

2 Samuel 08 - Extension of David's Kingdom; David and Mephibosheth; Ammonite-Syrian campaigns under Joab

I. David's faith (2 Sam 1:1—10:19)

(3) Military victory (8:1—10:19)

(A) David conquers Philistia, Moab, Zobah, Aram and Edom (8:1-18)

David's Triumphs

Review

With the death of Saul, David's fortune changed. He was no longer a fugitive, and was quickly acknowledged as king by the southern tribe of Judah, his own tribe. In the north, Ish-bosheth, a surviving son of Saul, was propped up as king by the military leader, Abner. Over the next years there were minor skirmishes between the two kingdoms. But David's strength showed itself, as did Ish-bosheth's weakness. Then Ish-bosheth was assassinated (and the assassins executed by an outraged David). It was seven and a half years after David had become king of Judah that he was recognized as king by all of Israel.

The story of David's triumphs is told in 2 Sam 5-10 and in 1 Chr 11-19. From these books we glean something of the significance of the accomplishments of this great leader, as well as great man of faith. David's accomplishments as Israel's ruler are unmatched. David's rule was strong and aggressive and his accomplishments were unparalleled. Other men of history have demonstrated military and administrative capacity, but David overshadows them all by the breadth and depth of his ability.

To cap it all, David is one of the great men of faith. He is a type of Jesus, who will rule as God's coming King. His personal qualities and faith provide examples for believers of every age.

Events of David's Reign

- David made king (2 Sam 5:1-5; 1 Chr 11:1-3)
- David takes Jerusalem (2 Sam 5:6-9; 1 Chr 11:4-9)
- David organizes the mighty men (1 Chr 11:10—12:40)
- David defeats the Philistines (2 Sam 5:17-25; 1 Chr 14:8-17)
- David brings the ark to Jerusalem (2 Sam 6:1-12; 1 Chr 13:1-14; 15:1-15)
- David offers praise (2 Sam 6:12-23; 1 Chr 15:6—16:36)

- David receives a covenant promise (2 Sam 7:1-16; 1 Chr 17:1-15)
- David wins more victories (2 Sam 8:1-14; 1 Chr 18:1-13)
- David organizes his government (2 Sam 8:15-18; 1 Chr 18:14-17)
- David honors Mephibosheth (2 Sam 9:1-13)
- David defeats the Ammonites (2 Sam 10:1-19; 1 Chr 19:1-19)

2 Samuel 8

(3) Military victory (8:1—10:19) (1 Chr 18:1-13)

(A) David conquers Philistia, Moab, Zobah, Aram and Edom (8:1-18)

1 Now it happened **afterward** that David defeated the Philistines and subdued them; and David took control of the chief city from the hand of the Philistines.

1 Now after this it came about that David defeated the Philistines and subdued them; and David took control of the chief city from the hand of the Philistines.

1 Sometime later, David defeated and subdued the Philistines, taking Metheg-ammah away from the Philistines.

1 And after this it came to pass, that David smote the Philistines, and subdued them: and David took Metheg-Ammah out of the hand of the Philistines.

- This chapter describes the conquest of David's enemies that took place before David brought the Ark into Jerusalem (2 Sam 6) and received the Davidic Covenant (2 Sam 7)

— Since 7:1 says God had given David rest from all his enemies, the events of 2 Sam 8 must precede 2 Sam 7, and probably 2 Sam 6

- "...afterward" - most likely refers to the battles with the Philistines (5:17-25), where the Philistine army twice tried, but failed, to end David's reign

— After those battles, David had other conflicts with the Philistines: from the west (v1) to east (v2) to north (v3-11), to south (v13-14)—showing God gave David victory in every direction (Cf. v6,14)

- 1 Chr 18 adds that David's defeat of the Philistines included their chief city, Gath, Goliath's hometown and David's refuge when he fled from Saul and allied with its king

2 Sam 8-10 shows us that victorious living is faithful obedience, regardless of circumstances or outcomes.

2 And He defeated Moab, and measured them with the line, making them lie down on the ground; and he measured two lines to put to death, and a full line to keep alive. And the Moabites became servants to David, bringing tribute.

2 He defeated Moab, and measured them with the line, making them lie down on the ground; and he measured two lines to put to death and one full line to keep alive. And the Moabites became servants to David, bringing tribute.

2 David also conquered Moab, then measured them with a cord, making them lie down on the ground. He executed everyone measured out in each two lengths' measurement of the cord, but spared the ones measured out by every third length. Then the Moabites were placed under servitude to David, and made to pay tribute.

2 And he smote Moab, and measured them with a line, casting them down to the ground; even with two lines measured he to put to death, and with one full line to keep alive. And so the Moabites became David's servants, and brought gifts.

- Next, David attacked the Moabites, putting two out of every three prisoners to death

— One interpretation is that David spared the young Moabites (whose height was a line) and executed the adults (who height was two lines)

— The survivors he put in bondage to Israel, which implies that Moab became a vassal state to David as the great king

— Some interpreters view David as giving the Moabites harsh treatment—since David had ancestral roots in Moab—through Ruth—and relationships up until then appear to have been amicable (Cf. 1 Sam 22:3-4)

— Others view David's treatment of them as merciful, leaving one-third of them alive

- David's flight from Saul led him to Moab for a time, where he found sanctuary for his parents (1 Sam 22:3-4)

— We can now see that God was putting David's time on the run from Saul to good use as a warrior against God's enemies

All people are born sinners, enemies of God. None is more deserving of being spared the due penalty of sin, death, than any other. No efforts, intentions or works can earn mercy or salvation from God. Yet, God chooses to save some. At His own expense, God saves sinners from their sin for a new life that serves as a living witness to both the fierce might and great grace of God.

3 Then David defeated Hadadezer, the son of Rehob king of Zobah, as he went to restore his power at the *Euphrates* River.

3 Then David defeated Hadadezer, the son of Rehob king of Zobah, as he went to restore his rule at the River.

3 David also attacked King Hadadezer, Rehob's son from Zobah, when he was attempting to restore his hegemony over the Euphrates River.

3 David smote also Hadadezer, the son of Rehob, king of Zobah, as he went to recover his border at the river Euphrates.

- The Arameans then became David's objective. Consisting of a loose federation of city-states, the Arameans rose to prominence the same time Israel's monarchy rose under Saul and David.

— David first made an assault against Hadadezer (or Hadarezer), king of Zobah, an area just north of Damascus

— Hadadezer had gone on a campaign to the Euphrates River to recover some territory, and in his absence David struck

4 And David captured from him **1,700 horsemen** and twenty thousand foot soldiers; and David **hamstrung** almost all the chariot horses, but left *enough* of them for a hundred chariots.

4 David captured from him 1,700 horsemen and 20,000 foot soldiers; and David hamstrung the chariot horses, but reserved *enough* of them for 100 chariots.

4 David captured 1,000 of his chariots, 1,700 horsemen, and 20,000 foot soldiers. David hamstrung all the chariot horses except for enough to supply 100 chariots.

4 And David took from him a thousand chariots, and seven hundred horsemen, and twenty thousand footmen: and David houghed all the chariot horses, but reserved of them for an hundred chariots.

- "...1,700 horsemen" - the Hebrew reads "1,700 charioteers" as well, but 1 Chr 18:4 (a better preserved text) reads, as the NIV does, "7,000 charioteers"

— See note: **Numbers in Chronicles that Disagree with Other OT Passages** in 1 Chr 18

- His victory over these Arameans gained him prisoners (7,000 charioteers and 20,000 foot soldiers), 1,000 chariots, and 100 of the chariot horses, the latter used for the first time to field a chariot corps in Israel

— As David conquered God's enemies, David brought their treasures home to Jerusalem as a sign of their subjection to Israel

- "...hamstrung" - this involved severing the large tendon above and behind their hocks (ankles) to disable them

— Evidently, David had plenty of horses and did not need to use all that he captured in war

— He may have also be following God's instruction against multiplying horses (Deut 17:16)

Although David multiplied wives (Solomon multiplied both horses and wives), he is apparently trying to follow the Lord's instructions in this matter concerning the horses.

5 When the Arameans of Damascus came to help Hadadezer, king of Zobah, David killed twenty-two thousand men among the Arameans.

5 When the Arameans of Damascus came to help Hadadezer, king of Zobah, David killed 22,000 Arameans.

5 When Arameans came from Damascus to help King Hadadezer of Zobah, David killed 22,000 of them.

5 And when the Syrians of Damascus came to succour Hadadezer king of Zobah, David slew of the Syrians two and twenty thousand men.

- Before David could return, he and his men were attacked by the Aramean troops of Damascus. Again David prevailed, and after slaying 22,000 of the enemy.

6 Then David put garrisons among the Arameans of Damascus, and the Arameans became servants to David, bringing tribute. And the LORD helped David wherever he went.

6 Then David put garrisons among the Arameans of Damascus, and the Arameans became servants to David, bringing tribute. And the LORD helped David wherever he went.

6 David erected garrisons in the Aramean kingdom of Damascus, placing the Arameans under servitude to him, and they paid tribute to him.

6 Then David put garrisons in Syria of Damascus: and the Syrians became servants to David, and brought gifts. And the LORD preserved David whithersoever he went.

- David established an occupation force in Damascus, thus making Damascus another client state to Israel, required to pay tribute

7 David took the shields of gold which were carried by the servants of Hadadezer, and brought them to Jerusalem.

7 David took the shields of gold which were carried by the servants of Hadadezer and brought them to Jerusalem.

7 David also confiscated the gold shields that belonged to Hadadezer's officers and took them to Jerusalem.

7 And David took the shields of gold that were on the servants of Hadadezer, and brought them to Jerusalem.

8 And from **Betah** and **Berothai**, cities of Hadadezer, King David took a very large amount of bronze.

8 From Betah and from Berothai, cities of Hadadezer, King David took a very large amount of bronze.

8 He also confiscated a vast quantity of bronze from Betah and Berothai, cities under Hadadezer's control.

8 And from Betah, and from Berothai, cities of Hadadezer, king David took exceeding much brass.

- Finally he returned to Jerusalem triumphantly, bringing gold shields and much bronze as trophies of conquest

- "...Betah" - "Tibhath" (1 Chr 18:8)

- "...Berothai" - "Berothah" (Ezek 47:16)

9 Now when Toi king of Hamath heard that David had defeated the whole army of Hadadezer,

9 Now when Toi king of Hamath heard that David had defeated all the army of Hadadezer,

9 When King Tou of Hamath learned that David had conquered the entire army of King Hadadezer of Zobah,

9 When Toi king of Hamath heard that David had smitten all the host of Hadadezer,

10 Toi sent his son Joram to King David to greet him and bless him, because he had fought Hadadezer and defeated him; for Hadadezer had been at war with Toi. And *Joram* brought with him articles of silver, gold, and bronze.

10 Toi sent Joram his son to King David to greet him and bless him, because he had fought against Hadadezer and defeated him; for Hadadezer had been at war with Toi. And *Joram* brought with him articles of silver, of gold and of bronze.

10 Tou sent his son Joram to King David to greet him and congratulate him on his victory over Hadadezer, because he had been at war with Tou. Joram brought articles of silver, gold, and bronze with him,

10 Then Toi sent Joram his son unto king David, to salute him, and to bless him, because he had fought against Hadadezer, and smitten him: for Hadadezer had wars with Toi. And Joram brought with him vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and vessels of brass:

- Having witnessed David's remarkable military successes, Tou (Heb. *Toi*) king of the Aramean city-state of Hamath, decided to capitulate without struggle and become a vassal of Israel

— To symbolize this move he sent his son Joram (or Hadoram, 1 Chr 18:10) to David laden with precious articles of silver, gold and bronze

11 King David also consecrated these *gifts* to the LORD, with the silver and gold that he had consecrated from all the nations which he had subdued:

11 King David also dedicated these to the LORD, with the silver and gold that he had dedicated from all the nations which he had subdued:

11 and King David dedicated them to the LORD, along with the silver and gold that had been dedicated from all the nations that he had conquered,

11 Which also king David did dedicate unto the LORD, with the silver and gold that he had dedicated of all nations which he subdued;

12 from Aram, Moab, the sons of Ammon, the Philistines, Amalek, and from the spoils of Hadadezer, son of Rehob, king of Zobah.

12 from Aram and Moab and the sons of Ammon and the Philistines and Amalek, and from the spoil of Hadadezer, son of Rehob, king of Zobah.

12 including from Edom, Moab, the Ammonites, the Philistines, Amalek, and spoil from King Hadadezer, Rehob's son from Zobah.

12 Of Syria, and of Moab, and of the children of Ammon, and of the Philistines, and of Amalek, and of the spoil of Hadadezer, son of Rehob, king of Zobah.

- These David added to all the other spoils he had gained in previous campaigns:

- Philistines (Cf. v1)
- Moab (Cf. v2)
- Edom (Cf. v14)
- Ammonites (Cf. 2 Sam 10)
- Amalek - David's conquest of Amalek is not narrated in the OT

All these spoils he dedicated to the service of the LORD (Cf. 1 Kings 7:51)

13 So David made a name *for himself* when he returned from killing eighteen thousand Arameans in the Valley of Salt.

13 So David made a name *for himself* when he returned from killing 18,000 Arameans in the Valley of Salt.

13 David made a name for himself when he returned from killing 18,000 Edomites in the Salt Valley.

13 And David gat him a name when he returned from smiting of the Syrians in the valley of salt, being eighteen thousand men.

- Likely while Israel was at war with the Arameans, the Edomites invaded Israel and proceeded as far as the Valley of Salt (south end of Dead Sea)

— David evidently defeated the Edomites there after defeating the Arameans (Cf. Ps 60:1)

— 1 Chr 18:12 gives Abishai credit for killing the Edomites; Ps 60:1 credits Joab, Abishai's brother, for killing 12,000 Edomites

— Perhaps this difference is explainable by noting that the entire campaign was under Abishai's direct command, and that Joab was responsible (with the soldiers in his contingency) for killing two-thirds of the Edomites

14 He also put garrisons in Edom. In all Edom he put garrisons, and all the Edomites became servants to David. And the LORD helped David wherever he went.

14 He put garrisons in Edom. In all Edom he put garrisons, and all the Edomites became servants to David. And the LORD helped David wherever he went.

14 He erected garrisons throughout Edom, and all the Edomites became subservient to David, while the LORD gave victory to David wherever he went.

14 And he put garrisons in Edom; throughout all Edom put he garrisons, and all they of Edom became David's servants. And the LORD preserved David whithersoever he went.

- Finally David gained far-flung fame by defeating an Edomite army of 18,000 in the Valley of Salt, a marshy plain south of the Dead Sea

According to God's Promises

David's military triumphs proved the Lord's faithfulness to His promises. God laid out Canaan's boundaries to Abraham in Gen 15. This description was repeated, with various details, through Moses, Joshua and Ezekiel (Deut 11:24; Joshua 1:4; Ezek 47:18-20). Many scholars claim Israel has never yet fully reached the Euphrates. Yet, under God's hand in David's kingdom, Israel held influence and control from the southern to northern boundaries of God's covenant and beyond.

God also promised Israel he would drive out enemy nations in and around Canaan so His people would live in security (Ex 33:2). Israel entered the Promised Land under Joshua, however they did not eliminate the Canaanites or take every part of the land at that time (Joshua 11:23; 13:1). God was unfolding His promised plan in His way and His perfect timing. It was David who faithfully fought and experienced God's great power to give long-term security and stability to Israel.

15 So David reigned over all Israel; and David administered justice and righteousness for all his people.

15 So David reigned over all Israel; and David administered justice and righteousness for all his people.

15 David reigned over all of Israel, administering justice and equity to every one of his people.

15 And David reigned over all Israel; and David executed judgment and justice unto all his people.

- As David's military victories showed God's power, David's rule over Israel reflected God's righteousness

16 Joab the son of Zeruiah *was commander* over the army, and Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud *was secretary*.

16 Joab the son of Zeruiah *was over* the army, and Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud *was recorder*.

16 Zeruiah's son Joab served in charge of the army, Ahilud's son Jehoshaphat was his personal archivist,

16 And Joab the son of Zeruiah was over the host; and Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud was recorder;

- "...secretary" - *mazkir*, "to remember" or "writer of chronicles"

— This was an important role in the courts, where he would keep the king informed, advise him, and communicate the king's commands

Interestingly, the Lord is also depicted, like the human king, as having “recorders” though the word is translated “remembrancers”; their responsibility was to keep reminding Him of His stated intentions until they were completed (Is 62:6). This is an aspect of prayer which is easily overlooked, though it is implicit in the Lord’s prayer: “thy kingdom come, thy will be done.”

17 Zadok the son of Ahitub and Ahimelech the son of Abiathar *were* priests, and **Seraiah** *was* scribe.

17 Zadok the son of Ahitub and Ahimelech the son of Abiathar *were* priests, and Seraiah *was* secretary.

17 Ahitub’s son Zadok and Abiathar’s son Ahimelech were priests, Seraiah was his personal secretary,

17 And Zadok the son of Ahitub, and Ahimelech the son of Abiathar, were the priests; and Seraiah was the scribe;

- “...Seraiah” - called “Sheva” (20:25), “Shisha” (1 Kings 4:3), and “Shavsha” (1 Chr 18:16)

- “...scribe” - “secretary”; a job similar to secretary of state

- The mention of Zadok and Ahimelech together indicates the transition that was occurring in the office of priest

— Ahimelech, son of Abiathar, was a descendant of Eli, whose priestly line Samuel had said would come to an end (1 Sam 3:10-14)

— Zadok was a descendant of Aaron through Eleazar (1 Chr 6:4-8). Through Zadok the line of priests eventually continued through the remainder of OT times.

18 Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was over the Cherethites and the Pelethites; and David’s sons were **chief ministers**.

18 Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was over the Cherethites and the Pelethites; and David’s sons were chief ministers.

18 Jehoida’s son Benaiah supervised the special forces and mercenaries, and David’s sons were priests.

18 And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was over both the Cherethites and the Pelethites; and David’s sons were chief rulers.

- David’s “cabinet” included:

- Joab as military commander
- Jehoshaphat, record keeper
- Zadok and Ahimelech, chief priests
- Seraiah, secretary

- Benaiah (Cf. 23:2-23), leader of the elite Kerethite and Pelethite troops (also mentioned in 1 Sam 30:14; 2 Sam 15:18; 20:7,23; 1 Kings 1:38,44; 1 Chr 18:17; Ezek 25:16; Zeph 2:5); he was possibly related to the Philistines in some way.
- "...chief ministers" - this Hebrew word, usually rendered "priests" [see ISV] is explained in 1 Chr 18:17 as "chief officials" (Cf. 2 Sam 20:26)
- This no doubt is the better meaning since David's sons, as Judeans, were ineligible to serve as priests

Were the land promises of the Abrahamic Covenant fulfilled in David's lifetime? — No. David's influence was larger than his kingdom. His kingdom did not include neighboring vassal states (i.e., Moab, Edom, Aram) much less other territories that acknowledged David's authority (Hamath, Philistia, and Phoenicia). His kingdom stretched from the Gulf of Aqabah and the Wadi of Egypt, on the southeast and southwest respectively, to the Euphrates River on the northeast. David did not have complete sovereignty over all this territory, however. Some of his neighbor kingdoms were tribute-paying vassal states. Israel lost control of most of this territory later. Since God had promised Abraham's descendants permanent possession of the Promised Land (Gen 13:15), David's kingdom did not constitute a fulfillment of the land promise in the Abrahamic Covenant.