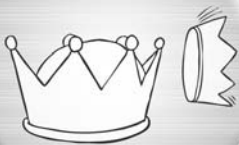


## 2 Samuel



**T**he two books of Samuel were originally one long book. Second Samuel records how David was made king of the tribe of Judah. Later he was made king of all of Israel. God made a special covenant with David, promising him that one of his descendants would always be king of Israel. The remainder of 2 Samuel tells of David's struggles to keep control of his kingdom and his family. Much of David's misery is seen as a direct result of his own sin—his adulterous relationship with Bathsheba and the murder of her husband Uriah.

### David Finds Out about Saul's Death

**1** Saul was dead. Meanwhile, David had defeated the Amalekites and returned to Ziklag. **2** Three days later, a soldier came from Saul's army. His clothes were torn, and dirt was on his head. He went to David and knelt down in front of him.

**3** David asked, "Where did you come from?"

The man answered, "From Israel's army. I barely escaped with my life."

**4** "Who won the battle?" David asked.

The man said, "Our army turned and ran, but many were wounded and died. Even King Saul and his son Jonathan are dead."

**5** David asked, "How do you know Saul and Jonathan are dead?"

**6** The young man replied:

I was on Mount Gilboa and saw King Saul leaning on his spear. The enemy's war chariots and cavalry were closing in on him. **7** When he turned around and saw me, he called me over. I went and asked what he wanted.

**8** Saul asked me, "Who are you?"

"An Amalekite," I answered.

**9** Then he said, "Kill me! I'm dying, and I'm in terrible pain."▷

**10** So I killed him. I knew he was too badly wounded to live much longer. Then I took his

crown and his arm-band, and I brought them to you, Your Majesty. Here they are.

**11** At once, David and his soldiers tore their clothes in sorrow. **12** They cried all day long and would not eat anything. Everyone was sad because Saul, his son Jonathan, and many of the LORD's people had been killed in the battle.

**13** David asked the young man, "Where is your home?"

The man replied, "My father is an Amalekite, but we live in Israel."

**14-16** David said to him, "Why weren't you afraid to kill the LORD's chosen king? And you even told what you did. It's your own fault that you're going to die!"

Then David told one of his soldiers, "Come here and kill this man!"

### David Sings in Memory of Saul

**17** David sang a song in memory of Saul and Jonathan, **18** and he ordered his men to teach the song to everyone in Judah. He called it "The Song of the Bow," and it can be found in *The Book of Jashar*. This is the song:

**19** Israel, your famous hero  
lies dead on the hills,  
and your mighty warriors  
have fallen!

**20** Don't tell it in Gath

- or spread the news  
on the streets of Ashkelon.  
The godless Philistine women  
will be happy  
and jump for joy.
- 21 Don't let dew or rain fall  
on the hills of Gilboa.  
Don't let its fields  
grow offerings for God.  
There the warriors' shields  
were smeared with mud,  
and Saul's own shield  
was left unpolished.
- 22 The arrows of Jonathan struck,  
and warriors died.  
The sword of Saul cut  
the enemy apart.
- 23 It was easy to love Saul  
and Jonathan.  
Together in life,  
together in death,  
they were faster than eagles  
and stronger than lions.
- 24 Women of Israel, cry for Saul.  
He brought you fine red cloth  
and jewelry made of gold.
- 25 Our warriors have fallen  
in the heat of battle,  
and Jonathan lies dead  
on the hills of Gilboa.
- 26 Jonathan, I miss you most!  
I loved you  
like a brother.  
You were truly loyal to me,  
more faithful than a wife  
to her husband.<sup>></sup>
- 27 Our warriors have fallen,  
and their weapons  
are destroyed.

### David Becomes King of Judah

**2** Later, David asked the LORD, "Should I go back to one of the towns of Judah?"

The LORD answered, "Yes."

David asked, "Which town should I go to?"

"Go to Hebron," the LORD replied.

<sup>2</sup> David went to Hebron with his two wives, Ahinoam and Abigail. Ahinoam was from Jezreel, and Abigail was the widow of Nabal from Carmel.

<sup>3</sup> David also told his men and their families to come and live in the villages near Hebron.

<sup>4</sup> The people of Judah met with David at Hebron and poured olive oil on his head to show that he was their new king. Then they told David, "The people from Jabesh in Gilead buried Saul."

<sup>5</sup> David sent messengers to tell them:

The LORD bless you! You were kind enough to bury Saul your ruler, <sup>6</sup> and I pray that the LORD will be kind and faithful to you. I will be your friend because of what you have done.

<sup>7</sup> Saul is dead, but the tribe of Judah has made me their king. So be strong and have courage.

### Ishbosheth Becomes King of Israel

<sup>8</sup> Abner the son of Ner had been the general of Saul's army. He took Saul's son Ishbosheth<sup>></sup> across the Jordan River to Mahanaim <sup>9</sup> and made him king of Israel, including the areas of Gilead, Asher,<sup>></sup> Jezreel, Ephraim, and Benjamin. <sup>10</sup> Ishbosheth was 40 years old at the time, and he ruled for two years. But the tribe of Judah made David their king. <sup>11</sup> and he ruled from Hebron for seven and a half years.

### The War between David and Ishbosheth

<sup>12</sup> One day, Abner and the soldiers of Ishbosheth<sup>></sup> left Mahanaim and went to Gibeon. <sup>13</sup> Meanwhile, Joab the son of Zeruiah was leading David's soldiers, and the two groups met at the pool in Gibeon. Abner and his men sat down on one side of the pool, while Joab and his men sat on the other side. <sup>14</sup> Abner yelled to Joab, "Let's get some of our best soldiers to stand up and fight each other!"

Joab agreed, <sup>15</sup> and twelve of Ishbosheth's men from the tribe of Benjamin got up to fight twelve of David's men. <sup>16</sup> They grabbed each other by the hair and stabbed each other in the side with their daggers. They all died right there! That's why the place in Gibeon is called "Field of Daggers."<sup>></sup>

<sup>17</sup> Then everyone started fighting. Both sides fought very hard, but David's soldiers defeated Abner and the soldiers of Israel.

<sup>18</sup> Zeruiah's three sons were there: Joab, Abishai, and Asahel. Asahel could run as fast as a deer in an open field, <sup>19</sup> and he ran straight after Abner, without looking to the right or to the left.

<sup>20</sup> When Abner turned and saw him, he said, "Is that you, Asahel?"

Asahel answered, "Yes it is."

<sup>21</sup> Abner said, "There are soldiers all around. Stop chasing me and fight one of them! Kill him and take his clothes and weapons for yourself."

But Asahel refused to stop.

<sup>22</sup> Abner said, "If you don't turn back, I'll have to kill you! Then I could never face your brother Joab again."

<sup>23</sup> But Asahel would not turn back, so Abner struck him in the stomach with the back end of his spear. The spear went all the way through and came out of his back. Asahel fell down and died. Everyone who saw Asahel lying dead just stopped and stood still. <sup>24</sup> But Joab and Abishai went after Abner. Finally, about sunset, they came to the hill of Ammah, not far from Giah on the road to Gibeon Desert. <sup>25</sup> Abner brought the men of Benjamin together in one group on top of a hill, and they got ready to fight.

<sup>26</sup> Abner shouted to Joab, "Aren't we ever going to stop killing each other? Don't you know that the longer we keep on doing this, the worse it's going to be when it's all over? When are you going to order your men to stop chasing their own relatives?"

<sup>27</sup> Joab shouted back, "I swear by the living God, if you hadn't spoken, my men would have chased their relatives all night!" <sup>28</sup> Joab took his trumpet and blew the signal for his soldiers to stop chasing the soldiers of Israel. At once, the fighting stopped.

<sup>29</sup> Abner and his troops marched through the Jordan River valley all that night. Then they crossed the river and marched 'all morning' until they arrived back at Mahanaim.

<sup>30</sup> As soon as Joab stopped chasing Abner, he got David's troops together and counted them. There were 19 missing besides Asahel. <sup>31</sup> But David's soldiers had killed 360 of Abner's men from the tribe of Benjamin. <sup>32</sup> Joab and his troops carried Asahel's body to Bethlehem and buried him in the family burial place. Then they marched all night and reached Hebron before sunrise.

**3** This battle was the beginning of a long war between the followers of Saul and the followers of David. Saul's power grew weaker, but David's grew stronger.

### David's Sons Born in Hebron

<sup>2-5</sup> Several of David's sons were born while he was living in Hebron. His oldest son was Amnon, whose mother was Ahinoam from Jezreel. David's second son was Chileab, whose mother was Abigail, who had been married to Nabal from Carmel. Absalom was the third. His mother was Maacah, the daughter of King Talmi of Geshur. The fourth was Adonijah, whose mother was Haggith. The fifth was Shephatiah, whose mother was Abital. The sixth

was Ithream, whose mother was Eglah, another one of David's wives.

### Abner Decides To Help David

<sup>6</sup> As the war went on between the families of David and Saul, Abner was gaining more power than ever in Saul's family. <sup>7</sup> He had even slept with a wife of Saul by the name of Rizpah the daughter of Aiah. But Saul's son Ishbosheth<sup>></sup> told Abner, "You shouldn't have slept with one of my father's wives!"

<sup>8</sup> Abner was very angry at what Ishbosheth had said, and he told Ishbosheth:

Am I some kind of worthless dog from Judah? I've always been loyal to your father's family and to his relatives and friends. I haven't turned you over to David. And yet you talk to me as if I've committed a crime with this woman.

<sup>9</sup> I ask God to punish me if I don't help David get what the LORD promised him! <sup>10</sup> God said that he wouldn't let anyone in Saul's family ever be king again and that David would be king instead. He also said that David would rule both Israel and Judah, all the way from Dan in the north to Beersheba in the south.<sup>></sup>

<sup>11</sup> Ishbosheth was so afraid of Abner that he could not even answer.

<sup>12</sup> Abner sent some of his men to David with this message: "You should be the ruler of the whole nation.<sup>></sup> If you make an agreement with me, I will persuade everyone in Israel to make you their king."

<sup>13</sup> David sent this message back: "Good! I'll make an agreement with you. But before I will even talk with you about it, you must get Saul's daughter Michal back for me."

<sup>14</sup> David sent a few of his officials to Ishbosheth to give him this message: "Give me back my wife Michal! I killed 100 Philistines so I could marry her."

<sup>15</sup> Ishbosheth sent some of his men to take Michal away from her new husband, Paltiel the son of Laish. <sup>16</sup> Paltiel followed Michal and the men all the way to Bahurim, crying as he walked. But he went back home after Abner ordered him to leave.

<sup>17</sup> Abner talked with the leaders of the tribes of Israel and told them, "You've wanted to make David your king for a long time now. <sup>18</sup> So do it! After all, God said he would use his servant David to rescue his people Israel from their enemies, especially from the Philistines."

<sup>19</sup> Finally, Abner talked with the tribe of Benjamin. Then he left for Hebron to tell David everything that the tribe of Benjamin and the rest of

the people of Israel wanted to do.<sup>20</sup> Abner took 20 soldiers with him, and when they got to Hebron, David gave a big feast for them.

<sup>21</sup> After the feast, Abner said, "Your Majesty, let me leave now and bring Israel here to make an agreement with you. You'll be king of the whole nation, just as you've been wanting."

David told Abner he could leave, and he left without causing any trouble.

### Joab Kills Abner

<sup>22</sup> Soon after Abner had left Hebron, Joab and some of David's soldiers came back, bringing a lot of things they had taken from an enemy village.<sup>23</sup> Right after they arrived, someone told Joab, "Abner visited the king, and the king let him go. Abner even left without causing any trouble."

<sup>24</sup> Joab went to David and said, "What have you done? Abner came to you, and you let him go. Now he's long gone!"<sup>25</sup> You know Abner—he came to trick you. He wants to find out how strong your army is and to know everything you're doing."

<sup>26</sup> Joab left David, then he sent some messengers to catch up with Abner. They brought him back from the well at Sirah,<sup>></sup> but David did not know anything about it.<sup>27</sup> When Abner returned to Hebron, Joab pretended he wanted to talk privately with him. So he took Abner into one of the small rooms that were part of the town gate and stabbed him in the stomach. Joab killed him because Abner had killed Joab's brother Asahel.

### Abner's Funeral

<sup>28</sup> David heard how Joab had killed Abner, and he said, "I swear to the LORD that I am completely innocent of Abner's death!"<sup>29</sup> Joab and his family are the guilty ones. I pray that Joab's family will always be sick with sores and other skin diseases. May they all be 'cowards,' and may they die in war or starve to death."

<sup>30</sup> Joab and his brother Abishai killed Abner because he had killed their brother Asahel in the battle at Gibeon.

<sup>31</sup> David told Joab and everyone with him, "Show your sorrow by tearing your clothes and wearing sackcloth! Walk in front of Abner's body and cry!"

David walked behind the stretcher on which Abner's body was being carried.<sup>32</sup> Abner was buried in Hebron, while David and everyone else stood at the tomb and cried loudly.<sup>33</sup> Then the king sang a funeral song about Abner:

Abner, why should you  
have died like an outlaw?<sup>></sup>

<sup>34</sup> No one tied your hands  
or chained your feet,  
yet you died as a victim  
of murderers.

Everyone started crying again.<sup>35</sup> Then they brought some food to David and told him he would feel better if he had something to eat. It was still daytime, and David said, "I swear to God that I'll not take a bite of bread or anything else until sunset!"

<sup>36</sup> Everyone noticed what David did, and they liked it, just as they always liked what he did.<sup>37</sup> Now the people of Judah and Israel were certain that David had nothing to do with killing Abner.

<sup>38</sup> David said to his officials, "Don't you realize that today one of Israel's great leaders has died?<sup>39</sup> I am the chosen king, but Joab and Abishai have more power than I do. So God will have to pay them back<sup>></sup> for the evil thing they did."

### Ishbosheth Is Killed

**4** Ishbosheth<sup>></sup> felt like giving up after he heard that Abner had died in Hebron. Everyone in Israel was terrified.

<sup>2</sup> Ishbosheth had put the two brothers Baanah and Rechab in charge of the soldiers who raided enemy villages. Rimmon was their father, and they were from the town of Beeroth, which belonged to the tribe of Benjamin.<sup>3</sup> The people who used to live in Beeroth had run away to Gittaim, and they still live there.

<sup>4</sup> Saul's son Jonathan had a son named Mephibosheth,<sup>></sup> who had not been able to walk since he was five years old. It happened when someone from Jezreel told his nurse that Saul and Jonathan had died. She hurried off with the boy in her arms, but he fell and injured his legs.

<sup>5</sup> One day about noon, Rechab and Baanah went to Ishbosheth's house. It was a hot day, and he was resting<sup>6-7</sup> in his bedroom. The two brothers went into the house, pretending to get some flour. But once they were inside, they stabbed Ishbosheth in the stomach and killed him. Then they cut off his head and took it with them.

Rechab and Baanah walked through the Jordan River valley all night long.<sup>8</sup> Finally they turned west and went to Hebron. They went in to see David and told him, "Your Majesty, here is the head of Ishbosheth, the son of your enemy Saul who tried

to kill you! The LORD has let you get even with Saul and his family.”

<sup>9</sup> David answered:

I swear that only the LORD rescues me when I'm in trouble! <sup>10</sup>When a man came to Ziklag and told me that Saul was dead, he thought he deserved a reward for bringing good news. But I grabbed him and killed him.

<sup>11</sup>You evil men have done something much worse than he did. You've killed an innocent man in his own house and on his own bed. I'll make you pay for that. I'll wipe you from the face of the earth!

<sup>12</sup>Then David said to his troops, "Kill these two brothers! Cut off their hands and feet and hang their bodies by the pool in Hebron. But bury Ishbosheth's head in Abner's tomb near Hebron." And they did it.

### David Becomes King of Israel

**5** Israel's leaders met with David at Hebron and said, "We are your relatives. <sup>2</sup>Even when Saul was king, you led our nation in battle. And the LORD promised that someday you would rule Israel and take care of us like a shepherd."

<sup>3</sup>During the meeting, David made an agreement with the leaders and asked the LORD to be their witness. Then the leaders poured olive oil on David's head to show that he was now the king of Israel.

<sup>4</sup>David was 30 years old when he became king, and he ruled for 40 years. <sup>5</sup>He lived in Hebron for the first seven and a half years and ruled only Judah. Then he moved to Jerusalem, where he ruled both Israel and Judah for 33 years.

### How David Captured Jerusalem

<sup>6</sup>The Jebusites lived in Jerusalem, and David led his army there to attack them. The Jebusites did not think he could get in, so they told him, "You can't get in here! We could run you off, even if we couldn't see or walk!"

<sup>7-9</sup>David told his troops, "You will have to go up through the water tunnel to get those Jebusites. I hate people like them who can't walk or see."

That's why there is still a rule that says, "Only people who can walk and see are allowed in the temple."▷

David captured the fortress on Mount Zion, then he moved there and named it David's City. He had the city rebuilt, starting with the landfill to the east. <sup>10</sup>David became a great and strong ruler, because the LORD All-Powerful was on his side.

<sup>11</sup>King Hiram of Tyre sent some officials to David. Carpenters and stone workers came with them, and they brought cedar logs so they could build David a palace.

<sup>12</sup>David knew that the LORD had made him king of Israel and that he had made him a powerful ruler for the good of his people.

### David's Sons Born in Jerusalem

<sup>13</sup>After David left Hebron and moved to Jerusalem, he married many women from Jerusalem,▷ and he had a lot of children. <sup>14</sup>His sons who were born there were Shammua, Shobab, Nathan, Solomon, <sup>15</sup>Ibhar, Elishua, Nepheg, Japhia, <sup>16</sup>Elishama, Eliada, and Eliphelet.

### David Fights the Philistines

<sup>17</sup>The Philistines heard that David was now king of Israel, and they came into the hill country to try and capture him. But David found out and went into his fortress. <sup>18</sup>So the Philistines camped in Rephaim Valley.

<sup>19</sup>David asked the LORD, "Should I attack the Philistines? Will you let me win?"

The LORD told David, "Attack! I will let you win."

<sup>20</sup>David attacked the Philistines and defeated them. Then he said, "I watched the LORD break through my enemies like a mighty flood." So he named the place "The Lord Broke Through."▷ <sup>21</sup>David and his troops also carried away the idols that the Philistines had left behind.

<sup>22</sup>Some time later, the Philistines came back into the hill country and camped in Rephaim Valley. <sup>23</sup>David asked the LORD what he should do, and the LORD answered:

Don't attack them from the front. Circle around behind and attack from among the 'balsam' trees.

<sup>24</sup>Wait until you hear a sound like troops marching through the tops of the trees. Then attack quickly! That sound will mean I have marched out ahead of you to fight the Philistine army.

<sup>25</sup>David obeyed the LORD and defeated the Philistines. He even chased them all the way from Geba to the entrance to Gezer.

### David Brings the Sacred Chest Back to Jerusalem

**6** David brought together 30,000 of Israel's best soldiers and <sup>2</sup>led them to Baalah in Judah, which was also called Kiriath-Jearim. They were going there▷ to get the sacred chest and bring it back to Jerusalem. The throne of the LORD

All-Powerful is above the winged creatures on top of this chest, and he is worshiped there.▷

<sup>3</sup> They put the sacred chest on a new ox cart and started bringing it down the hill from Abinadab's house. Abinadab's sons Uzzah and Ahio were guiding the ox cart, <sup>4</sup> with Ahio▷ walking in front of it. <sup>5</sup> Some of the people of Israel were playing music on small harps and other stringed instruments, and on tambourines, castanets, and cymbals. David and the others were happy, and they danced for the LORD with all their might.

<sup>6</sup> But when they came to Nacon's threshing-floor, the oxen stumbled, so Uzzah reached out and took hold of the sacred chest. <sup>7</sup> The LORD God was very angry at Uzzah for doing this, and he killed Uzzah right there beside the chest.

<sup>8</sup> David got angry at God for killing Uzzah. He named that place "Bursting Out Against Uzzah,"▷ and that's what it's still called.

<sup>9</sup> David was afraid of the LORD and thought, "Should I really take the sacred chest to my city?" <sup>10</sup> He decided not to take it there. Instead, he turned off the road and took it to the home of Obed Edom, who was from Gath.▷

<sup>11-12</sup> The chest stayed there for three months, and the LORD greatly blessed Obed Edom, his family, and everything he owned. Then someone told King David, "The LORD has done this because the sacred chest is in Obed Edom's house."

At once, David went to Obed Edom's house to get the chest and bring it to David's City. Everyone was celebrating. <sup>13</sup> The people carrying the chest walked six steps, then David sacrificed an ox and a choice cow. <sup>14</sup> He was dancing for the LORD with all his might, but he wore only a linen cloth. <sup>15</sup> He and everyone else were celebrating by shouting and blowing horns while the chest was being carried along.

<sup>16</sup> Saul's daughter Michal looked out her window and watched the chest being brought into David's City. But when she saw David jumping and dancing for the LORD, she was disgusted.

<sup>17</sup> They put the chest inside a tent that David had set up for it. David worshiped the LORD by sacrificing animals and burning them on an altar,▷ <sup>18</sup> then he blessed the people in the name of the LORD All-Powerful. <sup>19</sup> He gave all the men and women in the crowd a small loaf of bread, some meat, and a handful of raisins, and everyone went home.

### Michal Talks to David

<sup>20</sup> David went home so he could ask the LORD to bless his family. But Saul's daughter Michal went

out and started yelling at him. "You were really great today!" she said. "You acted like a dirty old man, dancing around half-naked in front of your servants' slave-girls."

<sup>21</sup> David told her, "The LORD didn't choose your father or anyone else in your family to be the leader of his people. The LORD chose me, and I was celebrating in honor of him. <sup>22</sup> I'll show you just how great I can be! I'll even be disgusting to myself. But those slave-girls you talked about will still honor me!"

<sup>23</sup> Michal never had any children.

### The LORD's Message to David

**7** King David moved into his new palace, and the LORD let his kingdom be at peace. <sup>2</sup> Then one day, as David was talking with Nathan the prophet, David said, "Look around! I live in a palace made of cedar, but the sacred chest has to stay in a tent."

<sup>3</sup> Nathan replied, "The LORD is with you, so do what you want!"

<sup>4</sup> That night, the LORD told Nathan <sup>5</sup> to go to David and give him this message:

David, you are my servant, so listen to what I say. Why should you build a temple for me?

<sup>6</sup> I didn't live in a temple when I brought my people out of Egypt, and I don't live in one now. A tent has always been my home wherever I have gone with them. <sup>7</sup> I chose leaders and told them to be like shepherds for my people Israel. But did I ever say anything to even one of them about building a cedar temple for me?

<sup>8</sup> David, this is what I, the LORD All-Powerful, say to you. I brought you in from the fields where you took care of sheep, and I made you the leader of my people. <sup>9</sup> Wherever you went, I helped you and destroyed your enemies right in front of your eyes. I have made you one of the most famous people in the world.

<sup>10</sup> I have given my people Israel a land of their own where they can live in peace, and they won't have to tremble with fear any more. Evil nations won't bother them, as they did <sup>11</sup> when I let judges rule my people. And I have kept your enemies from attacking you.

Now I promise that you and your descendants will be kings. <sup>12</sup> I'll choose one of your sons to be king when you reach the end of your life and are buried in the tomb of your ancestors. I'll make him a strong ruler, <sup>13</sup> and no one will be able to take his kingdom away from him.

He will be the one to build a temple for me. <sup>14</sup> I will be his father, and he will be my son.

When he does wrong, I'll see that he is corrected, just as children are corrected by their parents. <sup>15</sup> But I will never put an end to my agreement with him, as I put an end to my agreement with Saul, who was king before you. <sup>16</sup> I will make sure that one of your descendants will always be king.

<sup>17</sup> Nathan told David exactly what he had heard in the vision.

### David Gives Thanks to the LORD

<sup>18</sup> David went into the tent he had set up for the sacred chest. Then he sat there and prayed:

LORD All-Powerful, my family and I don't deserve what you have already done for us, <sup>19</sup> and yet you have promised to do even more. 'Is this the way you usually treat people?' <sup>20</sup> I am your servant, and you know my thoughts, so there is nothing more that I need to say. <sup>21</sup> You have done this wonderful thing, and you have let me know about it, because you wanted to keep your promise.

<sup>22</sup> LORD All-Powerful, you are greater than all others. No one is like you, and you alone are God. Everything we have heard about you is true. <sup>23</sup> And there is no other nation on earth like Israel, the nation you rescued from slavery in Egypt to be your own. 'You became famous by using great and wonderful miracles to force other nations and their gods out of your land, so your people could live here.' <sup>24</sup> You have chosen Israel to be your people forever, and you have become their God.

<sup>25</sup> And now, LORD God, please do what you have promised me and my descendants. <sup>26</sup> Then you will be famous forever, and everyone will say, "The LORD God All-Powerful rules Israel, and David's descendants are his chosen kings." <sup>27</sup> After all, you really are Israel's God, the LORD All-Powerful. You've told me that you will let my descendants be kings. That's why I have the courage to pray to you like this, even though I am only your servant.

<sup>28</sup> LORD All-Powerful, you are God. You have promised me some very good things, and you can be trusted to do what you promise. <sup>29</sup> Please bless my descendants and let them always be your chosen kings. You have already promised, and I'm sure that you will bless my family forever.

### A List of David's Victories in War

**8** Later, David attacked and badly defeated the Philistines. Israel was now free from their control.▷

<sup>2</sup> David also defeated the Moabites. Then he made their soldiers lie down on the ground, and he measured them off with a rope. He would measure off two lengths of the rope and have those men killed, then he would measure off one length and let those men live. The people of Moab had to accept David as their ruler and pay taxes to him.

<sup>3</sup> 'David set out for the Euphrates River to build a monument there. On his way,' he defeated the king of Zobah, whose name was Hadadezer the son of Rehob. <sup>4</sup> In the battle, David captured 1,700 cavalry▷ and 20,000 foot soldiers. He also captured war chariots, but he destroyed all but 100 of them.▷ <sup>5</sup> When troops from the Aramean kingdom of Damascus came to help Hadadezer, David killed 20,000 of them. <sup>6</sup> He left some of his soldiers in Damascus, and the Arameans had to accept David as their ruler and pay taxes to him.

Everywhere David went, the LORD helped him win battles.

<sup>7</sup> Hadadezer's officers had carried their arrows in gold cases hung over their shoulders, but David took these cases▷ and brought them to Jerusalem. <sup>8</sup> He also took a lot of bronze from the cities of Betah and Berothai, which had belonged to Hadadezer.

<sup>9-10</sup> King Toi of Hamath and King Hadadezer had been enemies. So when Toi heard that David had attacked and defeated▷ Hadadezer's whole army, he sent his son Joram to praise and congratulate David. Joram also brought him gifts made of silver, gold, and bronze. <sup>11</sup> David gave these to the LORD, just as he had done with the silver and gold that he had captured from <sup>12</sup> Edom,▷ Moab, Ammon, Philistia, and from King Hadadezer of Zobah.

<sup>13</sup> David fought the Edomite▷ army in Salt Valley and killed 18,000 of their soldiers. When he returned, he built a monument.▷ <sup>14</sup> David left soldiers all through Edom, and the people of Edom had to accept him as their ruler.

Wherever David went, the LORD helped him.

### A List of David's Officials

<sup>15</sup> David ruled all Israel with fairness and justice.

<sup>16</sup> Joab the son of Zeruiah was the commander in chief of the army.

Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud kept the government records.

<sup>17</sup>Zadok the son of Ahitub, and Abiathar the son of Ahimelech,<sup>▷</sup> were the priests.

Seraiah was the secretary.

<sup>18</sup>Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was the commander of<sup>▷</sup> David's bodyguard.<sup>▷</sup>

David's sons were priests.

### David Is Kind to Mephibosheth

**9** One day, David thought, "I wonder if any of Saul's family are still alive. If they are, I will be kind to them, because I made a promise to Jonathan."<sup>2</sup> David called in Ziba, one of the servants of Saul's family. David said, "So you are Ziba."

"Yes, Your Majesty, I am."

<sup>3</sup> David asked, "Are any of Saul's family still alive? If there are, I want to be kind to them."

Ziba answered, "One of Jonathan's sons is still alive, but he can't walk."

<sup>4</sup> "Where is he?" David asked.

Ziba replied, "He lives in Lo-Debar with Machir the son of Ammiel."

<sup>5-6</sup> David sent some servants to bring Jonathan's son from Lo-Debar. His name was Mephibosheth,<sup>▷</sup> and he was the grandson of Saul. He came to David and knelt down.

David asked, "Are you Mephibosheth?"

"Yes, I am, Your Majesty."

<sup>7</sup> David said, "Don't be afraid. I'll be kind to you because Jonathan was your father. I'm going to give you back the land that belonged to your grandfather Saul. Besides that, you will always eat with me at my table."

<sup>8</sup> Mephibosheth knelt down again and said, "Why should you care about me? I'm worth no more than a dead dog."

<sup>9</sup> David called in Ziba, Saul's chief servant, and told him, "Since Mephibosheth is Saul's grandson, I've given him back everything that belonged to your master Saul and his family."<sup>10</sup> You and your 15 sons and 20 servants will work for Mephibosheth. You will farm his land and bring in his crops, so that Saul's family and servants<sup>▷</sup> will have food. But Mephibosheth will always eat with me at my table."

<sup>11-13</sup> Ziba replied, "Your Majesty, I will do exactly what you tell me to do." So Ziba's family and servants worked for Mephibosheth.

Mephibosheth was lame, but he lived in Jerusalem and ate at David's<sup>▷</sup> table, just like one of David's own sons. And he had a young son of his own, named Mica.

### Israel Fights Ammon

**10** Some time later, King Nahash of Ammon died, and his son Hanun became king.

<sup>2</sup> David said, "Nahash was kind to me, and I will be kind to his son." So he sent some officials to the country of Ammon to tell Hanun how sorry he was that his father had died.

<sup>3</sup> But Hanun's officials told him, "Do you really believe David is honoring your father by sending these people to comfort you? He probably sent them to spy on our city, so he can destroy it."<sup>4</sup> Hanun arrested David's officials and had their beards shaved off on one side of their faces. He had their robes cut off just below the waist, and then he sent them away.<sup>5</sup> They were terribly ashamed.

When David found out what had happened to his officials, he sent a message and told them, "Stay in Jericho until your beards grow back. Then you can come home."

<sup>6</sup> The Ammonites realized that they had made David very angry, so they hired more foreign soldiers. Twenty thousand of them were foot soldiers from the Aramean cities of Beth-Rehob and Zobah, 1,000 were from the king of Maacah, and 12,000 were from the region of Tob.<sup>7</sup> David heard what they had done, and he sent out Joab with all of his well-trained soldiers.

<sup>8</sup> The Ammonite troops came out and got ready to fight in front of the gate to their city. The Arameans from Zobah and Rehob and the soldiers from Tob and Maacah formed a separate group in the nearby fields.

<sup>9</sup> Joab saw that he had to fight in front and behind at the same time, and he picked some of the best Israelite soldiers to fight the Arameans.<sup>10</sup> He put his brother Abishai in command of the rest of the army and gave them orders to fight the Ammonites.<sup>11</sup> Joab told his brother, "If the Arameans are too much for me to handle, you can come and help me. If the Ammonites are too strong for you, I'll come and help you."<sup>12</sup> Be brave and fight hard to protect our people and the cities of our God. I pray that the LORD will do whatever pleases him."

<sup>13</sup> Joab and his soldiers attacked the Arameans, and the Arameans ran from them.<sup>14</sup> When the Ammonite soldiers saw that the Arameans had run away, they ran from Abishai's soldiers and went back into their own city. Joab stopped fighting the Ammonites and returned to Jerusalem.

<sup>15</sup> The Arameans realized they had lost the battle, so they brought all their troops together again.

<sup>16</sup> Hadadzezer sent messengers to call in the

Arameans who were on the other side of the Euphrates River. Then Shobach, the commander of Hadadezer's army, led them to the town of Helam.

<sup>17</sup> David found out what the Arameans were doing, and he brought Israel's whole army together. They crossed the Jordan River and went to Helam, where the Arameans were ready to meet them.

<sup>18</sup> The Arameans attacked, but then they ran from Israel. David killed 700 chariot drivers and 40,000 cavalry. He also killed Shobach, their commander.

<sup>19</sup> When the kings who had been under Hadadezer's rule saw that Israel had beaten them, they made peace with Israel and accepted David as their ruler. The Arameans were afraid to help Ammon any more.

### David and Bathsheba

**11** It was now spring, the time when kings go to war. David sent out the whole Israelite army under the command of Joab and his officers. They destroyed the Ammonite army and surrounded the capital city of Rabbah, but David stayed in Jerusalem.

<sup>2-4</sup> Late one afternoon, David got up from a nap and was walking around on the flat roof of his palace. A beautiful young woman was down below in her courtyard, bathing as her religion required. David happened to see her, and he sent one of his servants to find out who she was.

The servant came back and told David, "Her name is Bathsheba. She is the daughter of Eliam, and she is the wife of Uriah the Hittite."

David sent some messengers to bring her to his palace. She came to him, and he slept with her. Then she returned home. <sup>5</sup> But later, when she found out that she was going to have a baby, she sent someone to David with this message: "I'm pregnant!"

<sup>6</sup> David sent a message to Joab: "Send Uriah the Hittite to me."

Joab sent Uriah <sup>7</sup> to David's palace, and David asked him, "Is Joab well? How is the army doing? And how about the war?" <sup>8</sup> Then David told Uriah, "Go home and clean up." Uriah left the king's palace, and David had dinner sent to Uriah's house. <sup>9</sup> But Uriah didn't go home. Instead, he slept outside the entrance to the royal palace, where the king's guards slept.

<sup>10</sup> Someone told David that Uriah had not gone home. So the next morning David asked him, "Why didn't you go home? Haven't you been away for a long time?"

<sup>11</sup> Uriah answered, "The sacred chest and the armies of Israel and Judah are camping out somewhere in the fields with our commander Joab and his officers and troops. Do you really think I would go home to eat and drink and sleep with my wife? I swear by your life that I would not!"

<sup>12</sup> Then David said, "Stay here in Jerusalem today, and I will send you back tomorrow."

Uriah stayed in Jerusalem that day. Then the next day, <sup>13</sup> David invited him for dinner. Uriah ate with David and drank so much that he got drunk, but he still did not go home. He went out and slept on his mat near the palace guards. <sup>14</sup> Early the next morning, David wrote a letter and told Uriah to deliver it to Joab. <sup>15</sup> The letter said: "Put Uriah on the front line where the fighting is the worst. Then pull the troops back from him, so that he will be wounded and die."

<sup>16</sup> Joab had been carefully watching the city of Rabbah, and he put Uriah in a place where he knew there were some of the enemy's best soldiers. <sup>17</sup> When the men of the city came out, they fought and killed some of David's soldiers—Uriah the Hittite was one of them.

<sup>18</sup> Joab sent a messenger to tell David everything that was happening in the war. <sup>19</sup> He gave the messenger these orders:

When you finish telling the king everything that has happened, <sup>20</sup> he may get angry and ask, "Why did you go so near the city to fight? Didn't you know they would shoot arrows from the wall?" <sup>21</sup> Don't you know how Abimelech the son of Gideon was killed at Thebez? Didn't a woman kill him by dropping a large rock from the top of the city wall? Why did you go so close to the city walls?"

Then you tell him, "One of your soldiers who was killed was Uriah the Hittite."

<sup>22</sup> The messenger went to David and reported everything Joab had told him. <sup>23</sup> He added, "The enemy chased us from the wall and out into the open fields. But we pushed them back as far as the city gate. <sup>24</sup> Then they shot arrows at us from the top of the wall. Some of your soldiers were killed, and one of them was Uriah the Hittite."

<sup>25</sup> David replied, "Tell Joab to cheer up and not to be upset about what happened. You never know who will be killed in a war. Tell him to strengthen his attack against the city and break through its walls."

<sup>26</sup> When Bathsheba heard that her husband was dead, she mourned for him. <sup>27</sup> Then after the time

for mourning was over, David sent someone to bring her to the palace. She became David's wife, and they had a son.

### The LORD's Message for David

**12** The LORD was angry at what David had done, and he sent Nathan the prophet to tell this story to David:

A rich man and a poor man lived in the same town. <sup>2</sup>The rich man owned a lot of sheep and cattle, <sup>3</sup>but the poor man had only one little lamb that he had bought and raised. The lamb became a pet for him and his children. He even let it eat from his plate and drink from his cup and sleep on his lap. The lamb was like one of his own children.

<sup>4</sup>One day someone came to visit the rich man, but the rich man didn't want to kill any of his own sheep or cattle and serve it to the visitor. So he stole the poor man's little lamb and served it instead.

<sup>5</sup>David was furious with the rich man and said to Nathan, "I swear by the living LORD that the man who did this deserves to die! <sup>6</sup>And because he didn't have any pity on the poor man, he will have to pay four times what the lamb was worth."

<sup>7</sup>Then Nathan told David:

You are that rich man! Now listen to what the LORD God of Israel says to you: "I chose you to be the king of Israel. I kept you safe from Saul <sup>8</sup>and even gave you his house and his wives. I let you rule Israel and Judah, and if that had not been enough, I would have given you much more. <sup>9</sup>Why did you disobey me and do such a horrible thing? You murdered Uriah the Hittite by letting the Ammonites kill him, so you could take his wife.

<sup>10</sup>"Because you wouldn't obey me and took Uriah's wife for yourself, your family will never live in peace. <sup>11</sup>Someone from your own family will cause you a lot of trouble, and I will take your wives and give them to another man before your very eyes. He will go to bed with them while everyone looks on. <sup>12</sup>What you did was in secret, but I will do this in the open for everyone in Israel to see."

<sup>13-14</sup>David said, "I have disobeyed the LORD."

"Yes, you have!" Nathan answered. "You showed you didn't care what the LORD wanted. > He has forgiven you, and you won't die. But your newborn son will." <sup>15</sup>Then Nathan went back home.

### David's Young Son Dies

The LORD made David's young son very sick.

<sup>16</sup>So David went without eating to show his sorrow, and he begged God to make the boy well. David would not sleep on his bed, but spent each night lying on the floor. <sup>17</sup>His officials stood beside him and tried to talk him into getting up. But he would not get up or eat with them.

<sup>18</sup>After the child had been sick for seven days, he died, but the officials were afraid to tell David. They said to each other, "Even when the boy was alive, David wouldn't listen to us. How can we tell him his son is dead? He might do something terrible!"

<sup>19</sup>David noticed his servants whispering, and he knew the boy was dead. "Did my son die?" he asked his servants.

"Yes, he did," they answered.

<sup>20</sup>David got up off the floor; he took a bath, combed his hair, and dressed. He went into the LORD's tent and worshiped, then he went back home. David asked for something to eat, and when his servants brought him some food, he ate it.

<sup>21</sup>His officials said, "What are you doing? You went without eating and cried for your son while he was alive! But now that he's dead, you're up and eating."

<sup>22</sup>David answered:

While he was still alive, I went without food and cried because there was still hope. I said to myself, "Who knows? Maybe the LORD will have pity on me and let the child live." <sup>23</sup>But now that he's dead, why should I go without eating? I can't bring him back! Someday I will join him in death, but he can't return to me.

### Solomon Is Born

<sup>24</sup>David comforted his wife Bathsheba and slept with her. Later on, she gave birth to another son and named him Solomon. The LORD loved Solomon <sup>25</sup>and sent Nathan the prophet to tell David, "The LORD will call him Jedidiah." >

### The End of the War with Ammon

<sup>26</sup>Meanwhile, Joab had been in the country of Ammon, attacking the city of Rabbah. He captured the royal fortress <sup>27</sup>and sent a messenger to tell David:

I have attacked Rabbah and captured the fortress guarding the city water supply. <sup>28</sup>Call the rest of the army together. Then surround the city, and capture it yourself. If you don't, everyone will remember that I captured the city.

<sup>29</sup> David called the rest of the army together and attacked Rabbah. He captured the city <sup>30</sup> and took the crown from the statue of their god Milcom.▷ The crown was made of about 35 kilograms of gold, and there was a valuable jewel on it. David put the jewel on his own crown.▷ He also carried off everything else of value. <sup>31</sup> David made the people of Rabbah 'tear down the city walls' with iron picks and axes, and then he put them to work making bricks. He did the same thing with all the other Ammonite cities.

David went back to Jerusalem, and the people of Israel returned to their homes.

### Amnon Disgraces Tamar

**13** David had a beautiful daughter named Tamar, who was the sister of Absalom. She was also the half sister of Amnon, who fell in love with her. <sup>2</sup> But Tamar was a virgin, and Amnon could not think of a way to be alone with her. He was so upset about it that he made himself sick.

<sup>3</sup> Amnon had a friend named Jonadab, who was the son of David's brother Shimeah. Jonadab always knew how to get what he wanted, <sup>4</sup> and he said to Amnon, 'What's the matter? You're the king's son! You shouldn't have to go around feeling sorry for yourself every morning.'

Amnon said, 'I'm in love with Tamar, my brother Absalom's sister.'

<sup>5</sup> Jonadab told him, 'Lie down on your bed and pretend to be sick. When your father comes to see you, ask him to send Tamar, so you can watch her cook something for you. Then she can serve you the food.'

<sup>6</sup> So Amnon went to bed and pretended to be sick. When the king came to see him, Amnon said, 'Please, ask Tamar to come over. She can make some special bread▷ while I watch, and then she can serve me the bread.'

<sup>7</sup> David told Tamar, 'Go over to Amnon's house and fix him some food.'<sup>8</sup> When she got there, he was lying in bed. She mixed the dough, made the loaves, and baked them while he watched. <sup>9</sup> Then she took the bread out of the pan and put it on his plate, but he refused to eat it.

Amnon said, 'Send the servants out of the house.' After they had gone, <sup>10</sup> he said to Tamar, 'Serve the food in my bedroom.'

Tamar picked up the bread that she had made and brought it into Amnon's bedroom. <sup>11</sup> But as she was taking it over to him, he grabbed her and said, 'Come to bed with me!'

<sup>12</sup> She answered, 'No! Please don't force me! This sort of thing isn't done in Israel. It's too disgusting!

<sup>13</sup> Think of me. I'll be disgraced forever! And think of yourself. Everyone in Israel will say you're nothing but trash! Just ask the king, and he will let you marry me.'

<sup>14</sup> But Amnon would not listen to what she said. He was stronger than she was, so he overpowered her and raped her. <sup>15</sup> Then Amnon hated her even more than he had loved her before. So he told her, 'Get up and get out!'

<sup>16</sup> She said, 'Don't send me away! That would be worse than what you have already done.'

But Amnon would not listen. <sup>17</sup> He called in his servant and said, 'Throw this woman out and lock the door!'

<sup>18</sup> The servant made her leave, and he locked the door behind her.

The king's unmarried daughters used to wear 'long robes with sleeves.'<sup>19</sup> Tamar tore the robe she was wearing and put ashes on her head. Then she covered her face with her hands and cried loudly as she walked away.

### Absalom Kills Amnon

<sup>20</sup> Tamar's brother Absalom said to her, 'How could Amnon have done such a terrible thing to you! But since he's your brother, don't tell anyone what happened. Just try not to think about it.'

Tamar soon moved into Absalom's house, but she was always sad and lonely. <sup>21</sup> When David heard what had happened to Tamar, he was very angry. But Amnon was his oldest son and also his favorite, and David would not do anything to make Amnon unhappy.▷

<sup>22</sup> Absalom treated Amnon as though nothing had happened, but he hated Amnon for what he had done to his sister Tamar.

<sup>23</sup> Two years later, Absalom's servants were cutting wool from his sheep in Baal-Hazor near the town of Ephraim, and Absalom invited all of the king's sons to be there. <sup>24</sup> Then he went to David and said, 'My servants are cutting the wool from my sheep. Please come and join us!'

<sup>25</sup> David answered, 'No, my son, we won't go. It would be too expensive for you.' Absalom tried to get him to change his mind, but David did not want to go. He only said that he hoped they would have a good time.

<sup>26</sup> Absalom said, 'If you won't go, at least let my brother Amnon come with us.'

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

<sup>27</sup> But Absalom kept on insisting, and finally David let Amnon and all his other sons go with Absalom.

Absalom prepared a banquet fit for a king.<sup>></sup> <sup>28</sup> But he told his servants, "Keep an eye on Amnon. When he gets a little drunk from the wine and is feeling good, I'll give the signal. Then kill him! I've commanded you to do it, so don't be afraid. Be strong and brave."

<sup>29</sup> Absalom's servants killed Amnon, just as Absalom had told them. The rest of the king's sons quickly rode away on their mules to escape from Absalom.

<sup>30</sup> While they were on their way to Jerusalem, someone told David, "Absalom has killed all of your sons! Not even one is left." <sup>31</sup> David got up, and in his sorrow he tore his clothes and lay down on the ground. His servants remained standing, but they tore their clothes too.

<sup>32</sup> Then David's nephew<sup>></sup> Jonadab said, "Your Majesty, not all of your sons were killed! Only Amnon is dead. On the day that Amnon raped Tamar, Absalom decided to kill him. <sup>33</sup> Don't worry about the report that all your sons were killed. Only Amnon is dead, <sup>34</sup> and Absalom has run away."

One of the guards noticed a lot of people coming along the hillside on the road to Horonaim.<sup>></sup> He went and told the king, "I saw some men coming along Horonaim Road."<sup>></sup>

<sup>35</sup> Jonadab said, "Your Majesty, look! Here come your sons now, just as I told you."

<sup>36</sup> No sooner had he said it, than David's sons came in. They were weeping out loud, and David and all his officials cried just as loudly. <sup>37-38</sup> David was sad for a long time because Amnon was dead.

### David Lets Absalom Come Home

Absalom had run away to Geshur, where he stayed for three years with King Talmi the son of Ammihud. <sup>39</sup> David still felt so sad over the loss of Amnon that he wanted to take his army there and capture Absalom.<sup>></sup>

**14** Joab knew that David couldn't stop thinking about Absalom, <sup>2-3</sup> and he sent someone to bring in the wise woman who lived in Tekoa. Joab told her, "Put on funeral clothes and don't use any makeup. Go to the king and pretend you have spent a long time mourning the death of a loved one." Then he told her what to say.

<sup>4</sup> The woman from Tekoa went to David. She bowed very low and said, "Your Majesty, please help me!"

<sup>5</sup> David asked, "What's the matter?"

She replied:

My husband is dead, and I'm a widow. <sup>6</sup> I had two sons, but they got into a fight out in a field where there was no one to pull them apart, and one of them killed the other. <sup>7</sup> Now all of my relatives have come to me and said, "Hand over your son! We're going to put him to death for killing his brother." But what they really want is to get rid of him, so they can take over our land.

Please don't let them put out my only flame of hope! There won't be anyone left on this earth to carry on my husband's name.

<sup>8</sup> "Go on home," David told her. "I'll take care of this matter for you."

<sup>9</sup> The woman said, "I hope your decision doesn't cause any problems for you. But if it does, you can blame me."<sup>></sup>

<sup>10</sup> He said, "If anyone gives you any trouble, bring them to me, and it won't happen again!"

<sup>11</sup> "Please," she replied, "swear by the LORD your God that no one will be allowed to kill my son!"

He said, "I swear by the living LORD that no one will touch even a hair on his head!"

<sup>12</sup> Then she asked, "Your Majesty, may I say something?"

"Yes," he answered.

<sup>13</sup> The woman said:

Haven't you been hurting God's people? Your own son had to leave the country. And when you judged in my favor, it was the same as admitting that you should have let him come back. <sup>14</sup> We each must die and disappear like water poured out on the ground. But God doesn't take our lives.<sup>></sup> Instead, he figures out ways of bringing us back when we run away.

<sup>15</sup> Your Majesty, I came here to tell you about my problem, because I was afraid of what someone might do to me. I decided to come to you, because I thought you could help. <sup>16</sup> In fact, I knew that you would listen and save my son and me from those who want to take the land that God gave us.<sup>></sup>

<sup>17</sup> I can rest easy now that you have given your decision. You know the difference between right and wrong just like an angel of God, and I pray that the LORD your God will be with you.

<sup>18</sup> Then David said to the woman, "Now I'm going to ask you a question, and don't try to hide the truth!"

The woman replied, "Please go ahead, Your Majesty."

<sup>19</sup> David asked, "Did Joab put you up to this?"

The woman answered, "Your Majesty, I swear by your life that no one can hide the truth from you. Yes, Joab did tell me what to say, <sup>20</sup>but only to show you the other side of this problem. You must be as wise as the angel of God to know everything that goes on in this country."

<sup>21</sup> David turned to Joab and said, "It seems that I have already given my decision. Go and bring Absalom back."

<sup>22</sup> Joab bowed very low and said, "Your Majesty, I thank you for giving your permission. It shows that you approve of me."

<sup>23</sup> Joab went to Geshur to get Absalom. But when they came back to Jerusalem, <sup>24</sup>David told Joab, "I don't want to see my son Absalom. Tell him to stay away from me." So Absalom went to his own house without seeing his father.

### **Absalom Was Handsome**

<sup>25</sup> No one in all Israel was as handsome and well-built as Absalom. <sup>26</sup>He got his hair cut once a year, and when the hair was weighed, it came to over two kilograms.

<sup>27</sup> Absalom had three sons. He also had a daughter named Tamar, who grew up to be very beautiful.

### **Absalom Finally Sees David**

<sup>28</sup> Absalom lived in Jerusalem for two years without seeing his father. <sup>29</sup>He wanted Joab to talk to David for him. So one day he sent a message asking Joab to come over, but Joab refused. Absalom sent another message, but Joab still refused. <sup>30</sup>Finally, Absalom told his servants, "Joab's barley field is right next to mine. Go set it on fire!" And they did.

<sup>31</sup> Joab went to Absalom's house and demanded, "Why did your servants set my field on fire?"

<sup>32</sup> Absalom answered, "You didn't pay any attention when I sent for you. I want you to ask my father why he told me to come back from Geshur. I was better off there. I want to see my father now! If I'm guilty, let him kill me."

<sup>33</sup> Joab went to David and told him what Absalom had said. David sent for Absalom, and Absalom came. He bowed very low, and David leaned over and kissed him.

### **Absalom Rebels against David**

**15** Some time later, Absalom got himself a chariot with horses to pull it, and he had 50 men run in front. <sup>2</sup>He would get up early each

morning and wait by the side of the road that led to the city gate.<sup>3</sup> Anyone who had a complaint to bring to King David would have to go that way, and Absalom would ask each of them, "Where are you from?"

If they said, "I'm from a tribe in the north," <sup>3</sup>Absalom would say, "You deserve to win your case. It's too bad the king doesn't have anyone to hear complaints like yours. <sup>4</sup>I wish someone would make me the judge around here! I would be fair to everyone."

<sup>5</sup>Whenever anyone would come to Absalom and start bowing down, he would reach out and hug and kiss them. <sup>6</sup>That's how he treated everyone from Israel who brought a complaint to the king. Soon everyone in Israel liked Absalom better than they liked David.

<sup>7</sup>Four years<sup>8</sup> later, Absalom said to David, "Please, let me go to Hebron. I have to keep a promise that I made to the LORD, <sup>8</sup>when I was living with the Arameans in Geshur. I promised that if the LORD would bring me back to live in Jerusalem, I would worship him in Hebron."<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup>David gave his permission, and Absalom went to Hebron. <sup>10-12</sup>He took 200 men from Jerusalem with him, but they had no idea what he was going to do. Absalom offered sacrifices in Hebron and sent someone to Gilo to tell David's advisor Ahithophel to come.

More and more people were joining Absalom and supporting his plot. Meanwhile, Absalom had secretly sent some messengers to the northern tribes of Israel. The messengers told everyone, "When you hear the sound of the trumpets, you must shout, 'Absalom now rules as king in Hebron!'"

### **David Has To Leave Jerusalem**

<sup>13</sup>A messenger came and told David, "Everyone in Israel is on Absalom's side!"

<sup>14</sup>David's officials were in Jerusalem with him, and he told them, "Let's get out of here! We'll have to leave soon, or none of us will escape from Absalom. Hurry! If he moves fast, he could catch us while we're still here. Then he will kill us and everyone else in the city."

<sup>15</sup>The officials said, "Your Majesty, we'll do whatever you say."

<sup>16-17</sup>David left behind ten of his wives to take care of the palace, but the rest of his family and his officials and soldiers went with him.

They stopped at the last house at the edge of the city. <sup>18</sup>Then David stood there and watched

while his regular troops and his bodyguards<sup>></sup> marched past. The last group was the 600 soldiers who had followed him from Gath. Their commander was Ittai.

<sup>19</sup> David spoke to Ittai and said, "You're a foreigner from the town of Gath. You don't have to leave with us. Go back and join the new king!<sup>></sup> <sup>20</sup> You haven't been with me very long, so why should you have to follow me, when I don't even know where I'm going? Take your soldiers and go back. I pray that the Lord will be<sup>></sup> kind and faithful to you."

<sup>21</sup> Ittai answered, "Your Majesty, just as surely as you and the LORD live, I will go where you go, no matter if it costs me my life."

<sup>22</sup> "Then come on!" David said.

So Ittai and all his men and their families walked on past David.

### David Sends the Sacred Chest Back to Jerusalem

<sup>23</sup> The people of Jerusalem were crying and moaning as David and everyone with him passed by. He led them across Kidron Valley and along the road toward the desert.

<sup>24</sup> Zadok and Abiathar the priests were there along with several men from the tribe of Levi who were carrying the sacred chest. They set the chest down, and left it there until David and his followers had gone out of the city.

<sup>25</sup> Then David said:

Zadok, take the sacred chest back to Jerusalem. If the LORD is pleased with me, he will bring me back and let me see it and his tent again. <sup>26</sup> But if he says he isn't pleased with me, then let him do what he knows is best.

<sup>27</sup> Zadok, you are a good judge of things,<sup>></sup> so return to the city and don't cause any trouble. Take your son Ahimaaz with you. Abiathar and his son Jonathan will also go back. <sup>28</sup> I'll wait at the river crossing in the desert until I hear from you.

<sup>29</sup> Zadok and Abiathar took the sacred chest back into Jerusalem and stayed there. <sup>30</sup> David went on up the slope of the Mount of Olives. He was barefoot and crying, and he covered his head to show his sorrow. Everyone with him was crying, and they covered their heads too.

<sup>31</sup> Someone told David, "Ahithophel is helping Absalom plot against you!"

David said, "Please, LORD, keep Ahithophel's plans from working!"

### David Sends Hushai Back as a Spy

<sup>32</sup> When David reached the top of the Mount of Olives, he met Hushai the Archite at a place of worship. Hushai's robe was torn, and dust was on his head. <sup>33</sup> David told him:

If you come with me, you might slow us down. <sup>34</sup> Go back into the city and tell Absalom, "Your Majesty, I am your servant. I will serve you now, just as I served your father in the past."

Hushai, if you do that, you can help me ruin Ahithophel's plans. <sup>35</sup> Zadok and Abiathar the priests will be there with you, and you can tell them everything you hear in the palace. <sup>36</sup> Then they can send their sons Ahimaaz and Jonathan to tell me what you've heard.

<sup>37</sup> David's advisor Hushai slipped back into Jerusalem, just about the same time that Absalom was coming in.

### Ziba Gives Food to David

**16** David had started down the other side of the Mount of Olives, when he met by Ziba, the chief servant of Mephibosheth. Ziba had two donkeys that were carrying 200 loaves of bread, 100 handfuls of raisins, 100 figs,<sup>></sup> and some wine.

<sup>2</sup> "What's all this?" David asked.

Ziba said, "The donkeys are for your family to ride. The bread and fruit are for the people to eat, and the wine is for them to drink in the desert when they are tired out."

<sup>3</sup> "And where is Mephibosheth?" David asked.

Ziba answered, "He stayed in Jerusalem, because he thinks the people of Israel want him to rule the kingdom of his grandfather Saul."

<sup>4</sup> David then told him, "Everything that used to belong to Mephibosheth is now yours."

Ziba said, "Your Majesty, I am your humble servant, and I hope you will be pleased with me."

### Shimei Curses David

<sup>5</sup> David was near the town of Bahurim when a man came out and started cursing him. The man was Shimei the son of Gera, and he was one of Saul's distant relatives. <sup>6</sup> He threw stones at David, at his soldiers, and at everyone else, including the bodyguards who walked on each side of David.

<sup>7</sup> Shimei was yelling at David, "Get out of here, you murderer! You good-for-nothing, <sup>8</sup> the LORD is paying you back for killing so many in Saul's family. You stole his kingdom, but now the LORD has given

it to your son Absalom. You're a murderer, and that's why you're in such big trouble!"

<sup>9</sup> Abishai said, "Your Majesty, this man is as useless as a dead dog! He shouldn't be allowed to curse you. Let me go over and chop off his head."

<sup>10</sup> David replied, "What will I ever do with you and your brother Joab? If Shimei is cursing me because the LORD has told him to, then who are you to tell him to stop?"

<sup>11</sup> Then David said to Abishai and all his soldiers:

My own son is trying to kill me! Why shouldn't this man from the tribe of Benjamin want me dead even more? Let him curse all he wants. Maybe the LORD did tell him to curse me. <sup>12</sup> But if the LORD hears these curses and sees the trouble I'm in, maybe he will have pity on me instead.

<sup>13</sup> David and the others went on down the road. Shimei went along the hillside by the road, cursing and throwing rocks and dirt at them. <sup>14</sup> When David and those with him came to the Jordan River, they were tired out. But after they rested, they<sup>▷</sup> felt much better.

### Hushai Meets Absalom

<sup>15</sup> By this time, Absalom, Ahithophel, and the others had reached Jerusalem. <sup>16</sup> David's friend Hushai came to Absalom and said, "Long live the king! Long live the king!"

<sup>17</sup> But Absalom asked Hushai, "Is this how you show loyalty to your friend David? Why didn't you go with him?"

<sup>18</sup> Hushai answered, "The LORD and the people of Israel have chosen you to be king. I can't leave. I have to stay and serve the one they've chosen.

<sup>19</sup> Besides, it seems right for me to serve you, just as I served your father."

### Ahithophel's Advice

<sup>20</sup> Absalom turned to Ahithophel and said, "Give us your advice! What should we do?"

<sup>21</sup> Ahithophel answered, "Some of your father's wives were left here to take care of the palace. You should have sex with them. Then everyone will find out that you have publicly disgraced your father. This will make you and your followers even more powerful."

<sup>22</sup> Absalom had a tent set up on the flat roof of the palace, and everyone watched as he went into the tent with his father's wives.

<sup>23</sup> Ahithophel gave such good advice in those days that both Absalom and David thought it came straight from God.

**17** Ahithophel said to Absalom:

Let me choose 12,000 men and attack David tonight, <sup>2</sup> while he is tired and discouraged. He will panic, and everyone with him will run away. I won't kill anyone except David, <sup>3</sup> since he's the one you want to get rid of. Then I'll bring the whole nation back to you like a bride coming home to her husband.<sup>▷</sup> This way there won't be a civil war.

### Hushai Fools Absalom

<sup>4</sup> Absalom and all the leaders of the tribes of Israel agreed that Ahithophel had a good plan. <sup>5</sup> Then Absalom said, "Bring in Hushai the Archite. Let's hear what he has to say."

<sup>6</sup> Hushai came in, and Absalom told him what Ahithophel had planned. Then Absalom said, "Should we do what he says? And if we shouldn't, can you come up with anything better?"

<sup>7</sup> Hushai said:

This time Ahithophel's advice isn't so good.

<sup>8</sup> You know that your father and his followers are real warriors. Now they are as fierce as a mother bear whose cubs have just been killed. Besides, your father has a lot of experience in fighting wars, and he won't be spending the night with the others. <sup>9</sup> He has probably already found a hiding place in a cave or somewhere else.

As soon as anyone hears that some of your soldiers have been killed, everyone will think your whole army has been destroyed. <sup>10</sup> Then even those who are as brave as a lion will lose their courage. All Israel knows what a great warrior your father is and what brave soldiers he has.

<sup>11</sup> My advice is to gather all the fighting men of Israel from the town of Dan in the north down to the town of Beersheba in the south. You will have more soldiers than there are grains of sand on the seashore. Absalom, you should lead them yourself, <sup>12</sup> and we will all go to fight David wherever he is. We will fall on him just as dew falls and covers the ground. He and all his soldiers will die! <sup>13</sup> If they go into a walled town, we will put ropes around that town and drag it into the river. We won't leave even one small piece of a stone.

<sup>14</sup> Absalom and the others liked Hushai's plan better than Ahithophel's plan. This was because the LORD had decided to keep Ahithophel's plan from working and to cause trouble for Absalom.

### Jonathan and Ahimaaz Tell David the News

<sup>15</sup> At once, Hushai went to Zadok and Abiathar. He told them what advice Ahithophel had given to Absalom and to the leaders of Israel. He also told them about the advice he had given. <sup>16</sup> Then he said, "Hurry! Send someone to warn David not to spend the night on this side of the river. He must get across the river, so he and the others won't be wiped out!"

<sup>17</sup> Jonathan and Ahimaaz had been waiting at Rogel Spring because they did not want to be seen in Jerusalem. A servant girl went to the spring and gave them the message for David. <sup>18</sup> But a young man saw them and went to tell Absalom. So Jonathan and Ahimaaz left and hurried to the house of a man who lived in Bahurim. Then they climbed down into a well in the courtyard. <sup>19</sup> The man's wife put the cover on the well and poured grain on top of it, so the well could not be seen.

<sup>20</sup> Absalom's soldiers came to the woman and demanded, "Where are Ahimaaz and Jonathan?"

The woman answered, "They went across the stream."

The soldiers went off to look for the two men. But when they did not find the men, they went back to Jerusalem.

<sup>21</sup> After the soldiers had gone, Jonathan and Ahimaaz climbed out of the well. They went to David and said, "Hurry! Get ready to cross the river!" Then they told him about Ahithophel's plan.

<sup>22</sup> David and the others got ready and started crossing the Jordan River. By sunrise all of them were on the other side.

### Ahithophel Kills Himself

<sup>23</sup> When Ahithophel saw that Absalom and the leaders of Israel were not going to follow his advice, he saddled his donkey and rode back to his home in Gilo. He told his family and servants what to do. Then he hanged himself, and they buried him in his family's burial place.

### Absalom Puts Amasa in Charge of the Army

<sup>24</sup> David went to the town of Mahanaim, and Absalom crossed the Jordan River with the army of Israel. <sup>25</sup> Absalom put Amasa in Joab's place as commander of the army. Amasa's father was Ithra<sup>></sup> from the family of Ishmael<sup>></sup> and his mother was Abigail, the daughter of Nahash and the sister of Joab's mother Zeruiah. <sup>26</sup> The Israelites under Absalom's command set up camp in the region of Gilead.

### Friends Bring Supplies to David

<sup>27</sup> After David came to the town of Mahanaim, Shobi the son of Nahash came from Rabbah in Ammon, Machir the son of Ammiel came from Lo-Debar, and Barzillai the Gileadite came from Rogelim.

<sup>28-29</sup> Here is a list of what they brought: sleeping mats, blankets, bowls, pottery jars, wheat, barley, flour, roasted grain, beans, lentils, honey, yogurt, sheep, and cheese.

They brought the food for David and the others because they knew that everyone would be hungry, tired, and thirsty from being out in the desert.

### David Gets Ready for Battle

**18** David divided his soldiers into groups of 100 and groups of 1,000. Then he chose officers to be in command of each group. <sup>2</sup> He sent out one-third of his army under the command of Joab, another third under the command of Abishai the son of Zeruiah, and the rest under the command of Ittai from Gath. He told the soldiers, "I'm going into battle with you."

<sup>3</sup> But the soldiers said, "No, don't go into battle with us! It won't matter to our enemies if they make us all run away, or even if they kill half of us. But you are worth 10,000 of us. It would be better for you to stay in town and send help if we need it."

<sup>4-6</sup> David said, "All right, if you think I should."

Then in a voice loud enough for everyone to hear, he said, "Joab! Abishai! Ittai! For my sake, be sure that Absalom comes back unharmed."

David stood beside the town gate as his army marched past in groups of 100 and in groups of 1,000.

### Joab Kills Absalom

The war with Israel took place in Ephraim Forest. <sup>7-8</sup> Battles were being fought all over the forest, and David's soldiers were winning. Twenty thousand soldiers were killed that day, and more of them died from the dangers of the forest than from the fighting itself.

<sup>9</sup> Absalom was riding his mule under a huge tree when his head<sup>></sup> caught in the branches. The mule ran off and left Absalom hanging in midair. Some of David's soldiers happened by, <sup>10</sup> and one of them went and told Joab, "I saw Absalom hanging in a tree!"

<sup>11</sup> Joab said, "You saw Absalom? Why didn't you kill him? I would have given you ten pieces of silver and a special belt."

<sup>12</sup> The man answered, "Even if you paid me 1,000 pieces of silver here and now, I still wouldn't

touch the king's son. We all heard King David tell you and Abishai and Ittai not to harm Absalom. <sup>13</sup>He always finds out what's going on. I would have been risking my life to kill Absalom, because you would have let me take the blame."

<sup>14</sup>Joab said, "I'm not going to waste any more time on you!"

Absalom was still alive, so Joab took three spears and stuck them through Absalom's chest. <sup>15</sup>Ten of Joab's bodyguards came over and finished him off. <sup>16</sup>Then Joab blew a trumpet to signal his troops to stop chasing Israel's soldiers. <sup>17</sup>They threw Absalom's body into a deep pit in the forest and put a big pile of rocks over it.

Meanwhile, the people of Israel had all run back to their own homes.

<sup>18</sup>When Absalom was alive, he had set up a stone monument for himself in King's Valley. He explained, "I don't have any sons to keep my name alive." He called it Absalom's Monument, and that is the name it still has today.

### Ahimaaz Wants To Tell David

<sup>19</sup>Ahimaaz the son of Zadok said, "Joab, let me run and tell King David that the LORD has rescued him from his enemies."

<sup>20</sup>Joab answered, "You're not the one to tell the king that his son is dead. You can take him a message some other time, but not today."

<sup>21</sup>Someone from Ethiopia<sup>></sup> was standing there, and Joab told him, "Go and tell the king what you have seen." The man knelt down in front of Joab and then got up and started running.

<sup>22</sup>Ahimaaz spoke to Joab again, "No matter what happens, I still want to run. And besides, the Ethiopian has already left."

Joab said, "Why should you run? You won't get a reward for the news you have!"

<sup>23</sup>"I'll run no matter what!" Ahimaaz insisted.

"All right then, run!" Joab said.

Ahimaaz took the road through the Jordan Valley and outran the Ethiopian.

<sup>24</sup>Meanwhile, David was sitting between the inner and outer gates in the city wall. One of his soldiers was watching from the roof of the gate-tower. He saw a man running toward the town <sup>25</sup>and shouted down to tell David.

David answered, "If he's alone, he must have some news."

The runner was getting closer, <sup>26</sup>when the soldier saw someone else running. He shouted down to the gate, "Look! There's another runner!"

David said, "He must have some news too."

<sup>27</sup>The soldier on the roof shouted, "The first one runs just like Ahimaaz the son of Zadok."

This time David said, "He's a good man. He must have some good news."

<sup>28</sup>Ahimaaz called out, "We won! We won!" Then he bowed low to David and said, "Your Majesty, praise the LORD your God! He has given you victory over your enemies."

<sup>29</sup>"Is my son Absalom all right?" David asked.

Ahimaaz said, "When Joab sent your personal servant and me, I saw a noisy crowd. But I don't know what it was all about."

<sup>30</sup>David told him, "Stand over there and wait."

Ahimaaz went over and stood there. <sup>31</sup>The Ethiopian came and said, "Your Majesty, today I have good news! The LORD has rescued you from all your enemies!"

<sup>32</sup>"Is my son Absalom all right?" David asked.

The Ethiopian replied, "I wish that all your Majesty's enemies and everyone who tries to harm you would end up like him!"

### David Cries for Absalom

<sup>33</sup>David started trembling. Then he went up to the room above the city gate to cry. As he went, he kept saying, "My son Absalom! My son, my son Absalom! I wish I could have died instead of you! Absalom, my son, my son!"<sup>></sup>

**19** Someone told Joab, "The king is crying because Absalom is dead."

<sup>2</sup>David's army found out he was crying because his son had died, and their day of victory suddenly turned into a day of sadness. <sup>3</sup>The troops were sneaking into Mahanaim, just as if they had run away from a battle and were ashamed.

<sup>4</sup>David held his hands over his face and kept on crying loudly, "My son, Absalom! Absalom, my son, my son!"

<sup>5</sup>Joab went to the house where David was staying and told him:

You've made your soldiers ashamed! Not only did they save your life, they saved your sons and daughters and wives as well. <sup>6</sup>You're more loyal to your enemies than to your friends. What you've done today has shown your officers and soldiers that they don't mean a thing to you. You would be happy if Absalom was still alive, even if the rest of us were dead.

<sup>7</sup>Now get up! Go out there and thank them for what they did. If you don't, I swear by the LORD that you won't even have one man left on

your side tomorrow morning. You may have had a lot of troubles in the past, but this will be the worst thing that has ever happened to you!

<sup>8</sup> David got up and went to the town gate and sat down. When the people heard that he was sitting there, they came to see him.

### Israel and Judah Want David Back

After Israel's soldiers had all returned home, <sup>9-10</sup> everyone in Israel started arguing. They were saying to each other, "King David rescued us from the Philistines and from our other enemies. But then we chose Absalom to be our new leader, and David had to leave the country to get away. Absalom died in battle, so why hasn't something been done to bring David back?"

<sup>11</sup> When David found out what they were saying, he sent a message to Zadok and Abiathar the priests. It said:

Say to the leaders of Judah, "Why are you the last tribe to think about bringing King David back home? <sup>12</sup> He is your brother, your own relative! Why haven't you done anything to bring him back?"

<sup>13</sup> And tell Amasa, "You're my nephew, and with God as a witness, I swear I'll make you commander of my army instead of Joab."

<sup>14</sup> Soon the tribe of Judah again became followers of David, and they sent him this message: "Come back, and bring your soldiers with you."

### David Starts Back for Jerusalem

<sup>15</sup> David started back and had gone as far as the Jordan River when he met the people of Judah. They had gathered at Gilgal and had come to help him cross the river.

<sup>16</sup> Shimei the son of Gera was there with them. He had hurried from Bahurim to meet David. Shimei was from the tribe of Benjamin, and <sup>17</sup> 1,000 others from Benjamin had come with him.

Ziba, the chief servant of Saul's family, also came to the Jordan River. He and his 15 sons and 20 servants waded across<sup>></sup> to meet David. <sup>18</sup> Then they brought David's family and servants back across the river, and they did everything he wanted them to do.

### Shimei Meets with David

Shimei crossed the Jordan River and bowed down in front of David. <sup>19</sup> He said, "Your Majesty, I beg you not to punish me! Please, forget what I did when you were leaving Jerusalem. Don't even think

about it. <sup>20</sup> I know I was wrong. That's why I wanted to be the first one from the northern tribes to meet you."

<sup>21</sup> But Abishai shouted, "You should be killed for cursing the LORD's chosen king!"

<sup>22</sup> David said, "Abishai, what will I ever do with you and your brother Joab? Is it your job to tell me who has done wrong? I've been made king of all Israel today, and no one will be put to death!" <sup>23</sup> Then David promised Shimei that he would not be killed.

### Mephibosheth Meets with David

<sup>24</sup> Mephibosheth, the grandson of Saul, also came to meet David. He had missed David so much that he had not taken a bath or trimmed his beard or washed his clothes the whole time David was gone.

<sup>25</sup> After they had gone back to Jerusalem, Mephibosheth came to see David, who asked him, "Why didn't you go with me?"

<sup>26</sup> He answered, "Your Majesty, you know I can't walk. I told my servant to saddle a donkey for me<sup>></sup> so I could go with you. But my servant left without me, and <sup>27</sup> then he lied about me. You're as wise as an angel of God, so do what you think is right. <sup>28</sup> After all, you could have killed my whole family and me. But instead, you let me eat at your own table. Your Majesty, what more could I ask?"

<sup>29</sup> David answered, "You've said enough! I've decided to divide the property between you and Ziba."

<sup>30</sup> Mephibosheth replied, "He can have it all! I'm just glad you've come home safely."

### Barzillai Returns Home

<sup>31</sup> Barzillai came from Rogelim in Gilead to meet David at the Jordan River and go across with him.

<sup>32</sup> Barzillai was 80 years old. He was very rich and had sent food to David in Mahanaim.

<sup>33</sup> David said to him, "Cross the river and go to Jerusalem with me. I will take care of you."

<sup>34</sup> Barzillai answered:

Your Majesty, why should I go to Jerusalem? I don't have much longer to live. <sup>35</sup> I'm already 80 years old, and my body is almost numb. I can't taste my food or hear the sound of singing, and I would be nothing but a burden. <sup>36</sup> I'll cross the river with you, but I'll only go a little way on the other side. You don't have to be so kind to me. <sup>37</sup> Just let me return to my hometown, where I can someday be buried near my father and mother. My servant Chimham<sup>></sup> can go with you, and you can treat him as your own.

<sup>38</sup> David said, "I'll take Chimham with me, and whatever you ask me to do for him, I'll do. And if there's anything else you want, I'll also do that."

<sup>39</sup> David's soldiers went on across the river, while he stayed behind to tell Barzillai goodbye and to wish him well. Barzillai returned home, but <sup>40</sup> Chimham crossed the river with David.

### Israel and Judah Argue

All of Judah's army and half of Israel's army were there to help David cross the river. <sup>41</sup> The soldiers from Israel came to him and said, "Why did our relatives from Judah sneak you and your family and your soldiers across the Jordan?"

<sup>42</sup> The people of Judah answered, "Why are you so angry? We are the king's relatives. He didn't give us any food, and we didn't take anything for ourselves!"

<sup>43</sup> Those from Israel said, "King David belongs to us ten times more than he belongs to you. Why didn't you think we were good enough to help you? After all, we were the first ones to think of bringing him back!"

The people of Judah spoke more harshly than the people of Israel.

### Sheba Rebels against David

**20** A troublemaker from the tribe of Benjamin was there. His name was Sheba the son of Bichri, and he blew a trumpet to get everyone's attention. Then he said, "People of Israel, David the son of Jesse doesn't belong to us! Let's go home."

<sup>2</sup> So they stopped following David and went off with Sheba. But the people of Judah stayed close to David all the way from the Jordan to Jerusalem.

### David's Ten Wives

<sup>3</sup> David had left ten of his wives in Jerusalem to take care of his palace. But when he came back, he had them taken to another house, and he placed soldiers there to guard them. He gave them whatever they needed, but he never slept with any of them again. They had to live there for the rest of their lives as if they were widows.

### The Army Goes after Sheba

<sup>4</sup> David said to Amasa, "Three days from now I want you and all of Judah's army to be here!"

<sup>5</sup> Amasa started bringing the army together, but it was taking him more than three days. <sup>6</sup> So David said to Abishai, "Sheba will hurt us more than

Absalom ever did. Take my best soldiers and go after him. We don't want him to take over any walled cities and 'get away from us."

### Joab Kills Amasa

<sup>7</sup> Abishai left Jerusalem to try and capture Sheba. He took along Joab and his soldiers, as well as David's bodyguard<sup>></sup> and best troops. <sup>8</sup> They had gone as far as the big rock at Gibeon when Amasa caught up with them. Joab had a dagger strapped around his waist over his military uniform, but it fell out as he started toward Amasa.

<sup>9</sup> Joab said, "Amasa, my cousin, how are you?" Then Joab took hold of Amasa's beard with his right hand, so that he could greet him with a kiss. <sup>10</sup> Amasa did not see the dagger in Joab's other hand. Joab stuck it in Amasa's stomach, and his insides spilled out on the ground. Joab only struck him once, but Amasa was dying.

Joab and his brother Abishai went off to chase Sheba. <sup>11</sup> One of Joab's soldiers stood by Amasa and shouted, "If any of you like Joab, and if you are for David, then follow Joab!"

<sup>12</sup> Amasa was still rolling in his own blood in the middle of the road. The soldier who had shouted noticed that everyone who passed by would stop, so he dragged Amasa off the road and covered him with a blanket. <sup>13</sup> After this, no one else stopped. They all walked straight past him on their way to help Joab capture Sheba.

### Sheba Hides Out in the Town of Abel

<sup>14</sup> Sheba had gone through all of the tribes of Israel when he came to the town of Abel Beth-Maacah. All of his best soldiers<sup>></sup> met him there and followed him into the town.

<sup>15</sup> Joab and his troops came and surrounded Abel, so that no one could go in or come out. They made a dirt ramp up to the town wall and then started to use a battering ram to knock the wall down.

### A Wise Woman Saves the Town

<sup>16</sup> A wise woman shouted from the top of the wall,<sup>></sup> "Listen to me! Listen to me! I have to talk to Joab! Tell him to come here!" <sup>17</sup> When he came, the woman said, "Are you Joab?"

"Yes, I am," he answered.

She said, "Please, listen to what I have to say."

"All right," he said. "I'll listen."

<sup>18</sup> She said, "Long ago people used to say, 'If you want good advice, go to the town of Abel to get it.' The answers they got here were all that was needed

to settle any problem. <sup>19</sup>We are Israelites, and we want peace! You can trust us. Why are you trying to destroy a town that's like a mother in Israel? Why do you want to wipe out the LORD's people?"

<sup>20</sup>Joab answered, "No, no! I'm not trying to wipe you out or destroy your town! <sup>21</sup>That's not it at all. There's a man in your town from the hill country of Ephraim. His name is Sheba, and he is the leader of a rebellion against King David. Turn him over to me, and we will leave your town alone."

The woman told Joab, "We will throw his head over the wall."

<sup>22</sup>She went to the people of the town and talked them into doing it. They cut off Sheba's head and threw it to Joab.

Joab blew a signal on his trumpet, and the soldiers returned to their homes. Joab went back to David in Jerusalem.

### Another List of David's Officials

<sup>23</sup>Joab was the commander of Israel's entire army.

Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was in command of David's bodyguard.<sup>▷</sup>

<sup>24</sup>Adoram<sup>▷</sup> was in charge of the slave-labor force.

Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud kept government records.

<sup>25</sup>Sheva was the secretary.

Zadok and Abiathar were the priests.

<sup>26</sup>Ira from Jair was David's priest.

### The Gibeonites Hang Saul's Descendants

**21** While David was king, there were three years in a row when the nation of Israel could not grow enough food. So David asked the LORD for help, and the LORD answered, "Saul and his family are guilty of murder, because he had the Gibeonites killed."

<sup>2</sup>The Gibeonites were not Israelites; they were descendants of the Amorites. The people of Israel had promised not to kill them, but Saul had tried to kill them because he wanted Israel and Judah to control all the land.

David had the Gibeonites come, and he talked with them. <sup>3</sup>He said, "What can I do to make up for what Saul did, so that you'll ask the LORD to be kind to his people again?"

<sup>4</sup>The Gibeonites answered, "Silver and gold from Saul and his family are not enough. On the other hand, we don't have the right to put any Israelite to death."

David said, "I'll do whatever you ask."<sup>▷</sup>

<sup>5</sup>They replied, "Saul tried to kill all our people so that none of us would be left in the land of Israel.

<sup>6</sup>Give us seven of his descendants. We will 'hang' these men near the place where the LORD is worshiped in Gibeah, the hometown of Saul, the LORD's chosen king."

"I'll give them to you," David said.

<sup>7</sup>David had made a promise to Jonathan with the LORD as his witness, so he spared Jonathan's son Mephibosheth, the grandson of Saul. <sup>8</sup>But Saul and Rizpah the daughter of Aiah had two sons named Armoni and Mephibosheth. Saul's daughter Merab<sup>▷</sup> had five sons whose father was Adriel the son of Barzillai from Meholah. David took Rizpah's two sons and Merab's five sons and <sup>9</sup>turned them over to the Gibeonites, who 'hanged' all seven of them on the mountain near the place where the LORD was worshiped. This happened right at the beginning of the barley harvest.

### Rizpah Takes Care of the Bodies

<sup>10</sup>Rizpah spread out some sackcloth on a nearby rock. She wouldn't let the birds land on the bodies during the day, and she kept the wild animals away at night. She stayed there from the beginning of the harvest until it started to rain.

### The Burial of Saul and His Descendants

<sup>11-12</sup>Earlier the Philistines had killed Saul and Jonathan on Mount Gilboa and had hung their bodies in the town square at Beth-Shan. The people of Jabesh in Gilead had secretly taken the bodies away, but David found out what Saul's wife Rizpah had done, and he went to the leaders of Jabesh to get the bones of Saul and his son Jonathan. <sup>13-14</sup>David had their bones taken to the land of Benjamin and buried in a side room in Saul's family burial place. Then he gave orders for the bones of the men who had been 'hanged' to be buried there. It was done, and God answered prayers to bless the land.

### The Descendants of the Rephaim

<sup>15</sup>One time David got very tired when he and his soldiers were fighting the Philistines. <sup>16</sup>One of the Philistine warriors was Ishbibenob, who was a descendant of the Rephaim, and he tried to kill David. Ishbibenob was armed with a 'new sword,' and his bronze spearhead<sup>▷</sup> alone weighed about three and a half kilograms. <sup>17</sup>But Abishai came to the rescue and killed the Philistine.

David's soldiers told him, "We can't let you risk your life in battle anymore! You give light to our nation, and we want that flame to keep burning."

<sup>18</sup> There was another battle with the Philistines at Gob, where Sibbecai from Hushah killed a descendant of the Rephaim named Saph.

<sup>19</sup> There was still another battle with the Philistines at Gob. A soldier named Elhanan killed Goliath from Gath, whose spear shaft was like a weaver's beam. Elhanan's father was Jari<sup>></sup> from Bethlehem.

<sup>20</sup> There was another war, this time in Gath. One of the enemy soldiers was a descendant of the Rephaim. He was as big as a giant and had six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot. <sup>21</sup> But when he made fun of Israel, David's nephew Jonathan killed him. Jonathan was the son of David's brother Shimei.

<sup>22</sup> David and his soldiers killed these four men who were descendants of the Rephaim from Gath.

### David Sings to the LORD

**22** David sang a song to the LORD after the LORD had rescued him from his enemies, especially Saul. These are the words to David's song:

<sup>2</sup> Our LORD and our God,  
you are my mighty rock,<sup>></sup>  
my fortress, my protector.

<sup>3</sup> You are the rock  
where I am safe.  
You are my shield,  
my powerful weapon,<sup>></sup>  
and my place of shelter.

You rescue me and keep me  
from being hurt.

<sup>4</sup> I praise you, our LORD!  
I prayed to you,  
and you rescued me  
from my enemies.

<sup>5</sup> Death, like ocean waves,  
surrounded me,  
and I was almost swallowed  
by its flooding waters.

<sup>6</sup> Ropes from the world  
of the dead  
had coiled around me,  
and death had set a trap  
in my path.

<sup>7</sup> I was in terrible trouble  
when I called out to you,

but from your temple  
you heard me  
and answered my prayer.

<sup>8</sup> Earth shook and shivered!  
The columns supporting the sky  
rocked back and forth.

You were angry  
<sup>9</sup> and breathed out smoke.  
Scorching heat and fiery flames  
spewed from your mouth.

<sup>10</sup> You opened the heavens  
like curtains,  
and you came down  
with storm clouds  
under your feet.

<sup>11</sup> You rode on the backs  
of flying creatures.

You appeared<sup>></sup>  
with the wind as wings.

<sup>12</sup> Darkness was your tent!  
Thunderclouds filled the sky,  
hiding you from sight.

<sup>13</sup> Fiery coals lit up the sky  
in front of you.

<sup>14</sup> LORD Most High, your voice  
thundered from the heavens.

<sup>15</sup> You scattered your enemies  
with arrows of lightning.

<sup>16</sup> You roared at the sea,  
and its deepest channels  
could be seen.

You snorted,  
and the earth shook  
to its foundations.

<sup>17</sup> You reached down from heaven,  
and you lifted me  
from deep in the ocean.

<sup>18</sup> You rescued me from enemies  
who were hateful  
and too powerful for me.

<sup>19</sup> On the day disaster struck,  
they came and attacked,  
but you defended me.

<sup>20</sup> When I was fenced in,  
you freed and rescued me  
because you love me.

<sup>21</sup> You are good to me, LORD,  
because I do right,  
and you reward me  
because I am innocent.

- 22 I do what you want  
and never turn to do evil.
- 23 I keep your laws in mind  
and never turn away  
from your teachings.
- 24 I obey you completely  
and guard against sin.
- 25 You have been good to me  
because I do right;  
you have rewarded me  
for being innocent  
by your standards.
- 26 You are always loyal  
to your loyal people,  
and you are faithful  
to the faithful.
- 27 With all who are sincere  
you are sincere,  
but you treat the unfaithful  
as their deeds deserve.
- 28 You rescue the humble,  
but you look for ways  
to put down the proud.
- 29 Our LORD and God,  
you are my lamp.  
You turn darkness to light.
- 30 You help me defeat armies  
and capture cities.
- 31 Your way is perfect, LORD,  
and your word is correct.  
You are a shield for those  
who run to you for help.
- 32 You alone are God!  
Only you are a mighty rock.▷
- 33 You are my strong fortress,  
and you set me free.
- 34 You make my feet run as fast  
as those of a deer,  
and you help me stand  
on the mountains.
- 35 You teach my hands to fight  
and my arms to use  
a bow of bronze.
- 36 You alone are my shield,  
and by coming to help me,  
you have made me famous.
- 37 You clear the way for me,  
and now I won't stumble.
- 38 I kept chasing my enemies  
until I caught them  
and destroyed them.
- 39 I destroyed them!  
I stuck my sword  
through my enemies,  
and they were crushed  
under my feet.
- 40 You helped me win victories  
and forced my attackers  
to fall victim to me.
- 41 You made my enemies run,  
and I killed them.
- 42 They cried out for help,  
but no one saved them;  
they called out to you,  
but there was no answer.
- 43 I ground them to dust,  
and I squashed them  
like mud in the streets.
- 44 You rescued me  
from my stubborn people  
and made me the leader  
of foreign nations,  
who are now my slaves.
- 45 They obey and come crawling.
- 46 They have lost all courage  
and from their fortresses  
they come trembling.
- 47 You are the living LORD!  
I will praise you!  
You are a mighty rock.▷  
I will honor you  
for keeping me safe.
- 48 You took revenge for me,  
and you put nations  
in my power.
- 49 You protected me  
from violent enemies,  
and you made me much greater  
than all of them.
- 50 I will praise you, LORD,  
and I will honor you  
among the nations.
- 51 You give glorious victories  
to your chosen king.  
Your faithful love for David  
and for his descendants  
will never end.

### David's Last Words

- 23** These are the last words of David the son of Jesse. The God of Jacob chose David and made him a great king. The Mighty God of Israel loved him.<sup>1</sup> When God told him to speak, David said:
- <sup>2</sup>The Spirit of the LORD has told me what to say.
- <sup>3</sup>Our Mighty Rock,<sup>2</sup> the God of Jacob, told me, "A ruler who obeys God and does right
- <sup>4</sup>is like the sunrise on a cloudless day, or like rain that sparkles on the grass."<sup>3</sup>
- <sup>5</sup>I have ruled this way, and God will never break his promise to me. God's promise is complete and unchanging; he will always help me and give me what I hope for.
- <sup>6</sup>But evil people are pulled up like thornbushes. They are not dug up by hand,
- <sup>7</sup>but with a sharp spear and are burned on the spot.

### The Three Warriors

<sup>8</sup>These are the names of David's warriors: Ishbosheth<sup>4</sup> the son of Hachmon<sup>5</sup> was the leader of the Three Warriors. In one battle, he killed 800 men "with his spear."

<sup>9</sup>The next one of the Three Warriors was Eleazar the son of Dodo the Ahohite. One time when the Philistines were at war with Israel, he and David dared the Philistines to fight them. Every one of the Israelite soldiers turned and ran, <sup>10</sup>except Eleazar. He killed Philistines until his hand was cramped, and he couldn't let go of his sword. When Eleazar finished, all the Israelite troops had to do was come back and take the enemies' weapons and armor. The LORD gave Israel a great victory that day.

<sup>11</sup>Next was Shammah the son of Agee the Hararite. One time the Philistines brought their army together to destroy a crop of peas growing in a field near Lehi. The rest of Israel's soldiers ran away from

the Philistines, <sup>12</sup>but Shammah stood in the middle of the field and killed the Philistines. The crops were saved, and the LORD gave Israel a great victory.

<sup>13</sup>One year at harvest time, the Three Warriors<sup>6</sup> went to meet David at Adullam Cave. The Philistine army had set up camp in Rephaim Valley <sup>14</sup>and had taken over Bethlehem. David was in his fortress, <sup>15</sup>and he was very thirsty. He said, "I wish I had a drink from the well by the gate at Bethlehem."

<sup>16</sup>The Three Warriors<sup>7</sup> sneaked into the Philistine camp and got some water from the well near Bethlehem's gate. But after they brought the water back to David, he refused to drink it. Instead, he poured it out as a sacrifice <sup>17</sup>and said to the LORD, "I can't drink this water! It's like the blood of these men who risked their lives to get it for me."

The Three Warriors did these brave deeds.

### The Thirty Warriors

<sup>18</sup>Joab's brother Abishai was the leader of the Thirty Warriors, and in one battle he killed 300 men with his spear. He was as famous as the Three Warriors <sup>19</sup>and certainly just as famous as the rest of the Thirty Warriors. He was the commander of the Thirty Warriors, but he still did not become one of the Three Warriors.

<sup>20</sup>Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was a brave man from Kabzeel who did some amazing things. He killed two of Moab's best fighters,<sup>8</sup> and on a snowy day he went down into a pit and killed a lion. <sup>21</sup>Another time, he killed an Egyptian, as big as a giant. The Egyptian was armed with a spear, but Benaiah only had a club. Benaiah grabbed the spear from the Egyptian and killed him with it. <sup>22-23</sup>Benaiah did these things. He never became one of the Three Warriors, but he was just as famous as they were and certainly just as famous as the rest of the Thirty Warriors. David made him the leader of his bodyguard.

<sup>24-39</sup>Some of the Thirty Warriors were:

- Asahel the brother of Joab
- Elhanan the son of Dodo from Bethlehem
- Shammah from Harod
- Elika from Harod
- Helez the Paltite
- Ira the son of Ikkes from Tekoa
- Abiezer from Anathoth
- Mebunnai<sup>9</sup> the Hushathite
- Zalmon the Ahohite
- Maharai from Netophah

Heleb the son of Baanah from Netophah  
 Ittai the son of Ribai from Gibeah of the tribe  
 of Benjamin

Benaiah from Pirathon

Hiddai from the streams on Mount Gaash

Abialbon from Beth-Arabah

Azmaveth from Bahurim<sup>▷</sup>

Eliahba from Shaalbon

Jashen<sup>▷</sup>

Jonathan the son of Shammah the Hararite<sup>▷</sup>

Ahiam the son of Sharar the Hararite

Eliphelet the son of Ahasbai from Maacah

Eliam the son of Ahithophel from Gilo

Hezro from Carmel

Paarai the Arbite

Igal the son of Nathan from Zobah

Bani the Gadite

Zelek from Ammon

Naharai from Beeroth, who carried the  
 weapons of Joab the son of Zeruiah

Ira the Ithrite

Gareb the Ithrite

Uriah the Hittite

There were 37 in all.

## David Counts the People

**24** The LORD was angry at Israel again, and he made David think it would be a good idea to count the people in Israel and Judah.

<sup>2</sup> So David told Joab and the army officers,<sup>▷</sup> “Go to every tribe in Israel, from the town of Dan in the north all the way south to Beersheba, and count everyone who can serve in the army. I want to know how many there are.”

<sup>3</sup> Joab answered, “I hope the LORD your God will give you 100 times more soldiers than you already have. I hope you will live to see that day! But why do you want to do a thing like this?”

<sup>4</sup> But when David refused to change his mind, Joab and the army officers went out and started counting the people. <sup>5</sup> They crossed the Jordan River and began with<sup>▷</sup> Aroer and the town in the middle of the river valley. From there they went toward Gad and on as far as Jazer. <sup>6</sup> They went to Gilead and to Kadesh in Syria.<sup>▷</sup> Then they went to Dan, Ijon,<sup>▷</sup> and on toward Sidon. <sup>7</sup> They came to the fortress of Tyre, then went through every town of the Hivites and the Canaanites. Finally, they went to Beersheba in the Southern Desert of Judah. <sup>8</sup> After they had gone through the whole land, they went back to Jerusalem. It had taken them nine months and 20 days.

<sup>9</sup> Joab came and told David, “In Israel there are 800,000 who can serve in the army, and in Judah there are 500,000.”

## The LORD Punishes David

<sup>10</sup> After everyone had been counted, David felt guilty and told the LORD, “What I did was stupid and terribly wrong. LORD, please forgive me.”

<sup>11</sup> Before David even got up the next morning, the LORD had told David’s prophet Gad <sup>12-13</sup> to take a message to David. Gad went to David and told him:

You must choose one of three ways for the LORD to punish you: Will there be seven<sup>▷</sup> years when the land won’t grow enough food for your people? Or will your enemies chase you and make you run from them for three months? Or will there be three days of horrible disease in your land? Think about it and decide, because I have to give your answer to God, who sent me.

<sup>14</sup> David was really frightened and said, “It’s a terrible choice to make! But the LORD is kind, and I’d rather be punished by him than by anyone else.”

<sup>15-16</sup> So that morning, the LORD sent an angel to spread a horrible disease everywhere in Israel, from Dan to Beersheba. And before it was over, 70,000 people had died.

When the angel was about to destroy Jerusalem, the LORD felt sorry for all the suffering he had caused and told the angel, “That’s enough! Don’t touch them.” This happened at the threshing place that belonged to Araunah the Jebusite.

<sup>17</sup> David saw the angel killing everyone and told the LORD, “These people are like sheep with me as their shepherd.<sup>▷</sup> I have sinned terribly, but they have done nothing wrong. Please, punish me and my family instead of them!”

## David Buys Araunah’s Threshing Place

<sup>18-19</sup> That same day the prophet Gad came and told David, “Go to the threshing place that belongs to Araunah and build an altar there for the LORD.”

So David went.

<sup>20</sup> Araunah looked and saw David and his soldiers coming up toward him. He went over to David, bowed down low, <sup>21</sup> and said, “Your Majesty! Why have you come to see me?”

David answered, “I’ve come to buy your threshing place. I have to build the LORD an altar here, so this disease will stop killing the people.”

<sup>22</sup> Araunah said, “Take whatever you want and offer your sacrifice. Here are some oxen for the

sacrifice. You can use the threshing-boards and the wooden yokes for the fire. <sup>23</sup> Take them—they're yours! I hope the LORD your God will be pleased with you."

<sup>24</sup> But David answered, "No! I have to pay you what they're worth. I can't offer the LORD my God a sacrifice that I got for nothing." So David

bought the threshing place and the oxen for 50 pieces of silver. <sup>25</sup> Then he built an altar for the LORD. He sacrificed animals and burned them on the altar.

The LORD answered the prayers of the people, and no one else died from the terrible disease.

## Notes

Phrases enclosed in half square superscript brackets (‘<sup>1</sup>’) are those that are difficult to translate from the original Hebrew with great certainty. Consequently, the English rendering given should be understood as only one possible way of translating such texts.

- ▷ **1.9** *in terrible pain*: Or “very weak.”
- ▷ **1.26** *You ... husband*: Or “You loved me more than a wife could possibly love her husband.”
- ▷ **2.8** *Ishbosheth*: One ancient translation has “Ishbaal.”
- ▷ **2.9** *Asher*: The Hebrew text has “Ashur.”
- ▷ **2.12** *Ishbosheth*: One ancient translation has “Ishbaal.”
- ▷ **2.16** *Field of Daggers*: Or “Field of Opponents” or “Battlefield.”
- ▷ **3.7** *Ishbosheth*: One ancient translation has “Ishbaal.”
- ▷ **3.10** *from ... south*: Hebrew “from Dan to Beersheba.”
- ▷ **3.12** *You ... nation*: Or “I like you.”
- ▷ **3.26** *well at Sirah*: Or “basis of Sirah” or “cistern at Sirah.”
- ▷ **3.33** *outlaw*: Or “fool.”
- ▷ **3.39** *God ... back*: Or “I pray that God will pay them back.”
- ▷ **4.1** *Ishbosheth*: Hebrew “The Son of Saul.”
- ▷ **4.4** *Mephibosheth*: Some manuscripts of one ancient translation have “Mephibaal.”
- ▷ **5.7-9** *temple*: Or “palace.”
- ▷ **5.13** *from Jerusalem*: Or “in Jerusalem.”
- ▷ **5.20** *The Lord Broke Through*: Or “Baal-Perazim.”
- ▷ **6.2** *to Baalah ... there*: The Dead Sea Scrolls and 1 Chronicles 13.6; the Standard Hebrew Text “from Baalah in Judah. They had gone there.”
- ▷ **6.2** *he is worshiped there*: Or “the chest belongs to him.”
- ▷ **6.3,4** *Ahio ... Ahio*: Or “his brother ... his brother.”
- ▷ **6.8** *Bursting ... Uzzah*: Or “Perez-Uzzah.”
- ▷ **6.10** *Gath*: Or perhaps, “Gittaim.”
- ▷ **6.17** *sacrificing ... altar*: The Hebrew mentions two kinds of sacrifices. In one kind of sacrifice, the whole animal was burned on the altar. In the other kind, only part was burned, and the worshippers ate the rest.
- ▷ **8.1** *Israel ... control*: Or “David also took the town of Metheg-Ammah away from them.”
- ▷ **8.4** *1,700 cavalry*: Hebrew; one ancient translation and 1 Chronicles 18.4 “1,000 chariots and 7,000 cavalry.”
- ▷ **8.4** *He also captured ... them*: Or “He crippled all but 100 of the horses.”
- ▷ **8.7** *Hadadezer's ... cases*: Or “Hadadezer’s soldiers carried gold shields, but David took these shields.”
- ▷ **8.9,10** *defeated*: Or “killed.”
- ▷ **8.12** *Edom*: Some Hebrew manuscripts and two ancient translations (see also 1 Chronicles 18.11); most Hebrew manuscripts “Aram.” In Hebrew the words for “Edom” and “Aram” look almost alike.
- ▷ **8.13** *Edomite*: Some Hebrew manuscripts and two ancient translations (see also 1 Chronicles 18.12); most Hebrew manuscripts “Aramean.” In Hebrew the words for “Edomite” and “Aramean” look almost alike.
- ▷ **8.13** *built a monument*: Or “was famous.”
- ▷ **8.17** *Abiathar the son of Ahimelech*: One ancient translation and 1 Samuel 22.11-23; Hebrew “Ahimelech the son of Abiathar.”
- ▷ **8.18** *was the commander of*: Not in the Hebrew text of this verse, but see 1 Chronicles 18.17.
- ▷ **8.18** *David's bodyguard*: The Hebrew text has “the Cherethites and the Pelethites.”
- ▷ **9.5,6** *Mephibosheth*: Or “Mephibaal.”
- ▷ **9.10** *Saul's family and servants*: Some manuscripts of one ancient translation; Hebrew “the son of your master.”
- ▷ **9.11-13** *David's*: Hebrew “my.”
- ▷ **10.18** *cavalry*: The Hebrew manuscripts and ancient translations differ as to how many and what kind of soldiers were killed.

- ▷ **11.1** *when ... war*: Or "when the messengers had gone to Ammon" or "the time when the kings had gone to war."
- ▷ **11.8** *and clean up*: Or "and sleep with your wife."
- ▷ **11.11** *somewhere in the fields*: Or "at Succoth."
- ▷ **11.21** *Gideon*: The Hebrew text has "Jerubbesheth," which stands for "Jerubbaal."
- ▷ **11.25** *break ... walls*: Or "destroy it."
- ▷ **12.13,14** *what ... wanted*: One manuscript of one ancient translation; one Hebrew manuscript "what the LORD had said"; most Hebrew manuscripts "what the enemies of the LORD would think."
- ▷ **12.25** *Jedidiah*: In Hebrew this name means "Loved by the LORD."
- ▷ **12.30** *the statue of their god Milcom*: Or "their king."
- ▷ **12.30** *David ... crown*: Or "and David wore the crown."
- ▷ **13.6** *special bread*: Or "heart-shaped bread" or "dumplings."
- ▷ **13.21** *But Amnon ... unhappy*: The Dead Sea Scrolls and one ancient translation; these words are not in the Standard Hebrew Text.
- ▷ **13.27** *Absalom prepared ... king*: One ancient translation; these words are not in the Hebrew text.
- ▷ **13.32** *David's nephew*: The Hebrew text has "the son of David's brother Shimeah."
- ▷ **13.34** *the road to Horonaim*: Or "the road behind him" or "the road to the west."
- ▷ **13.34** *He ... Road*: One ancient translation; these words are not in the Hebrew text.
- ▷ **13.39** *David ... Absalom*: Or "David was comforted over the loss of Amnon, and he no longer wanted to take his army there to capture Absalom."
- ▷ **14.9** *I hope ... me*: Or "May I speak some more?"
- ▷ **14.14** *take our lives*: Or "make any exceptions."
- ▷ **14.16** *take ... us*: Or "make sure we have no part in God's people."
- ▷ **15.2** *the city gate*: Or "the entrance to the king's palace."
- ▷ **15.7** *Four years*: The Hebrew text has "forty years."
- ▷ **15.8** *in Hebron*: Some manuscripts of one ancient translation; these words are not in the Hebrew text.
- ▷ **15.18** *bodyguards*: The Hebrew text has "the Cherethites and the Pelethites."
- ▷ **15.20** *I pray ... be*: One ancient translation; these words are not in the Hebrew text.
- ▷ **15.27** *you ... things*: Or "You are a prophet" or "You are not a prophet."
- ▷ **16.1** *figs*: Or "pomegranates."
- ▷ **16.14** *they*: Hebrew "he."
- ▷ **17.3** *back to you ... husband*: One ancient translation; Hebrew "back to you. The man you are chasing is like bringing back the whole nation."
- ▷ **17.25** *Ithra*: Or "Jether."
- ▷ **17.25** *the family of Ishmael*: Some manuscripts of one ancient translation; other manuscripts of the same translation "the town of Jezreel"; Hebrew "the people of Israel."
- ▷ **18.9** *head*: Or "hair."
- ▷ **18.21** *Ethiopia*: The Hebrew text has "Cush."
- ▷ **18.33** *David ... son*: In Hebrew, this verse is 19.1.
- ▷ **19.17** *waded across*: Or "tushed."
- ▷ **19.26** *I told ... me*: Two ancient translations; Hebrew, "I said, 'I will saddle a donkey for myself.'"
- ▷ **19.37** *My servant Chimham*: Or "My son Chimham."
- ▷ **20.7** *bodyguard*: The Hebrew text has "the Cherethites and the Pelethites."
- ▷ **20.14** *best soldiers*: One ancient translation; the difficult Hebrew text may mean either "Berites" or "Bichrites."
- ▷ **20.16** *the top of the wall*: Or "the town."
- ▷ **20.23** *David's bodyguard*: The Hebrew text has "the Cherethites and the Pelethites."
- ▷ **20.24** *Adoram*: One ancient translation "Adoniram."
- ▷ **21.4** *I'll ... ask*: Or "What are you asking me to do for you?"
- ▷ **21.8** *Merab*: Some Hebrew manuscripts and some manuscripts of one ancient translation. Most other manuscripts have "Michal."
- ▷ **21.16** *spearhead*: Or "helmet."
- ▷ **21.19** *Jari*: Or "Jaare."
- ▷ **22.2** *mighty rock*: The Hebrew text has "rock."
- ▷ **22.3** *powerful weapon*: The Hebrew has "the horn."
- ▷ **22.11** *appeared*: Most Hebrew manuscripts; some Hebrew manuscripts "swooped down,"
- ▷ **22.32,47** *mighty rock*: The Hebrew text has "rock."
- ▷ **23.1** *The Mighty ... him*: Or "He wrote Israel's favorite songs."
- ▷ **23.3** *Mighty Rock*: The Hebrew text has "rock."
- ▷ **23.4** *sparkles ... grass*: Or "makes the grass grow."

- ▷ **23.8** *Ishbosheth*: Hebrew "Josheb Bashebeth," which seems to be another spelling of Ishbosheth.
- ▷ **23.8** *the son of Hachmon*: Or "the Tahchemonite."
- ▷ **23.13** *the Three Warriors*: Or "three warriors." Hebrew "three of the thirty most important."
- ▷ **23.16** *the Three Warriors*: Or "three warriors."
- ▷ **23.20** *Moab's best fighters*: Or "big lions in Moab;" one ancient translation "sons of Ariel from Moab."
- ▷ **23.24-39** *Mebunnai*: Or "Sibbecai."
- ▷ **23.24-39** *Bahurim*: Or "Barhum."
- ▷ **23.24-39** *Jashen*: Hebrew "sons of Jashen."
- ▷ **23.24-39** *Jonathan ... Hararite*: Some manuscripts of one ancient translation. In the Hebrew text Jonathan and Shamah are separate members of the list.
- ▷ **24.2** *Joab ... officers*: Some manuscripts of one ancient translation; 1 Chronicles 21.2; Hebrew "Joab, the officer of the army."
- ▷ **24.5** *began with*: Some manuscripts of one ancient translation; Hebrew "set up camp in."
- ▷ **24.6** *Kadesh in Syria*: Or "the lower slopes of Mount Hermon."
- ▷ **24.6** *Dan, Ijon*: Or "Danjaan," an unknown place.
- ▷ **24.12,13** *seven*: Hebrew; some manuscripts of one ancient translation "three."
- ▷ **24.17** *as their shepherd*: The Dead Sea Scrolls, and some manuscripts of two ancient translations; these words are not in the Standard Hebrew Text of this verse.