she wear? _____
7. How did the girl describe the man's sin? _____
8. At what kind of feast was the son killed? _____
9. By what corruption of the evil son's name did the daughter's brother describe him? _____
10. To what city did Absalom flee? _____

STUDIES IN SAMUEL

A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 14

- Vv. 1-20 *Joab and the woman of Tekoah.* Joab took steps to bring Absalom back from exile. He discerned that David was longing to see his son. He evidently believed that David needed an excuse for bringing the young man back from his grandfather's country. Joab therefore engaged the services of a woman who posed a case of blood revenge, which was quite similar to what prevailed in the house of David. When David gave judgment to the woman, she asked him to be of like mind in his own case.
- Vv. 21-33 *David recalls Absalom.* David understood that Joab had instituted proceedings to bring Absalom from Geshur and he had indicated that he would be willing to let the young man come back to Jerusalem. Joab then saw that Absalom came back and after two years Absalom was given an audience with the king.

LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. "*The voice is Jacob's voice*" (Genesis 27:22). When Jacob deceived his father Isaac by clothing his hands in kid skin, Isaac said that the voice was the voice of Jacob, but the hands were the hands of Esau. A woman from Tekoah came to David for a judgment in her case, but David saw through the incident and discerned that Joab must have been behind it all. Too often we find Christian people who are deceptive. They may have the hands of Esau, but the voice of Jacob. We need to be straightforward in all our dealings.
2. *Time heals all wounds.* It was two years after Absalom's return before David would consent to see him.

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Finally, the king called the young man to him. This delay indicates the grievous nature of the crimes involved. Sometimes a great deal of time is needed to alleviate a situation.

5. Absalom's Exile Ended, 14:1-33.

Joab and the Woman of Tekoah, 14:1-20

Now Joab the son of Zeruiah perceived that the king's heart *was* toward Absalom.

2 And Joab sent to Tekoah, and fetched thence a wise woman, and said unto her, I pray thee, feign thyself to be a mourner, and put on now mourning apparel, and anoint not thyself with oil, but be as a woman that had a long time mourned for the dead:

3 And come to the king, and speak on this manner unto him. So Joab put the words in her mouth.

4 And when the woman of Tekoah spake to the king, she fell on her face to the ground, and did obeisance, and said, Help, O king.

5 And the king said unto her, What aileth thee? And she answered, I *am* indeed a widow woman, and mine husband is dead.

6 And thy handmaid had two sons, and they two strove together in the field, and *there was* none to part them, but the one smote the other, and slew him.

7 And, behold, the whole family is risen against thine handmaid, and they said, Deliver him that smote his brother, that we may kill him, for the life of his brother whom he slew; and we will destroy the heir also: and so they shall quench my coal which is left, and shall not leave to my husband *neither* name or remainder upon the earth.

8 And the king said unto the woman, Go to thine house and I will give charge concerning thee.

STUDIES IN SAMUEL

9 And the woman of Tekoah said unto the king, My lord, O king, the iniquity *be* on me, and on my father's house: and the king and his throne *be* guiltless.

10 And the king said, Whosoever said *ought* unto thee, bring him to me, and he shall not touch thee any more.

11 Then said she, I pray thee, let the king remember the Lord thy God, that thou wouldest not suffer the revengers of blood to destroy any more, lest they destroy my son. And he said, As the Lord liveth, there shall not one hair of thy son fall to the earth.

12 Then the woman said, Let thine handmaid, I pray thee, speak *one* word unto my lord the king. And he said, Say on.

13 And the woman said, Wherefore then hast thou thought such a thing against the people of God? for the king doth speak this thing as one which is faulty, in that the king doth not fetch home again his banished.

14 For we must needs die, and *are* as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again; neither doth God respect *any* person: yet doth he devise means, that his banished be not expelled from him.

15 Now therefore that I am come to speak of this thing unto my lord the king, *it is* because the people have made me afraid: and thy handmaid said, I will now speak unto the king; it may be that the king will perform the request of his handmaid.

16 For the king will hear, to deliver his handmaid out of the hand of the man *that would* destroy me and my son together out of the inheritance of God.

17 Then thine handmaid said, The word of my lord the king shall now be comfortable: for as an angel of God, so *is* my lord the king to discern good and bad: therefore the Lord thy God will be with thee.

18 Then the king answered and said unto the woman, Hide not from me, I pray thee, the thing that I shall ask

thee. And the woman said, Let my lord the king now speak.

19 And the king said, *Is not* the hand of Joab with thee in all this? And the woman answered and said, As thy soul liveth, my lord the king, none can turn to the right hand or to the left from ought that my lord the king hath spoken: for thy servant Joab, he bade me, and he put all these words in the mouth of thine handmaid:

20 To fetch about this form of speech hath thy servant Joab done this thing: and my lord *is* wise, according to the wisdom of an angel of God, to know all *things* that *are* in the earth.

1. *What was David's attitude towards Absalom? 14:1*

The first verse of this chapter is understood by the majority of commentators as signifying that David was favorably disposed towards Absalom. The Syriac translation as well as the Vulgate translated the passage to show that David was inclined towards Absalom. Keil and Delitzsch take the position that David was against Absalom and therefore Joab took action to bring him back where his case could be presented to the king. Joab's part in this is hard to understand.

2. *What was Joab's motive in bringing Absalom back?*
14:2

Joab could see that David was mourning for his son. This fact alone might have prompted Joab to effect Absalom's return. More than likely there was some hidden personal interest on Joab's part. David was able to see through the woman's story, for the whole thing sounded like something that Joab would plan. He did not believe the woman, and he asked whether or not Joab plotted it. Even though David did accede, a complete reconciliation was not effected at once. Absalom was not permitted to see the king.

3. *Where was Tekoah?* 14:4

Tekoah was a town in Judah some eight miles south of Bethlehem. This was the home of the prophet Amos (Amos 1:1), and has been identified as the modern Tekua. No significance was attached to the fact that the woman was a wise woman, so far as making her a prophetess, wizard, or necromancer is concerned. She was to pretend to be in mourning, wearing the proper clothing and giving every appearance of having been in grief for a long period of time.

4. *How could the woman have access to the king?* 14:5

Although a number of officers were appointed by David to take care of the affairs of state, many seemingly incidental matters were brought to his attention. His trying to care for all these judgments was a source of aggravation to some of the people, and Absalom capitalized on the king's inability to take care of some of their appeals (II Kings 15:2-6). Moses had tried to sit in judgment on all the affairs of the Israelites in his day, but the staggering load of responsibility was too much for him. He appointed rulers of tens, fifties, hundreds, and thousands, to hear the minor cases; only the most important cases were brought to him (Exodus 18:26). Joab may have been able to bypass all these subordinate officers and bring the woman's case directly to the king.

5. *Why would the family want to kill her son?* 14:7

The woman pretended to have two sons, one of whom had killed the other. There was nobody to part them, since the father was said to have been dead. The rest of the family were asking that God's immutable law be followed. God had said that He would require the life of man at the hand of every man's brother (Genesis 9:5). Manslaughter was recognized as the unpremeditated killing of a man, and provision was made for the manslayer to flee to the cities of refuge (Numbers 35:1-34). The

relatives had judged the surviving son to be worthy of death, and they were crying out for his execution. In the primitive society, the nearest relative of the slain man had the solemn responsibility of avenging the murder. Had the family carried out the law in this, they would have left this woman without any heirs. This is what she meant when she said that they would "quench my coal." The candle of life would flicker and go out as far as she and her husband were concerned. They would have neither name nor remainder on the earth.

6. *What was David's decision? 14:8*

The woman was sent away with David's promise that he would pass judgment in the matter. She understood that to mean that he would prevent the family from avenging her son's death. Although this was an unusual sentence, the woman was grateful for it; and she assumed full responsibility for it, leaving the king and his throne guiltless for suspending the normal processes of law in this case. David indicated to her that those who objected to his decision should be brought to him. Should the woman suffer any persecution on account of the decision, the culprit was to answer to David. The matter was fully discussed and brought to a satisfactory conclusion.

7. *What was the woman's final request? 14:13*

Having received her initial request from David the woman went on to show the inconsistency of David's conduct. David also had a son who was being sought by those who were the avengers of blood. Some of his subjects must have been calling for him to execute Absalom; and although he had not done this as yet, he had rendered no judgment in the case. The woman showed David that he was sparing her fictitious son; she could not see any reason why he should not spare Absalom.

8. *What was the woman's view of life? 14:14*

The woman was very philosophical about life and death. She knew that death was inevitable. She regarded man's

life as being very fragile, describing man as being "as water spilt on the ground." Once it has been spilled, of course, it cannot be gathered up again. She also believed that God was not any respecter of persons, and she did not understand why it would be legitimate for David to spare her son and not spare his son.

9. *Why did the woman call David an "angel of God?"*

14:17

The Israelites had a very deep respect for their kings and all their national leaders. The fact that this woman and Mephibosheth (II Samuel 19:27) gave this title to David was not an indication of their having an unholy respect for David. Neither was it an indication of their considering him as being the angel of the covenant, the mediator of the blessings of Divine grace to the people of Israel. God had said that He would send His angel before Moses, and His angel did lead them through the wilderness (Exodus 14:19). This woman was not identifying David with that angel but looking to him as God's messenger and servant. She thought that he did have unnatural and unusual grace and ability.

10. *Why did David suspect Joab? 14:19*

In some way Joab had learned the king's mind in the matter of Absalom's exile. From day to day, he had the opportunity for conversations with him; and in some of these exchanges he could have expressed his view which would have been similar to that which he prompted the woman to express. The woman was honest and affirmed that Joab had instigated the entire affair. Once again, she was impressed with David's wisdom and said that it was as the wisdom of the "angel of God" (verse 20).

David Recalls Absalom. 14:21-33

21 And the king said unto Joab, Behold now, I have done this thing: go therefore, bring the young man Absalom again.

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22 And Joab fell to the ground on his face, and bowed himself, and thanked the king: and Joab said, Today thy servant knoweth that I have found grace in thy sight, my lord, O king, in that the king hath fulfilled the request of his servant.

23 So Joab arose and went to Geshur, and brought Absalom to Jerusalem.

24 And the king said, Let him turn to his own house, and let him not see my face. So Absalom returned to his own house, and saw not the king's face.

25 But in all Israel there was none to be so much praised as Absalom for his beauty: from the sole of his foot even to the crown of his head there was no blemish in him.

26 And when he polled his head, (for it was at every year's end that he polled *it*: because *the hair* was heavy on him, therefore he polled it:) he weighed the hair of his head at two hundred shekels after the king's weight.

27 And unto Absalom there were born three sons, and one daughter, whose name *was* Tamar: she was a woman of a fair countenance.

28 So Absalom dwelt two full years in Jerusalem, and saw not the king's face.

29 Therefore Absalom sent of Joab, to have sent him to the king; but he would not come to him: and when he sent again the second time, he would not come.

30 Therefore he said unto his servants, See Joab's field is near mine, and he hath barley there; go and set it on fire. And Absalom's servants set the field on fire.

31 Then Joab arose, and came to Absalom unto *his* house, and said unto him, Wherefore have thy servants set my field on fire?

32 And Absalom answered Joab, Behold, I sent unto thee, saying, Come hither, that I may send thee to the king, to say, Wherefore am I come from Geshur? *it had been good for me to have been* there still: now therefore

let me see the king's face; and if there be *any* iniquity in me, let him kill me.

33 So Joab came to the king, and told him: and when he had called for Absalom, he came to the king, and bowed himself on his face to the ground before the king: and the king kissed Absalom.

11. What was David's final decision? 14:21

Since David had already committed himself to the woman, he followed through by giving Joab the order to bring Absalom back to Jerusalem. Joab was grateful for this turn of events and expressed his thanks to the king. His profuse conversation about it revealed that he made this request to the king either before the coming of the woman or at least through her partitions.

12. Why did David refuse to see Absalom? 14:24

David was acting contrary to the letter of the Law. The Law stipulated that a man who had done what Absalom had done should be put to death. It was an overruling of the king which permitted him to live. David must have felt somewhat conscience-stricken about this and refused to see Absalom. He felt that it was enough that he was permitted to live without his being reinstated to his full rank in the king's house. Absalom was returned to his homeland; but he was not restored to the favor of the king, his father.

13. What kind of man was Absalom? 14:25-27

Absalom proved to be crafty, fearless, vengeful, murderous, strong-willed, and very vain. He had cunningly schemed to bring about Amnon's death and had fearlessly executed his plot. He harbored a hatred that cried out for revenge, until finally he achieved his ends; not even stopping at murder. He was a handsome man, there being none in all Israel so much to be praised as Absalom for

his beauty. No blemish was found in him; every feature was manly. An outstanding part of his person was his hair, which was exceedingly heavy; and he ceremoniously cut it every year. This shaving of his head at the year's end may have had some religious signification, as was true with the Nazarites (Numbers 6:5). The weight of his hair would be six pounds or three pounds according to whether the shekel was the sacred shekel or the royal shekel. He must have worn it as a sign of his manly power.

14. When did Absalom finally come before the king?

14:28-33

Absalom was in exile for three years. He was in Jerusalem after his return for two years. In all, it had been five years since he last saw the king. Joab probably refused to come at Absalom's bidding, because he felt that he had done enough for him. Absalom forced Joab to come to him by burning Joab's barley field. His destructive action marked him as a man who would stop at nothing to gain his objective.

15. Why did David finally agree to see Absalom? 14:33

Only after Joab came to the king and told him of Absalom's actions and attitude did David agree to see the young man. Absalom had told Joab that he might as well have stayed with his grandfather in Geshur. He still did not know whether he was safe from the king's wrath, since the king had not agreed to see him. He wanted a final settlement in his case; and if there was iniquity in him, he was willing to go to the gallows to pay for his crime. When David learned of Absalom's extreme measures in setting Joab's field on fire and the gist of his conversation with him, he agreed to see him. David fully accepted Absalom and forgave him for killing Amnon. This was evident from his receiving him into his presence and kissing him when he saw him.

STUDIES IN SAMUEL
CHAPTER 14 IN REVIEW

1. Who instituted proceedings to bring Absalom home? _____
2. From what city did he fetch a woman to aid him? _____
3. By what adjective is the woman described? _____
4. What prophet later came from the same town? _____
5. How many sons did the woman once have? _____
6. What happened to one? _____
7. What did the family want to do with the remaining son? _____
8. By what figure did the woman refer to her posterity? _____
9. By what title did the woman refer to David? _____
10. How many years did Absalom live in Jerusalem before he saw David again? _____

PART FOUR

ABSALOM'S REVOLT

15:1—19:43

STUDIES IN SAMUEL

A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 15

- Vv. 1-13 *Absalom's conspiracy.* Absalom stole the hearts of the people by sitting in the gate in the capital city and indicating that he was sympathetic to their causes. When he had gained sufficient support, he went to Hebron, where his father had first ruled. His trip to Hebron was under the pretense of paying a vow, but in reality he went there to assemble his forces and begin his rebellion.
- Vv. 14-28 *David's flight.* David did not choose to stay in Jerusalem and defend the capital city. It is doubtful that he wanted to meet his son on the field of battle. He also would be reluctant to see street fighting in the city of the great king. His decision was to flee across the Jordan into Gilead.
- Vv. 29-37 *David's counterplot.* David sent some of his faithful friends back into Jerusalem to act as spies. He especially instructed Hushai to defeat the counsel of Ahithophel.

LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *The fickleness of multitudes.* Men and women who had been soundly in support of the government of David suddenly turned to support the cause of his rebellious son. Some of them went along with the revolt without really knowing what was happening. Absalom was a demagogue, and many of the people were deceived into following him. Those who want to please God must be careful lest they follow along with the crowd.
2. *"Let him do to me as seemeth good"* (v. 26). David was willing to let God discipline him as it seemed good

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to Him. He was resting his case in the hands of the righteous judge. He knew that he had sinned against God, and he was willing to pay whatever penalty should be exacted. This surrender of life is commendable.

IV. ABSALOM'S REVOLT, 15:1—19:43.

1. The Rebellion's Beginning, 15:1-37.

Absalom's Conspiracy. 15:1-13

And it came to pass after this, that Absalom prepared him chariots and horses, and fifty men to run before him.

2 And Absalom rose up early, and stood by the way of the gate: and it was *so*, that when any man that had a controversy came to the king for judgment, then Absalom called unto him, and said, Of what city *art* thou? And he said, Thy servant *is* one of the tribes of Israel.

3 And Absalom said unto him, See, thy matters *are* good and right; but *there is* no man *deputed* of the king to hear thee.

4 Absalom said moreover, Oh that I were made judge in the land, that every man which hath any suit or cause might come unto me, and I would do him justice!

5 And it was *so*, that when any man came nigh *to him* do him obeisance, he put forth his hand, and took him, and kissed him.

6 And on this manner did Absalom to all Israel that came to the king for judgment: so Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel.

7 And it came to pass after forty years, that Absalom said unto the king, I pray the, let me go and pay my vow, which I have vowed unto the Lord, in Hebron.

8 For thy servant vowed a vow while I abode at Geshur in Syria, saying, If the Lord shall bring me again indeed to Jerusalem, then I will serve the Lord.

9 And the king said unto him, Go in peace. So he arose, and went to Hebron.

10 But Absalom sent spies throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, As soon as ye hear the sound of the trumpet, then ye shall say, Absalom reigneth in Hebron.

11 And with Absalom went two hundred men out of Jerusalem, *that were* called; and they went in their simplicity, and they knew not any thing.

12 And Absalom sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, David's counselor, from his city, *even* from Giloh, while he offered sacrifices. And the conspiracy was strong; for the people increased continually with Absalom.

13 And there came a messenger to David, saying, The hearts of the men of Israel are after Absalom.

1. Why did Absalom have fifty men run before him? 15:1

The Eastern way of calling attention to the position of a man included having men to run before him as he proceeded through the streets. Absalom was not nearly as democratic in spirit as David. There was more showmanship in his makeup. He was promoting his own personal ambitions. Absalom's personal appearance was very striking, his beautiful hair being explicitly mentioned in the Scripture.

There may have been something of personal satisfaction in his naming his daughter Tamar (14:27). It would be natural for her to be so named inasmuch as they were of the tribe of Judah (Genesis 38:6), but the name may have had a deeper significance to Absalom and those who knew the events causing Absalom's exile. Many of those things done by Absalom were to attract the attention and win the love of the people.

2. What was Absalom's campaign plan? 15:2-6

Absalom set out to steal the hearts of the men of Israel. His main effort was to win the confidence of those who had had cases to be brought to the attention of the king.

Absalom was very energetic and industrious in this as he arose early in the morning and stood by the gate so that he could meet any man who came up to Jerusalem to present a case. He made specific inquiry into each man's background finding out all he could about his home, city, and tribe. He made every effort to agree with each man and express his wish that he were made a judge in the land so that he could render decisions in the cases. He did not allow the man to do obeisance to him, but rather stretched forth his hand and drew the man to him and kissed him. This demeanor was very pleasing to the people, and he did win the favor of many of the men of Israel.

3. *How was the rebellion begun?* 15:7-12

The text reads that the rebellion began after a period of forty years, but it is hard to understand the point from which the time is counted. Absalom may have revolted when he was forty years old, but it could hardly be forty years after his return from Geshur.

Absalom was dishonest in asking to go to Hebron. He wanted to go for the purpose of instigating a rebellion, not to make a vow or pay a vow. Absalom knew that he had to get away from Jerusalem, and he knew that David would consent under such a pretext. A signal was given whereby the men of every tribe would know when the time to arise had come.

One wonders why Ahithophel would consent to such a plot. His son was Bathsheba's father, and he may have keenly felt the insult that David had put on his family (11:3; 23:34).

4. *Why did Absalom go to Hebron to begin his revolt?*
15:9

David began his rule in Hebron; and it would be in the tribe of Judah, where David's family had its origins. The city would be filled with men who were loyal to any good son of a man of Judah. Furthermore, it was far enough away from Jerusalem to be out of immediate

danger of reprisal from David. Ahithophel's home was southwest of Hebron (Joshua 15:51). Ahithophel may have been able to arouse a great deal of sympathy for him and his cause as he opposed David on account of his taking Bathsheba as his wife.

5. *How did some of them go in their simplicity?* 15:11

They had gone along not knowing Absalom's full intentions, not knowing that he intended to make an armed rebellion against his father. They knew that he was rallying men to support him and his cause. They knew that the sound of the trumpet was a signal for his saying that he was the ruler of Judah and that he was establishing a kingdom in Hebron. With such a group assembled the conspiracy was described as being very strong, and the people increased continually with Absalom. He had made them very attractive promises, and this allured many to follow him.

6. *Why did David flee from Jerusalem?* 15:13

David was not prepared for a siege. His company included some of the former residents of Gath, who may not have been ready to fight. They had come to him soon after his capture of that city. Even with all the faithful followers he had, he was still not in a position to defend the city. The steadfastness of men like Ittai would be useless against the hordes with Absalom. The priests were with David, but he would not allow them to take the Ark from its resting place. Some of the Israelites may still have been holding the idea held by some of the older Israelites who believed that where the Ark was, there God was. David knew this was not true. David forced the priests themselves to turn back. They stayed in the city as spies. Beyond all these reasons was the fact that David would not want to subject his capital city to a siege. The shock to David must have been great, and he was willing at almost any price to avoid a direct confrontation in battle with Absalom.

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David's Flight. 15:14-28

14 And David said unto all his servants that *were* with him at Jerusalem, Arise, and let us flee; for we shall not *else* escape from Absalom: make speed to depart, lest he overtake us suddenly, and bring evil upon us, and smite the city with the edge of the sword.

15 And the king's servants said unto the king, Behold, thy servants *are ready to do* whatsoever my lord the king shall appoint.

16 And the king went forth, and all his household after him. And the king left ten women, *which were* concubines, to keep the house.

17 And the king went forth, and all the people after him, and tarried in a place that was far off.

18 And all his servants passed on beside him; all the Cherethites, and all the Pelethites, and all the Gittites, six hundred men which came after him from Gath, passed on before the king.

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

20 Whereas thou camest *but* yesterday, should I this day make thee go up and down with us? seeing I go whither I may, return thou, and take back thy brethren: mercy and truth *be* with thee.

21 And Ittai answered the king, and said, As the Lord liveth, and *as* my lord the king liveth, surely in what place my lord the king shall be, whether in death or life, even there also will thy servant be.

22 And David said to Ittai, Go and pass over. And Ittai the Gittite passed over, and all his men, and all the little ones that *were* with him.

23 And all the country wept with a loud voice, and the people passed over: the king also himself passed over

the brook Kidron, and all the people passed over, toward the way of the wilderness.

24 And lo Zadok also, and all the Levites *were* with him, bearing the ark of the covenant of God: and they set down the ark of God; and Abiathar went up, until all the people had done passing out of the city.

25 And the king said unto Zadok, Carry back the ark of God into the city: if I shall find favor in the eyes of of the Lord, he will bring me again, and show me *both* it, and his habitation:

26 But if he thus say, I have no delight in thee; behold, *here am* I, let him do to me as seemeth good unto him.

27 The king said also unto Zadok the priest, *Art not* thou a seer? return into the city in peace, and your two sons with you, Ahimaaz thy son, and Jonathan the son of Abiathar.

28 See, I will tarry in the plain of the wilderness, until there come word from you to certify me.

7. *Why did David leave ten women behind? 15:16*

David left ten women of the concubines to keep his house in Jerusalem. He could hardly have known that Absalom would misuse these women and take them as a part of his household. Absalom was advised to do this by Ahithophel, who knew this would show all Israel that Absalom had completely severed his relations with his father. Absalom spread a tent on the top of his house and went in to his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel (II Samuel 16:22). David must have thought he would be able to return to the city, or else he would hardly have been willing to leave these women behind.

8. *Why did David stop Ittai? 15:19*

Ittai, the Gittite, was one of David's soldiers and a former resident of Gath, as the name indicates. Gath was a Philistine city, and such a civil war as the conflict between Absalom and David would have no real meaning

to a foreigner. David instructed him to go back and to serve with Absalom, since he was in the position of a mercenary anyway. The man was loyal to David, however; and David allowed him to go with him.

9. *Who were Ittai's brethren? 15:20*

Ittai's brethren were the Cherethites, Pelethites, and the other Gittites, six hundred men of which had come to David from Gath. They had passed in review before the king, and David was reluctant to subject them to the fortunes of a vagabond and fugitive. His action, at this point, was similar to the action of the Philistine lords who had stopped David and his men from going into the final battle with Saul (I Samuel 29:4). The Cherethites and Pelethites were hired soldiers from Philistia who had been serving as David's bodyguard. These men made excellent personal attendants for the king, since they had no political axes to grind and would hardly be a party to court intrigues and vendettas. Their situation would be different as they were fleeing in the midst of civil strife; but when David saw their determined purpose, he allowed them to go with him. Ittai assured David of his loyalty as well as the loyalty of his men, and David allowed them to go before him (verse 21).

10. *What was the attitude of the people? 15:23*

Israel was in deep distress; the people that were with David were weeping with a loud voice as they journeyed on towards the valley of the Jordan, and crossed the brook Kidron. They made their way towards the wilderness which lay around the Dead Sea. The affairs of the nation had turned from the prosperity and peace which they had known under David and were brought again to times similar to those in the early days of Saul when the people had to hide in caves, thickets, rocks, in high places, and in pits (I Samuel 13:6).

11. Where was the brook Kidron? 15:23 b

The brook Kidron runs along the eastern side of the ancient wall of the city of Jerusalem. The valley begins about a mile north of the city as a mere depression in the surface. It turns southward just northeast of the city and becomes a smooth, broad valley covered with green fields and olive orchards. As it reaches a point opposite the northeastern corner of the city, it becomes quite narrow. The sides are steep, and the depth beneath the wall is as great as attained at any point farther along. The bed continues to descend, but the surface along the edge of the city also descends equally rapidly. Walls have been built across it at intervals to check the rush of the water and to accumulate some soil. After the brook Kidron passes Ophel, it widens again and makes room for additional building sites and vegetable gardens. A company leaving Jerusalem would have to cross this brook some place in order to go to a point east of the city. David and his followers made their sad journey down into this brook and up over the mount of Olives which lies just east of Jerusalem.

12. What plan did David formulate? 15:28

David asked Zadok, the priest, to take the Ark back into the city. He believed that if God blessed him in his flight from Absalom, he would have the opportunity to return and worship Him in Jerusalem. If God were not favorable to him, then he was willing that God's will be done in his life. He asked Zadok to help him in his campaign by observing the movements of Absalom. Zadok, in turn was to report these to his son Ahimaaz and to Jonathan, the son of the other priest, Abiathar. These young men would serve as couriers to bring news to David. David planned to wait in the Jordan valley until he could find out what was happening in Jerusalem under Absalom.

David's Counterplot. 15:29-37

29 Zadok therefore and Abiathar carried the ark of God again to Jerusalem: and they tarried there.

30 And David went up by the ascent of *mount Olivet*, and wept as he went up, and had his head covered, and he went barefoot: and all the people that *was* with him covered every man his head, and they went up, weeping as they went up.

31 And *one* told David, saying, Ahithophel *is* among the conspirators with Absalom. And David said, O Lord, I pray thee, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness.

32 And it came to pass, that *when* David was come to the top of *the mount*, where he worshiped God, behold, Hushai the Archite came to meet him with his coat rent, and earth upon his head:

33 Unto whom David said, If thou passest on with me, then thou shalt be a burden unto me:

34 But if thou return to the city, and say unto Absalom, I will be thy servant, O king; *as I have been* thy father's servant hitherto, so *will* I now also *be* thy servant: then mayest thou for me defeat the counsel of Ahithophel.

35 And *hast thou* not there with thee Zadok and Abiathar the priests? therefore it shall be, *that* what thing soever thou shalt hear out of the king's house, thou shalt tell *it* to Zadok and Abiathar the priests.

36 Behold, *they have* there with them their two sons, Ahimaaz Zadok's *son*, and Jonathan Abiathar's *son*; and by them ye shall send unto me every thing that ye can hear.

37 So Hushai David's friend came into the city, and Absalom came into Jerusalem.

13. Trace David's journey out of the city. 15:30

David went with his head covered and his feet bare. Such actions were signs of sorrow. David knew of Ahithophel's going with Absalom. He feared his actions, for he

was a wise man and could foresee very well how the rebellion would turn out.

Hushai, the Archite, met the company. Gladly would he have gone with David. David constrained him to turn back and enter into the city of Jerusalem. He was of much more help to David as a spy in Jerusalem than he would have been as a member of David's company in flight.

The company went over the mount of Olives in the direction of Jericho. The road, after it passes Bethany, leads down the slope of a hill. A valley comes between it and the opposite hill. Both hills are very steep and difficult to climb.

This route of the journey made it possible for Shimei to be above the company and cast stones at David. At the same time, he was out of reach of the company.

David took this humiliation as a punishment from the Lord. At the same time, he expected a blessing.

14. What instructions did David give to Hushai? 15:33

Since Absalom had the services of Ahithophel, a trusted counselor, David suggested that Hushai, an Archite, go back to Jerusalem and pretend to be loyal to Absalom. No town of Arka is known in Palestine. One by this name is found north of Tripoli in Phoenicia. A mention of the borders of Archi, near Bethel and Luz, is made in Joshua 16:2. David recognized Hushai as a trusted counselor, and the fact that he would be a burden to him in his flight indicated that he was a man of some years, unable to undergo the rigors of the life of a fugitive. David trusted him to find a way to outwit Ahithophel and defeat his counsels. These three men—Zadok, Abiathar, and Hushai were to do their best to undermine Absalom's plans. Jonathan, Abiathar's son, and Ahimaaz, Zadok's son, were to carry messages back and forth. This was David's scheme for putting down Absalom's rebellion.

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CHAPTER 15 IN REVIEW

1. How many men ran before Absalom? _____
2. To what city did Absalom go to start his revolt? _____
3. What instrument did Absalom use to signal the beginning of his revolt? _____
4. How many men went with Absalom? _____
5. What councilor of David joined Absalom? _____
6. From what town was he? _____
7. How many Philistine men went with David? _____
8. What was the name of the man from Gath? _____
9. What two priests took care of the Ark? _____
10. What was the name of the councilor whom David left in Jerusalem? _____

STUDIES IN SAMUEL

A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 16

- Vv. 1-14 *The people divided.* David had many fast friends who supported his cause. He also found that division came into such houses as that of Mephibosheth. Ziba came to David saying that Mephibosheth had stayed behind hoping that the people would champion his claim for the throne. Ziba himself wanted to support David. On the road out of Jerusalem David was cursed by a man named Shimei who called David "a bloody man" (v. 8). This man was supporting the house of Saul as the regal family.
- Vv. 15-23 *Absalom ruling in Jerusalem.* Absalom took over all the reins of government. He claimed David's concubines as his own household and showed to all of Israel that the break between him and his father was complete and final. His faithful counselor in this conspiracy was Ahithophel.

LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. "*The Lord will look on mine affliction*" (v. 12). This was David's belief. He trusted that it would be so that the Lord would see what was happening to him and would requite him good for the cursing which he was receiving at the hands of some of his people. It is enough for the Christian to trust God to heal his hurts.
2. *There is a true oracle of God.* Absalom's people followed Ahithophel as if he were God's true spokesman. His counsel was good over all, but it was not the counsel of God. Hushai was thwarting a man who was usurping the throne.

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3. *False prophets arise in every age and multitudes follow them as if they were the oracle of God. Only one could say, "I am the way, the truth and the light" (John 14:6).*

2. The Role of Absalom in Jerusalem, 16:1-23.

The People Divided. 16:1-14

And when David was a little past the top of *the hill*, behold, Ziba the servant of Mephibosheth met him, with a couple of asses saddled, and upon them two hundred *loaves* of bread, and a hundred bunches of raisins, and a hundred summer fruits, and a bottle of wine.

2 And the king said unto Ziba, What meanest thou by these? And Ziba said, The asses *be* for the king's household to ride on; and the bread and summer fruit for the young men to eat; and the wine, that such as be faint in the wilderness may drink.

3 And the king said, And where *is* thy master's son? And Ziba said unto the king, Behold, he abideth at Jerusalem: for he said, Today shall the house of Israel restore me the kingdom of my father.

4 Then said the king to Ziba, Behold, thine *are* all that *pertained* unto Mephibosheth. And Ziba said, I humbly beseech thee *that* I may find grace in thy sight, my lord, O king.

5 And when king David came to Bahurim, behold, thence came out a man of the family of the house of Saul, whose name *was* Shimei, the son of Gera: he came forth, and cursed still as he came.

6 And he cast stones at David, and at all the servants of king David: and all the people and all the mighty men *were* on his right hand and on his left.

7 And thus said Shimei when he cursed, Come out, come out, thou bloody man, and thou man of Belial:

8 The Lord hath returned upon thee all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose stead thou hast reigned; and the Lord hath delivered the kingdom into the hand of Absalom thy son: and, behold, thou *art taken* in thy mischief, because thou *art* a bloody man.

9 Then said Abishai the son of Zeruiah unto the king, Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? let me go over, I pray thee, and take off his head.

10 And the king said, What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah? so let him curse, because the Lord hath said unto him, Curse David. Who shall then say, Wherefore hast thou done so?

11 And David said to Abishai, and to all his servants, Behold, my son, which came forth of my bowels, seeketh my life: how much more now *may this* Benjamite *do it*? let him alone, and let him curse; for the Lord hath bidden him.

12 It may be that the Lord will look on mine affliction, and that the Lord will requite me good for his cursing this day.

13 And as David and his men went by the way, Shimei went along on the hill's side over against him, and cursed as he went, and threw stones at him, and cast dust.

14 And the king, and all the people, that *were* with him, came weary, and refreshed themselves there.

1. *Why did Ziba come to David?* 16:1

Ziba came to bring provisions for David and his men. He also gave a report on Mephibosheth. Ziba may have misrepresented Mephibosheth. Mephibosheth later came before David in the same submissive manner he manifested when David first befriended him (II Samuel 19:24). On the other hand, Mephibosheth may have felt that he could step into the breach between David and Absalom and usurp the throne in the name of his father Saul, Israel's first king. His tribe had been honored by having Israel's

first king selected from her ranks. Abner had championed their claim by putting Ishbosheth on the throne in Mahan-ain. Sheba led a revolt of Benjaminites against David later (II Samuel 20:1), indicating there was some opposition to David and Judah. If this feeling were strong enough, Mephibosheth may have had some hope of becoming a king.

2. *What reward did David give to Ziba?* 16:4

Since David was convinced that Mephibosheth was turning against him, he gave everything that belonged to Mephibosheth to Ziba. Ziba was grateful for this, and asked that he might find favor in David's sight. What Ziba brought was a substantial gift, inasmuch as there were 200 loaves of bread, 100 bunches of raisins, 100 bunches of summer fruits, and wine for such as might become faint in the wilderness. He also provided a couple of asses on which David might ride. David rewarded Ziba at this time, but later he was not sure that he had told him the truth. He divided Mephibosheth's inheritance between him and Ziba at that time (II Samuel 19:29).

3. *Where was Bahurim?* 16:5

Bahurim was a spot near the road which ran from Jerusalem to Jericho. Ruins in the *Wady Ruwaby* have been identified as this spot. The name signifies "a young man's village." Shimei was a native of this town which indicated that it belonged to the tribe of Benjamin. His father was named Gera, a name that was quite common in Benjamin, and probably stemmed from the root "ger" which means, "a sojourner." Being of this background Shimei was a champion of the house of Saul and happy to see any kind of misfortune come to David, since he viewed him as one who had usurped Saul's throne.

4. *What epithet did he hurl at David?* 16:7

Shimei called David a bloody man and a man of Belial. The latter term was a common epithet used to describe a

shameful and worthless fellow. It was the equivalent of calling him a son of Satan. His hatred for David was deep.

5. *What caused Shimei's hatred for David?* 16:8

Shimei blamed David for the demise of the house of Saul. Such a misconstruing of the facts demonstrates why David was so careful to prevent his being linked directly in any way to the death of Saul. Even though David had slain the Amalekite who brought him word of Saul's death, and killed the two assassins of Ish-bosheth, some of the people still thought that David was responsible for the fall of the house of Saul. Shimei viewed David as reigning where a son of Saul ought to be reigning. Shimei believed that God had brought a just penalty on David, and delivered the kingdom into the hands of Absalom, his son, as a punishment for David's having taken over the throne from Saul. In other words, Shimei was saying that it was good enough for David that he was driven out from Jerusalem.

6. *What was Abishai's proposal?* 16:9

Abishai called Shimei a "dead dog." He thought it terrible that he was cursing his king. He proposed to go over and behead the man. Such a proposal was typical of Abishai's spirit. It was Abishai who had suggested killing Saul as he lay sleeping as he and David slipped into his camp (I Samuel 26:8). Abishai had also been involved in killing Abner at Hebron (II Samuel 3:30).

7. *Why did David stop Abishai?* 16:10

Once again, David said that the sons of Zeruah were too hard for him. This is the same thing he had said when Joab and Abishai had killed Abner (II Samuel 3:39). David felt that Joab and Abishai, the sons of Zeruah, David's sister, were too anxious to put people to death. He stopped them from killing Shimei because he felt that God had a hand in the situation. David said that Absalom his own son, had turned against him, and he was not surprised that a man from the tribe of Benjamin would

curse him. David believed that if injustices were being done to him in such matters as Shimei's cursing, then God would see that justice was done. He believed that God would repay him with good things for all the evil things which were befalling him.

8. *Why did Shimei throw dust on David? 16:13*

Shimei was in a position above David, as the trail wound along the descent down into the Jordan valley. He threw stones at David with some expectation of injuring him, but the main emphasis of his actions was not to inflict bodily injury, as much as to heap imprecations and shame on David. His dusting him with dust could hardly injure him, but it would be a nuisance and a sign of contempt on the part of Shimei. No mention is made of the place where they stopped, but it is conjectured by many that they stopped in the edge of the Jordan valley. One of the Greek manuscripts has the phrase, "along the Jordan."

Absalom Ruling in Jerusalem. 16:15-23

15 And Absalom, and all the people the men of Israel, came to Jerusalem, and Ahithophel with him.

16 And it came to pass, when Hushai the Archite, David's friend, was come unto Absalom, that Hushai said unto Absalom, God save the king, God save the king.

17 And Absalom said to Hushai, *Is this thy kindness to thy friend? why wentest thou not with thy friend?*

18 And Hushai said unto Absalom, Nay; but whom the Lord, and this people, and all the men of Israel, choose, his will I be, and with him will I abide.

19 And again, whom should I serve? *should I not serve in the presence of his son? as I have served in thy father's presence, so will I be in thy presence.*

20 Then said Absalom to Ahithophel, Give counsel among you what we shall do.

21 And Ahithophel said unto Absalom, Go in unto thy father's concubines, which he hath left to keep the

house; and all Israel shall hear that thou art abhorred of thy father: then shall the hands of all that *are* with thee be strong.

22 So they spread Absalom a tent upon the top of the house; and Absalom went in unto his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel.

23 And the counsel of Ahithophel, which he counseled in those days *was* as if a man had inquired at the oracle of God: so *was* all the counsel of Ahithophel both with David and with Absalom.

9. How was Hushai able to dissuade Absalom? 16:15

Hushai spoke in an ambiguous, flattering manner. He flattered Absalom even when he told the truth. It was a wise thing to do under the circumstances. Such counsel aimed at making an impossible breach between Ahithophel and Absalom and between Absalom and David. Hushai showed that he was in earnest. His speech indicates that he must have been very convincing.

10. What was Abithophel's advice? 16:20

Ahithophel advised Absalom to make a complete break with his father. A sign of this was Absalom's spreading a tent on the roof of the palace, and going into his father's concubines in the open view of the men of Israel. Such action would signify Absalom was taking over everything that belonged to his father the king. His action would be abhorred by David, his father, and it would encourage those who were backing him, because they would believe that he would stop at nothing to make the rebellion complete.

11. Why was Abithophel's counsel like an oracle of God? 16:23

As Absalom followed the advice of Ahithophel his cause prospered; Joshua had gone to the high priest, Eleazar, for advice. David had inquired concerning the will of God from Abiathar when he came to him in the wilder-

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ness (I Samuel 23:6). These men were God's appointed counselors for the kings, and leaders of Israel. Ahithophel stood in this position with Absalom. Since Ahithophel was very deeply involved in the rebellion, he did his best to give right advice and counsel.

CHAPTER 16 IN REVIEW

1. Who brought asses to David? _____
2. Whose servant was he? _____
3. Why did he say his master stayed behind? _____
4. Who cursed David as he left Jerusalem? _____
5. Who proposed beheading the man? _____
6. Did David accept the proposal? _____
7. Who cried "God save the king" to Absalom? _____
8. Who proposed that Absalom take David's concubines? _____
9. What kind of shelter was erected for the concubines? _____
10. Where was the shelter erected? _____

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A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 17

- Vv. 1-14 *Hushai's counsel.* Hushai had been left in Jerusalem by David to counteract the advice of Ahithophel. Although his advice was not sound, Absalom took it.
- Vv. 15-24 *David urged to cross over Jordan.* As soon as Absalom had determined not to pursue David immediately, Hushai sent word to David that he should hurry across the Jordan river into Gilead. The little bit of time which David had gained through Hushai's counseling Absalom to wait for awhile in Jerusalem gave David an opportunity to gather his forces and organize his strategy.
- Vv. 25-29 *David helped by the Gileadites.* The people on the east side of the Jordan rallied to David's support. They brought him supplies for his troops and gave him the necessary assistance.

LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *The Lord appoints man's ways.* The writer of the scriptures says that "the Lord had appointed to defeat the good counsel of Ahithophel" (v. 14). The ways of men are in the hand of God. He does not overrule their freedom of the will, but he does bring about his will and purpose. Consequently, man should entrust his affairs to the guidance of almighty God.
2. *"God will provide"* (Genesis 22:8; Matthew 6:33). Abraham trusted God to provide a sacrifice when he took Isaac into Mt. Moriah (Genesis 22:8). Jesus taught his disciples that they should seek first the kingdom of Heaven and that all the necessary things of life would be added to them (Matthew 6:33). David must have wondered how he would ever be able to gather

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enough material and supplies to wage a war. He had been driven out of his capital city and was again a fugitive. God raised up many friends for David in the land of Gilead, and he was able to supply and maintain his army. Help will come for faithful Christian workers from many unexpected sources, for God will provide.

3. The Rebellion Defeated, 17:1—18:33.

Hushai's Counsel. 17:1-14

Moreover Ahithophel said unto Absalom, Let me now choose out twelve thousand men, and I will arise and pursue after David this night:

2 And I will come upon him while he *is* weary and weakhanded, and will make him afraid: and all the people that *are* with him shall flee; and I will smite the king only:

3 And I will bring back all the people unto thee: the man whom thou seekest *is* as if all returned: so all the people shall be in peace.

4 And the saying pleased Absalom well, and all the elders of Israel.

5 Then said Absalom, Call now Hushai the Archite also, and let us hear likewise what he saith.

6 And when Hushai was come to Absalom, Absalom spake unto him, saying, Ahithophel hath spoken after this manner: shall we do *after* his saying? if not; speak thou.

7 And Hushai said unto Absalom, The counsel that Ahithophel hath given *is* not good at this time.

8 For, said Hushai, thou knowest thy father and his men, that they *be* mighty men, and they *be* chafed in their minds, as a bear robbed of her whelps in the field: and thy father *is* a man of war, and will not lodge with the people.

9 Behold, he is hid now in some pit, or in some *other* place: and it will come to pass, when some of them be overthrown at the first, that whosoever heareth it will

say, There is a slaughter among the people that follow Absalom.

10 And he also *that is* valiant, whose heart *is* as the heart of a lion, shall utterly melt: for all Israel knoweth that thy father *is* a mighty man, and *they* which *be* with him *are* valiant men.

11 Therefore I counsel that all Israel be generally gathered unto thee, from Dan even to Beer-sheba, as the sand that *is* by the sea for multitude; and that thou go to battle in thine own person.

12 So shall we come upon him in some place where he shall be found, and we will light upon him as the dew falleth on the ground: and of him and of all the men that *are* with him there shall not be left so much as one.

13 Moreover, if he be gotten into a city, then shall all Israel bring ropes to that city, and we will draw it into the river, until there be no one small stone found there.

14 And Absalom and all the men of Israel said, The counsel of Hushai the Archite *is* better than the counsel of Ahithophel. For the Lord had appointed to defeat the good counsel of Ahithophel, to the intent that the Lord might bring evil upon Absalom.

1. What actions did Ahithophel suggest? 17:1

Ahithophel asked Absalom to allow him to choose 12,000 soldiers and go out to catch David that first night. He thought that the situation called for immediate action and that an immediate attack on David would frighten the people who were with him so badly that they would forsake him and flee for their lives. Had this happened David would have been open to attack personally, and Ahithophel believed that he could defeat David with one bold stroke. He knew that this would leave most of Israel without a leader, and they would naturally turn to Absalom, who had seized the throne.

2. *How did Absalom receive this advice? 17:4*

Absalom believed that Ahithophel's counsel was right. It was viewed the same way by the elders of Israel, and David was in immediate danger. Hushai had made such a good impression on Absalom, however, that he decided to call him and ask his advice before implementing Ahithophel's strategy.

3. *How was Ahithophel's second counsel defeated? 17:7*

Ahithophel's counsel was good, because David's men were worn out and frustrated. Moreover, David was joined by an innumerable company a few days after the beginning of his flight. Hushai's advice was plausible, because surely David would not be able to stand against all Israel; but no more strength would come to Absalom, and it would have been far better for Absalom to strike at once. Hushai's counsel appealed to Absalom's vanity. A campaign involving all Israel and administering an overwhelming defeat to David would be very impressive.

4. *What was the fallacy in Hushai's counsel? 17:8*

Hushai built up David's prowess too much, and made Absalom afraid to strike him immediately. Although David was a valiant man and was attended by some of his mighty men they were at a distinct disadvantage and distressed. Hushai may have been correct in pointing out how difficult it would be to catch David personally, but David would hardly hide alone as Hushai suggested. The major error in Hushai's counsel was in his suggestion that all Israel could be generally gathered together under Absalom's leadership. His scheme was very grandiose as he depicted Israel going to whatever city might be David's hideout and pulling down the stones one at a time. It was this exaggerated view of the outcome of the battle which appealed to Absalom's vanity and led to his accepting Hushai's counsel.

5. *In what way had the Lord appointed the defeat of Ahithophel?* 17:14

The unexpected turn of events brought on by Absalom's accepting the counsel of Hushai and rejecting the counsel of Ahithophel after he and the elders of Israel had formerly accepted it was providential. Such a turn of events could hardly be explained, except the hand of the Lord be seen. Therefore the defeat of the good counsel of Ahithophel was attributed to God. All of this ultimately led to the downfall of Absalom.

David Urged to Cross Over Jordan. 17:15-24

15 Then said Hushai unto Zadok and to Abiathar the priests, Thus and thus did Ahithophel counsel Absalom and the elders of Israel; and thus and thus have I counseled.

16 Now therefore send quickly and tell David, saying, Lodge not this night in the plains of the wilderness, but speedily pass over; lest the king be swallowed up, and all the people that *are* with him.

17 Now Jonathan and Ahimaaz stayed by Enrogel; for they might not be seen to come into the city: and a wench went and told them; and they went and told king David.

18 Nevertheless a lad saw them, and told Absalom: but they went both of them away quickly, and came to a man's house in Bahurim, which had a well in his court; whither they went down.

19 And the woman took and spread a covering over the well's mouth, and spread ground corn thereon; and the thing was not known.

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

21 And it came to pass, after they were departed, that they came up out of the well, and went and told king

David, and said unto David, Arise, and pass quickly over the water: for thus hath Ahithophel counseled against you.

22 Then David arose, and all the people that *were* with him, and they passed over Jordan: by the morning light there lacked not one of them that was not gone over Jordan.

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

24 Then David came to Mahanaim. And Absalom passed over Jordan, he and all the men of Israel with him.

6. *What action did Hushai take? 17:15*

Hushai had been sent back to Jerusalem in order that he might have access to the court of Absalom and observe his activity. As soon as he learned that his counsel had been accepted by Absalom, he counseled with Zadok and Abiathar, the priests who had also been sent back to aid David's cause. Since time had been gained by Hushai's counseling of Absalom to wait until he could gather a large army, David would have opportunity to prepare for a major campaign. Hushai thought that David dare not stay in the plains of the Jordan river but should cross over into Gilead.

7. *Where was En-rogel? 17:17*

J. W. McGarvey found En-rogel to be the only unfailing well around Jerusalem when he visited there a century ago. This ancient well had seen the coming and going of a number of civilizations and peoples. It was known in the Old Testament and in the days of earliest Christian travelers as En-rogel, but after the Mohammedan invasion it was called the Well of Job by the Arabs. The Greek and Latin priests in Jerusalem called it the "Well of Nehemiah" from a tradition mentioned in II Maccabees

1:19-22. Dr. Barclay measured the well and found it to be 125 feet deep. Though the mouth of it was narrow, it was a very large well and had large collecting chambers near the bottom. In the winter time it frequently overflowed and sent a lively stream down the valley. Since it stood at the junction of the valley of Jehoshaphat and the valley of Hinnom, it had a very strategic location and made a good place for Jonathan and Ahimaaz, the sons of the high priests, to hide themselves and wait for word which they could carry to David.

8. *How was the message almost intercepted? 17:18*

A young man saw the young woman who carried the message from Zadok and Abiathar to their sons, Jonathan and Ahimaaz. The young maiden is called a *wench*, but there is no need to attach to her the disreputable character generally suggested by the word in our use today. The Septuagint translators used the same word to translate this word as they used to describe Ruth (Ruth 4:12). The young sons of the priests knew that they were observed; and they fled quickly to Bahurim, a little further away from the city and hid again in a well of a court in a man's house. The mouth of the well was covered with stalks of grain making it appear to be threshing floor, and the young men were not found.

9. *Was the woman justified in her lie? 17:20*

Absalom's servants came to the woman of the house where Jonathan and Ahimaaz were hiding and asked her where they were. She replied that they had gone over the brook of water. Her answer was not true for she was implying that they had gone over the little water brook which was nearby, but she was not making reference to the well where the men were hiding. Even though the standard of morality was not high in pre-Christian days, this woman should not be justified in her lie. She could have refused to answer and depended upon the hiding place to be secure.

10. How did David escape? 17:22

Jonathan and Ahimaaz were able to escape from the well where they were hiding, and they arrived safely at David's hideout. They informed him of the counsel of Ahithophel and the instructions given by Hushai. David arose and took the people with him, leading them across the Jordan river. By the next morning, every one of them had escaped into Gilead.

11. Why did Ahithophel commit suicide? 17:23

Ahithophel had shown himself to be a very wise counselor. He had directed David correctly and was attempting to do the same for Absalom. He knew that Absalom was taking the wrong step, and there was nothing but ruin ahead. Ahithophel probably foresaw that there was nothing but a traitor's end ahead for himself. When Hushai was taken completely into Absalom's confidence, he would be in a position to ask for Ahithophel's head. Suicide seemed the best escape for the discredited old counselor.

12. Why did David go to Mahanaim? 17:24

David's treatment of the men who had murdered Ish-bosheth would incline the people towards David in a favorable way. His friendship towards Mephibosheth would also strengthen his relationships with these people. More than this, David had shown himself a true friend of Abner. The people of the city were more than likely following Abner, not Ish-bosheth. All of this kindness toward them and their true leaders had completely won the hearts of the people of Mahanaim. Besides all this, Mahanaim was a well fortified city.

David Helped by the Gileadites. 17:25-29

25 And Absalom made Amasa captain of the host instead of Joab: which Amasa *was* a man's son, whose name *was* Ithra an Israelite, that went in to Abigail the daughter of Nahash, sister to Zeruiah Joab's mother.

26 So Israel and Absalom pitched in the land of Gilead.

27 And it came to pass, when David was come to Mahanaim, that Shobi the son of Nahash of Rabbah of the children of Ammon, and Machir the son of Ammiel of Lo-debar, and Barzillai the Gileadite of Rogelim,

28 Brought beds, and basins, and earthen vessels, and wheat, and barley, and flour, and parched *corn*, and beans, and lentils, and parched *pulse*,

29 And honey, and butter, and sheep, and cheese of kine, for David, and for the people that *were* with him, to eat: for they said, The people *is* hungry, and weary, and thirsty, in the wilderness.

13. *What was the relationship between Absalom and Amasa? 17:25*

These two men were cousins. A question may be raised with regard to the mother of Joab and Abishai. Zeruah was David's sister. By taking into consideration I Chronicles 2:15, 16, some ask how her sister could be the daughter of Nahash. Genealogies of the period are difficult to trace for us today, and some commentators take Nahash to be Jesse's other name.

Another question is raised with regard to the two titles of Ithra. I Chronicles 2:14-18 must be compared with the passage in II Samuel. There is a confusion between Ithra the Israelite, and Jethro the Ishmaelite, but the reference is probably to an Israelite who dwelt with the Ishmaelites and was known among them by another form of his Israelite name.

14. *Why was Shobi friendly? 17:27*

When one country conquered another, the conqueror often left a native king on the throne. David had made Shobi friendly to him by putting him on the throne of the conquered kingdom (II Samuel 10:1-6). When David fled to his territory, Shobi was quite willing to aid him. He joined with others of his area to back David in his war against Absalom.

15. Who were David's other helpers? 17:27 b

Machir was the man who had befriended Mephibosheth and from whose home David had called the lame prince when he wanted to reinstate him in his family home. David's kind treatment of Mephibosheth would have inclined Machir to align himself with David (II Samuel 9:4). Barzillai was an octogenarian of apparent wealth who lived in a place that is otherwise unmentioned in the Scriptures and unknown to modern archaeologists. The town must have been a spot in Gilead, not too far from where the battle was pitched between Absalom and David. These men brought the necessary provisions for an army in the field—beds, cups, vessels of various kinds, wheat, barley, flour, parched grain, beans, lentils, parched garden vegetables, honey, butter, sheep, and cheese. The long listing of the materials was impressive and indicated the abundant way in which the supplies were made available to the men in the field. Such assistance must have been invaluable to David and his weary men.

16. How were the leading men of Israel divided?

Although the conspiracy led by Absalom was described as being strong (II Samuel 15:12) and the people with him increased continually, most of the leading men stayed with David. Joab, his captain, remained faithful, as did his brother Abishai. Zadok and Abiathar, the priests, were with David. Ittai, the Gittite, a valiant soldier, remained faithful. Jonathan and Ahimaaz, the young sons of the priests were on David's side as were the leading men in Gilead—Shobi, Machir, and Barzillai. Ahithophel was the outstanding man who backed Absalom. With him was Amasa, a descendant of the family of Jesse who became Absalom's captain. Shimei, the man of Benjamin, was opposed to David and may be considered as a supporter of Absalom. Ziba and Mephibosheth both avowed their loyalty to David at one time or another; but as David left the city, Ziba said that Mephibosheth had stayed be-

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hind, hoping that he could receive the throne since he was a descendant of Saul. The realization of such aspirations would be highly improbable, and Ziba must have been attempting to ingratiate himself with David by the report which he brought to him. On the surface Israel was badly divided, but the larger number of important men supported David.

CHAPTER 17 IN REVIEW

1. Which councilor advised Absalom to attack David at once? _____
2. How many men did he want to muster? _____
3. Which councilor advised waiting? _____
4. Which man's advice was taken? _____
5. What did the loser do? _____
6. What were the names of the priests' sons? _____
7. Who carried the message from the priests to their sons? _____
8. To what city in Gilead did David flee? _____
9. Who became Absalom's captain? _____
10. What three Gileadite men brought supplies to David? _____

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A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 18

- Vv. 1- 8 *David's battle plan.* David divided his army into three parts, putting one under the leadership of Joab, one under Abishai, and one under Ittai. He strictly warned his commanders against harming his son, Absalom.
- Vv. 9-18 *The death of Absalom.* The terrain where the battle was fought was very rough. The difficulties faced by soldiers caused more deaths than the actual fighting. One casualty of the terrain was Absalom himself. His head was caught in the branches of a tree, and his mule rode out from under him. While he was hanging suspended in this way, Joab drove three darts through his heart.
- Vv. 19-33 *David's lament for Absalom.* David's lamentation over his son is a classical expression of a father's grief over the death of his son. It is hard to imagine any more expressive wording for a man's grief than those recorded in the last verse of the chapter.

LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *It is folly to make a name for one's self.* Absalom had reared a pillar in his own honor. This is about the only remembrance he had in Israel. His action is reminiscent of the wicked men of Babel (Genesis 11:1 ff). These men sought to rear a tower to heaven in order that they might make a name for themselves. A man is much wiser to let others rear a memorial in his honor.
2. *Many run without tidings* (v. 22). Ahimaaz wanted to run to tell David the news of the battle. Cushie had already been sent with the news. It was useless for Ahimaaz to run since he had no more news to carry.

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Many preachers and churches have continued to make a lot of noise, but they have forgotten to tell the good news. They run without tidings.

3. *God mourns for His children.* God's children have gone astray and are dying in sin. God did not only say, "I would die for you," but He has said, "I have died for you."

David's Battle Plan. 18:1-8

And David numbered the people that *were* with him, and set captains of thousands and captains of hundreds over them.

2 And David sent forth a third part of the people under the hand of Joab, and a third part under the hand of Abishai the son of Zeruiah, Joab's brother, and a third part under the hand of Ittai the Gittite. And the king said unto the people, I will surely go forth with you myself also.

3 But the people answered, Thou shalt not go forth: for if we flee away, they will not care for us; neither if half of us die, will they care for us: but now *thou art* worth ten thousand of us: therefore now *it is* better that thou succor us out of the city.

4 And the king said unto them, What seemeth you best I will do. And the king stood by the gate side, and all the people came out by hundreds and by thousands.

5 And the king commanded Joab and Abishai and Ittai, saying, *Deal* gently for my sake with the young man, *even* with Absalom. And all the people heard when the king gave all the captains charge concerning Absalom.

6 So the people went out into the field against Israel: and the battle was in the wood of Ephraim;

7 Where the people of Israel were slain before the servants of David, and there was there a great slaughter that day of twenty thousand *men*.

8 For the battle was there scattered over the face of all the country: and the wood devoured more people that day than the sword devoured.

1. Where did David get his men? 18:1

The army had increased from 600 to great numbers. These were numerous enough to demand the appointment of captains of thousands and captains of hundreds. Most of the men were from different parts of the country. Some were from Judah; some, from the other tribes. Because of Hushai's counsel, David had time to collect a large army; and the pendulum of affairs was swinging favor towards David and not towards Absalom. Hushai had counseled Absalom to take time to collect a large force, but the time also allowed David to collect an army. David seemed to have the better advantage.

2. How did David divide his army? 18:2

David appointed Joab captain over a third of his army. Another third was under the direction of Abishai, Joab's brother, and the third was led by Ittai, the Gittite. The fact that there were three captains in this campaign, whereas only two had led in the war against the Syrio-Ammonite coalition, would point to the fact that David had a larger army in the field against Absalom. The exact number was not stated, but if he had one-half the total of all men available to him, he must have had at his disposal some 600,000 men.

3. Why did David want to go into the battle? 18:3

David wanted to go out to the battle with the troops, for he was still a soldier. He may have been prompted to go out in order that he might guard against harm coming to Absalom, but the people would not allow him to lead the army in person. They had great respect for him, and they valued him highly. They felt that the battlefield was too dangerous a spot for their leader. The enemy would naturally be looking for David, since a part of

Ahithophel's original counsel was designed to drive off David's men and attack David personally (II Samuel 17:2). David could direct the battle from a safe distance and send up reinforcements when and if they were needed.

4. *What instructions did David give concerning Absalom?*

18:5

David's command with regard to Absalom shows his deep affection for his son. At the same time, it reflects his parental indulgence. The fact that all people heard and that David gave the instructions carefully and explicitly to Joab, Abashai, and Ittai, revealed how deeply he was concerned over his safety. David did not want to spare Absalom's life so that he could punish him, but he wanted to make sure that nothing happened to the young man. As Absalom had stolen the hearts of many of the people of Israel, he had also reserved for himself a very warm spot in David's own heart. David's deep grief over his death arose out of this fondness he had for Absalom (verse 33).

5. *Where was the forest of Ephraim?* 18:6

The exact location of the forest is unknown. We cannot tell certainly where it was or what prompted the giving of its name. From the narrative we can determine that it was rough country. The men very evidently fell into pits, over cliffs, and into patches of entangling underbrush. The battle was fought east of the Jordan river, so the forest must have been there. The fact that it is called the forest of Ephraim would incline us to believe that it was parallel with the territory of Ephraim which lay west of the Jordan. Such a location would fit the description since Mahanaim was just north of the Jabbok river, and the men who helped David lived in this territory. The rugged land which lay east of the Jordan and half-way between the Dead Sea and the Sea of Galilee, must have been the scene of the battle.

The Death of Absalom. 18:9-18

9 And Absalom met the servants of David. And Absalom rode upon a mule, and the mule went under the thick boughs of a great oak, and his head caught hold of the oak, and he was taken up between the heaven and the earth; and the mule that *was* under him went away.

10 And a certain man saw *it*, and told Joab, and said, Behold, I saw Absalom hanged in an oak.

11 And Joab said unto the man that told him, And, behold, thou sawest *him*, and why didst thou not smite him there to the ground? and I would have given thee ten *shekels* of silver, and a girdle.

12 And the man said unto Joab, Though I should receive a thousand *shekels* of silver in mine hand, *yet* would I not put forth mine hand against the king's son: for in our hearing the king charged thee and Abishai and Ittai, saying, Beware that none *touch* the young man Absalom.

13 Otherwise I should have wrought falsehood against mine own life: for there is no matter hid from the king, and thou thyself wouldest have set thyself against *me*.

14 Then said Joab, I may not tarry thus with thee. And he took three darts in his hand, and thrust them through the heart of Absalom, while he *was* yet alive in the midst of the oak.

15 And ten young men that bare Joab's armor compassed about and smote Absalom, and slew him.

16 And Joab blew the trumpet, and the people returned from pursuing after Israel: for Joab held back the people.

17 And they took Absalom, and cast him into a great pit in the wood, and laid a very great heap of stones upon him: and all Israel fled every one to his tent.

18 Now Absalom in his lifetime had taken and reared up for himself a pillar, which *is* in the king's dale: for he said, I have no son to keep my name in remembrance: and he called the pillar after his own name: and it is called unto this day, Absalom's place.

6. *How was Absalom's head caught? 18:9*

Absalom was following a trail through the forest that led through dense underbrush. He caught his hair in the branches of a tree. His mule went out from under him, and he was left suspended. When the enemy found him, they slew him and covered his body with a heap of stones. This was a Jewish way of showing contempt.

The mention of the pillar in verse 18 seemed to be over against the heap of stones in verse 17. Absalom had raised a pillar in the valley of Jehoshaphat to perpetuate his name. The sons of Absalom that had been mentioned all died young, and there was no one to bear his name. A daughter would not perpetuate his name. For all these reasons, the pillar was erected. The men of David heaped stones over his body to show their contempt for Absalom and his pillar in the king's dale.

7. *Why had the young man failed to kill Absalom? 18:10*

One of the young soldiers in Israel had seen Absalom hanging by his head from the oak tree, but he did not kill Absalom; rather he ran and told Joab, his captain. Joab rebuked the young man for sparing Absalom's life and told him that he would have given him ten shekels of silver and a military man's girdle if he had killed him. The young man replied that if he had received a thousand shekels of silver, he would not have put forth his hand against Absalom, since David had charged his captains not to harm him. He said that he would have endangered his own life if he had smitten Absalom. He could have expected no better treatment than David gave the Amalekite (II Samuel 1:15) and the assassins of Ish-bosheth (II Samuel 4:12).

8. *What action did Joab take? 18:14*

Joab turned impatiently away from the soldier who had discovered Absalom hanging from a tree. He took three darts in his hand and thrust them through the heart of Absalom, while he was hanging yet alive from the branches

of the oak tree. Ten of Joab's armour bearers ringed the tree around and smote Absalom. This sadistic treatment of the king's son was completely unnecessary, and the action revealed the spirit of Joab and his men.

9. *Where was Absalom buried?* 18:17

Absalom's body was cast into a huge pit in the forest of Ephraim. The men of Israel cast a very large heap of stones on him to show their contempt and then withdrew from the battlefield. Joab blew the trumpet and called the people from their pursuit of Absalom's men and the text states that "Joab held back the people." They were enraged by Absalom's rebellion, and fought valiantly to restore David to his former position.

10. *Where was the king's dale?* 18:18

Absalom's body was covered by a heap of stones as a mark of the contempt of his enemies, but he had reared for himself a pillar of honor in the king's dale. Absalom had three sons, according to the record in II Samuel 14:27, but they must have died untimely deaths; for when he reared the pillar, he said that he had no son to perpetuate his name in Israel. Although Absalom was beaten in his campaign to overthrow his father's throne, the pillar was left standing; and it was still there when the book was written at the end of David's reign. The location of the king's dale is unknown, but Josephus located it one mile and a half from Jerusalem (*Antiquities* VIII; x; 3).

David's Lament for Absalom. 18:19-33

19 Then said Ahimaaz the son of Zadok, let me now run, and bear the king tidings, how that the Lord hath avenged him of his enemies.

20 And Joab said unto him, Thou shalt not bear tidings this day, but thou shalt bear tidings another day: but this day thou shalt bear no tidings, because the king's son is dead.

21 Then said Joab to Cush, Go tell the king what thou hast seen. And Cush bowed himself unto Joab, and ran.

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22 Then said Ahimaaz the son of Zadok yet again to Joab, But howsoever, let me, I pray thee, also run after Cush. And Joab said, Wherefore wilt thou run, my son, seeing that thou hast no tidings ready?

23 But howsoever, *said he*, let me run. And he said unto him, Run. Then Ahimaaz ran by the way of the plain, and over-ran Cush.

24 And David sat between the two gates: and the watchman went up to the roof over the gate unto the wall, and lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold a man running alone.

25 And the watchman cried, and told the king. And the king said, If he *be* alone, *there is* tidings in his mouth. And he came apace and drew near.

26 And the watchman saw another man running: and the watchman called unto the porter, and said, Behold *another* man running alone. And the king said, He also bringeth tidings.

27 And the watchman said, Me thinketh the running of the foremost is like the running of Ahimaaz the son of Zadok. And the king said, He *is* a good man, and cometh with good tidings.

28 And Ahimaaz called, and said unto the king, All is well. And he fell down to the earth upon his face before the king, and said, Blessed *be* the Lord thy God, which hath delivered up the men that lifted up their hand against my lord the king.

29 And the king said, Is the young man Absalom safe? And Ahimaaz answered, When Joab sent the king's servant, and *me* thy servant, I saw a great tumult, but I knew not what *it was*.

30 And the king said *unto him*, Turn aside, *and* stand here. And he turned aside, and stood still.

31 And, behold, Cush came; and Cush said, Tidings, my lord the king: for the Lord hath avenged thee this day of all them that rose up against thee.

32 And the king said unto Cush, Is the young man Absalom safe? And Cush answered, The enemies of my lord the king, and all that rise against thee to do *thee* hurt, be as *that* young man *is*.

33 And the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept: and as he went, thus he said, O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!

11. *Why did Joab choose to send the news by the Cushite?*
18:19

Ahimaaz wished to soften the news of the death of Absalom in the presence of the king. The Cushite was a Negro—a foreign-born member of Joab's army and was considered not a very honorable messenger. The poor messenger carried the bad news. The good messenger carried the good news. Joab may have been afraid that David would kill the men who brought him the bad news since he had killed the Amalekite, who brought him news of Saul's death (II Samuel 1:15).

12. *How did Ahimaaz outrun the Cushite?* 18:23

The battle was fought to the South of Mahanaim. The Cushite probably went over the hills, while Ahimaaz went by the way of the plain of the Jordan River. Since he had the easier course, he made better progress and reached David first with the news. The watchman recognized Ahimaaz's stride; and since he was a good man, he expected him to bring good news.

13. *Where was David when he heard the news?* 18:24

David was sitting on the roof of the gate. This refers to the tower over the gates of the city. More than likely, David was sitting in a room in the top of the tower. David knew that the man running alone bore tidings. Had their eyes beheld a number of men they would have surmised that the army had been defeated and routed. This one man running alone would bear tidings of the battle.

Ahimaaz was recognizable because of his peculiar stride. He did not tell the whole truth because he had not been commissioned to tell the whole story. He also wished to avoid the odium that would fall upon the bearer of the bad news.

14. *Why did the Cushite veil his message? 18:31, 32*

When the Cushite arrived in David's presence, he announced that he had news for him, but he couched his news in words that would soften the blow. He did not abruptly and brusquely say that Absalom was dead. He told David that the Lord had avenged him of all those who had risen up against him. David would perceive by this statement that the battle was going well and perhaps had been finalized in his favor. David's first question was with regard to the safety of Absalom. Once again, the Cushite did not curtly reply that Absalom was dead. He expressed a wish that all David's enemies might be in the same condition as that of Absalom. David knew by this statement that Absalom had been killed.

15. *Did David have reasons for such distress? 18:33*

Time and time again David had demonstrated his love for Absalom. David must have felt responsible for Absalom's bad career. In the first place, David himself had not been able to punish Amnon for his sin because he had himself committed such a sin. In the second place, he would not punish Absalom for avenging his sister's honor. In the third place, David's sending Hushai to Absalom had defeated Ahithophel's counsel and brought ultimate defeat to Absalom. David must have felt that he had failed miserably as a father.

16. *What had caused Absalom's bad career?*

David had set a bad example for his son by his sin against Uriah with Bathsheba. Such a great crime could hardly be kept from members of the family, and this may have led to a lack of respect for David on the part of all his children. Absalom particularly had been blessed with a

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good physique which led to vanity. He had selfishly misused the popularity he won by his position and appearance. David had been lenient with him when he had killed Amnon by failing to take the vengeance which the law demanded—that of the death of a murderer. Wicked counselors had aided Absalom in his rebellion, and he finally met his death in the rugged forest of Ephraim.

CHAPTER 18 IN REVIEW

1. Under what three men did David place his soldiers? _____
2. Did David go into the battle himself? _____
3. In what forest was the battle fought? _____
4. In what kind of tree was Absalom's head caught? _____
5. With what weapon did Joab kill Absalom? _____
6. With what did the men cover Absalom's body? _____
7. With whom did Joab send the news to David? _____
8. Who else wanted to carry the news? _____
9. Where was David when he received the news? _____
10. Quote David's lamentation of Absalom. _____

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A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 19

- Vv. 1- 8 *The king's grief assuaged.* Many of the people received the impression that David was sorry that Absalom's revolt had been stopped. They even felt that if all of them had been killed and Absalom had been spared, David would have been happy. Joab rebuked David for this attitude and the king arose and sat in the gate and greeted his people.
- Vv. 9-15 *The return to the Jordan.* Since the campaign was successfully concluded, David and his men returned to the Jordan river in preparation for crossing back over into the main part of Israel. He had sent messages ahead to find out if the people wanted him to be king. He was a monarch, but he also wanted the people to approve his kingship.
- Vv. 16-43 *The people greeted the king.* Different ones came out to meet David as he returned. Some had favors to ask of him. Others had apologies to make. Most of the people were happy to see David returning as king.

LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *We must forgive others their trespasses against us.* Jesus taught His disciples to pray, "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors" (Matthew 6:12). David had sinned grievously. He wanted very much to receive God's forgiveness of his sins, and he was willing to forgive others their trespasses against him. Although some of his men wanted him to wreak vengeance on his enemies, David forgave those who had spoken evilly against him and opposed him as he fled out of Jerusalem. His example is a good model.

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2. "*The king is an angel of God*" (v. 27). The people had great respect for their rulers. They considered the king as a messenger of God. The apostle Paul wrote "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers" (Romans 13:1). Christians should honor their rulers.

4. David Restored to Power, 19:1-43.

The King's Grief Assuaged. 19:1-8

And it was told Joab, Behold, the king weepeth and mourneth for Absalom.

2 And the victory that day was *turned* into mourning unto all the people: for the people heard say that day how the king was grieved for his son.

3 And the people gat them by stealth that day into the city, as people being ashamed steal away when they flee in battle.

4 But the king covered his face, and the king cried with a loud voice, O my son Absalom, O Absalom, my son, my son!

5 And Joab came into the house to the king, and said Thou hast shamed this day the faces of all thy servants, which this day have saved thy life, and the lives of thy sons and of thy daughters, and the lives of thy wives, and the lives of thy concubines;

6 In that thou lovest thine enemies, and hatest thy friends. For thou hast declared this day, that thou regardedst neither princes nor servants: for this day I perceive, that if Absalom had lived, and all we had died this day, then it had pleased thee well.

7 Now therefore arise, go forth, and speak comfortably unto thy servants: for I swear by the Lord, if thou go not forth, there will not tarry one with thee this night: and that will be worse unto thee than all the evil that befell thee from thy youth until now.

8 Then the king arose, and sat in the gate. And they old unto all the people, saying, Behold, the king doth sit in the gate. And all the people came before the king: for Israel had fled every man to his tent.

1. How long did David continue mourning? 19:1

The fondness which David had showed to Absalom in his early indulgences finally broke out into uncontrolled grief when he learned of Absalom's death on the battlefield. David appeared to be in a state of shock, hoping against hope to the last that the news which he had received would prove to be false. The original word translated to express David's weeping and mourning gave the idea of one trembling under strong emotion. David continued in such a state long enough for the word to get back to Joab and for it to become general knowledge among the people. The soldiers might have expected a triumphal entry back into the city where David was staying, but instead they were obliged to creep into the city like thieves and fugitives. Joab came immediately and told him that if he did not cease this kind of conduct the whole army would abandon him by nightfall (verse 7).

2. What is the meaning of David's repeated reference to his son? 19:4

To understand this repeated cry of grief, the reader must remember not only the excessive indulgence and weakness of David's fatherly affection for his son but also his anger at Joab and his captains. They had paid little regard to his command to protect the life of Absalom. David had a quick temper, and these mixed emotions prevented him from correctly judging the crime of his rebellious son who merited death. David was also forgetting the justice of God which had been made known in the death of Absalom. David declared that he would rather have died for Absalom than for Absalom to die while fighting against him. The Christian reader can almost hear

the cry of God as He calls out for His wayward sons. God has said that He is not only willing to die for His children but in Jesus Christ God in the flesh has died for wayward mankind.

3. *Why did Joab rebuke David? 19:5*

The people were greatly discouraged. As a captain over all the host, Joab knew the feelings of the people. The time demanded action. The soldiers had fought valiantly and won, and they had every right to expect a warm welcome. David's demeanor greatly abashed the men. The king was in sadness over an aspect of the outcome of a victory; and their ardor was dampened. If the men were permitted to continue without a welcome, they would return to their homes with an ill feeling of disappointment and wrong at the hands of David; and in the end, they would turn against David. Joab was the intimate counselor and advisor of the king; and he had the courage by nature to speak boldly to the king. The time was right for such speaking.

4. *What confusion had David caused? 19:4*

Joab said that David appeared to love his enemies and hate his friends. He was weeping over Absalom who had proved to be a very dangerous enemy. He acted as if he were angry with his men who had put down the revolt. David did have these mixed emotions, and they were apparent to those who saw his actions. Joab also said that David had no regard for his leaders and soldiers. He gave his men the impression that if everybody else had been killed and Absalom had lived he would have been happy.

5. *What action did Joab suggest? 19:7*

Joab advised David to leave the chamber where he was weeping and mourning and go out to his men and put their minds at rest about the outcome of the battle. The word used here to describe the speaking to his men is the same as was used with regard to Shechem's speaking to

Dinah (Genesis 34:3). David had caused a very grievous misunderstanding among his men, and he needed to assure them that he did not feel the way he appeared to feel. Joab did not specify what evil had befallen David through his career, but David had seen hard times. He was forced to flee for a long time as Saul sought to kill him. David was brought very low when his sin with Bathsheba was exposed. He was greatly distressed when Amnon forced Tamar, and his sin led to Absalom's killing Amnon. Perhaps one of the greatest evils which have befallen him was the revolt of Absalom, although he had been extremely grieved when Absalom was killed. Joab said that the evil which he was about to bring on himself by his continued mourning over Absalom would be greater than all these others.

5. What men had fled to their tents? 19:8

This passage should be compared with 17:24 and 18:16. The people of Israel were at a loss. Israel here mentioned should be construed to mean the followers of Absalom. They would be the ones placed in such a predicament by the death of the leader, but the fact that they had gone back to their homes left David's men free to come out of the battlefield and stand before the king.

The Return to the Jordan. 19:9-15

9 And all the people were at strife throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, The king saved us out of the hand of our enemies, and he delivered us out of the hand of the Philistines; and now he is fled out of the land for Absalom.

10 And Absalom, whom we anointed over us, is dead in battle. Now therefore why speak ye not a word of bringing the king back?

11 And king David sent to Zadok and to Abiathar the priests, saying, Speak unto the elders of Judah, saying, Why are ye the last to bring the king back to his house? seeing the speech of all Israel is come to the king, *even* to his house.

12 Ye *are* my brethren, ye *are* my bones and my flesh: wherefore then are ye the last to bring back the king?

13 And say ye to Amasa, *Art* thou not of my bone, and of my flesh? God do so to me, and more also, if thou be not captain of the host before me continually in the room of Joab.

14 And he bowed the heart of all the men of Judah, even as *the heart of one man*; so that they sent *this word* unto the king, Return thou, and all thy servants.

15 So the king returned, and came to Jordan. And Judah came to Gilgal, to go to meet the king, to conduct the king over Jordan.

7. *What was the popular opinion among the people?*
19:9, 10

The people of Israel were confused and their loyalties were divided. They knew that David had saved them out of the hands of their enemies—the Moabites, Edomites, Ammonites, Syrians, and Philistines. They knew that he was in exile, having been driven out of his kingdom by his own son, but Absalom, whom they had anointed to be their king, was dead. Their line of reasoning led them to the place where the majority of them were agitating for bringing David back to rule in Jerusalem.

8. *Why did David summon Judah?* 19:11

David represented the people of Judah as being the last to come back under his banner. They would have been last if they had not hastened to come in before Israel found their way back. Amasa was mentioned as a diplomatic gesture. This would flatter Amasa and secure his allegiance to David. David wanted Amasa, since he was a member of the tribe of Judah and had been Absalom's commander. Judah responded to David's invitation and met him at Gilgal, a convenient, sacred place located west of the Jordan.

9. *Why the pledge to Amasa?* 19:13

David did another unaccountable and unjustifiable thing in appointing Amasa commander-in-chief of the army in the place of Joab (19:13). One can understand his exasperation with the latter for his deliberate disobedience in the death of Absalom, and for the insulting language he used to the king. But, for all that, to make the former rebel chief to be the head of the army, superseding the loyal and victorious commander who had saved the king's throne for him was really too much; and one wonders where David's common sense had gone. We can imagine the fierce and sullen resentment of Joab's veterans when they heard the news. It is a wonder that there was not an outbreak of rebellion.

The People Greet the King. 19:16-43

16 And Shimei the son of Gera, a Benjamite, which *was* of Bahurim, hasted and came down with the men of Judah to meet king David.

17 And *there were* a thousand men of Benjamin with him, and Ziba the servant of the house of Saul, and his fifteen sons and his twenty servants with him; and they went over Jordan before the king.

18 And there went over a ferry boat to carry over the king's household, and to do what he thought good. And Shimei the son of Gera fell down before the king, as he was come over Jordan;

19 And said unto the king, Let not my lord impute iniquity unto me, neither do thou remember that which thy servant did perversely the day that my lord the king went out of Jerusalem, that the king should take it to his heart.

20 For thy servant doth know that I have sinned: therefore, behold, I am come the first this day of all the house of Joseph to go down to meet my lord the king.

21 But Abishai the son of Zeruiah answered and said,

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Shall not Shimei be put to death for this, because he cursed the Lord's anointed?

22 And David said, What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah, that ye should this day be adversaries unto me? shall there any man be put to death this day in Israel? for do not I know that I *am* this day king over Israel?

23 Therefore the king said unto Shimei, Thou shalt not die. And the king swore unto him.

24 And Mephibosheth the son of Saul came down to meet the king, and had neither dressed his feet, nor trimmed his beard, nor washed his clothes, from the day the king departed until the day he came *again* in peace.

25 And it came to pass, when he was come to Jerusalem to meet the king, that the king said unto him, Wherefore wentest not thou with me, Mephibosheth?

26 And he answered, My lord, O king, my servant deceived me: for thy servant said, I will saddle me an ass, that I may ride thereon, and go to the king; because thy servant *is* lame.

27 And he hath slandered thy servant unto my lord the king; but my lord the king *is* as an angel of God: do therefore *what is* good in thine eyes.

28 For all *of* my father's house were but dead men before my lord the king: yet didst thou set thy servant among them that did eat at thine own table. What right therefore have I yet to cry any more unto the king?

29 And the king said unto him, Why speakest thou any more of thy matters? I have said, Thou and Ziba divide the land.

30 And Mephibosheth said unto the king, Yea, let him take all, forasmuch as my lord the king is come again in peace unto his own house.

31 And Barzillai the Gileadite came down from Rogelim, and went over Jordan with the king, to conduct him over Jordan.

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32 Now Barzillai was a very aged man, *even* fourscore years old: and he had provided the king of sustenance while he lay at Mahanaim; for he *was* a very great man.

33 And the king said unto Barzillai, Come thou over with me, and I will feed thee with me in Jerusalem.

34 And Barzillai said unto the king, How long have I to live, that I should go up with the king unto Jerusalem?

35 I *am* this day fourscore years old: *and* can I discern between good and evil? can thy servant taste what I eat or what I drink? can I hear any more the voice of singing men and singing women? wherefore then should thy servant be yet a burden unto my lord the king?

36 Thy servant will go a little way over Jordan with the king: and why should the king recompense it me with such a reward?

37 Let thy servant, I pray thee, turn back again, that I may die in mine own city, *and be buried* by the grave of my father and of my mother. But behold thy servant Chimham; let him go over with my lord the king; and do to him what shall seem good unto thee.

38 And the king answered, Chimham shall go over with me, and I will do to him that which shall seem good unto thee: and whatsoever thou shalt require of me, *that* will I do for thee.

39 And all the people went over Jordan. And when the king was come over, the king kissed Barzillai, and blessed him; and he returned unto his own place.

40 Then the king went on to Gilgal, and Chimham went on with him: and all the people of Judah conducted the king, and also half the people of Israel.

41 And, behold, all the men of Israel came to the king, and said unto the king, Why have our brethren the men of Judah stolen thee away, and have brought the king, and his household, and all David's men with him, over Jordan?

42 And all the men of Judah answered the men of Israel, Because the king *is* near of kin to us: wherefore then be ye angry for this matter? have we eaten at all of the king's *cost*? or hath he given us any gift?

43 And the men of Israel answered the men of Judah, and said, We have ten parts in the king, and we have also more *right* in David than ye: why then did ye despise us, that our advice should not be first had in bringing back our king? And the words of the men of Judah were fiercer than the words of the men of Israel.

10. Why did Shimei do obeisance? 19:16

Shimei had cursed David as the king fled from Jerusalem (II Samuel 16:5). When David returned, the Jordan river was in a flood-swollen condition. A ferry was sent to carry the king's household over the water. Shimei showed his hypocritical zeal and humility in the presence of the king by swimming across the river. He was a coward and wished to escape the punishment that he rightly should have suffered. David forgave him and let him live.

11. Why were men of Benjamin with Shimei? 19:17

Shimei himself was a man of Benjamin. He had cursed David because he felt that David was on Saul's throne without any right to it (II Samuel 16:8). After David had been victorious over Absalom, Shimei might well expect to be the brunt of David's retaliation. In some manner he had influenced a thousand other men of the tribe of Benjamin to stand with him, and they came out to welcome David back to Jerusalem. Ziba was among them, and he also was connected with the tribe of Benjamin. He was the servant of the house of Saul and especially accountable to Mephibosheth, Saul's grandson. All these men must have come to the conclusion that it was useless for them to oppose David's claim to the throne. They should have known that it was God's will and that David

had been anointed by Samuel to replace Saul, but their extreme sense of family loyalty and devotion had led them to foolish actions, epitomized in Shimei's cursing David when the king was driven out of Jerusalem. They were anxious to make restitution and to be included among the people welcoming David back to his throne.

12. How could Shimei be of the house of Joseph? 19:20

Two of Joseph's sons were adopted by Jacob as his own sons and made heads of tribes in Israel (Genesis 48:5). These two sons were Ephraim and Manasseh, and their descendants settled in the land immediately north of the tribe of Benjamin. Benjamin itself lay on the northern border of Judah. Benjamin was also the son of Rachel by Jacob, the same as Joseph. They were very close to each other, and the last two sons to be born to Jacob. In the wilderness wanderings, their people had been given campsites immediately to the west of the tabernacle (Numbers 2:18-24). This close affinity gendered by a common birthright and strengthened through years of close proximity led Shimei to make reference to himself as a member of the house of Joseph.

13. What was Abishai's proposal? 19:21

Abishai's position was constant. When Shimei came out to curse David as they were leaving the environs of Jerusalem, Abishai had asked permission to go over to Shimei and behead him. This was typical of Abishai's militant spirit, and his first reaction upon hearing Shimei's appeal to the king was that the appeal should be denied. It was his opinion that Shimei should be put to death for the shame that he brought on David when he cursed him. In Abishai's eyes, David was the Lord's anointed, and anybody who treated him shamefully was worthy of death.

14. What was David's reaction to Abishai's proposal? 19:22

Once again, David affirmed that he did not have anything to do with the wicked proposals of his nephews. He disclaimed any responsibility for the death of Abner

at the hands of the two brothers. He had barely been able to restrain Abishai when he wanted to behead Saul as he and David crept into Saul's camp. He had held back Abishai when he first proposed beheading Shimei; and once again, he was restraining Abishai's unbridled desire for revenge. He had been unable to restrain Joab in the battle against Absalom, although he had strictly charged him not to harm Absalom. David had no taste for bloodshed, and he felt the day was one of rejoicing and not a time for an execution of any kind. He would not mar the happiness of being restored to his throne by putting any of his enemies to death.

15. *Why was Mephibosheth negligent of his person? 19:24*

Mephibosheth showed his sorrow over the plight of David by letting his person go unattended. The phrase "dressed his feet" may tell us something of the nature of his lameness. At the conclusion of the interview, David divided Mephibosheth's inheritance between him and Ziba. Such an action shows that David doubted Mephibosheth. David did not want to punish Ziba, to say the least. If Mephibosheth was sincere, his urging David to give all to Ziba means that he was very glad to see David return; if he was not sincere, this saying meant that he realized his jeopardous position and wanted to flatter David.

16. *How were Jonathan's descendant's dead men? 19:28*

Had David been like other oriental potentates, he would have slain all of Saul's descendants since Saul had been his predecessor on the throne. As it was, David had made a covenant with Jonathan that he would not act in this way. The two men had promised each other that they would deal kindly with each other's descendants, regardless of which of them survived the other. Mephibosheth had suffered the loss of his father in the battle when his grandfather and uncles were killed by the Philistines. He may have thought that his life was in danger also, because he had not made himself known for a number of years after

the others of his house were killed. Anything Mephibosheth possessed was his largely on account of the kindness of David. Mephibosheth acknowledged this and made reference to David's kindness in setting him among the people who were privileged to be considered members of the king's household. He could ask for nothing more from David. Mephibosheth's happiness over the king's safety seemed sincere, which would lead one to believe that Ziba had betrayed him when he reported the reason for Mephibosheth's not coming out to see David when the king was driven out from his capital city.

17. Who was Barzillai? 19:31

Barzillai was one of the men of Gilead who had brought supplies to David at Mahanaim (II Samuel 17:27). Barzillai was very wealthy, but his greatness could hardly be measured by any present-day yardstick. He was an old man, and the pleasures of court were undesirable to him. All he wanted was to live out his last days in his home in peace. Chimham was more than likely his son, although he referred to him as David's servant (verse 37)

18. How did David reward Barzillai for his kindness? 19:40

When the king went on from the edge of the Jordan to Gilgal on his way back to Jerusalem, he took Chimham with him. He had told Barzillai that he would do whatever seemed good to him and that he would show any favor which Barzillai would require of him. David was deeply indebted to the men of Gilead for supplying the provision necessary for his campaign, and he would not be likely to forget their many favors. As David laid down the reins of his government and turned them over to Solomon, he reminded Solomon of the kindness which had been showed to him by Barzillai. He commanded Solomon to "show kindness unto the sons of Barzillai, the Gileadite, and let them be of those that eat at thy table, for so they came to me when I fled because of Absalom thy brother"

(I Kings 2:7). In other words, David made Chimham to be equal to David's own sons and Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, to whom he had already shown great kindness.

19. *What was the quarrel between Judah and Israel?* 19:41

Half of Israel had probably been waiting for their leaders to bring them back to David. Perhaps the other half of the people had been with David all along helping him. The people of Israel felt that they had a larger share in David's work and victory than Judah, but Judah seemed to be preferred. At least they had hurried out to meet David, although this had been at David's invitation.

20. *What was Judah's reply?* 19:42

The men of Judah replied to the men of Israel by saying that the king was near of kin to them. He was from the tribe of Judah; his father, Jesse, was a man from Bethlehem, a town in the midst of the land of Judah. David had also asked for Amasa, one of his kinsmen and a man of Judah, to be captain of his army. The men of Judah felt that it was only natural for them to be the first to welcome back the king and to be closer to him than anybody else. They denied that they were given any undue favors because of their kinship to him. They said that they had not eaten anything at the king's cost which was another way of saying that he was not giving them any provisions. David had not given them any kind of gifts to bribe their loyalty to him, but it was the natural outpouring of their love for one of their own.

21. *What was the outcome?* 19:43

The arguments of the men of Judah prevailed. Their words were described as being "fiercer" than the men of Israel. The men of Israel felt that they were more numerous and thus they had a greater claim on the affections of the king. They were slighted somewhat, inasmuch as they had instigated the movements to bring David back; but David had skirted their overtures by making a direct

appeal to the people of Judah through his priests who were back in Jerusalem. For this reason, the men of Israel felt that they were despised, or that their proposition was taken too lightly. They would very much have liked to have the honor of being the first to bring the king back to his throne. All of this popular opinion with regard to the monarchy gives us a refreshing view of the nature of the kingship of Israel. David was not a despotic ruler who laid claims to the throne regardless of the affections of his people. He might well have remained in exile in Gilead if nobody had shown an inclination to bring him back. Although the king was not selected by popular vote, David was very much aware of the attitude of the people towards him. This made a very happy situation. God's chosen ruler was popular with people of goodwill, and he made every effort to treat them with fairness and kindness.

CHAPTER 19 IN REVIEW

1. Who rebuked David for his continued mourning over Absalom? _____
2. Who first mentioned calling David back to Jerusalem? _____
3. To which tribe did David send word? _____
4. By what two men did David make his contact? _____
5. Where did the men of Judah go to meet David? _____
6. Whom did David invite to be his captain? _____
7. Of what tribe was the man a member? _____
8. Who swam the Jordan to meet David? _____
9. Which son of Saul came to meet David? _____
10. Which son of Barzillai went with David? _____

PART FIVE

DAVID'S
LAST DAYS
AND SONG

20:1—24:25

STUDIES IN SAMUEL

A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 20

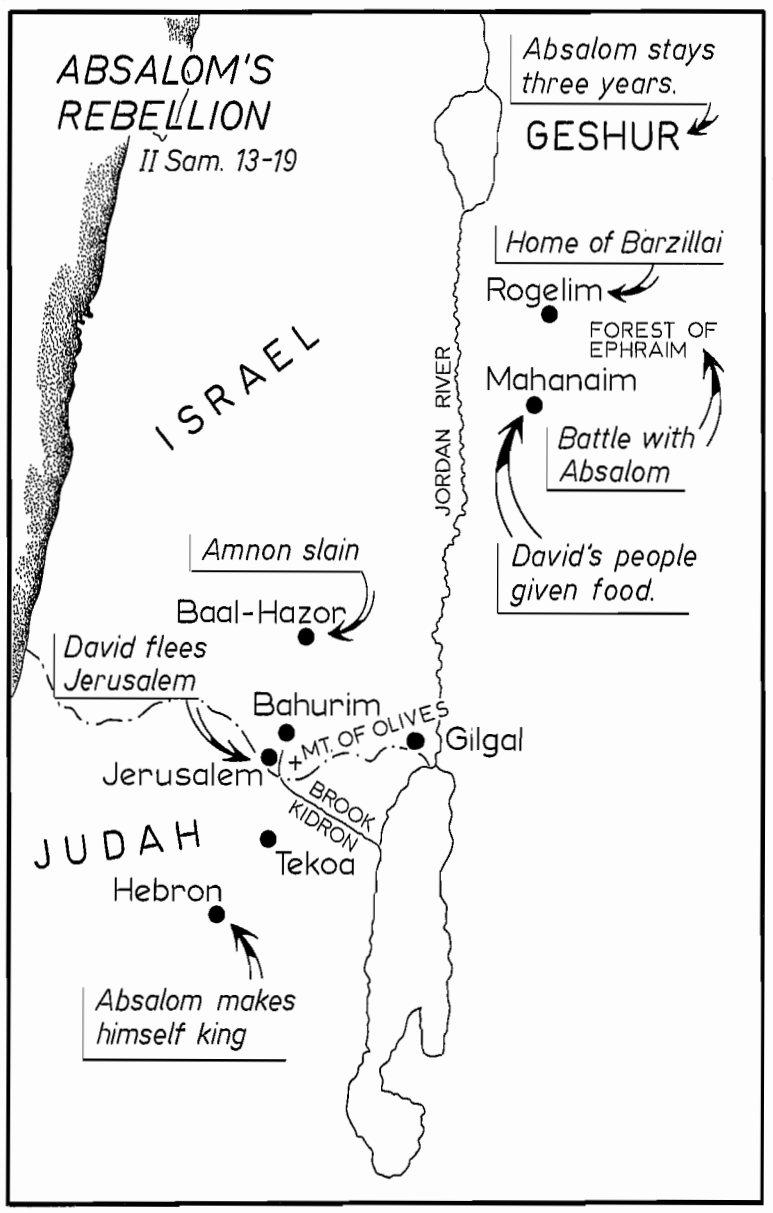
- Vv. 1-3 *Sheba's revolt.* Some of the Israelites still felt that David had usurped Saul's throne. This was especially true of the men of Benjamin. They found a leader in Sheba.
- Vv. 4-9 *Amasa's indolence.* David had made Amasa his captain in Joab's stead and sent him to put down Sheba's revolt. Amasa proved inept and was very tardy in performing the king's bidding.
- Vv. 10-13 *Joab assassinates Amasa.* Joab went out to assist Amasa, but he killed Amasa instead. This cold-blooded murder of David's captain by his former captain is inexcusable.
- Vv. 14-23 *Sheba's death.* David's men under Joab were forced to pursue Sheba to the extreme northern boundary of Israel. He had entrenched himself in the city of Abel, but some of the wise citizens of the city slew him.
- Vv. 24-26 *Israel's leaders.* It was necessary for the kingdom to be reorganized after Absalom's and Sheba's revolt. Some of the officers who were first appointed by David were still in office. Other new offices had been formed and some of the older leaders had been replaced. It was still a very efficient organization.

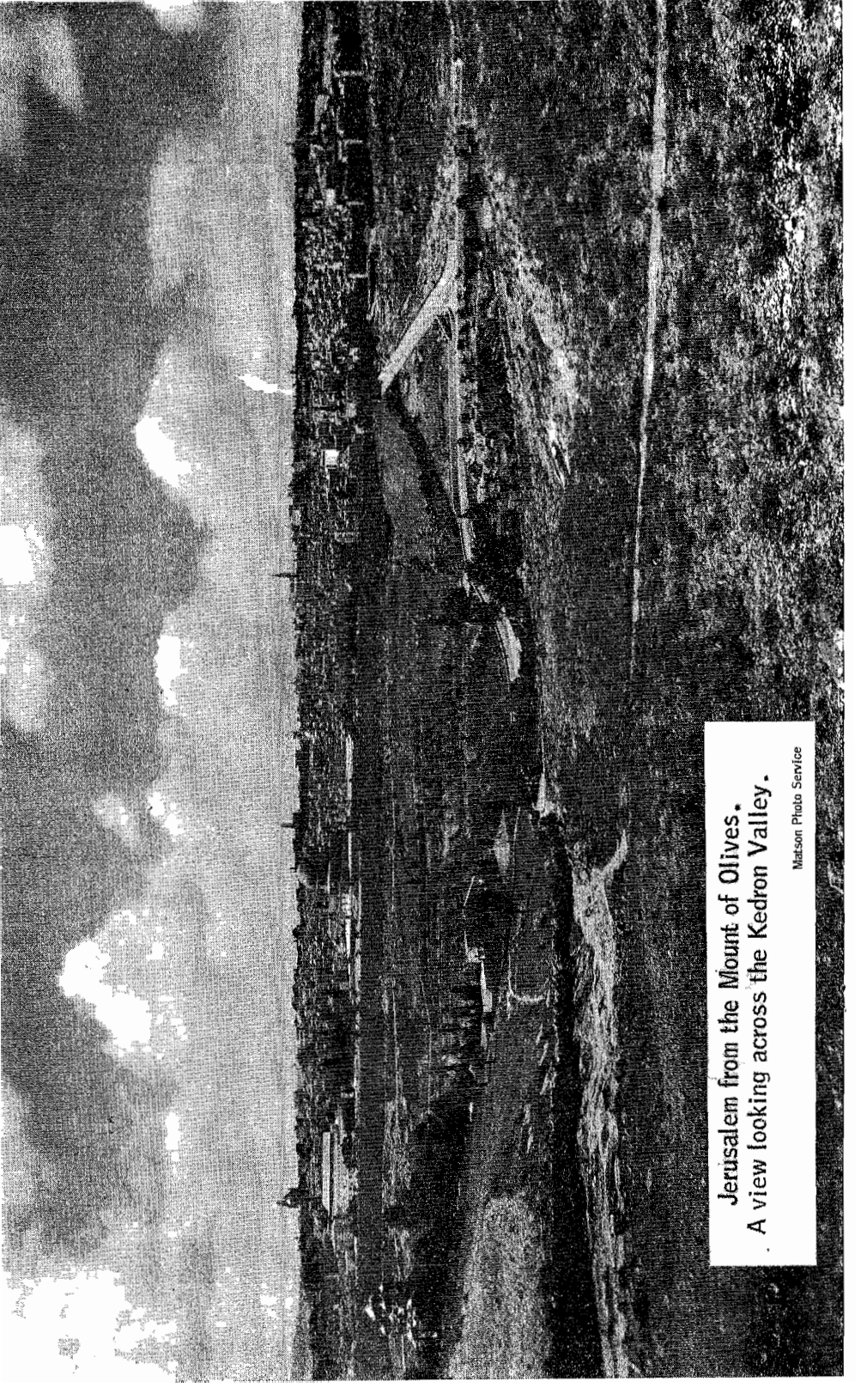
LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *Peaceable men are men of wisdom.* When Sheba fled to Abel, some of the people said that they were "peaceable and faithful" (v. 19). These men did what they knew was right. A land is blessed when it has this type of men.

ABSALOM'S REBELLION

II Sam. 13-19



A black and white photograph showing a panoramic view of Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives. The city's walls and various buildings are visible in the distance, nestled in a valley. The foreground shows the rugged, sloping terrain of the Mount of Olives, with some sparse vegetation and a few small structures. The sky is filled with large, dramatic clouds, creating a high-contrast scene. The overall tone is historical and serene.

Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives.
A view looking across the Kedron Valley.

Matson Photo Service

2. *The powers that be are ordained of God* (Romans 13:1 b). God intends for men to have good government. David saw to it that his people had good, efficient rule. More governments of this kind are needed in the present critical stage of world affairs.

V. DAVID'S LAST DAYS AND SONG, 20:1—24:25.

1. The Reorganization of the Kingdom, 20:1-26.

Sheba's Revolt. 20:1-3

And there happened to be there a man of Belial, whose name *was* Sheba, the son of Bichri, a Benjamite: and he blew a trumpet, and said, We have no part in David, neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: every man to his tents, O Israel.

2 So every man of Israel went up from after David, *and* followed Sheba the son of Bichri: but the men of Judah clave unto their king, from Jordan even to Jerusalem.

3 And David came to his house at Jerusalem; and the king took the ten women *his* concubines, whom he had left to keep the house, and put them in ward, and fed them, but went not in unto them. So they were shut up unto the day of their death, living in widowhood.

1. Who was Sheba? 20:1

Sheba is described as being a man of Belial, another way of saying that he was a shameful and worthless man. His genealogy is given, and he is described as being the son of Bichri, a word meaning "first-born" in the original language. This is the only reference found to the man's name in the Bible. Being a Benjaminite, Sheba was the catalytic agent for solidifying the opposition to David as expressed by Shimei when Shimei said that David was ruling in the place of the house of Saul. Although Shimei rescinded his action and asked for David's forgiveness,

Sheba was more base and resolute. He championed the cause of all who supported the house of Saul by saying, "We have no part in David, neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse." He asked every man of Israel to return to his home and refuse to participate further in the affairs of David's kingdom.

2. *Why were the men of Judah left alone? 20:2*

Judah had occasioned the dispute between her people and the Israelites living in the northern tribes; and when Sheba led a revolt, many of the men from the other bordering tribes joined him, thus leaving Judah as the main support for David. Although every man of Israel went up from after David and followed Sheba and only the men of Judah were loyal to their king, the revolt was not open enough to prevent David's going on up from the Jordan valley to Jerusalem. Once again David was able to rule from the great city.

3. *Why did David isolate the concubines? 20:3*

Absalom had gone into his father's concubines when he spread a tent on the roof of the palace and took them as members of his own household, in the sight of all the people who followed him (II Samuel 16:21, 22). This rebellious act on the part of Absalom was designed to indicate that Absalom was taking over everything which had belonged to his father; and although David had left them behind to pursue their normal activities of keeping the house, he felt that they had been shamed and it would not be proper for him to reinstate them to their former positions. He did not turn them out to fend for themselves but put them in separate quarters and ordained that they should be provided for but left to live as widows.

Amasa's Indolence. 20:4-9

4 Then said the king to Amasa, Assemble me the men of Judah within three days, and be thou here present.

5 So Amasa went to assemble *the men of* Judah: but he tarried longer than the set time which he had appointed him.

6 And David said to Abishai, Now shall Sheba the son of Bichri do us more harm than *did* Absalom: take thou thy lord's servants, and pursue after him, lest he get him fenced cities, and escape us.

7 And there went out after him Joab's men, and the Cherethites, and the Pelethites, and all the mighty men: and they went out of Jerusalem, to pursue after Sheba the son of Bichri.

8 When they *were* at the great stone which *is* in Gibeon, Amasa went before them. And Joab's garment that he had put on was girded unto him, and upon it a girdle *with* a sword fastened upon his loins in the sheath thereof; and as he went forth it fell out.

9 And Joab said to Amasa, *Art* thou in health, my brother? And Joab took Amasa by the beard with the right hand to kiss him.

4. *Why was Amasa sent against Sheba?* 20:4

Amasa had been made captain of the host under David, when Joab was deposed. Amasa proved to be not as prompt as Joab; and while he tarried, Abishai was sent to do his work. The men under Abishai met Amasa at Gibeon, a city north of Mizpah and six miles north of Jerusalem, where Amasa was up among the people of Benjamin gathering forces. This means that some of the men of Benjamin were helping David.

Joab was not a man to be deposed by anybody. He slew Amasa by trickery and immediately assumed control, leaving a man to tell the people to follow on after Joab and David.

5. *Why did David think Sheba would do great harm?* 20:6

David's future was hanging in the balance as Sheba led all the other tribes, except Judah, to revolt against David.

It was imperative that immediate action be taken to remedy the situation; and when Amasa took longer than the three days appointed for mustering the troops, David knew that allowing Sheba additional time would give him opportunity to gain more strength. He would be able to establish himself in the cities that were fenced and were provided with gates to keep out any invading armies. He could thoroughly permeate the Israelite society with his political opposition and David would not be able to ferret out all his followers. He would thus be able to escape detection and punishment.

6. *How did Joab trick Amasa? 20:8*

Joab had no responsibilities whatever with regard to the mustering of the troops, but he was probably in the company which was commanded by Amasa or else he had gone with Abishai to assist in the matter. When he met Amasa, he was clothed with a garment that had a girdle around the middle. This large belt had a sheath attached to it, and in the sheath was Joab's sword. He allowed this sword to fall out, leading Amasa to believe that he was unarmed. Joab threw Amasa off his guard by greeting him in a friendly way making inquiry about his health and calling him his brother. Being naturally right handed, he took Amasa by the beard to draw him to himself to kiss him. Joab had a sword in his other hand, probably behind his back; and when Amasa was close enough to him to permit him to stab him, Joab plunged the blade into the abdomen of Amasa. The one blow was sufficient to wound him mortally. Once again, Joab had struck without sufficient reason, except for a matter of personal honor and vengeance.

Joab Assassinate Amasa. 20:10-13

But Amasa took no heed to the sword that *was* in Joab's hand: so he smote him therewith in the fifth *rib*, and shed out his bowels to the ground, and struck him

not again; and he died. So Joab and Abishai his brother pursued after Sheba the son of Bichri.

11 And one of Joab's men stood by him, and said, He that favoreth Joab, and he that *is* for David, *let him go* after Joab.

12 And Amasa wallowed in blood in the midst of the highway. And when the man saw that all the people stood still, he removed Amasa out of the highway into the field, and cast a cloth upon him, when he saw that every one that came by him stood still.

13 When he was removed out of the highway, all the people went on after Joab, to pursue after Sheba the son of Bichri.

7. What was the soldier's reaction to Amasa's murder?
20:12

The men were stunned by Joab's slaying Amasa; and when they came to the spot where his body was lying, they stood still. Although Joab had left one of his men there to encourage them to follow him and Abishai as they pursued Sheba, the evidence of the murder of Amasa caused many of them to hesitate. Only when the man removed the corpse out of the highway into the field and covered it with a cloth did the men decide to go ahead and follow Joab.

Sheba's Death. 20:14-23

14 And he went through all the tribes of Israel unto Abel, and to Beth-maachah, and all the Berites: and they were gathered together, and went also after him.

15 And they came and besieged him in Abel of Beth-maachah, and they cast up a bank against the city, and it stood in the trench: and all the people that *were* with Joab battered the wall, to throw it down.

16 Then cried a wise woman out of the city, Hear, hear; say, I pray you, unto Joab, Come near hither, that I may speak with thee.

17 And when he was come near unto her, the woman said, *Art* thou Joab? And he answered, I *am* *he*. Then she said unto him, Hear the words of thine handmaid. And he answered, I do hear.

18 Then she spake, saying, They were wont to speak in old time, saying, They shall surely ask *counsel* at Abel: and so they ended *the matter*.

19 I *am* *one of them that are peaceable and faithful* in Israel: thou seekest to destroy a city and a mother in Israel: why wilt thou swallow up the inheritance of the Lord?

20 And Joab answered and said, Far be it, far be it from me, that I should swallow up or destroy.

21 The matter *is* not so: but a man of mount Ephraim, Sheba the son of Bichri by name, hath lifted up his hand against the king, *even* against David: deliver him only, and I will depart from the city. And the woman said unto Joab, Behold, his head shall be thrown to thee over the wall.

22 Then the woman went unto all the people in her wisdom. And they cut off the head of Sheba the son of Bichri, and cast *it* out to Joab. And he blew a trumpet, and they retired from the city, every man to his tent. And Joab returned to Jerusalem unto the king.

23 Now Joab *was* over all the host of Israel: and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada *was* over the Cherethites and over the Pelethites:

8. *Where was Abel-beth-maachah?* 20:14

Abel-beth-maachah was near the waters of Merom at the northern end of the land of Israel. The name of the town was a compound of Hebrew words signifying "the meadow of the house of the oppressor," and has been

identified with Abiel-el-Kumh. The circumstances surrounding its mention in the Scriptures indicate that it was a place of some importance. Joab laid siege to it in order to drive out Sheba; and in later history, Ben-hadad and Tiglathpileser led their armies against it (I Kings 15:20; II Kings 15:20). The Berites were a people mentioned only at this point, but their mention here indicates that they must have lived in the north part of Israel. The town of Beroth, a city in the northern part of Galilee, not far from Kadesh, is a likely spot for their center of activity. These people were far removed from the center of activity in Israel and were easily influenced to follow Sheba in his revolt.

9. *How did Joab attack the city? 20:15*

Abel was so strongly fortified that Joab found it necessary to throw up a rampart against the city. The earth-work which he made was up against the outside wall of the city; making it possible for his men to attack the wall with some success. The blows with which they hammered the city were beginning to take effect and the wall was starting to crumble when their siege was broken by the wise woman.

10. *Why did a woman speak for the citizens? 20:16*

A woman took the lead in stopping Joab's attack against Abel. She is described as a wise woman. This same kind of terminology was used with regard to the woman of Tekoah whom Joab fetched to intercede on Absalom's behalf (II Samuel 14:2). These women must have stood in the same kind of company as that of Deborah, who was Israel's female leader in the days of the judges (Judges 4:4). These women were not banded together in any kind of order, but they were women who showed unusual wisdom and took action when action was needed.

11. *What was the reputation of Abel? 20:18*

Abel was known in ancient times as the home of citizens who were very clever. They had the reputation of

being able to make judgments which were right and good, and many matters were brought to them to be resolved. The woman demonstrated this wisdom and she described herself as being a peaceable and faithful citizen of Israel. She felt that Joab and Abishai were out to destroy the city and herself, a mother of Israel. She felt that this destruction was needless, and asked them why they would devour the inheritance of the Lord in such a holocaust. Joab denied that he was intending to destroy Abel. He was only after Sheba, a worthless fellow who had led a revolt against King David. Joab showed that he was sincere in this by promising the citizens that if Sheba was delivered to them, they would withdraw their siege.

12. How did the matter end? 20:22

The woman was able to make good on her promise to throw Sheba's head over the wall to Joab. Her words were wise, and she persuaded the leaders of the community to follow her advice. They captured Sheba, cut off his head, and threw it out to Joab. When Joab received the assurance that Sheba was dead, he lifted the siege from the city and dismissed his troop. Joab then went back to Jerusalem to report to the king.

Israel's Leaders. 20:24-26

24 And Adoram *was* over the tribute: and Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud *was* recorder:

25 And Sheva *was* scribe: and Zadok and Abiathar *were* the priests:

26 And Ira also the Jairite *was* a chief ruler about David.

13. What changes were made among David's officers? 20:23-26

The office of scribe had been changed from Seraiah to Sheva. Adoram was overseer of the workmen who were forced to work for David. Ira, the Jairite, was chief officer instead of David's sons. David's sons had proved

to be ineffective, and at least two of them had been killed. Joab's office was again mentioned to show that he was back in his old place. The giving of this arrangement may be considered the beginning of the account of the real close of David's reign.

The story of the close of David's reign is not as thrilling as the narrative of the beginning of his powerful rule. He still retained an undiminished faith in God, but many things were unsavory and maladjusted. Many sins had been committed, many blunders had been made, much suffering had been endured. One can only wish that the king might have had a peaceful old age, and determine to keep such folly out of his own life so that he may lay claim to God's promise of eternal life.

CHAPTER 20 IN REVIEW

1. Who led the revolt against David? _____
2. Of what tribe was he? _____
3. Whom did David order to muster his army? _____
4. How many days did he give him to gather his forces? _____
5. Whom did David send to help him? _____
6. Who slew Amasa? _____
7. To what city did Sheba flee? _____
8. Who beheaded Sheba? _____
9. Who was David's captain in his last days? _____
10. Who was over the tribute? _____

STUDIES IN SAMUEL

A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 21

- Vv. 1- 9 *The Gibeonites avenged.* Saul had slain many of the Gibeonites although Joshua had made a covenant to live in peace with them. As a result of this injustice God had sent a famine on Israel. The Gibeonites did not ask for any restitution from David, but they felt that the family of Saul should be punished. They asked that seven of his sons be slain to avenge the treatment they had received at Saul's hand. David executed the penalty on their behalf, and the famine was stayed.
- Vv. 10-14 *Rizpah's sad vigil.* Rizpah was Saul's concubine. Two of her sons whom she had borne to Saul were among those slain. She sat by their bodies and drove off the birds of the air and the beasts of the field until David came and took up the bones of the slain men and buried them in Saul's old home.
- Vv. 15-22 *Battles with the Philistines.* The Philistines were perennial enemies of Israel. Even in the later days of David's reign they were engaged in war against him.

LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *Mother love is deep.* Kipling has said in his poem, "Mother O' Mine," that if he were hanged on the highest hill, his mother's love would reach him still. He mused that if he were drowned in the deepest sea, his mother's love would come down to him. Men and women who have memory of tender mother love should give God thanks for this invaluable gift.
2. *Vengeance belongs to the Lord* (Deuteronomy 32:35). It was not for David to say what penalty should be exacted against the house of Saul for their infamous

SECOND SAMUEL

treatment of the Gibeonites, neither was it for the Gibeonites to make an unfair request of David. That vengeance should be taken on the house of Saul was evident from the fact that God had brought a famine on Israel. Those involved were wise to inquire of the Lord in this manner. Men and women today should be willing for God's justice to be worked in their lives.

2. The Three Years of Famine, 21:1-22.

The Gibeonites Avenged. 21:1-9

Then there was a famine in the days of David three years, year after year; and David inquired of the Lord. And the Lord answered, *It is* for Saul, and for *his* bloody house, because he slew the Gibeonites.

2 And the king called the Gibeonites, and said unto them; (now the Gibeonites *were* not of the children of Israel, but of the remnant of the Amorites; and the children of Israel had sworn unto them: and Saul sought to slay them in his zeal to the children of Israel and Judah.)

3 Wherefore David said unto the Gibeonites, What shall I do for you? and wherewith shall I make the atonement, that ye may bless the inheritance of the Lord?

4 And the Gibeonites said unto him, We will have no silver nor gold of Saul, nor of his house; neither for us shalt thou kill any man in Israel. And he said, What ye shall say, *that* will I do for you.

5 And they answered the king, The man that consumed us, and that devised against us *that* we should be destroyed from remaining in any of the coasts of Israel,

6 Let seven men of his sons be delivered unto us, and we will hang them up unto the Lord in Gibeah of Saul, *whom* the Lord did choose. And the king said, I will give *them*.

7 But the king spared Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan the son of Saul, because of the Lord's oath that *was*

between them, between David and Jonathan the son of Saul.

8 But the king took the two sons of Rizpah the daughter of Aiah, whom she bare unto Saul, Armoni and Mephibosheth; and the five sons of Michal the daughter of Saul, whom she brought up for Adriel the son of Barzillai the Meholahite:

9 And he delivered them into the hands of the Gibeonites, and they hanged them in the hill before the Lord: and they fell *all* seven together, and were put to death in the days of harvest, in the first *days*, in the beginning of barley harvest.

1. Who were the Gibeonites? 21:1

The Gibeonites were inhabitants of a republic which included not only Gibeon, the capital, but the towns of Chephirah, Beeroth, and Kirjath-Jearim. Gibeon was larger than Ai, the city which Israel attacked when she first came up out of the Jordan valley in the days of Joshua (Joshua 10:2). Gibeon was one of the royal cities and was inhabited by Hivites, who were a brave people (Joshua 10:7; 11:19). When the land was settled by the Israelites, the city was allotted to the tribe of Benjamin and set aside as a Levitical city (Joshua 18:25; 21:17). After the destruction of the priestly family at Nob by Saul, the tabernacle was moved to Gibeon; and it remained there until the building of Solomon's temple (I Chronicles 16:39; 21:29; I Kings 3:4, 5; II Chronicles 1:3). A team of archaeologists from the University of Pennsylvania excavated the site of El-Jib in 1956. The walls and part of the city's water supply system were uncovered. More recent diggings reveal that the city had an elaborate system of civil defense which was designed to enable Gibeon to withstand indefinite siege. They also found a cemetery dating to 2000 years before Christ and containing thirty-six rock-cut tombs which illustrated burial customs and

documented the details of the Gibeonite daily life several hundred years before the Israelites came to Palestine. These people had lived at peace with the Israelites from the days of Joshua when they deceived the Israelites by their camouflage and Joshua made a treaty of peace with them.

2. *Why had Saul sought to slay them? 21:1 b*

The Gibeonites were not members of any of the tribes of Israel, but were known as Amorites, a name given to the Canaanites in general on occasion and probably signifying those who dwelt in the hills (Joshua 24:8). They were descended from Canaan (Genesis 10:16). Joshua's covenant with them was an unending one and should have been honored by all leaders of Israel who followed Joshua (Joshua 9:15). No historical reference is made to Saul's effort to exterminate them, but he probably did this in a burst of senseless zeal after he had failed to exterminate the Amalekites, as if wiping out a Canaanite tribe would atone for his failure to get rid of the Amalekites.

3. *Why was the nation punished for Saul's sin? 21:2*

Israel had sworn to the men of Gibeon that they would be at peace throughout their days. This was promised at the time Israel conquered the land, and an account of this promise is found in Joshua 9:1-27. Saul had slain a number of the men of Gibeon. No number is given, but the number was probably larger than the seven lives sought in revenge. Saul had sinned, it is true; and all Israel paid the penalty by a famine because of Saul's zeal for Israel and the fact that the nation would be held responsible for the acts of her leaders. Why the Gibeonites should desire the penalty to be paid in "Gibeah of Saul" is not known; but it was, of course, Saul's home.

4. *Why did the Gibeonites want seven men to be killed? 21:6*

The Gibeonites told David that they did not want retribution in the form of the payment of money, neither did they want to punish all Israel for the sins of her king.

They asked for specific revenge in the form of the killing of seven descendants of Saul. By hanging them up in Gibeah they would keep the shame upon Saul's home and any other of his descendants who might live there. Seven sons were chosen to signify a complete number. The number seven is generally taken to be a full number, God having ordained seven days in a week and often providing that a payment be made seven times for injuries sustained (Genesis 4:15; Proverbs 6:31).

5. *Why did David spare Mephibosheth?* 21:7

Mephibosheth was the grandson of Saul, and his death would certainly have satisfied the demands of the Gibeonites. David spared him because he had sworn with an oath to Jonathan, the son of Saul, that he would not harm his heirs. This oath was made immediately after David had killed Goliath and was repeated a number of times as David was in exile from Saul's court (I Samuel 18:3; 20:8; 8:15, 42; 23:18). It is called the Lord's oath because the men swore to each other as unto the Lord. It was a sacred covenant, and David would not do anything to break it. It is significant that he spared Mephibosheth even though Ziba had said that Mephibosheth entertained notions of succeeding David to the throne (II Samuel 16:3).

6. *Which of Saul's descendants were slain?* 21:8

David took two sons of Rizpah—Armoni and Mephibosheth. Rizpah was Saul's concubine, and she had borne these children to Saul. David took five sons of Merab, Saul's oldest daughter. She was the daughter who should have been given to David as his wife as a reward for his killing Goliath (I Samuel 18:19), but when it came time for the marriage, Saul gave her to Adriel, the Meholathite, to be his wife and to embarrass David. Michal had no children of her own (II Samuel 6:23), and these sons were evidently taken into Michal's care for rearing after Merab had died. Barzillai is noted as the father of Adriel, but this is quite evidently a different Barzillai from the

one who aided David while he was in Gilead (II Samuel 17:27). These seven descendants of Saul were hung by the Gibeonites in Gibeah, the home of Saul.

7. How were the sons hanged? 21:9

The Gibeonites asked that the persons executed might be impaled as a public exhibition of the punishment. The bodies were gibbeted and exposed after death. These sons were slain at the beginning of the harvest (near the first of June) and Rizpah kept watch over them until the time of the autumnal rains (sometime in November). This was a long period of five months. Rizpah, Saul's concubine, posed a tragic, dramatic figure in the heart of the scripture account. Although the place of woman in those days was not what we know it to be now, women still were capable of that faithful deep devotion which is well expressed in mother love. The attachment of Rizpah to her sons caused David to again show his respect for Saul.

Rizpah's Sad Vigil. 21:10-14

10 And Rizpah the daughter of Aiah took sackcloth, and spread it for her upon the rock, from the beginning of harvest until water dropped upon them out of heaven, and suffered neither the birds of the air to rest on them by day, nor the beasts of the field by night.

11 And it was told David what Rizpah the daughter of Aiah, the concubine of Saul, had done.

12 And David went and took the bones of Saul and the bones of Jonathan his son from the men of Jabesh-gilead, which had stolen them from the street of Bethshan, where the Philistines had hanged them, when the Philistines had slain Saul in Gilboa:

13 And he brought up from thence the bones of Saul and the bones of Jonathan his son; and they gathered the bones of them that were hanged.

14 And the bones of Saul and Jonathan his son buried they in the country of Benjamin in Zelah, in the sepulcher

of Kish his father: and they performed all that the king commanded. And after that God was entreated for the land.

8. *Why did Rizpah guard the bodies? 21:10*

Rizpah took the coarse, hairy cloth which was worn as a sign of mourning and spread it out as a pallet for herself on the rock at the summit of the high place where Saul's heirs were crucified. She was, indeed, mourning over this tragic end of Saul's house, two of whom were her own children. The sackcloth was not used as a tent to keep the sun off herself nor as a covering for the corpses of those who had been executed; it was to soften the surface on which she sat by day, and lay by night, and to express her deep grief. Leaving bodies to be consumed by birds of prey and wild beasts was regarded to be the greatest ignominy that could be heaped on the dead (I Samuel 17:44). The Law had stipulated that when people were executed, they were not to remain hanging overnight but to be buried before nightfall (Deuteronomy 21:22, 23). The law was not applicable in this case because the slaying of Saul's sons was to expiate a sin which Saul had committed, and the bodies were to be left spread out before the Lord until the rains fell as a sign of the end of the famine. Mention is made of the fact that Rizpah sat there from the beginning of the harvest which would come in late spring, until the rains came in the fall at the beginning of Palestine's wet season. Josephus assumes that the rain fell at once and before the ordinary early rain (*Antiquities* VII; xii; 1). News of this lonely vigil of this tragic figure was brought to David by those who had seen what she was doing.

9. *How was David able to move the bones of Saul? 21:12*

Although the corpses of Jonathan and Saul had been stolen from the walls of Beth-shan by the men of Jabesh-gilead, the bodies may have been only partially burned (I

Samuel 31:12). Some charred remains of the body must have been left. The bones of these men were then buried with the bones of those seven sons who had been hanged. Such concern for the human body was typical of the Jewish people and is another indication of the fact that Godfearing people through the years have practiced only the burial of the corpse. The earthly remains of Saul's heirs were buried in the homeland of Israel's first king.

Battles With the Philistines. 21:15-22

15 Moreover the Philistines had yet war again with Israel; and David went down, and his servants with him, and fought against the Philistines: and David waxed faint.

16 And Ishbi-benob, which *was* of the sons of the giant, the weight of whose spear *weighed* three hundred *shekels* of brass in weight, he being girded with a new *sword*, thought to have slain David.

17 But Abishai the son of Zeruiah succoured him, and smote the Philistine, and killed him. Then the men of David swore unto him, saying, Thou shalt go no more out with us to battle, that thou quench not the light of Israel.

18 And it came to pass after this, that there was again a battle with the Philistines at Gob: then Sibbechai the Hushathite slew Saph, which *was* of the sons of the giant.

19 And there was again a battle in Gob with the Philistines where Elhanan the son of Jaare-oregim, a Bethlehemite, slew *the brother of* Goliath the Gittite, the staff of whose spear *was* like a weaver's beam.

20 And there was yet a battle in Gath, where *was* a man of *great* stature, that had on every hand six fingers, and on every foot six toes, four and twenty in number; and he also was born to the giant.

21 And when he defied Israel, Jonathan the son of Shimea the brother of David slew him.

22 These four were born to the giant in Gath, and fell by the hand of David, and by the hand of his servants.

10. *Why did the Philistines attack again?* 21:15

Israel had been weakened by the famine which had followed year after year for three years. The Philistines seized the opportunity to rise and revolt against their neighbors to the east. Although some students of Scripture believe that this account is not in its correct location, chronologically speaking, the statement is made that the Philistines had *yet war* again with Israel. Such an emphasis on the time of the war, and its repetition point to an effort of the Philistines to defeat Israel after the famine which had come on them because of Saul's sin against the Gibeonites.

11. *Who were the sons of the giant?* 21:16

One of the sons of Goliath is named Ishbi-benob. He is described in language similar to that used to describe his father. He made an effort to avenge the death of his father by slaying David, but Abishai helped David, and Ishbi-benob was killed. A second son was Saph (verse 18). Saph was slain by Sibbechai the Hushathite. The location of Hushath is unknown, and Josephus calls Sibbechai a Hittite (*Antiquities* VII; xii; 2). A third son was also named Goliath, after the name of his father (verse 19). Elhanan, the son of Jaare-oregim, a Bethlehemite, slew this Goliath. The King James version adds unnecessarily the words found in italics in verse 19, making the man slain to be the brother of Goliath the Gittite. The text in Chronicles reads, "Elhanan the son of Jair slew Lahmi the brother of Goliath the Gittite" (I Chronicles 20:5). If this giant slain by Elhanan is not a son of Goliath, we cannot determine who were the four sons of the giant mentioned later (verse 22). A fourth son is mentioned as one who had a physical imperfection. He had six fingers on every hand and six toes on every foot. The total is given as twenty-four, verifying the facts of his deformity. He was also born to the giant (verse 20); and when he fought against Israel, Jonathan, the son of

Shimei, David's brother, killed him. These four—Ishbi-benob, Saph, the son slain by Elhanan, and the one with twelve fingers and twelve toes—were born to the Goliath in Gath (verse 22). All of these were killed by David or his men in their various campaigns against the Philistines. 12. *Who was this Goliath?* 21:19

This Goliath was probably a descendant of the Goliath slain by David. They were both from the same country. All of this must have transpired at the time of the war with Gath. Chronicles (see I Chronicles 20:1-8) calls Gob "Geyer." This place is located on the border of the Philistine plain and is probably the correct location. Radical critics attempt to discredit the Scriptures by saying that Elhanan slew Goliath and tradition attributed the feat to David. They emend the text by dropping the phrase "the brother of" from verse 19 and defend their action by showing that there was no Hebrew word for brother at that point. A better emendation of the text would be to put the "son of" in the text for the italicized words found there in the usual printing. It is essential that it be understood the giant had four sons, and the one slain by Elhanan must have been a son of Goliath, who was killed by David (I Samuel 17:50).

CHAPTER 21 IN REVIEW

1. How long did the famine last? _____
2. What people had Saul slain? _____
3. How many sons of Saul were slain in revenge? _____
4. Did David spare Mephibosheth, Jonathan's son? _____
5. How many of Rizpah's sons were slain? _____
6. Where did David go to get Saul's bones? _____
7. Where were they finally interred? _____
8. How many sons did Goliath have? _____
9. Who saved David from Goliath's son? _____
10. How many toes did the deformed son have? _____

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A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 22

- Vv. 1-20 *The Lord's deliverance.* As David came to the close of his reign, he composed a grand song of deliverance. The text is the same as Psalm 18 almost in entirety. The first part of this great song is a description of how God had delivered David from his many adversaries.
- Vv. 21-32 *The Lord's rewards.* God had not only delivered David out of the hands of his enemies, but He had given to him many blessings. God had done more than he could ask or think.
- Vv. 33-51 *The Lord's victory.* Ultimate victory is promised to those that serve God. David had pursued his enemies and destroyed them. God had helped him literally to consume them. He had been given to be head over heathen people. Peoples that he knew not had come to serve him. Strangers had submitted themselves to his rule. The victory that God had given to David was complete.

LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. "*He delivered me*" (vv. 1, 18, 20). Those faithful followers of the Lord Jesus Christ who take time to look back over their lives can find many instances where God has delivered them. His followers are taught to pray "deliver us from evil" (Matthew 6:13). God will deliver those who trust in Him.
2. "*The Lord rewarded me*" (v. 21). Many rewards are given to Christians in this life. They are taught that if they forsake houses, brethren, sisters, fathers, mothers, wives, children or lands for Christ's sake that they will receive a hundred fold (Matthew 19:29). Beyond all these things there is a crown of righteousness (II Timothy 4:8).

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3. "*He is the tower of salvation*" (v. 51). No gift is as precious as the gift of God's son. If a man gains the whole world and loses his soul, it has profited him nothing" (Matthew 16:26). God is the tower of our salvation. The free gift of God is eternal life (Romans 6:23 b).

3. David's Song, 22:1-51.

The Lord's Deliverance. 22:1-20

And David spake unto the Lord the words of this song, in the day *that* the Lord had delivered him out of the hand of all his enemies, and out of the hand of Saul:

- 2 And he said,
The Lord *is* my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer;
3 the God of my rock; in him will I trust:
he is my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower, and my refuge,
my saviour; thou savest me from violence.
4 I will call on the Lord, *who is* worthy to be praised:
so shall I be saved from mine enemies.
5 When the waves of death compassed me,
the floods of ungodly men made me afraid;
6 the sorrows of hell compassed me about;
the snares of death prevented me.
7 In my distress I called upon the Lord,
and cried to my God:
and he did hear my voice out of his temple,
and my cry *did enter* into his ears.
8 Then the earth shook and trembled;
the foundations of heaven moved
and shook, because he was wroth.
9 There went up a smoke out of his nostrils,
and fire out of his mouth devoured:
coals were kindled by it.

- 10 He bowed the heavens also, and came down;
and darkness *was* under his feet.
- 11 And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly:
and he was seen upon the wings of the wind.
- 12 And he made darkness pavilions round about him,
dark waters, *and* thick clouds of the skies.
- 13 Through the brightness before him were coals of fire
kindled.
- 14 The Lord thundered from heaven,
and the Most High uttered his voice.
- 15 And he sent out arrows, and scattered them;
lightning, and discomfited them.
- 16 And the channels of the sea appeared,
the foundations of the world were discovered,
at the rebuking of the Lord,
at the blast of the breath of his nostrils.
- 17 He sent from above, he took me;
he drew me out of many waters:
- 18 He delivered me from my strong enemy,
and from them that hated me:
for they were too strong for me.
- 19 They prevented me in the day of my calamity:
but the Lord was my stay.
- 20 He brought me forth also into a large place:
he delivered me, because he delighted in me.

1. *When was this song composed?* 22:1

The song was written, "in the day that the Lord had delivered him out of the hand of all of his enemies, and out of the hand of Saul." This title indicated that it was written when David's triumphs over his enemies at home and abroad were still fresh in his mind. Reference is made to the great covenant made with David in chapter seven (verse 51), and it is usually attributed to sometime after Nathan's visit to David when David proposed building the temple. A. F. Kirkpatrick writing in the *Cambridge Bible*

for Schools and Colleges attributed the psalm to the earlier years of David's reign, rather than the latter years on the account of the free and joyous tone and the bold expressions of conscious integrity which pointed to a time prior to the period when David's life was clouded by the fatal consequences of his sin. On the other hand, the psalm is a review of God's many mercies to David; therefore Matthew Henry in his commentary took the position in the introduction to chapter twenty-two that David penned the psalm when he was old, giving a general review of the mercies of his life and the many wonderful preservations God had blessed him with from first to last. He admitted in his comments that it could have been penned when David was young upon the occasion of some of his first deliverances and kept by his side for use afterwards upon every new deliverance, making it his practice to sing the song. The appeal of the song has been so great that it was a part of the "Haphtarah," or lessons from the prophets, appointed to be read in the synagogue of the Jews on the sabbath in conjunction with Deuteronomy 32, a passage from the Law. The Spanish Jews also read this song on the sabbath day of the Passover celebration. Since mention is made of David's deliverance out of the hand of Saul, the song must have been written early in David's life; and since his sin was forgiven, he did not mention it in the psalm.

2. *Which psalm resembles this song?* 22:2

This psalm is the same as Psalm 18 with only slight differences. The first line is omitted from Psalm 18, as it is recorded in this chapter of Samuel. Psalm 18 opens with a statement, "I will love thee, O Lord my strength" (Psalm 18:1). It is admitted by most students of the Scripture that this magnificent hymn is substantially identical with Psalm 18 and that both the eighteenth Psalm and this magnificent hymn came from the same author. The form found here is supposed to be the original form

and that is the Psalter must be a revision prepared by David himself, probably towards the close of his life, for public recitation. This fact throws some light on the authorship of the Psalter, inasmuch as this one Psalm is attributed to David very definitely. If Psalm 18 is by the hand of David, many of the other songs which breathe the same spirit could also be attributed to him by comparison of the vocabulary, style, and diction.

3. *What are the main sections of the psalm?*

David began with a full statement of his trust in the Lord (verses 2-4). He called God his rock, fortress, and deliverer (verse 2). He also called him his shield, horn, high tower, refuge, and saviour (verse 3). Since God was all these things, to David, he said that he would trust in Him (verse 3), and call on Him (verse 4). He said that God is worthy to be praised (verse 4) because God saved him from violence (verse 3). The reader wonders if David were referring to the time when he was kept back from violently destroying Nabal (I Samuel 25).

David moved on to recount the experiences of calamity and deliverances (verses 5-20). David had seen dark days. He said that the pangs of death had surrounded him and the sons of Belial had caused him to be afraid. The very horrors of hell had surrounded him and the traps of death had stood before him. Many instances in David's career fit such descriptions. He was trapped in a cave with Saul's men blocking the mouth. Worthless fellows such as the assassins of Ish-bosheth and the rebel Sheba disputed his rule. David had to fight for his life and fled for refuge to Philistia. On a number of occasions he must have been tempted to yield to unlawful means in order to advance his cause, but God had kept him back. At one of the lowest ebbs in David's life, his own men had talked of stoning him to death; and when he had no one else to help him, he "encouraged himself in the Lord his God" (I Samuel 30:6 b). David knew that God had

heard his prayer, and he pictured him as hearing his voice as he dwelt in His holy temple. Since the temple in Jerusalem had not been built, his reference must have been to the vaulted arches of heaven, God's true dwelling place.

David presented a very complete picture of God's activities as he said that the earth shook and trembled. This is poetic language, and it is not necessary to find a historical reference to the time when an earthquake aided David in his activities. David was simply saying that God had moved heaven and earth in order to bring about His good providences. David viewed God as becoming angry with the sins of men and breathing out smoke and fire, so that fires of vengeance were kindled. His vision of God was one of an omnipotent ruler who could bend the heavens and dwell even in the dark places of earth. He viewed Him as moving on the wings of angels and flying through the skies with the wings of the wind to bear him along (verse 11). David must have had in mind the clouds of the sky as he described darkness as being the tent which enshrouds his majesty. Lightning flashes which burst through the dense clouds were to David the rays of the unapproachable light in which God dwells. Thunder was the voice of God, and David called Him, "the most High" (verse 14). Lightning was like the arrows of God, and David attributed much of the scattering of his enemies to God's interference (verse 15). Even the depths of the sea were not beyond the reach of the power of God; the very foundations of the world were uncovered by Him as if they were blown bare by the breath of His nostrils (verse 16). David knew that God had answered his prayers and delivered him from the depths of many troublesome times. Without God's strength, he could not have done what he had done because he viewed his enemies as being too strong for him. He certainly must have felt this way as he faced the giant from Gath. His enemies outran him in the times of his calamity, but God had

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strengthened him. David finally arrived at what he called, "a larger place," (verse 20); his prosperous kingdom was the result of God's blessing on his effects. David did not think he had done this all by himself, but he thought it had come to pass because God had delighted in him (verse 20).

The Lord's Rewards. 22:21-31

- 21 The Lord rewarded me according to my righteousness;
According to the cleanness of my hands hath he recompensed me.
- 22 For I have kept the ways of the Lord,
and have not wickedly departed from my God.
- 23 For all his judgments *were* before me:
and *as for* his statutes, I did not depart from them.
- 24 I was also upright before him,
and have kept myself from mine iniquity.
- 25 Therefore the Lord hath recompensed me according to
my righteousness;
according to my cleanness in his eyesight.
- 26 With the merciful thou wilt show thyself merciful,
and with the upright man thou wilt show thyself upright.
- 27 With the pure thou wilt show thyself pure;
and with the forward thou wilt show thyself unsavory.
- 28 And the afflicted people thou wilt save:
but thine eyes *are* upon the haughty, *that* thou mayest
bring *them* down.
- 29 For thou *art* my lamp, O Lord:
and the Lord will lighten my darkness.
- 30 For by thee I have run through a troop:
by my God have I leaped over a wall.
- 31 *As for* God, his way *is* perfect;
the word of the Lord *is* tried:
he *is* a buckler to all them that trust in him.

The third part of David's psalm was a lengthy affirmation of his righteousness. It is this particular section of the psalm which makes some of the critics believe it was written before he had sinned with Bathsheba. David knew his sin had been forgiven, however, and as far as he was concerned, it was forgotten. He did not need to make mention of the adverse circumstances of his life at a time when he was speaking of the blessings he had received. The song could have been written late in his life, even after his sin with Bathsheba. Over all, David had kept the ways of the Lord (verse 22). He had not wickedly departed from God in the same way in which Saul had openly disobeyed God to such an extent that finally God had abandoned him. David had followed God's judgments and statutes. He gave evidence of being acquainted with the Law, and such evidence pointed to the fact that the Pentateuch had been written before the days of David. When David was giving his final instructions to Solomon, he told him to walk in the commandments, statutes, and ordinances of God, as they were written in the "Law of Moses" (I Kings 2:3).

David was called a man after God's own heart (I Samuel 13:14; Acts 13:22), and David knew that it was because he had done his best to follow God that God had recompensed him according to his righteousness (verse 25). This was according to the very nature of God, a full description of which David gave as he considered his own life. God would be merciful to the merciful; He would be upright to the upright; He would be pure to the pure (verses 26, 27a). God would be against the unsavory and plead the cause of the afflicted people so that they might be saved from their enemies, watching the proud and haughty in order that He might trip them up and break them down to destruction (verses 27b, 28). David called God his candle or lamp; and in times of darkness or distress, God had been the light along his way (verse 29).

David never grew tired of singing the praises of God, and in the next section of his psalm he praised God as the source of his strength. It was by God's help that he had broken down many troops of armed resistance, even escaping, as it were, by leaping over walls. David knew that as long as he walked in God's way, he was going the right way; and it was the "word of the Lord" which he had proved in the very fires of adversity. David would rather have the Lord with him than to have the armor of men. He proved this when he gave Saul's armor back to him and went forth to meet Goliath, "in the name of the Lord of Hosts, the God of the armies of Israel" (I Samuel 17:45). David's feet had been made swift by the Lord (verse 34), and his hands had been nimble and strong because of the knowledge that God was with him. God had been his very armor (verse 36), and his girdle (verse 41). His faith was like that of the apostle Paul, who described the Christian's armor in great detail (Ephesians 6:13-18). Equipped with the spirit of the Lord, David had been able to enlarge his steps (verse 37), pursue his enemies (verse 38), consume his foes (verse 39), and "beat them as small as the dust of the earth" (verse 43). Even enemies from within his own kingdom had not brought David's downfall, and he had spread his dominion east and west and north and south.

The Lord's Victory. 22:32-51

- 32 For who *is* God, save the Lord?
and who *is* a rock, save our God?
- 33 God *is* my strength *and* power;
and he maketh my way perfect.
- 34 He maketh my feet like hinds' *feet*:
and setteth me upon my high places.
- 35 He teacheth my hands to war;
so that a bow of steel is broken by mine arms.

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- 36 Thou hast also given me the shield of thy salvation:
and thy gentleness hath made me great.
- 37 Thou hast enlarged my steps under me;
so that my feet did not slip.
- 38 I have pursued mine enemies, and destroyed them;
and turned not again until I had consumed them.
- 39 And I have consumed them, and wounded them, that
they could not arise:
yea, they are fallen under my feet.
- 40 For thou hast girded me with strength to battle:
them that rose up against me hast thou subdued under
me.
- 41 Thou hast also given me the necks of mine enemies,
that I might destroy them that hate me.
- 42 They looked, but *there was* none to save;
even unto the Lord, but he answered them not.
- 43 Then did I beat them as small as the dust of the earth:
I did stamp them as the mire of the street, *and* did
spread them abroad.
- 44 Thou also hast delivered me from the strivings of my
people,
thou hast kept me *to be* head of the heathen:
a people *which* I knew not shall serve me.
- 45 Strangers shall submit themselves unto me:
as soon as they hear, they shall be obedient unto me.
- 46 Strangers shall fade away,
and they shall be afraid out of their close places.
- 47 The Lord liveth; and blessed *be* my rock;
and exalted be the God of the rock of my salvation.
- 48 *It is* God that avengeth me,
and that bringeth down the people under me,
- 49 and that bringeth me forth from mine enemies:
thou also hast lifted me up on high above them that
rose up against me:
thou hast delivered me from the violent man.

- 50 Therefore I will give thanks unto thee, O Lord, among
the heathen,
and I will sing praises unto thy name.
- 51 *He is* the tower of salvation for his king:
and showeth mercy to his anointed,
unto David, and to his seed for evermore.

David finally broke into a doxology of praise and thanksgiving. He returned to the theme with which he began the psalm, as he called God, "the rock of his salvation" (verses 2, 49). God had avenged David of his enemies and subdued people under his command. None of his enemies had been able to overcome him, and he had been exalted to a high place among the kings of the day. Violent men had not been able to destroy him, not even his own son, Absalom. David therefore, gave thanks to God that even the heathen might know of his mercies. David would sing praises to God who was his "tower of salvation" (verses 3, 51). David closed his song by referring to himself as God's anointed who had received God's mercy. God's mercy was not only given to David, but was promised to his seed after him, this latter reference being an allusion to a covenant made with him in II Samuel 7.

4. *What five songs are recorded in Samuel?*

The following songs are all found in the books of Samuel and furnish typical samples of Israel's poetry:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Hannah's song of Thanksgiving | I Samuel 2: 1-10 |
| 2. David's Lament | II Samuel 1:19-27 |
| 3. David's Dirge | II Samuel 3:33, 34 |
| 4. David's Song of Thanksgiving | II Samuel 22: 1- 5 |
| 5. David's Last Words | II Samuel 23: 1- 7 |

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CHAPTER 22 IN REVIEW

1. With what Psalm did this song compare? _____
2. By what figures did David describe God? _____

3. With what weapon of war did David compare lightning? _____
4. With what adjective did David describe God's way? _____
5. With what did he say God had girded him? _____
6. Whom did David say had avenged him? _____
7. To whom did David give thanks? _____
8. To whom did David sing praises? _____
9. With what structure did David compare God? _____
10. Who was God's anointed? _____

STUDIES IN SAMUEL

A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 23

- Vv. 1-7 *David's last song.* David described himself as a "sweet psalmist of Israel" (v. 1). He was just that. He gave Israel many of her outstanding spiritual songs and found expression for many thoughts of his mind in poetic structure which could be set to music.
- Vv. 8-39 *David's mighty men.* What David accomplished was not done by his own power alone. Men of great ability had joined themselves to him. They had fought many campaigns together. It is fitting that their names should be mentioned as the final days of David are described.

LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *God spake by men.* David said, "The spirit of the Lord spake by me" (v. 2). This is one of the clearest claims for inspiration made anywhere in these books. David did not speak by his own will alone. God's spirit guided him. He was inspired.
2. *Many hands make light tasks.* A careful reading of the epistles of Paul will reveal that he had a galaxy of helpers to assist him in his preaching of the gospel. Some of them are well known—Timothy, Titus, Silas, Barnabas, and John Mark. Others are mentioned only briefly—Epaphras, Epaphroditus, Tertius, Tychicus, and Urbane. These helpers of Paul's number into scores. David had his helpers, too. A long list of them impresses us with the fact that God's work is accomplished largely by cooperative efforts. Men of like precious faith should bind themselves together to go forward for Christ.

4. David's Last Words and His Mighty Men, 23:1-39.

David's Last Song, 23:1-7

Now these *be* the last words of David. David the son of Jesse said, and the man *who was* raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel, said,

- 2 The Spirit of the Lord spake by me,
and his word *was* in my tongue.
- 3 The God of Israel said,
the Rock of Israel spake to me,
He that ruleth over men *must* be just,
ruling in the fear of God.
- 4 And *he shall be* as the light of the morning, *when* the
sun riseth,
even a morning without clouds;
as the tender grass *springing* out of the earth
by clear shining after rain.
- 5 Although my house *be* not so with God;
yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant,
ordered in all *things*, and sure:
for *this is* all my salvation, and all *my* desire,
although he make *it* not to grow.
- 6 But *the sons* of Belial *shall be* all of them as thorns
thrust away,
because they cannot be taken with hands:
- 7 but the man *that* shall touch them
must be fenced with iron and the staff of a spear;
and they shall be utterly burned with fire in the *same*
place.

1. *What titles did David ascribe to himself? 23:1*

David stood in a long line of great men such as Jacob, Moses, Joshua, and Samuel. When Jacob came to the end of his life, he called his sons before him and blessed each of them. This was his last testament (Genesis 49:1-33).

As Moses laid down the reins of leadership of Israel, he gave a blessing to each of the tribes (Deuteronomy 33:1-29). He had already composed a song (Deuteronomy 32:1-52). Joshua called the tribes of Israel to him as he was nearing his death and made a covenant with them (Joshua 24:1-28). Samuel had also uttered a valedictory when he was about to die (I Samuel 12:1-15). David not only composed a song, but he uttered a few last words in summary of his career. He called himself by titles which must have meant the most to him—"the man who was raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel."

2. *Was David inspired of God?* 23:2

The great hymn of triumph in chapter twenty-two composed when David was at the zenith of his prosperity was followed by his "last words." They were delivered as a parting testimony to the world of his confidence in the fulfillment of the promise concerning the everlasting dominion of his posterity, and it was all given as an oracle of God. He claims for his words the special divine inspiration which was granted to the spokesmen of God. Christ, Himself bore witness of the fact that David was inspired (Matthew 22:43).

3. *What was David's view of a ruler?* 23:3

David knew that a king should be just. He had learned this through his experiences, but most of all through the revelation God had given him. A ruler was one who should lead his people in the fear of God. He was to be "as the light of the morning when the sun riseth; even a morning without clouds" (verse 4 a). God's people depended on the king for life-giving provisions as the earth depends upon the life-giving sunshine of a cloudless morning. David went on to say that the king was to be like the tender grass, springing out of the earth after a rain shower (verse 4 b). To appreciate this latter figure, the reader must remember that Palestine is not per-

petually clothed in verdure. At times, the land was only a brown, hard-baked, gaping plain. At intervals there would be only withered stems of thistles and other hardy plants to tell that life had ever existed there. When the rains came, there was the deep, solid growth of clover, and grasses. David had been familiar with such yearly transformations of the dry and dusty landscape around Bethlehem into a lovely garden of brilliant flowers. These annual transformations were an emblem of the gracious influences of the righteous government guided by the ideal king. David here arose to a height of inspired utterance which should be compared with the lofty utterances of Isaiah, who spoke of the wilderness and the desert rejoicing and blossoming "as the rose" (Isaiah 35:1). David's utterance finds its fullest fruition in the Lord Jesus Christ and His righteous rule over all nations. The prophecy in David's last words is the companion and the complement of the prophecy in II Samuel 7. There the promise of an eternal dominion was given to the house of David and found a partial fulfillment in his immediate descendants, but the complete fulfillment could only be in Christ. In David's last words he drew by inspiration a portrait of an ideal ruler, some features of which were realized partially in Solomon and the better kings of Judah, but the complete picture finds its perfect realization only in Jesus Christ. David could hope for little more; and he closed his oracle concerning the king with a statement that this was all his salvation and his desire, even though he had not seen the full enlargement of the picture (verse 5).

4. *With what psalm may this oracle be compared?*
23:6, 7

David shifts his attention from the righteous ruler to the base and shameless sons of Satan, who are described throughout the books of Samuel as the "sons of Belial." He makes this same kind of a shift in Psalm 1 where he

began by describing the man who did not stand in the council of the ungodly, or walk in the way of the sinner, or sit in the seat of the scoffer. After David described the righteous man who meditated day and night in the Law of the Lord and predicted he would bring forth his fruit in his season, he turned his attention to the unrighteous. They were not so, but were like chaff which the wind drove away (Psalm 1:4). Although the wording is not the same, the spirit of this last oracle is much like the thrust of the first Psalm.

David's Mighty Men. 23:8-39

8 These *be* the names of the mighty men whom David had: The Tachmonite that sat in the seat, chief among the captains; the same *was* Adino the Eznite: *he lifted up his spear* against eight hundred, whom he slew at one time.

9 And after him *was* Eleazar the son of Dodo the Ahohite, *one* of the three mighty men with David, when they defied the Philistines *that* were there gathered together to battle, and the men of Israel were gone away:

10 He arose, and smote the Philistines until his hand was weary, and his hand clave unto the sword: and the Lord wrought a great victory that day; and the people returned after him only to spoil.

11 And after him *was* Shammah the son of Agee the Hararite. And the Philistines were gathered together into a troop, where was a piece of ground full of lentils: and the people fled from the Philistines.

12 But he stood in the midst of the ground, and defended it, and slew the Philistines: and the Lord wrought a great victory.

13 And three of the thirty chief went down, and came to David in the harvest time unto the cave of Adullam: and the troop of the Philistines pitched in the valley of Rephaim.

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14 And David *was* then in a hold, and the garrison of the Philistines *was* then *in* Beth-lehem.

15 And David longed, and said, Oh, that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Beth-lehem, which *is* by the gate!

16 And the three mighty men brake through the host of the Philistines, and drew water out of the well of Beth-lehem, that *was* by the gate, and took *it*, and brought *it* to David: nevertheless he would not drink thereof, but poured it out unto the Lord.

17 And he said, Be it far from me, O Lord, that I should do this: *is not this* the blood of the men that went in jeopardy of their lives? therefore he would not drink it. These things did these three mighty men.

18 And Abishai, the brother of Joab, the son of Zeruiah, was chief among three. And he lifted up his spear against three hundred, *and* slew *them*, and had the name among three.

19 Was he not most honorable of three? therefore he was their captain: howbeit he attained not unto the *first* three.

20 And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, the son of a valiant man, of Kabzeel, who had done many acts, he slew two lionlike men of Moab: he went down also and slew a lion in the midst of a pit in time of snow:

21 And he slew an Egyptian, a goodly man: and the Egyptian had a spear in his hand; but he went down to him with a staff, and plucked the spear out of the Egyptian's hand, and slew him with his own spear.

22 These *things* did Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and had the name among three mighty men.

23 He was more honorable than the thirty, but he attained not to the *first* three. And David set him over his guard.

24 Asahel the brother of Joab *was* one of the thirty; Elhanan the son of Dodo of Beth-lehem,

- 25 Shammah the Harodite, Elikah the Harodite,
- 26 Helez the Paltite, Ira the son of Ikkesh the Tekoite,
- 27 Abiezer the Anethothite, Mebunnai the Hushathite,
- 28 Zalmon the Ahohite, Maharai the Netophathite,
- 29 Heleb the son of Baanah, a Netophathite, Ittai the son of Ribai out of Gibeah of the children of Benjamin,
- 30 Benaiah the Pirathonite, Hiddai of the brooks of Gaash,
- 31 Abi-albon the Arbathite, Azmaveth the Barhumite,
- 32 Eliahba the Shaalbonite, of the sons of Jashen, Jonathan.
- 33 Shammah the Hararite, Ahiam the son of Sharar the Hararite,
- 34 Eliphelet the son of Ahasbai, the son of the Maachathite, Eliam the son of Ahithophel the Gilonite,
- 35 Hezrai the Carmelite, Paarai the Abrite,
- 36 Igal the son of Nathan of Zobah, Bani the Gadite,
- 37 Zelek the Ammonite, Nahari the Beerothite, armor-bearer to Joab the son of Zeruiah,
- 38 Ira an Ithrite, Gareb an Ithrite,
- 39 Uriah the Hittite: thirty and seven in all.

5. *Who were David's "mighty men?"* 23:8-39

David had a fine list of officers who were responsible for many of the affairs of state, and they were listed on two occasions (II Samuel 8:14-18; 20:23-26). In addition to these leaders, David had three chief officers, and thirty-four other mighty men. The officers are listed here and also in I Chronicles 11 and I Chronicles 27. A comparison of the listings of the names is as follows:

A listing is as follows:

<i>II Samuel xxiii</i>	<i>*I Chronicles xi</i>	<i>I Chronicles xxvii</i>
Adino	Jashobeam	Jashobeam
Eleazar	Eleazar	Dodai
Shammah		
Abishai	Abishai	

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Benaiah	Benaiah	Benaiah
Asahel	Asahel	Asahel
Elhanan	Elhanan	
Shammah	Shammoth	Shamhuth
Elika		
Helez	Helez	Helez
Ira	Ira	Ira
Abiezer	Abiezer	Abiezer
Mebunnai	Sibbecai	Sibbecai
Zalmon	Ilai	
Maharai	Maharai	Maharai
Heleb	Heled	Heldai
Ittai	Ithai	
Benaiah	Benaiah	Benaiah
Hiddai	Hurai	
Abi-albon	Abiel	
Azmaveth	Azmaveth	
Eliahba	Eliahba	
(The sons of)	(The sons of)	
Jashen	Hashem	
Jonathan	Jonathan	
Ahiam	Ahiam	
Eliphelet	Eliphal	
Shammah of	Hepher	
Harar		
Eliam	Abijah	
Hezro	Hezro	
Paarai	Naarai	
Igal	Joel	
Bani	Mibhar	
Zelek	Zelek	
Naharai	Naharai	
Ira	Ira	
Gareb	Gareb	
Uriah	Uriah	

*In I Chronicles xi sixteen additional names are given.

6. How had these men attained to their rank? 23:8

Adoni had won his rank as chief among the captains when he had slain 800 men on one occasion (verse 8). Eleazar, another of the three mighty men of David, had fought so valiantly that his hand had tensed; and when the battle was done, he could not unclasp his sword (verse 10). Shammah had stood his ground in the midst of a field and achieved a mighty victory against the Philistines (verses 11, 12). Others had performed similar feats of courage and valor which had earned them places of leadership in David's army.

*7. When had the three mighty men befriended David?
23:13-17*

Three of David's thirty chief men had gone down to the well at Bethlehem to get some of the water from the well in order to quench David's thirst. David must have longed for a taste of this water when he was fleeing from Saul and staying in Adullam (I Samuel 22:1). It was while David was there that his parents had come to him. He must have reminisced on the occasion and thought how good would be the taste of some water from the well from which he had drunk as a lad at home in Bethlehem. Three of his mighty men broke through the lines of the Philistines and got the water out of the well which was by the gate of Bethlehem and brought some of it to David. David refused to drink of it and poured it out before the Lord. David did not do this because he did not appreciate the sacrifice the men had made in getting it for him, but he felt unworthy to drink the water after they had risked their lives to get it. He poured it out as an offering to the Lord. These three mighty men had endeared themselves to David by putting their lives in jeopardy to do a service for him.

8. *What other feats had his mighty men performed?* 23:18

Abishai, Jacob's brother, who had led a third of David's army when they put down the revolt of Absalom's army, had slain 300 men at one time. This had built quite a reputation for him (verse 18). Benaiah had slain two lion-like men of Moab and had also gone down and killed a lion in the midst of a pit in the time of snow (verse 20). He had also killed an Egyptian who had a reputation as a fierce fighter (verse 21). The reference to his killing a lion in the midst of the snow is a unique reference to some of the circumstances of the land. Lions were not common and it must have been a mountain lion. It must have been killed in the heights where snow would be most likely to fall. Reference was made to Asahel in David's list of mighty men (verse 24), although he had died quite early at the hands of Abner (II Samuel 2:18). Uriah, the Hittite, the husband of Bathsheba, was also mentioned. He had indeed proved himself to be a valiant soldier, and his death arose out of the tragic circumstances of David's sin with Bathsheba (verse 39).

CHAPTER 23 IN REVIEW

1. What titles did David ascribe to himself? _____
2. Was David inspired of God? _____
3. By what figure did he refer to God? _____
4. To what did David compare a just ruler? _____
5. To what Psalm may these words be compared? _____
6. How many mighty men did David have? _____
7. Where was the well from which three of his men brought him water? _____
8. Which soldier killed a lion in a pit? _____
9. Who fought so long that his hand clung to his sword? _____
10. Was Uriah one of these "mighty men"? _____

STUDIES IN SAMUEL

A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 24

- Vv. 1- 9 *The numbering.* David conceived the plan of going throughout the length and breadth of Israel and numbering his people. Joab opposed this, but David went ahead with the project.
- Vv. 10-15 *The plague.* David was given a choice of three penalties for his rash actions. He chose the one which he thought would make him most dependent upon the mercy of God. The plague swept over Israel, but was stayed when it spread to Jerusalem.
- Vv. 16-25 *The plague stayed...* When the angel stretched out his hand upon Jerusalem, the Lord said, "It is enough" (v. 16). David then went out to offer sacrifice to the Lord. He built an altar on the mountain immediately east of his capital.

LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. "*Pride goeth before destruction*" (Proverbs 16:18). There is nothing wrong in numbering a people. God commanded his people to be numbered twice while they were wandering in the wilderness (Numbers 1 and 26). David evidently numbered his people in order to revel in his strength. It is wrong to take pride in one's own physical accomplishments and power. For this reason he was punished.
2. "*If any is to glory, let him glory in the Lord*" (I Corinthians 1:31). Sacrifices to God are not to be free (v. 24). Araunah offered to give David the threshing floor and the oxen for his sacrifice. David refused saying that he would not offer something to God which had cost him nothing. What we give to God ought

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to represent a sacrifice. It should come from the labors of our hands and represent the best that we have to offer to God. God was entreated for the land in the days of David by his sacrificial offering, and God will be pleased by the sacrificial efforts of Christians in every age.

5. The Sin of Census, 24:1-25.

The Numbering. 24:1-9

And again the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel and Judah.

2 For the king said to Joab the captain of the host, which *was* with him, Go now through all the tribes of Israel, from Dan even to Beer-sheba, and number ye the people, that I may know the number of the people.

3 And Joab said unto the king, Now the Lord thy God add unto the people, how many soever they be, an hundred-fold, and that the eyes of my lord the king may see *it*: but why doth my lord the king delight in this thing?

4 Notwithstanding the king's word prevailed against Joab, and against the captains of the host. And Joab and the captains of the host went out from the presence of the king, to number the people of Israel.

5 And they passed over Jordan, and pitched in Aroer, on the right side of the city that *lieth* in the midst of the river of Gad, and toward Jazer:

6 Then they came to Gilead, and to the land of Tah-tim-hodshi; and they came to Dan-jaan, and about to Zidon,

7 And came to the stronghold of Tyre, and to all the cities of the Hivites, and of the Canaanites: and they went out to the south of Judah, *even* to Beer-sheba.

8 So when they had gone through all the land, they came to Jerusalem at the end of nine months and twenty days.

9 And Joab gave up the sum of the number of the people unto the king: and there were in Israel eight hundred thousand valiant men that drew the sword; and the men of Judah *were* five hundred thousand men.

1. *When did the numbering occur? 24:1*

There is no indication of the exact time of the numbering of Israel which provoked the anger of the Lord, but certain indications in the text point to a date late in the reign of David. First of all, we read that "*again* the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel." This sounds very definitely like a reference to the famine which came in the days of David three years in a row when the Gibeonites called for vengeance (II Samuel 21:1). Since the anger of the Lord was kindled again, this numbering occurred after the famine. In the second place, the numbering took nearly ten months of time, and it would be very difficult for the commander-in-chief of the army to spend this length of time in what would be a peacetime task until after the conquests which marked the beginning of David's reign had been completed. In the third place, the description of David's preparation for building the temple which occupied the latter part of his reign is given in the book of Chronicles immediately after the account of this numbering. The numbering itself must have been one of David's last acts.

2. *Did God move David to make the census? 24:1 b*

The subject of the verb "moved" in this verse is the Lord whose anger was kindled against Israel. The nation had sinned against God and incurred His anger, and He moved David to perform an act which brought down a severe punishment on the nation. God did not compel David to sin; but in order to test and prove his character, he allowed the temptation to come to him. Although we read in James 1:13 that no man is tempted of God, we are also instructed to pray that God should not bring us

into temptation (Matthews 6:13). In I Chronicles 22:1 the statement is made that Satan stood up against Israel and moved David to number his people. Such a condition would be similar to that of the days of Job when God allowed Satan to afflict a righteous man (Job 1:12; 2:10).

3. Why did David want to number his people? 24:2

David said that he wanted to know the number of his people, but he was hardly so childish that he wanted to know the number simply for the sake of the knowledge. He had an end in mind which made the numbering wrong. The mere taking of a census was not wrong in itself, for God had commanded the numbering of His people on two separate occasions as they wandered in the wilderness (Numbers 1:26). On other occasions, the number of people who went out to war was given indicating there must have been a consciousness of numbers and a means for ascertaining the exact numbers (I Samuel 11:8; 13:2).

4. Why did Joab oppose the numbering? 24:3

Joab was not a man moved by religious scruples, and his opposition must have been based on some other reason. He would have to leave the work that he was best fitted for, and this may have been the basis of his objection. Later events proved that it was wrong, and Joab may have been able to ascertain this better than the king himself. Since he was not moved by religious scruples and his selfishness did not always cause him to do his work, his strong objection to the numbering of the people arose from his perception of David's motives.

5. What was wrong with David's actions?

David overruled Joab's objections and sent him out to number the people of Israel. Something was dreadfully wrong with David's actions. The numbering was presented in verse one as the manifestation of the wrath of God against Israel, and in verse three Joab tried to stop the king from continuing. In verse ten, David himself admitted that it was a grievous sin against God. His "heart

smote him." Moreover, as a sin, the numbering of the people was punished by the Lord (verse 12). Josephus indicated that the census was a sin because he neglected to demand the atonement money which was specified in the law (Exodus 30:12 ff.). Such could hardly be the case because the collecting of the atonement money mentioned in the book of Exodus was the original enrolling of the people as members of the commonwealth of Israel. Many students of the Scripture have suggested that David entered into the whole affair with pride and vain boasting and that he commanded the census out of his vanity. But David was hardly so vain as to desire simply to have the number which he could quote or which could be recorded in the annals and provide him with an opportunity for reviewing how mighty he was. This may have entered into the sin, since Joab prayed that God multiply the number by 100 and allow the eyes of the king to see it. A higher purpose for the census was suggested in I Chronicles 27:23, 24, where the numbering was connected with the military organization of the kingdom. David must not have taken the census in order to boast nor in order to levy taxes. He must have desired to be fully acquainted with his defensive power and thus came to a place where he was trusting his own might and not leaning heavily on the strength of God, although we cannot be justified in concluding that he was intending to enter into a campaign of world-wide conquests in an effort to make him more of a world power. God reduced the number to show that any effort of feeble man alone can be brought to nought by an almighty God.

6. *What was the route of the enumerators? 24:5-7*

Those who took the census went out from Jerusalem and crossed over Jordan. They set up their headquarters in Aroer, a spot on the north bank of the Arnon river ten miles east of the Dead Sea. It was the southernmost town of Israel east of the Jordan and has been referred to as

"the Beersheba of the East." From this point, the workers moved north into the territory of Gad, the tribe which settled in the center section of the land east of the Jordan (Numbers 32:33-42). Jazer was a town taken by Israel from the Amorites (Numbers 21:32) and assigned to the tribe of Gad (Numbers 32:1-3, 35). The city was named a Levitical city (Joshua 21:39). The importance of the town is seen in the fact that it gave its name to the district including some dependent towns (Numbers 31:32), and both Isaiah and Jeremiah mentioned the place in their prophecies (Isaiah 16:8, 9 and Jeremiah 48:32). It has been identified with Khirbet-jazzier. The men then turned north through Gilead and went throughout the land to a point mentioned only here in the Scriptures; the name of Tahtimhodshi means the "lowland recently occupied" and is probably a reference to the edge of the Israelite territory. Everybody was counted including those in Dan-Jaan, Israel's northernmost town. David's servants then moved west to the Phoenician territory on the Mediterranean sea-coast counting people all the way to Tyre, the capital city of Phoenicia. They moved down through western Palestine taking the census in the cities which had once belonged to the Canaanites until they reached Israel's southernmost town, Beersheba. When the entire count had been made, they brought their report up to the king at Jerusalem. The total time spent in taking the census was nine months and twenty days (verse 8).

7. *What was the total of the number of the people? 24:9*

Joab and his men had counted 800,000 men in the ten tribes of Israel. There were 500,000 men in the tribe of Judah. Inasmuch as men were counted only after they had reached their twentieth birthday, this would be 1,300,000 men twenty years of age and over, thus men able to go to war (Numbers 1:3). There must have been an equal number of men under twenty years of age, making the total of 2,600,000 males. An equal number of females

should be added to bring the grand total to 5,200,000 or 6,000,000 people. The number is larger in Chronicles (I Chronicles 21:5), and an additional note is made that the men of the tribes of Levi and Benjamin were not counted (I Chronicles 21:6). The smaller number in the book of Samuel must be without the two tribes mentioned, and the number in Chronicles probably included them. The number in Chronicles is given in connection with David organizing his kingdom, and the tribe of Benjamin is mentioned in the list of tribes and their chieftains (I Chronicles 27:21). An additional note is made in the book of Chronicles stating that the count was not the official count (I Chronicles 27:24). Critics take particular exception to the numbers found in Chronicles as compared to those found in the books of Samuel and Kings. Certainly the writer of Chronicles did not deliberately seek to make his work appear ridiculous by increasing the numbers in the Chronicles, although the radical critics generally charge that the numbers are exaggerated in Chronicles. Neither did the writer give numbers out of ignorance, for the work is too superb for such a thing to be possible. It must be noted that the numbers given are round numbers, representing only approximate figures. Only thousands are taken into account, and the intention apparently is merely to indicate the greatness of the armies. While the numbers in Chronicles are usually larger than those in Samuel or Kings, sometimes they are smaller. For example, 40,000 stalls for Solomon's horses are mentioned in I Kings 4:26, but II Chronicles 9:25 gives 4,000. In I Chronicles 11:11, three hundred mighty men are mentioned, but eight hundred are given in II Samuel 23:8. In I Chronicles 21:12 David was given a choice of three years of famine, whereas the number is seven years in II Samuel 24:13. In all of these cases the numbers are smaller in Chronicles than in the parallel passages in Kings or Samuel. Lastly, we must

remember that even though today we are not in a position to explain precisely and to our satisfaction how the differences in the numerals may have arisen, these numerals being so isolated must not shake the conviction we have in the general historical credibility of Chronicles. Many more passages are in accordance with the facts as found elsewhere, and these are sufficient to give the earmarks of historicity and trustworthiness to the scriptures of Chronicles.

The Plague. 24:10-15

10 And David's heart smote him after that he had numbered the people. And David said unto the Lord, I have sinned greatly in that I have done: and now, I beseech thee, O Lord, take away the iniquity of thy servant; for I have done very foolishly.

11 For when David was up in the morning, the word of the Lord came unto the prophet Gad, David's seer, saying,

12 Go and say unto David, Thus saith the Lord, I offer thee three *things*; choose thee one of them, that I may *do it* unto thee.

13 So Gad came to David, and told him, and said unto him, Shall seven years of famine come unto thee in thy land? or wilt thou flee three months before thine enemies, while they pursue thee? or that there be three days' pestilence in thy land? now advise, and see what answer I shall return to him that sent me.

14 And David said unto Gad, I am in a great strait: let us fall now into the hand of the Lord; for his mercies *are* great: and let me not fall into the hand of man.

15 So the Lord sent a pestilence upon Israel from the morning even to the time appointed: and there died of the people from Dan even to Beer-sheba seventy thousand men.

8. How did David know he had sinned? 24:10

David's heart smote him after he had completed the numbering of the people. He calmly reflected upon the matter and came to see the folly of his intentions. If he had acted because the people themselves had sinned and thus brought down upon themselves the wrath of God, he knew that it was wrong to react against their evil by performing an evil himself. Two wrongs never make a right. If the people had done something wrong, David should have done something good to counteract it. David also knew that Joab had opposed this numbering, and he came to see that Joab was right. His conviction was confirmed in the morning when Gad, the prophet, brought the judgment of God to him.

9. Who was the prophet Gad? 24:11

Gad had first come to David when David fled from Saul (I Samuel 22:5). His ministry at that time was to encourage David while he was a fugitive. He particularly brought God's message to the effect that David was to stay in the borders of Israel while fleeing from Saul. He was not to seek refuge in Moab or any other place outside the land of his forefathers. Although it was Nathan who brought him the message of the great covenant (II Samuel 7), Gad must have been a constant companion to David. He was one of the three men who wrote the entire history of David (I Chronicles 29:29). His message following the numbering was one giving David a choice of three penalties—famine, flight, or pestilence.

10. Why did David choose the pestilence? 24:14

David felt that he would be more dependent upon the mercy of God if a pestilence was sent upon Israel. It was to be a pestilence lasting for three days, but its toll was heavy. Had the Israelites suffered seven years of famine, the land would have been brought to its knees in hunger. Her enemies would have been able to attack her and overcome her. In that way, Israel would have been

at the mercy of hostile men. The same would have been true if they were forced to flee for three months. The toll would have been extremely heavy in such circumstances, and they would have been subjected to all the acts of reprisal which enemy nations could devise.

11. What was the effect of the pestilence? 24:15

God sent a pestilence on Israel which afflicted them all day long. Seventy thousand of Israel's men who had recently been counted in the myriads of Israel were smitten before God. The great number in which David had taken pride was thus reduced with one fell swoop from the hand of God. David learned a lesson that could be learned in no other way. He saw that man at his best is helpless before God.

The Plague Stayed. 24:16-25

16 And when the angel stretched out his hand upon Jerusalem to destroy it, the Lord repented him of the evil, and said to the angel that destroyed the people, It is enough: stay now thine hand. And the angel of the Lord was by the threshing place of Araunah the Jebusite.

17 And David spake unto the Lord when he saw the angel that smote the people, and said, Lo, I have sinned, and I have done wickedly: but these sheep, what have they done? let thine hand, I pray thee, be against me, and against my father's house.

18 And Gad came that day to David, and said unto him, Go up, rear an altar unto the Lord in the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite.

19 And David, according to the saying of Gad, went up as the Lord commanded.

20 And Araunah looked, and saw the king and his servants coming on toward him: and Araunah went out, and bowed himself before the king on his face upon the ground.

21 And Araunah said, Wherefore is my lord the king come to his servant? And David said, To buy the threshing floor of thee, to build an altar unto the Lord, that the plague may be stayed from the people.

22 And Araunah said unto David, Let my lord the king take and offer up what *seemeth* good unto him: behold, *here be* oxen for burnt sacrifice, and threshing instruments and *other* instruments of the oxen for wood.

23 All these *things* did Araunah, *as* a king, give unto the king. And Araunah said unto the king, The Lord thy God accept thee.

24 And the king said unto Araunah, Nay; but I will surely buy *it* of thee at a price: neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the Lord my God of that which doth cost me nothing. So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver.

25 And David built there an altar unto the Lord, and offered burnt offerings. So the Lord was intreated for the land, and the plague was stayed from Israel.

12. *Where was the threshing floor of Araunah?* 24:16

The plague began on the morning of its announcement by the prophet Gad and continued through that day. Some commentators have presented the thought that the plague continued till the expiration of the three days, and the Vulgate translation supports this interpretation. But the plague was stopped earlier than originally intended because God's mercy was poured out upon the people. The pestilence must have lasted to the appointed time for evening prayers, which would be the ninth hour of the day or the third hour of the afternoon. Although the pestilence did not last for the three days announced, the toll exceeded considerably the number destroyed by the most violent pestilences on record. Jerusalem itself was spared when God stayed the hand of the angel of the Lord, who must have been distinctly visible to the people.

His visible appearance is described more minutely in the book of Chronicles, and David saw him standing by the threshing floor of Araunah between heaven and earth with a drawn sword in his hand stretched out over Jerusalem (I Chronicles 21:15, 16). The threshing floor of Araunah was situated outside the city of Jerusalem on Mt. Moriah, a hill to the northeast of mount Zion. It was here that the temple was built later in the days of Solomon.

13. What was David's offer to God? 24:17

David stands in the company of the great intercessors of the Bible. He took the same attitude as that taken by Moses when he offered to have his name blotted out of the book of life in order that the people of Israel might be spared (Exodus 32:32). This was the same compassion as that demonstrated by the apostle Paul, who said he could wish himself to be anathema in order that his people Israel could be saved (Romans 9:3). David said that he was the one who had sinned against God and brought pestilence upon Israel. He prayed that the people of Israel might be spared because they were like sheep without a shepherd and were not responsible for what had happened. He asked that he himself and his father's people might be punished for what he had done, but he asked for God to be merciful to the thousands of Israel.

14. What did Gad tell David to do? 24:18

Gad instructed David to go up to the mountain where he had seen the angel of the Lord and build an altar to God in the threshing floor of Araunah, the Jebusite. Araunah is called a Jebusite because he was not a member of the commonwealth of Israel, but a Canaanite man. His name is not a typical Hebrew name and substantiates the statement that he was a Jebusite.

15. Why did Araunah offer to give David the threshing floor? 24:20

Araunah saw David coming and went out to meet his king. He asked what brought him to his threshing floor,

and David told him that he had come to buy the floor in order to build an altar to the Lord and remove the plague from the people. In typical Canaanite fashion, Araunah offered to give him the threshing floor, the machinery for wood for a fire, and the oxen for an offering. Ephron, the Hittite, had made this same kind of offer to Abraham when Abraham wanted to buy the cave of Machpelah as a burial place for Sarah. On that occasion, the Hittite named his price as he and Abraham continued to discuss the matter (Genesis 23:15). Araunah wanted to have part in the sacrifice which David intended to make, and he offered the needed provisions to the king.

16. Why did David refuse the offer? 24:24

David did not want to offer something to God which had cost him nothing. Had David taken the material from Araunah, the sacrifice would not have been David's but Araunah's. His spirit is an ideal for the spirit of a Christian. Christians should not give something to God which has meant nothing to them. If they enter into this kind of practice, the offering will mean nothing to God. God expects man to give of the best to Him.

17. What later use was made of the area? 24:25

Additional notes were given in the book of Chronicles, where it was noted that when David built the altar and offered the burnt offerings and peace offerings as he called upon the name of the Lord, God answered him from heaven by fire upon the altar of burnt offering (I Chronicles 21:26). There it was stated that the Lord also commanded the angel to put up his sword again into the sheath, and the pestilence ceased. David continued to offer sacrifice upon the altar built on the threshing floor of Araunah and designated the spot at the site of the temple which was afterwards to be built (II Chronicles 22:1). The Chronicler also appended an account of the preparations which David made for building the temple (I Chronicles 22:2 ff.).

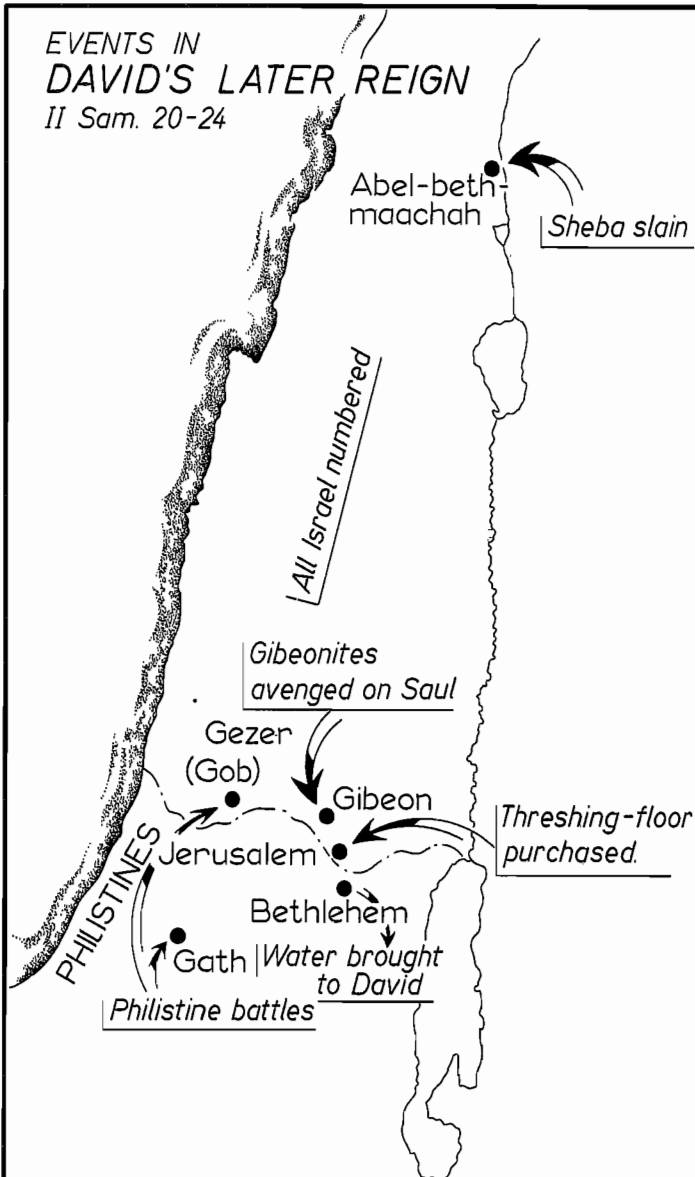
SECOND SAMUEL
CHAPTER 24 IN REVIEW


1. What action did David take which angered God? _____
2. Whom did David appoint to do the work? _____
3. Where was the numbering begun? _____
4. How long did the census take? _____
5. How many men were in Judah? _____
6. How many men were in the rest of Israel? _____
7. What prophet told David he had sinned? _____
8. From what three penalties could David choose? _____

9. Which one did he choose? _____
10. From whom did David buy a threshing floor? _____

EVENTS IN
DAVID'S LATER REIGN

II Sam. 20-24





Air view of Jerusalem seen under floating
clouds taken from the south

Molson Photo Service

EPILOGUE

The division of the Old Testament books at the end of Samuel is quite artificial. The history of David is continued in I Kings with the account of Abishag and the revolt of Adonijah. The division we have now in the English Bible is not very early, as is indicated by the Septuagint in some of its copies in which the third book of Kings begins with I Kings, chapter three. The two chapters which intervene are thus numbered twenty-five and twenty-six of Samuel.

Comments from the book of Samuel would not be complete without some reference to the fact that David did become old and stricken in years. He ruled for forty years and did not begin his career until he was thirty (II Samuel 5:4). As he neared the prescribed three score and ten years (Psalm 90:10), he suffered an infirmity which caused him to chill. In a manner which seems crude to a civilization provided with mechanical and chemical corrective measures for such a condition, the people of Israel sought a young virgin to be David's constant companion, in order that the heat from her body might warm David. The maiden they found was Abishag, a fair damsel from Shunem. Shunem was a spot belonging to the tribe of Isaachar. It was here that the Philistines had camped before Saul's last battle (I Samuel 28:4). This locality was also the residence of the woman whose son Elisha raised from the dead (II Kings 4:35), and has been identified with *Shulam* at the southwest base of little Hermon and three miles north of Jezreel in the midst of a very fertile valley.

Abishag was a very fair maiden, and she ministered to the needs of the king in his infirmities; but the king did not consider her to be his wife or one of his concubines.

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His relationship to her was not that of a man with his wife, and Abishag was not above one of the household servants. Her relationship to him, however, was peculiar and unusual, a fact that indirectly brought about the death of Adonijah.

After David's death, Adonijah, who had been spared by Solomon, decided that he would like to have Abishag as his wife. He sent Bathsheba, Solomon's mother, to have an audience with Solomon in order to ask him to give Abishag to Adonijah. Adonijah felt that Bathsheba as the king's mother would have more influence with Solomon than he would have personally.

Solomon interpreted this request of Adonijah's to be highly improper, inasmuch as Abishag once was very close to King David. The situation was very much similar to that of Abner and Rizpah in the days of Ish-bosheth. Kings were very jealous of their concubines and wices. When a king died, the successor to the throne not only acceded to the throne but also inherited the king's household, being responsible for the continued support of the widows and children. If he were of a different house, he often would slay these heirs in order to prevent their making future claims to the throne. Abishag was Solomon's responsibility, and he felt that Adonijah's desire was quite out of place. Although Abishag was not a wife or concubine of David's, she had been in a very intimate association with David; and Solomon viewed Adonijah's request for her hand in marriage as a veiled pretension to the throne.

Adonijah had attempted to usurp the throne while David was still alive in order to prevent Solomon's accession. Adonijah had some reason for such action, inasmuch as he was the elder brother of Solomon and directly in line for the throne. He was the son of Haggith, the fourth-born of David's sons (II Samuel 3:4). Since Amnon had been killed by Absalom and Absalom had been slain in battle,

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the two older brothers of Adonijah could not succeed David to the throne. Nothing is known of Chileab, David's second-born son (II Samuel 3:3); and it is generally concluded that he also was dead.

Adonijah was born to David while David lived and ruled in Hebron, during the first seven years of his reign. Solomon was not born until after David had moved his capital to Jerusalem and had stolen Bathsheba from Uriah. Adonijah knew that David intended to have Solomon as his successor, but his own selfish interests led him to attempt to steal the throne. His revolt should not be considered an attempt to rebel against David, as was Absalom's effort; but he did try to supersede Solomon.

The Scripture says, "Then Adonijah, the son of Haggith, exalted himself" (II Kings 1:5). He prepared chariots and horsemen, with fifty men to run before him through the streets of Jerusalem. His father had not spoken a word in rebuke of him, giving him an exalted estimation of himself; and in addition, he was a very handsome person. Specific reference is made to the fact that he was born after Absalom (I Kings 1:6), making him the next in line to the throne.

Adonijah secured the support of some of the leading people in David's government. Joab, who had been faithful to David when Absalom rebelled, joined in Adonijah's conspiracy. The priesthood, which had been united behind David in the days of Absalom, was divided by Adonijah's attempted *coup*. Abiathar, the priest whose father had been slain in the days of Saul and who had fled to David for protection, was led away from David and persuaded to join Adonijah. Zadok, the other priest, remained loyal to David and Solomon.

Certain key men in David's government were not convinced by Adonijah's claims. Zadok, the priest, Nathan, the prophet, and Benaiah, one of David's mighty men, were all solidly back of Solomon's claims and David's in-

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tentions for him to be his successor. None of these men were invited to Adonijah's rally where he proclaimed himself to be king over Israel. Shimei and Rei, mighty men which belonged to David, also were not with Adonijah.

The area around En-rogel, at the southeast corner of the city, was chosen for the meeting-place by those who supported the claims of Adonijah. Adonijah announced a sacrifice, slaying sheep, oxen, and fat cattle, and inviting all his brethren of the king's sons and all the men of Judah who were the king's servants, except those who were not in sympathy with his cause.

Nathan, the prophet, learned of the meeting and informed Bathsheba, David's wife and Solomon's mother. He instructed Bathsheba to ask for an audience with the king and make inquiry about his intentions concerning his successor. It was Nathan's understanding that Solomon should succeed David to the throne. No doubt he had gathered this from the prediction which he had made to David about the son who should build the temple (II Samuel 7:12). More was involved than the mere succession to the throne. The fulfillment of prophecy was hanging in the balance. The will of God was to be done in the lives of the men who were involved.

Bathsheba asked for and received the audience with David. She asked David if he had not sworn to her by the Lord God that Solomon would be the one to sit on the throne. She then announced to David that Adonijah was ruling in Jerusalem. She specifically mentioned the feast which he had announced and the oxen, fat cattle, and sheep which were sacrificed. She enumerated those who were supporting Adonijah—Abiathar and Joab, particularly. Bathsheba informed David that the citizens of his kingdom were waiting for some word from him which would indicate his pleasure concerning his successor. With pitiable concern, Bathsheba predicted that if Adonijah were

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successful in acceding to the throne then she and Solomon would be considered offenders and probably be put to death (I Kings 1:21).

While Bathsheba was speaking, Nathan came in and substantiated her remarks and appraisal of the situation. Nathan specifically asked David if it were his intention that the fourth-born son would succeed him to the throne. He verified the report that Adonijah had chosen a spot rather remote from the palace and proclaimed himself to be king. It had even been reported that the people were crying, "God save king Adonijah" (I Kings 1:25). Nathan assured David that Solomon, Benaiah, and he were not invited to the feast and were devoutly loyal to David. Nathan concluded his interview with the king by asking if all this were David's intentions and done by his order.

David was aroused by all these reports. He acted immediately. King David recalled Bathsheba and swore again to her that it was not his desire for Adonijah to succeed him to the throne. He assured her that Solomon, their son, was his choice as a successor. With alacrity which had typified his earlier activity but had been lacking in the latter days of his reign, David took steps to thwart Adonijah's efforts.

David summoned Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiakim, one of David's mighty men. These men represented the religious, civil, and military leaders of Israel; and he gave them specific instructions which were to be carried out at once.

Certain routine procedures of state were to be followed in proclaiming Solomon to be the king. He was to ride upon the king's own mule and be brought down to the eastern edge of the city. He was there to be anointed king by Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet as Saul and David had been anointed by Samuel the prophet. A trumpet was to be blown and the proclamation was to be made. The people were to cry out, "God save King

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Solomon" (I Kings 1:34). Solomon was then to lead a procession to the palace and there he was to be installed as king over Israel and Judah. This immediate and direct action of David's pleased Benaiah especially; and he said, "Amen: the Lord God of my lord the king say so too" (I Kings 1:36).

David's directions were followed precisely; and the king's bodyguard, the Cherethites and Pelethites, went down to put Solomon on the king's mule to make the trip to the Gihon on the western side of Jerusalem. Zedok the priest took a horn of oil out of the tabernacle with which to anoint Solomon. The trumpet was blown to signal the assembly of the people; and the people cried out, "God save King Solomon" (I Kings 1:39). The procession wound its way back into the city as the people followed Solomon to the palace playing on the pipes, and the earth was literally shaken by the sound.

Adonijah and those who were called to his abortive assembly heard the shout. Joab was especially attracted by the blowing of the trumpet and made inquiry about the uproar in the city. Jonathan, the son of Abiathar the priest, came at that moment with news that David had announced that Solomon was to be his successor to the throne. He also knew that Zadok, Nathan, and Benaiah were backing Solomon's claims to the throne. His information included the detail that the king's bodyguard was attending Solomon and Solomon was riding on the king's own mule. Jonathan properly assessed the situation by announcing that the city was following Solomon and yielding to David's wishes in the matter. This news threw Adonijah's guests into an uproar, and they fled in terror from the scene. Adonijah himself arose and went to the altar and caught hold of the horns on the altar, a gesture of entreaty signifying that he was pleading with God and all who saw him that his life might be spared.

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News came to Solomon of Adonijah's pitiful plea, and Solomon assured him that he might live if he conducted himself in a worthy manner. He warned him that if wickedness were found in him, he would be put to death. Adonijah accepted the offer of pardon, and went to Solomon to do obeisance to his new king. Solomon dismissed him, and allowed him to return to his own dwelling in peace.

David lived for some time after announcing that Solomon should succeed him to the throne, but the day of his death approached nonetheless. Before he died, he called Solomon to him and encouraged him to conduct himself as a man. He especially exhorted him to keep the charge of the Lord, "to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, and His commandments, and His judgments, and His testimonies" (I Kings 2:3). David's charge was specifically based on a written law of Moses, a passing reference to the fact that the Pentateuch was in existence in David's day and formed the basis for the king's conduct as well as the conduct for the subjects of the land. Uppermost in David's mind was the knowledge that God had made a covenant with him (II Samuel 7), a portion of which carried the stipulation that if his children walked in the ways of God there should not fail him a man on the throne of Israel. This was God's promise to the royal family.

David gave specific instructions to Solomon with regard to certain matters of unfinished business in his kingdom. He specified that some kind of punishment should be meted out to Joab, his captain through the years who had demonstrated on occasion a wicked spirit. Joab had killed Abner, the son of Ner, and also Amasa, the son of Gezer—two valiant soldiers. David was also anxious that Barzillai, the Gileadite, be remembered for the kindness which he had shown David when David had fled from Absalom. He had promised Barzillai that his son, Chimham, would be taken into the king's family and given daily sustenance from the king's table. Others to whom David owed a

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debt of gratitude or a measure of punishment were Shimei, the Benjamite, who had cursed him as he fled from Jerusalem at the time of Absalom's rebellion. Although David had spared his life, he knew that some punishment should be given to him.

These touching final moments spent with Solomon were like the time that Isaac spent with Esau and Jacob as he sought to give a blessing to Esau even though the birth-right had been sold to Jacob (Genesis 27:1), and like the time when Jacob spent with his twelve sons in Egypt as he pronounced prophecies and blessings about each of them (Genesis 49:1-33). When David had attended to these last affairs of state and given a word of personal exhortation to Solomon, his duties as king were ended and soon thereafter he died. He was buried in Jerusalem, the city of David (I Kings 2:10).

Solomon succeeded David to the throne and ruled with wisdom. Adonijah gave occasion to Solomon for executing him when he asked to have Abishag the Shunamite, to be his wife, after she had attended David until the time of his death. Oriental potentates considered the wives and concubines to be their own personal property in a very special way, and any interest shown in them by anyone else was considered to be an effort to steal the throne as well. This was Solomon's view of Adonijah's request; and for that reason, he killed Adonijah.

Abiathar was called before Solomon who told him to go to Anathoth; a town in the tribe of Benjamin belonging to the priests (Joshua 21:18; Jeremiah 1:1). The town was a city of refuge and the birthplace of Jeremiah and also his residence for a great part of his life (Jeremiah 1:1; 11:21-23; 29:27). It lay three miles northeast of Jerusalem. It has been identified with the modern Anata, but is of little modern importance. Solomon spared Abiathar's life because he had attended the Ark in the days of David and had suffered affliction with him, especially at

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the time of Saul's killing all the priests (I Samuel 22:20-23). Abiathar was deposed from his office, and this was a fulfillment of the prophecy made in the days of Eli (I Samuel 2:31, 35).

Solomon also took direct action against Joab. Joab heard what had happened to the other conspirators who had followed Adonijah, and he fled to the tabernacle and caught hold of the horns on the altar in much the same fashion as Adonijah (I Kings 2:28; cf. I Kings 1:51). Solomon sent Benaiah to execute Joab, but Joab refused to be dragged away from the altar. Benaiah reported this to the king, and Solomon told him to slay him in the sanctuary. Joab had shed much innocent blood, and Solomon feared that he would bring blood-guiltiness upon his kingdom if he permitted Joab to live. Benaiah was faithful to Solomon's orders and killed Joab in the tabernacle area but allowed his body to be taken for burial to the wilderness of Judah which had been Joab's home.

Benaiah, one of David's mighty men and a faithful soldier under Solomon, was made captain of Solomon's army. Zadok the priest, officiated at the tabernacle; and Solomon did his best to put his kingdom in order.

One other duty was his to perform as he completed the unfinished business of his father's rule. Shimei, the man of Benjamin, who had cursed David when he fled from Jerusalem, was told to establish his residence in Jerusalem. He was instructed not to go out of the city, the border line being established at the brook Kidron, east of Jerusalem. Shimei agreed to the terms of Solomon's amnesty and kept his part of the bargain for quite a while. When two of Shimei's servants fled from him and went into a foreign territory, Shimei left Jerusalem without gaining permission from Solomon. Solomon heard that Shimei had broken his covenant, and he ordered that Shimei be executed. When these matters had been attended to, Solomon established the kingdom firmly under his hand.

EPILOGUE

The people of Israel knew that it was David's intention for him to reign, and he had set his kingdom in order. No regent ever began his rule under more auspicious omens, for David had ruled well in spite of the failures which were noted in the Scripture. God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding; he was also endowed with a largeness of heart. His wisdom exceeded the wisdom of all the children of the east country, and the wisdom of the men of Egypt. Hiram, the king of Tyre, spoke a fitting benediction to the reign of David, and offered an appropriate invocation for the reign of Solomon as he said:

“Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, that made heaven and earth, who had given to David the king a wise son, endued with prudence and understanding, that might build an house for the Lord, and an house for his kingdom” (II Chronicles 2:12).

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