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2 Samuel

Chapter 1

¹And it happened after the death of Saul, and David returned from attacking the Amalekites, that David remained in Ziklag two days. ²And it happened on the third day, that behold, a man came from the camp, from with Saul, and his clothes were torn and dirt was on his head. And it happened when he came to David that he fell to the ground and prostrated himself. ³And David said to him, "Where are you coming from?" And he said to him, "I escaped from the camp of Israel." ⁴And David said to him, "What is the matter? Tell to me please." And He said that, "The people have fled from the battle, and also many from the people have fallen and died, and Saul and Jonathan his son are also dead." ⁵And David said to the young man, the one who was reporting to him, "How do you know that Saul and Jonathan his son are dead?" ⁶And the young man, the one who was reporting to him, said, "Certainly I happened to be in the mountain of Gilboa, and behold, Saul was leaning on his spear, and behold, the chariots and the masters of the horses clung to him. ⁷And Saul turned behind him and saw me. And he called out to me, and I said, 'Here I am.' ⁸And he said to me, 'Who are you?' And I said to him, 'I am an Amalekite.' ⁹And he said to me, 'Now stand over me and kill me, for agony has grasped me, because my life is still wholly in me.' ¹⁰So I stood over him and killed him, because I knew that he would not live after his fall. And I took the crown that was on his head and the band that was on his arm, and I brought them here to my lord."

¹¹And David seized his clothes and tore them, and also all the men who were with him. ¹²And they mourned and wept and fasted until the evening for Saul, and for Jonathan his son, and for the army of Yahweh, and for the house of Israel because they had fallen by the sword. ¹³And David said to the young man, the one who was reporting to him, "Where are you from?" And he said, "I am a son of a man, a foreigner, an Amalekite." ¹⁴And David said to him, "How were you not afraid to stretch out your hand to destroy the anointed one of Yahweh?" ¹⁵And David called out to one of the young men and said, "Come near, fall upon him." And he struck him, and he died. ¹⁶And David said to him, "Your blood is on your head because your mouth has testified against you saying, 'I myself killed the anointed one of Yahweh.'"

¹⁷Then David sang this funeral song for Saul and for Jonathan his son. ¹⁸And he said to teach the sons of Judah the bow, behold, which has been written in the Book of the Upright.^[1]

¹⁹"The beauty of Israel

is slain on your high places!

How the mighty have fallen!

²⁰Do not tell it in Gath, do not announce it in the streets of Ashkelon,

lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised exult.

²¹Mountains in Gilboa,

let there not be dew and let there not be rain on you,

nor fields that give contributions,

for there the shield of the mighty was defiled.

The shield of Saul is not anointed with oil.

²²From the blood of the slain,

from the fat of the mighty,
 the bow of Jonathan did not turn back,
 and the sword of Saul did not return empty.

²³Saul and Jonathan, the ones who were loved and the delightful ones in their life,
 and in their death they were not separated.

They were swifter than eagles,
 they were mightier than lions.

²⁴Daughters of Israel, weep for Saul,
 the one who clothed you in scarlet, with luxuries,
 the one who put ornaments of gold on your clothing.

²⁵How the mighty have fallen in the midst of the battle!
 Jonathan is slain on your high places.

²⁶It is distressing to me concerning you, my brother Jonathan.
 You were very pleasant to me.
 Your love for me was wonderful,
 more than the love of women.

²⁷How the mighty have fallen,
 and the weapons of war perished!"

1:18 ^[1]

Chapter 2

¹And it happened after this that David asked of Yahweh saying, "Should I go up into one of the cities of Judah?" And Yahweh said to him, "Go up." Then David said, "Where should I go?" And he said, "To Hebron." ²So David went up there and with his two wives, Ahinoam the Jezreelite, and Abigail, the wife of Nabal the Carmelite. ³And David brought up his men who were with him, each man with his household, and they lived in the cities of Hebron,. ⁴And the men of Judah came, and there they anointed David as king over the house of Judah.

And they told to David saying, "The men of Jabesh Gilead, who buried Saul." ⁵So David sent messengers to the men of Jabesh Gilead and said to them, "Blessed are you by Yahweh, because you did this kindness with your master, with Saul, and have buried him. ⁶And now may Yahweh do to you kindness and faithfulness. And also I will do for you this good because you have done this thing. ⁷So now, let your hands be strong; and be as sons of might for Saul your master is dead, and also the house of Judah has anointed me for king over them."

⁸And Abner son of Ner, commander of Saul's army, took Ishbosheth son of Saul and brought him over to Mahanaim. ⁹And he made him king over Gilead, and over the Ashurites, and over Jezreel, and over Ephraim, and over Benjamin, and over all Israel. ¹⁰Ishbosheth son of Saul, was forty years old when he began to reign over Israel, and he reigned two years. But the house of Judah was behind David. ¹¹And the number of the days that David was king in Hebron over the house of Judah was seven years and six months.

¹²And Abner son of Ner, and the servants of Ishbosheth son of Saul, went out from Mahanaim to Gibeon. ¹³And Joab the son of Zeruiah, and the servants of David, went out and met them by the pool of Gibeon; and they sat down together, these by the pool on this side, and these by the pool on this side. ¹⁴And Abner said to Joab, "Now let the young men arise and compete before us." And Joab said, "Let them arise." ¹⁵Then they arose and passed by, by number, twelve for Benjamin and Ishbosheth son of Saul, and twelve from the servants of David. ¹⁶And each man grasped his opponent by the head and his sword into the side of his opponent, and they fell down together. Therefore that place was called "Helkath Hazzurim," or "Field of Swords," which is in Gibeon. ¹⁷And the battle was very severe that day and Abner and the men of Israel were defeated before the servants of David.

¹⁸The three sons of Zeruiah were there: Joab, and Abishai, and Asahel. Asahel was swift on his feet like one of the gazelles which are in the field. ¹⁹And Asahel pursued after Abner, and he turned not aside by going to the right or to the left from after Abner. ²⁰Then Abner looked behind him and said, "Is that you Asahel?" And he answered, "It is I." ²¹And Abner said to him, "Turn aside to your right or to your left, and seize for you from one of the young men, and take for you his belongings." But Asahel was not willing to turn aside from behind him. ²²And Abner said again to Asahel, "You turn aside from behind me. Why should I strike you to the ground? How then could I lift up my face towards Joab, your brother?" ²³But he refused to turn aside, and so Abner struck him in the stomach with the back of the spear, so that the spear came out from his back. And he fell there, and died on the spot. And it happened that all the ones coming to the place where Asahel fell there and died, they stood.

²⁴But Joab and Abishai pursued after Abner. And when the sun was going down, they came to the hill of Ammah, which is on the front of Giah by the road to the wilderness of Gibeon. ²⁵And the sons of Benjamin gathered themselves behind Abner, and they were as one band, and they stood on the top of the hill as one. ²⁶Then Abner called to Joab and said, "Must the sword devour forever? Do you not know that it will be bitter in the end? And until when will it be that you not tell to the people to turn from after their brothers?" ²⁷And Joab said, "As God lives, if you had not spoken, surely then the people would have pulled back, a man from after his brother, until the morning!" ²⁸So Joab blew on the trumpet, and all the people stood and did not pursue after Israel anymore, and they did not continue to fight anymore. ²⁹And Abner and his men went all that night through the Arabah. And they crossed the Jordan and they walked all the morning, and they came to Mahanaim.

³⁰And Joab returned from after Abner, and he assembled all the people, and were missing Asahel and nineteen men from the servants of David. ³¹But the servants of David struck down from Benjamin, from the men of Abner, 360 men they killed. ³²And they took up Asahel and buried him in the tomb of his father, which was in Bethlehem. Joab and his men walked all of the night, and it became light on them at Hebron.

Chapter 3

¹And the war was long between the house of Saul and between the house of David. And David was progressing stronger and stronger, but the house of Saul was progressing weaker and weaker.

²And sons were born to David in Hebron. And his firstborn was Amnon, by Ahinoam the Jezreelitess. ³And his second, Kileab, by Abigail, the wife of Nabal the Carmelite. And the third, Absalom, was son of Maacah, daughter of Talmi, king of Geshur. ⁴And the fourth was Adonijah, son of Haggith. And the fifth was Shephatiah, son of Abital. ⁵And the sixth Ithream, by Eglah, David's wife. These were born to David in Hebron.

⁶And it happened during the war between the house of Saul and between the house of David that Abner was strengthening himself in the house of Saul. ⁷And Saul had a concubine, and her name was Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah. And he said to Abner, "Why have you gone in to my father's concubine?" ⁸And Abner was very angry at the words of Ishbosheth and said, "Am I a dog's head that belongs to Judah? Today I do covenant faithfulness with the house of Saul, your father, to his brothers, and to his friends, by not delivering you into the hand of David. And today you call me to account concerning a fault with this woman? ⁹So may God do to Abner, and so more also to him, if as has sworn Yahweh to David, that so I do for him, ¹⁰to transfer the kingdom from the house of Saul and to

set up the throne of David over Israel and over Judah, from Dan to Beersheba." ¹¹And he was not able to answer Abner another word, because of his fear of him.

¹²And Abner sent messengers to David on his behalf saying, "Whose land is this? Cut your covenant with me, and behold my hand is with you, to bring over all of Israel to you." ¹³And he said, "Good, I will cut a covenant with you. Only one thing I require from you, that is, that you will not see my face unless to my face you bring Michal, Saul's daughter, when you come to see my face." ¹⁴Then David sent messengers to Ishbosheth, Saul's son, saying, "Give me my wife Michal, whom I betrothed to myself with one hundred Philistine foreskins." ¹⁵And Ishbosheth sent and took her from with her husband, from with Paltiel, son of Laish. ¹⁶And her husband walked with her, walking and weeping behind her to Bahurim. Then Abner said to him, "walk back" and he returned back.

¹⁷And Abner had communication with the elders of Israel saying, "Yesterday and the day before, you were seeking to secure David for a king over you. ¹⁸And now do it, for Yahweh said concerning David saying, 'By the hand of my servant David I will save my people Israel from the hand of the Philistines and from the hand of all their enemies.'" ¹⁹And Abner also spoke in the ears of Benjamin. And Abner also went to speak in the ears of David in Hebron all that was good in the eyes of Israel and in the eyes of all of the house of Benjamin. ²⁰And Abner came to David in Hebron, and with him twenty men; and David had made a feast for Abner and for the men who were with him. ²¹And Abner said to David, "Let me arise, and let me go, and let me gather to my lord the king, all of Israel that they may cut a covenant with you, and you will reign over all that your soul desires." And David sent Abner away, and he left in peace.

²²And behold, the servants of David and Joab came from a raid and brought with them much plunder, but Abner was not with David in Hebron because he had sent him away and he had gone in peace. ²³And Joab and all the army which was with him arrived, and they told to Joab saying, "Abner son of Ner came to the king, and he let him go, and he went in peace." ²⁴And Joab came to the king and said, "What have you done? Behold, Abner came to you! Why is this you have let him go, and he went and is surely gone? ²⁵You know that Abner son of Ner came to deceive you and to know your going out and your coming in and to know all which you are doing?" ²⁶And Joab went out from with David and he sent messengers after Abner, and they brought him back from the cistern of Sirah, but David did not know.

²⁷And Abner returned to Hebron, and Joab took him aside into the middle of the gate to speak with him in the quietness. There Joab stabbed him in the stomach, and he died for the blood of Asahel, his brother. ²⁸And afterward, David heard this, and he said, "I and my kingdom are forever innocent before Yahweh of the blood of Abner son of Ner. ²⁹Let the guilt of Abner's death fall on the head of Joab and on all his father's house. May there never fail to be in the family of Joab someone who has a flowing sore or skin disease or who is lame and must walk with a staff or who is killed by the sword or who goes without food." ³⁰So Joab and Abishai his brother killed Abner, because he had killed their brother Asahel at Gibeon in battle.

³¹David said to Joab and to all the people who were with him, "Tear your clothes, put on sackcloth, and mourn before Abner's body." Now King David walked behind the body in the funeral procession. ³²They buried Abner in Hebron. The king wept and cried loudly at the tomb of Abner, and all the people also wept. ³³The king lamented for Abner and sang,

"Should Abner die as a fool dies?

³⁴Your hands were not bound.

Your feet were not shackled.

As a man falls before the sons of injustice, so you have fallen."

Once more all the people wept over him. ³⁵All the people came to make David eat while it was still day, but David swore, "May God do so to me, and more also, if I taste bread or anything else before the sun goes down." ³⁶All the people took notice of David's grief, and it pleased them, as whatever the king did pleased them. ³⁷So all the people

and all Israel understood that day that it was not the king's desire to kill Abner son of Ner. ³⁸The king said to his servants, "Do you not know that a prince and a great man has fallen this day in Israel? ³⁹Now I am weak today, though I am an anointed king. These men, the sons of Zeruiah, are too brutal for me. May Yahweh repay the evildoer by punishing him for his wickedness, as he deserves."

Chapter 4

¹When Ishbosheth, Saul's son, heard that Abner was dead in Hebron, his hands became weak, and all Israel was troubled. ²Now Saul's son had two men who were captains of groups of soldiers. The name of one was Baanah and the other Recab, sons of Rimmon the Beerothite of the people of Benjamin (for Beeroth is also considered part of Benjamin, ³and the Beerothites fled to Gittaim and have been living there until this very time).

⁴Now Jonathan, Saul's son, had a son who was crippled in his feet. He was five years old when the news about Saul and Jonathan came from Jezreel. His nurse picked him up to flee. But as she was running, Jonathan's son fell and became lame. His name was Mephibosheth.

⁵So the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, Recab and Baanah, traveled during the heat of the day to the house of Ishbosheth, as he was resting at noon. ⁶Behold, the woman guarding the door had fallen asleep while sifting wheat, and Recab and Baanah, his brother, walked in quietly, stabbed Ishbosheth in the stomach, and then escaped. ⁷So after they entered the house, they attacked him and killed him as he was lying on his bed in his room. Then they cut off his head and carried it away, traveling on the road all night to the Arabah. ⁸They brought the head of Ishbosheth to David at Hebron, and they said to the king, "Look, this is the head of Ishbosheth son of Saul, your enemy, who sought your life. Today Yahweh has avenged our master the king against Saul and his descendants." ⁹David answered Recab and Baanah his brother, the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite; he said to them, "As Yahweh lives, who delivered my life from every trouble, ¹⁰when someone told me, 'Look, Saul is dead,' thinking he was bringing good news, I seized him and killed him at Ziklag. That was the reward I gave him for his news. ¹¹How much more, when wicked men have killed an innocent person in his own house on his bed, should I not now require his blood from your hand, and remove you from the earth?" ¹²Then David gave orders to the young men, and they killed them and cut off their hands and feet and hung them up beside the pool at Hebron. But they took the head of Ishbosheth and buried it in the grave of Abner in Hebron.

Chapter 5

¹Then all the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron and said, "Look, we are your flesh and bone. ²In the recent past, when Saul was king over us, it was you who led the Israelite army. Yahweh said to you, 'You will shepherd my people Israel, and you will become ruler over Israel.'" ³So all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron, and King David made a covenant with them before Yahweh. They anointed David king over Israel. ⁴David was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years. ⁵In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months, and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty-three years over all Israel and Judah.

⁶The king and his men went to Jerusalem against the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land. They said to David, "You will not come here except to be turned away by the blind and the lame. David cannot come here." ⁷Nevertheless, David captured the stronghold of Zion, which now is the city of David. ⁸At that time David said, "Those who attack the Jebusites will have to go through the water shaft to reach the 'lame and the blind' who are David's enemies." That is why people say, "The 'blind and the lame' must not enter the palace." ⁹So David lived in the stronghold and called it the city of David. He fortified around it, from the terrace toward the inside. ¹⁰David became very powerful because Yahweh, the God of hosts, was with him.

¹¹Then Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David, and cedar trees, carpenters, and masons. They built a house for David. ¹²David knew that Yahweh had established him as king over Israel, and that he had exalted his kingdom for the sake of his people Israel.

¹³David took more concubines and wives from Jerusalem after he left Hebron, and more sons and daughters were born to him. ¹⁴These were the names of the children who were born to him in Jerusalem: Shammua, Shobab, Nathan, Solomon, ¹⁵Ibhar, Elishua, Nepheg, Japhia, ¹⁶Elishama, Eliada, and Eliphelet.

¹⁷Now when the Philistines heard that David had been anointed as king over Israel, they all went out looking for him. But David heard about it and went down to the stronghold. ¹⁸Now the Philistines had come and spread out in the Valley of Rephaim. ¹⁹Then David asked for help from Yahweh. He said, "Should I attack the Philistines? Will you give victory over them?" Yahweh said to David, "Attack, for I will certainly give you victory over the Philistines." ²⁰So David attacked at Baal Perazim, and there he defeated them. He commented, "Yahweh has burst through my enemies before me like a bursting flood of water." So the name of that place became Baal Perazim. ²¹The Philistines left their idols there, and David and his men carried them away.

²²Then the Philistines came up again and spread out once more in the Valley of Rephaim. ²³So David asked help from Yahweh again, and Yahweh said to him, "You must not attack their front, but rather circle around behind them and come on them through the balsam woods. ²⁴When you hear the sound of marching in the wind blowing through the balsam treetops, then attack with force. Do this because Yahweh will have gone out before you to attack the army of the Philistines." ²⁵So David did as Yahweh had commanded him. He killed Philistines from Geba all the way to Gezer.

Chapter 6

¹Now David again gathered together all the chosen men of Israel, thirty thousand. ²David arose and went with all his men who were with him from Baalah in Judah to bring up from there the Box of the Covenant of God, which is called by the name of Yahweh of hosts, who sits enthroned over the cherubim. ³They set the Box of the Covenant of God on a new cart. They brought it out of Abinadab's house, which was on a hill. Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, were guiding the new cart. ⁴They brought the cart out of Abinadab's house on the hill with the Box of the Covenant of God on it. Ahio was walking in front of the ark. ⁵Then David and all the house of Israel began to play before Yahweh, celebrating with wooden instruments, harps, lyres, tambourines, rattles, and cymbals.

⁶When they came to the threshing floor of Nakon, the oxen stumbled, and Uzzah reached out with his hand to grab the Box of the Covenant of God, and he took hold of it. ⁷Then the anger of Yahweh burned against Uzzah. God attacked him there for his error. Uzzah died there by the Box of the Covenant of God. ⁸David was angry because Yahweh had attacked Uzzah, and he called the name of that place Perez Uzzah. That place is called Perez Uzzah to this day. ⁹David was afraid of Yahweh that day. He said, "How can the Box of the Covenant of Yahweh come to me?" ¹⁰So David was not willing to take the Box of the Covenant of Yahweh with him into the city of David. Instead, he put it aside in the house of Obed Edom the Gittite. ¹¹The Box of the Covenant of Yahweh remained in the house of Obed Edom the Gittite for three months. So Yahweh blessed him and all his household.

¹²Now King David was told, "Yahweh has blessed Obed Edom's house and everything that belongs to him because of the Box of the Covenant of God." So David went and brought up the Box of the Covenant of God from Obed Edom's house to the city of David with joy. ¹³When those who were carrying the Box of the Covenant of Yahweh had gone six steps, he sacrificed an ox and a fattened calf. ¹⁴David danced before Yahweh with all his might; he was wearing only a linen ephod. ¹⁵So David and all the house of Israel brought up the Box of the Covenant of Yahweh with shouting and the sound of trumpets.

¹⁶Now as the Box of the Covenant of Yahweh came into the city of David, Michal, the daughter of Saul, looked out the window. She saw King David leaping and dancing before Yahweh. Then she despised him in her heart. ¹⁷They

brought in the Box of the Covenant of Yahweh and put it in its place, in the middle of the tent that David had set up for it. Then David offered burnt offerings and fellowship offerings before Yahweh. ¹⁸When David had finished sacrificing the burnt offerings and the fellowship offerings, he blessed the people in the name of Yahweh of hosts. ¹⁹Then he distributed among all the people, the whole multitude of Israel, both to men and women, a loaf of bread, a portion of meat, and a cake of raisins. Then all the people left; each one returned to his own house.

²⁰Then David returned to bless his family. Michal, the daughter of Saul, came out to meet David and said, "How honored the king of Israel was today, who undressed himself today before the eyes of the slave girls among his servants, like one of the crude fellows who shamelessly undresses himself!" ²¹David responded to Michal, "I did that before Yahweh, who chose me above your father and above all his family, who appointed me leader over the people of Yahweh, over Israel. Before Yahweh I will be joyful! ²²I will be even more undignified than this, and I will be humiliated in my own eyes. But by these slave girls you have spoken about, I will be honored." ²³So Michal, the daughter of Saul, had no children to the day of her death.

Chapter 7

¹It happened that after the king had settled in his house, and after Yahweh had given him rest from all his surrounding enemies, ²the king said to Nathan the prophet, "Look, I am living in a house of cedar, but the Box of the Covenant of God is staying in the middle of a tent." ³Then Nathan said to the king, "Go, do what is in your heart, for Yahweh is with you." ⁴But that same night the word of Yahweh came to Nathan, saying: ⁵"Go and tell David my servant, 'This is what Yahweh says: Will you build me a house in which to live? ⁶For I have not lived in a house from the day that I brought up the people of Israel out of Egypt until this present day; instead, I have been moving about in a tent, a tabernacle. ⁷In all places where I have moved among all the people of Israel, did I ever say anything to any of Israel's leaders whom I appointed to shepherd my people Israel, saying, 'Why have you not built me a house of cedar?'" ⁸Now then, tell my servant David, 'This is what Yahweh of hosts says: I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, so that you would be ruler over my people Israel. ⁹I have been with you wherever you went. I have cut off all your enemies from before you. Now I will make your name great, like the names of the great ones of the earth. ¹⁰I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them there, so that they may live in their own place and be troubled no more. No longer will wicked people oppress them, as they did before, ¹¹as they were doing from the days that I commanded judges to be over my people Israel. Now I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover, I, Yahweh declare to you that I will make you a house. ¹²When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up a descendant after you, one who will come out from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. ¹³He will build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. ¹⁴I will be a father to him, and he will be my son. When he sins, I will discipline him with the rod of men and with the whipping of the sons of men. ¹⁵But my covenant faithfulness will not leave him, as I took it from Saul, whom I removed from before you. ¹⁶Your house and kingdom will be confirmed forever before you. Your throne will be established forever.'" ¹⁷Nathan spoke to David and reported to him all these words and the entire vision.

¹⁸Then David the king went in and sat before Yahweh and said, "Who am I, Lord Yahweh, and what is my family that you have brought me to this point? ¹⁹Now this was a small thing in your sight, Lord Yahweh. You have even spoken about your servant's family for a great while to come, and have shown me future generations, Lord Yahweh! ²⁰What more can I, David, say to you? You have known your servant, Lord Yahweh. ²¹For your word's sake, and to fulfill your own purpose, you have done this great thing and revealed it to your servant. ²²Therefore you are great, Lord Yahweh, for there is no one like you, and there is no God besides you, as we have heard with our own ears. ²³What nation is like your people Israel, the one nation on earth whom you, God, went and rescued for yourself? You did this so that they would become a people for yourself, to make a name for yourself, and to do great and fearful deeds for your land. You drove out nations and their gods from before your people, whom you rescued from Egypt. ²⁴You established Israel as your own people forever, and you, Yahweh, became their God. ²⁵So now, Yahweh God, may the promise that you made concerning your servant and his family be established forever.

Do as you have spoken. ²⁶May your name be forever great, so the people will say, 'Yahweh of hosts is the God of Israel,' while the house of me, David, your servant is established before you. ²⁷For you, Yahweh of hosts, the God of Israel, have revealed to your servant that you will build him a house. That is why I, your servant, have found courage to pray to you. ²⁸Now, Lord Yahweh, you are God, and your words are trustworthy, and you have made this good promise to your servant. ²⁹Now then, let it please you to bless the house of your servant, so that it may continue forever before you. For you, Lord Yahweh, have said these things, and with your blessing your servant's house will be blessed forever."

Chapter 8

¹After this it came about that David attacked the Philistines and defeated them. So David took Metheg Ammah from the control of the Philistines.

²Then he defeated Moab and measured their men with a line by making them lie down on the ground. He measured off two lines to put to death, and one full line to keep alive. So the Moabites became servants to David and began to pay him tribute.

³David then defeated Hadadezer son of Rehob, the king of Zobah, as Hadadezer was traveling to recover his rule by the Euphrates River. ⁴David captured from him 1700 chariots and 20000 footmen. David hamstringed all the chariot horses, but reserved enough of them for 100 chariots. ⁵When the Arameans of Damascus came to help Hadadezer king of Zobah, David killed 22000 Aramean men. ⁶Then David put garrisons in Aram of Damascus, and the Arameans became servants to him and brought him tribute. Yahweh gave victory to David wherever he went. ⁷David took the golden shields that were on Hadadezer's servants and brought them to Jerusalem. ⁸From Tebah and Berothai, cities of Hadadezer, King David took very much bronze.

⁹When Tou, king of Hamath, heard that David had defeated all the army of Hadadezer, ¹⁰Tou sent Hadoram his son to King David to greet him and to bless him, because David had fought against Hadadezer and defeated him, and because Hadadezer had waged war against Tou. Hadoram brought with himself objects of silver, gold, and bronze.

¹¹King David set aside these objects to Yahweh, together with the silver and gold from all the nations that he conquered— ¹²from Aram, Moab, the people of Ammon, the Philistines, and Amalek, along with all of the plundered goods of Hadadezer son of Rehob, the king of Zobah.

¹³David's name was well known when he returned from conquering the Arameans in the Valley of Salt, with their 18000 men. ¹⁴He placed garrisons throughout all of Edom, and all the Edomites became servants to him. Yahweh gave victory to David wherever he went.

¹⁵David reigned over all Israel, and he administered justice and righteousness to all his people. ¹⁶Joab son of Zeruah was the commander of the army, and Jehoshaphat son of Ahilud was recorder. ¹⁷Zadok son of Ahitub and Ahimelech son of Abiathar were priests, and Seraiah was scribe. ¹⁸Benaiah son of Jehoiada was in charge of the Kerethites and Pelethites, and David's sons were the chief officials at the king's hand.^[1]

8:18 ^[1]; but the MT has, .

Chapter 9

¹David said, "Is there anyone left in Saul's family to whom I may show kindness for Jonathan's sake?" ²There was in Saul's family a servant whose name was Ziba, and they called him to David. The king said to him, "Are you Ziba?" He replied, "Yes. I am your servant." ³So the king said, "Is there anyone left of Saul's family to whom I may show the kindness of God?" Ziba replied to the king, "Jonathan still has a son, who is lame in his feet." ⁴The king said to him, "Where is he?" Ziba replied to the king, "Look, he is in the house of Machir son of Ammiel in Lo Debar." ⁵Then King David sent and had him brought out of the house of Machir son of Ammiel from Lo Debar. ⁶So Mephibosheth son

of Jonathan son of Saul, came to David and bowed down his face to the floor in honor of David. David said, "Mephibosheth." He answered, "See, I am your servant!" ⁷David said to him, "Do not be afraid, for I will surely show you kindness for Jonathan your father's sake, and I will restore to you all the land of Saul your grandfather, and you will always eat bread at my table." ⁸Mephibosheth bowed and said, "What is your servant, that you should look on such a dead dog as I am?"

⁹Then the king called to Ziba, Saul's servant, and said to him, "All that belonged to Saul and his family I have given to your master's grandson. ¹⁰You, your sons, and your servants must till the land for him and you must harvest the crops so that your master's grandson will have food to eat. For Mephibosheth, your master's grandson, must always eat at my table." Now Ziba had 15 sons and 20 servants. ¹¹Then Ziba said to the king, "Your servant will do all that my master the king commands his servant." The king added, "As for Mephibosheth he will eat at my table, as one of the king's sons." ¹²Mephibosheth had a young son whose name was Mika. All who lived in the house of Ziba were servants of Mephibosheth. ¹³So Mephibosheth lived in Jerusalem, and he always ate at the king's table, though he was lame in both his feet.

Chapter 10

¹It came about later that the king of the people of Ammon died, and that Hanun his son became king in his place.

²David said, "I will show kindness to Hanun son of Nahash, as his father showed kindness to me." So David sent his servants to comfort Hanun concerning his father. His servants entered the land of the people of Ammon. ³But the leaders of the people of Ammon said to Hanun their master, "Do you really think that David is honoring your father because he has sent men to comfort you? Has not David sent his servants to you to look at the city, to spy it out, in order to overthrow it?" ⁴So Hanun took David's servants, shaved off half their beards, cut off their garments up to their buttocks, and sent them away. ⁵When they explained this to David, he sent to meet with them, for the men were deeply ashamed. The king said, "Stay at Jericho until your beards have grown back, and then return."

⁶When the people of Ammon saw that they had become a stench to David, the people of Ammon sent messengers and hired the Arameans of Beth Rehob and Zobah, 20000 foot soldiers, and the king of Maacah with 1000 men, and the men of Tob with 12000 men. ⁷When David heard of it, he sent Joab and all the army of soldiers. ⁸The Ammonites came out and formed a line of battle at the entrance to their city gate, while the Arameans of Zobah and of Rehob, and the men of Tob and Maacah, stood by themselves in the open fields.

⁹When Joab saw the battle lines facing him both in front and behind, he chose some of Israel's best fighters and arranged them against the Arameans. ¹⁰The rest of his people he put into the hand of Abishai his brother, and he arranged them against the sons of Ammon. ¹¹Joab said, "If the Arameans are too strong for me, then you, Abishai, must rescue me. But if the sons of Ammon are too strong for you, then I will come and rescue you. ¹²Be strong, and let us show ourselves to be strong for our people and for the cities of our God, for Yahweh will do what is good for his purpose." ¹³So Joab and the soldiers of his army advanced to the battle against the Arameans, who were forced to flee before the army of Israel. ¹⁴When the sons of Ammon saw that the Arameans had fled, they also fled from Abishai and went back into the city. Then Joab returned from the people of Ammon and went back to Jerusalem.

¹⁵When the Arameans saw that they were being defeated by Israel, they gathered themselves together again.

¹⁶Then Hadarezer sent for Aramean troops from beyond the Euphrates River. They came to Helam, and Shobak, the commander of Hadarezer's army, went before them. ¹⁷When David was told this, he gathered all Israel together, crossed the Jordan, and arrived at Helam. The Arameans arranged themselves in battle lines against David and fought him. ¹⁸The Arameans fled from Israel, and David killed 700 of their men in chariots and 40000 horsemen. Shobak the commander of their army was wounded and died there. ¹⁹When all the kings who were servants of Hadarezer saw that they were defeated by Israel, they made peace with Israel and became their subjects. So the Arameans were afraid to help the people of Ammon anymore.

Chapter 11

¹It came about in the springtime, at the time when kings normally go to war, that David sent out Joab, his servants, and all the army of Israel. They destroyed the sons of Ammon and besieged Rabbah. But David stayed in Jerusalem.

²So it came about one evening that David got up from his bed and walked on the roof of his palace. From there he saw a woman who was bathing, and the woman was very beautiful to look at. ³So David sent and he inquired about the woman. Someone said, "Is not this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, and is she not the wife of Uriah the Hittite?" ⁴David sent messengers and took her; she came in to him, and he lay with her (for she had just purified herself from menstruation). Then she returned to her house. ⁵The woman conceived, and she sent and told David; she said, "I am pregnant."

⁶Then David sent to Joab saying, "Send me Uriah the Hittite." So Joab sent Uriah to David. ⁷When Uriah arrived, David asked him how Joab was, how the army was doing, and how the war was going. ⁸David said to Uriah, "Go down to your house and wash your feet." So Uriah left the king's palace, and the king sent a gift for Uriah after he left. ⁹But Uriah slept at the door of the king's palace with all the servants of his master, and he did not go down to his house. ¹⁰When they told David, "Uriah did not go down to his house," David said to Uriah, "Have you not come from a journey? Why did you not go down to your house?" ¹¹Uriah answered David, "The Box, and Israel and Judah are staying in tents, and my master Joab and my master's servants are camped in an open field. How then can I go into my house to eat and to drink and to lie with my wife? As sure as you are alive, I will not do this." ¹²So David said to Uriah, "Stay here today also, and tomorrow I will let you leave." So Uriah stayed in Jerusalem that day and the next day. ¹³When David called him, he ate and drank before him, and David made him drunk. At evening Uriah went out to sleep on his bed with the servants of his master; he did not go down to his house.

¹⁴So in the morning David wrote a letter to Joab, and sent it by the hand of Uriah. ¹⁵David wrote in the letter saying, "Set Uriah at the very front of the most intense battle, and then withdraw from him, that he may be hit and killed." ¹⁶So as Joab watched the siege upon the city, he assigned Uriah to the place where he knew the strongest enemy soldiers would be fighting. ¹⁷When the men of the city went out and fought against Joab's army, some of the soldiers of David fell, and Uriah the Hittite was also killed there. ¹⁸When Joab sent word to David about everything concerning the war, ¹⁹he commanded the messenger, saying, "When you have finished telling all the things concerning the war to the king, ²⁰it may happen that the king will become angry, and he will say to you, 'Why did you go so near to the city to fight? Did you not know that they would shoot from the wall? ²¹Who killed Abimelech son of Jerub-Besheth? Did not a woman cast an upper millstone on him from the wall, so that he died at Thebez? Why did you go so near the wall?' Then you must answer, 'Your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also.'"

²²So the messenger left and went to David and told him everything that Joab had sent him to say. ²³Then the messenger said to David, "The enemy were stronger than we were at first; they came out to us into the field, but we drove them back to the entrance of the gate. ²⁴Then their shooters shot at your soldiers from off the wall, and some of the king's servants were killed, and your servant Uriah the Hittite was killed, too." ²⁵Then David said to the messenger, "Say this to Joab, 'Do not let this displease you, for the sword devours one as well as another. Make your battle even stronger against the city, and overthrow it,' and encourage him."

²⁶So when the wife of Uriah heard that Uriah her husband was dead, she lamented deeply for her husband.

²⁷When her sorrow passed, David sent and took her home to his palace, and she became his wife and bore him a son. But what David had done displeased Yahweh.

Chapter 12

¹Then Yahweh sent Nathan to David. He came to him and said, "There were once two men in a city. One man was rich and the other poor. ²The rich man had huge numbers of flocks and herds, ³but the poor man had nothing except one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and fed and raised. It grew up together with him and with his

children. The lamb even ate with him and drank from his own cup, and it slept in his arms and was like a daughter to him. ⁴One day a visitor came to the rich man, but the rich man was unwilling to take an animal from his own flocks and herds to provide food for the traveler. Instead he took the poor man's ewe lamb and cooked it for his visitor." ⁵David was hot with anger against the rich man, and he raged to Nathan, "As Yahweh lives, the man who has done this deserves to be put to death. ⁶He must pay back the lamb four times over because he did such a thing, and because he had no pity."

⁷Then Nathan said to David, "You are that man! Yahweh, the God of Israel, says, 'I anointed you king over Israel, and I rescued you out of the hand of Saul. ⁸I gave you your master's house, and your master's wives into your arms. I also gave you the house of Israel and Judah. But if that had been too little, I would have given you many other things in addition. ⁹So why have you despised the commands of Yahweh, so as to do what is evil in his sight? You have struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword and have taken his wife to be your own wife. You killed him with the sword of the army of Ammon. ¹⁰So now the sword will never leave your house, because you have despised me and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite as your wife.' ¹¹Yahweh says, 'Look, I will raise up disaster against you out of your own house. Before your own eyes, I will take your wives and give them to your neighbor, and he will lie with your wives in broad daylight. ¹²For you committed your sin secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel, in the sunlight.'" ¹³Then David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against Yahweh." Nathan replied to David, "Yahweh also has passed over your sin. You will not be killed. ¹⁴However, because by this act you have despised Yahweh, the child who is born to you will surely die." ¹⁵Then Nathan left and went home.

Yahweh attacked the child that Uriah's wife bore to David, and he was very sick. ¹⁶David then implored God for the boy. David fasted and went inside and lay all night on the floor. ¹⁷The elders of his house arose and stood beside him, to raise him up from the floor, but he would not get up, and he would not eat with them. ¹⁸It came about on the seventh day that the child died. David's servants were afraid to tell him that the child was dead, for they said, "Look, while the child was still alive we spoke to him, and he did not listen to our voice. What might he do to himself if we tell him that the boy is dead?!" ¹⁹But when David saw that his servants were whispering together, David perceived that the child was dead. He said to his servants, "Is the child dead?" They answered, "He is dead." ²⁰Then David arose from the floor and washed himself, anointed himself, and changed his clothes. He went to the tabernacle of Yahweh and worshiped there, and then he came back to his own palace. When he asked for it, they set food before him, and he ate. ²¹Then his servants said to him, "Why have you done this? You fasted and wept for the child while he was alive, but when the child died, you got up and ate." ²²David answered, "While the child was still alive I fasted and wept. I said, 'Who knows whether or not Yahweh will be gracious to me, that the child may live?' ²³But now he is dead, so why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I will go to him, but he will not return to me."

²⁴David comforted Bathsheba his wife, and went in to her and lay with her. Later she gave birth to a son, and the child was named Solomon. Yahweh loved him ²⁵and he sent word through Nathan the prophet to name him Jedidiah, because Yahweh loved him.

²⁶Now Joab fought against Rabbah of the Ammonites, and he captured the royal city. ²⁷So Joab sent messengers to David and said, "I have fought against Rabbah, and I have taken the city's water supply. ²⁸Now therefore gather the rest of the army together and camp against the city and take it, because if I take the city, it will be named after me." ²⁹So David gathered all the army together and went to Rabbah; he fought against the city and captured it. ³⁰David took the crown from their king's head—it weighed a talent of gold, and there was a precious stone in it. The crown was placed on David's own head. Then he brought out the plunder of the city in large quantities. ³¹He brought out the people who were in the city and forced them to work with saws, iron picks, and axes; he also made them work at brick kilns. David required all the cities of the people of Ammon to do this labor. Then David and all the army returned to Jerusalem.

Chapter 13

¹It came about after this that Amnon son of David was very attracted to his beautiful half-sister Tamar, who was a full sister of Absalom, another of David's sons. ²Amnon was so frustrated that he became sick because of his sister Tamar. She was a virgin, and it seemed impossible to Amnon to do anything to her. ³But Amnon had a friend whose name was Jonadab son of Shimeah, David's brother. Jonadab was a very shrewd man. ⁴Jonadab said to Amnon, "Why, son of the king, are you depressed every morning? Will you not tell me?" So Amnon answered him, "I love Tamar, my brother Absalom's sister." ⁵Then Jonadab said to him, "Lie down on your bed and pretend to be sick. When your father comes to see you, ask him, 'Would you please send my sister Tamar to give me something to eat and cook it before me, so that I may see it and eat it from her hand?'" ⁶So Amnon lay down and pretended to be sick. When the king came to see him, Amnon said to the king, "Please send my sister Tamar to make some food for my sickness in front of me so that I may eat from her hand."

⁷Then David sent word to Tamar at his palace, saying, "Go now to your brother Amnon's house and prepare food for him." ⁸So Tamar went to her brother Amnon's house where he was lying down. She took dough and kneaded it and formed bread in his sight, and then she baked it. ⁹She took the pan and gave the bread to him, but he refused to eat. Then Amnon said to the others present, "Send everyone out, away from me." So everyone went out from him. ¹⁰So Amnon said to Tamar, "Bring the food into my room that I may eat from your hand." So Tamar took the bread that she had made, and brought it into the room of Amnon her brother. ¹¹When she had brought the food to him, he took hold of her and said to her, "Come, lie with me, my sister." ¹²She answered him, "No, my brother, do not force me, for nothing like this should be done in Israel. Do not do this appalling thing! ¹³How could I be rid of my shame? What about you? You would be like one of the fools in Israel! Now, please speak to the king, for he would not keep me from you." ¹⁴However Amnon would not listen to her, and he was stronger than she was, and he overpowered her, and he lay with her.

¹⁵Then Amnon hated Tamar with extreme hatred. He hated her even more than he had desired her. Amnon said to her, "Get up and go." ¹⁶But she responded to him, "No! Because this great evil of making me leave is even worse than what you did to me!" But Amnon did not listen to her. ¹⁷Instead, he called his personal servant and said, "Take this woman away from me, and bolt the door after her." ¹⁸Then his servant brought her out and bolted the door after her. Tamar was wearing a very decorated robe because the king's daughters who were virgins dressed that way. ¹⁹Tamar put ashes on her head and tore her robe. She put her hands on her head and walked away, crying aloud as she went.

²⁰Absalom her brother said to her, "Has Amnon your brother been with you? But now keep quiet, my sister. He is your brother. Do not take this thing to heart." So Tamar remained alone in her brother Absalom's house. ²¹But when King David heard of all these things, he was very angry. ²²Absalom spoke neither evil nor good to Amnon, for Absalom hated him for what he had done to her and how he had disgraced his sister Tamar.

²³It came about after two full years that Absalom had sheep shearers working at Baal Hazor, which is near Ephraim, and Absalom invited all the king's sons to visit there. ²⁴Absalom went to the king and said, "Look now, your servant has sheep shearers. Please, may the king and his servants go with me, your servant." ²⁵The king answered Absalom, "No, my son, all of us should not go because we would be a burden to you." Absalom begged the king, but he would not go, but he gave him his blessing. ²⁶Then Absalom said, "If not, please let my brother Amnon go with us." So the king said to him, "Why should Amnon go with you?" ²⁷Absalom pressed David, and so he let Amnon and all the king's sons go with him. ²⁸Absalom commanded his servants saying, "Pay attention. When Amnon begins to be affected by the wine, and when I say to you, 'Attack Amnon,' then kill him. Do not be afraid. Have I not commanded you? Be courageous and brave." ²⁹So Absalom's servants did to Amnon as he had commanded them. Then all the king's sons arose, and every man mounted his mule and fled.

³⁰So it came about, while they were on the road, that the news came to David saying, "Absalom has killed all the king's sons, and there is not one of them left." ³¹Then the king arose and tore his clothes, and lay on the floor; all

his servants stood by with their clothes torn. ³²Jonadab son of Shimeah, David's brother, answered and said, "Let not my master believe that they have killed all the young men who are the king's sons, for Amnon only is dead. Absalom has planned this from the day that Amnon violated his sister Tamar. ³³So therefore let not my master the king take this report to heart, so as to believe that all the king's sons are dead, for Amnon only is dead."

³⁴Absalom fled away. A servant keeping watch raised his eyes and saw many people coming on the road on the hillside west of him. ³⁵Then Jonadab said to the king, "Look, the king's sons are coming. It is just as your servant said." ³⁶So it came about when he finished speaking, the king's sons arrived and raised their voices and wept. The king and all his servants also wept bitterly.

³⁷But Absalom fled and went to Talmai son of Ammihud, the king of Geshur. David mourned for his son every day. ³⁸So Absalom fled and went to Geshur, where he was for three years. ³⁹The mind of King David longed to go out to see Absalom, for he was comforted concerning Amnon and his death.

Chapter 14

¹Now Joab son of Zeruah perceived that the king's heart desired to see Absalom. ²So Joab sent word to Tekoa and had from there a wise woman brought to him. He said to her, "Please pretend you are a mourner and put on mourning clothes. Please do not anoint yourself with oil, but be like a woman who has mourned a long time for the dead. ³Then go to the king and speak to him about what I will describe." So Joab told her the words she was to say.

⁴When the woman from Tekoa spoke to the king, she lay facedown on the ground and said, "Help me, king." ⁵The king said to her, "What is wrong?" She answered, "The truth is that I am a widow, and my husband is dead. ⁶I, your servant, had two sons, and they fought together in the field, and there was no one to separate them. One struck the other and killed him. ⁷Now the whole clan has risen against your servant, and they say, 'Give into our hand the man who struck his brother, so that we may put him to death, to pay for the life of his brother whom he killed.' So they would also destroy the heir. Thus they will put out the burning coal that I have left, and they will leave for my husband neither name nor descendant on the surface of the earth."

⁸So the king said to the woman, "Go to your house, and I will command something to be done for you." ⁹The woman of Tekoa replied to the king, "My master, king, may the guilt be on me and on my father's family. The king and his throne are guiltless." ¹⁰The king replied, "Whoever says anything to you, bring him to me, and he will not touch you anymore." ¹¹Then she said, "Please, may the king remember Yahweh your God, so that the avenger of blood will not destroy anyone further, so that they will not destroy my son." The king replied, "As Yahweh lives, not one hair of your son will fall to the ground."

¹²Then the woman said, "Please let your servant speak a further word to my master the king." He said, "Speak on." ¹³So the woman said, "Why then have you devised such a thing against the people of God? For in saying this thing, the king is like someone who is guilty, because the king has not brought back home again his banished son. ¹⁴For we all must die, and we are like water spilled on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again. But God will not take away life; instead, he finds a way for those who were driven away to be restored. ¹⁵Now then, seeing that I have come to speak this thing to my master the king, it is because the people have made me afraid. So your servant said to herself, 'I will now speak to the king. It may be that the king will perform the request of his servant. ¹⁶Perhaps the king will listen to me and deliver his servant from the hand of the man who would destroy me and my son together, out of the inheritance God gave us.' ¹⁷Then your servant prayed, 'Please, may the word of my master the king give me relief, for as an angel of God, so is my master the king in telling good from evil.' May Yahweh your God be with you."

¹⁸Then the king answered and said to the woman, "Please do not hide from me anything that I will ask you." The woman replied, "Let my master the king now speak." ¹⁹The king said, "Is not the hand of Joab with you in all this?" The woman answered and said, "As you live, my master the king, no one can escape to the right hand or to the left from anything that my master the king has spoken. It was your servant Joab who commanded me and told me to

say these things that your servant has spoken. ²⁰Your servant Joab has done this to change the course of what is happening. My master is wise, like the wisdom of an angel of God, and he knows everything that is happening in the land."

²¹So the king said to Joab, "Look now, I will do this thing. Go then, and bring the young man Absalom back." ²²So Joab lay facedown on the ground in honor and gratitude to the king. Joab said, "Today your servant knows that I have found favor in your eyes, my master, king, in that the king has performed the request of his servant." ²³So Joab arose, went to Geshur, and brought Absalom back to Jerusalem. ²⁴The king said, "He may return to his own house, but he may not see my face." So Absalom returned to his own house, but did not see the king's face.

²⁵Now in all Israel there was no one praised for his handsomeness more than Absalom. From the sole of his foot to the top of his head there was no blemish in him. ²⁶When he cut the hair of his head at the end of every year, because it was heavy on him, he weighed his hair; it would weigh about 200 shekels, which is measured by the weight of the king's standard. ²⁷To Absalom were born three sons and one daughter, whose name was Tamar. She was a beautiful woman.

²⁸Absalom lived two full years in Jerusalem, without seeing the king's face. ²⁹Then Absalom sent word for Joab to send him to the king, but Joab would not come to him. So Absalom sent word a second time, but Joab still did not come. ³⁰So Absalom said to his servants, "See, Joab's field is near mine, and he has barley there. Go and set it on fire." So Absalom's servants set the field on fire. ³¹Then Joab arose and came to Absalom at his house, and said to him, "Why have your servants set my field on fire?" ³²Absalom answered Joab, "Look, I sent word to you saying, 'Come here so I may send you to the king to say, "Why did I come from Geshur? It would be better for me to still be there. Now therefore let me see the king's face, and if I am guilty, let him kill me."' ³³So Joab went to the king and told him. When the king called for Absalom, he came to the king and bowed low to the ground before the king, and the king kissed Absalom.

Chapter 15

¹It came about after this that Absalom prepared a chariot and horses for himself, with 50 men to run before him.

²Absalom would get up early and stand beside the road leading to the city gate. When any man had a dispute to come to the king for judgment, Absalom called to him and said, "From what city have you come?" Then the man would answer, "Your servant is from one of the tribes of Israel." ³So Absalom would say to him, "Look, your case is good and right, but there is no one empowered by the king to hear your case." ⁴Absalom added, "I wish that I were made judge in the land, so that every man who had any dispute or cause might come to me, and I would bring him justice!" ⁵So it came about that when any man came to Absalom to honor him, Absalom would put out his hand and take hold of him and kiss him. ⁶Absalom acted in this way to all Israel who came to the king for judgment. So Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel.

⁷It came about at the end of four years that Absalom said to the king, "Please let me go and pay a vow that I have made to Yahweh in Hebron. ⁸For your servant made a vow while I was living at Geshur in Aram, saying, 'If Yahweh will indeed bring me again to Jerusalem, then I will worship Yahweh.'" ⁹So the king said to him, "Go in peace." So Absalom arose and went to Hebron. ¹⁰But then Absalom sent spies throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, "As soon as you hear the sound of the trumpet, then you must say, 'Absalom is king in Hebron.'" ¹¹With Absalom went 200 men from Jerusalem, who were invited. They went in their innocence, not knowing anything that Absalom had planned. ¹²While Absalom offered sacrifices, he sent for Ahithophel the Gilohite from his hometown of Giloh. He was David's counselor. Absalom's conspiracy was strong, for the people following Absalom were constantly increasing.

¹³A messenger came to David saying, "The hearts of the men of Israel are following after Absalom." ¹⁴So David said to all his servants who were with him in Jerusalem, "Arise and let us flee, or none of us will escape from Absalom. Prepare to leave immediately, or he will quickly overtake us, and he will bring down disaster on us and attack the city with the edge of the sword." ¹⁵The king's servants said to the king, "Look, your servants are ready to do

whatever our master the king decides.” ¹⁶The king left and all his family after him, but the king left ten women, who were his slave wives, to keep the palace. ¹⁷After the king went out and all the people after him, they stopped at the last house. ¹⁸All his army marched with him, and before him went all the Kerethites, and all the Pelethites, and all the Gittites—600 men who had followed him from Gath.

¹⁹Then the king said to Ittai the Gittite, “Why will you come with us? Return and stay with the king, for you are a foreigner and an exile. Return to your own place. ²⁰Since you just left yesterday, why should I make you wander all over with us? I do not even know where I am going. So return and take your fellow countrymen back. May loyalty and faithfulness go with you.” ²¹But Ittai answered the king and said, “As Yahweh lives, and as my master the king lives, surely in whatever place where my master the king goes, there also will your servant go, whether that means living or dying.” ²²So David said to Ittai, “Go ahead and continue with us.” So Ittai the Gittite marched with the king, along with all his men and all the families who were with him. ²³All the country wept with a loud voice as all the people passed by over the Kidron Valley, and as the king also himself crossed over. All the people traveled on the road toward the wilderness.

²⁴Even Zadok was present, along with all the Levites carrying the Box of the Covenant of God. They set the Box of God down, and then Abiathar joined them. They waited until all the people had passed by out of the city. ²⁵The king said to Zadok, “Carry the Box of God back into the city. If I find favor in the eyes of Yahweh, he will bring me back here and show me again the Box and the place where he lives. ²⁶But if he says, ‘I am not pleased with you,’ look, here am I, let him do to me whatever seems good to him.” ²⁷The king also said to Zadok the priest, “Are you not a seer? Return into the city in peace, and your two sons with you, Ahimaaz your son, and Jonathan son of Abiathar. ²⁸See, I will wait at the fords of the Arabah until word comes from you to inform me.” ²⁹So Zadok and Abiathar carried the Box of God back into Jerusalem, and they stayed there.

³⁰But David ascended barefoot and weeping up the Mount of Olives, and he had his head covered. Every man of the people who were with him covered his head, and they went up weeping as they walked. ³¹Someone told David saying, “Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom.” So David prayed, “O Yahweh, please turn Ahithophel’s advice into foolishness.” ³²It came about that when David arrived at the top of the road, where God used to be worshiped, Hushai the Arkite came to meet him with his coat torn and earth on his head. ³³David said to him, “If you travel with me, then you will be a burden to me. ³⁴But if you return to the city and say to Absalom, ‘I will be your servant, king, as I have been your father’s servant in time past, so will I now be your servant,’ then you will confuse Ahithophel’s advice for me. ³⁵Will you not have the priests Zadok and Abiathar with you? So whatever you hear in the king’s palace, you must tell it to Zadok and Abiathar the priests. ³⁶See that they have there with them their two sons, Ahimaaz, Zadok’s son, and Jonathan, Abiathar’s son. You must send to me by their hand everything that you hear.” ³⁷So Hushai, David’s friend, came into the city as Absalom arrived and entered into Jerusalem.

Chapter 16

¹When David had gone a short distance over the summit of the hill, Ziba the servant of Mephibosheth met him with a couple of saddled donkeys; on them were 200 loaves of bread, 100 clusters of raisins, and 100 bunches of figs, and a skin of wine. ²The king said to Ziba, “Why did you bring these things?” Ziba replied, “The donkeys are for the king’s household to ride on, the bread and figs are for your men to eat, and the wine is for anyone who is faint in the wilderness to drink.” ³The king said, “Then where is your master’s grandson?” Ziba replied to the king, “Look, he has stayed behind in Jerusalem, for he said, ‘Today the house of Israel will restore my father’s kingdom to me.’” ⁴Then the king said to Ziba, “Look, all that belonged to Mephibosheth now belongs to you.” Ziba answered, “I bow in humility to you, my master, king. Let me find favor in your eyes.”

⁵When King David approached Bahurim, there came out from there a man from the clan of Saul, whose name was Shimei son of Gera. He came out cursing as he walked. ⁶He threw stones at David and at all of the king’s officials, in spite of the army and bodyguards who were on the king’s right and left. ⁷Shimei called out in cursing, “Go away,

get out of here, you villain, you man of blood! ⁸Yahweh has repaid all of you for the blood you shed within the family of Saul, in whose place you have reigned. Yahweh has given the kingdom into the hand of Absalom your son. You have come to ruin because you are a man of blood."

⁹Then Abishai son of Zeruiah, said to the king, "Why should this dead dog curse my master the king? Please let me go over and take off his head." ¹⁰But the king said, "What have I to do with you, sons of Zeruiah? Perhaps he is cursing me because Yahweh has said to him, 'Curse David.' Who then could say to him, 'Why are you cursing the king?'" ¹¹So David said to Abishai and to all his servants, "Look, my son, who was born from my body, wants to take my life. How much more may this Benjamite now desire my ruin? Leave him alone and let him curse, for Yahweh has commanded him to do it. ¹²Perhaps Yahweh will look at the misery unleashed on me, and repay me with good for his cursing me today." ¹³So David and his men traveled on the road, while Shimei went beside him up on the hillside, cursing and throwing dust and stones at him as he went. ¹⁴Then the king and all the people who were with him became weary, and he rested when they stopped for the night.

¹⁵As for Absalom and all the men of Israel who were with him, they came to Jerusalem, and Ahithophel was with him. ¹⁶It came about when Hushai the Arkite, David's friend, had come to Absalom, that Hushai said to Absalom, "Long live the king! Long live the king!" ¹⁷Absalom said to Hushai, "Is this your loyalty to your friend? Why did you not go with him?" ¹⁸Hushai said to Absalom, "No! Instead, the one whom Yahweh and this people and all the men of Israel have chosen, that is the man to whom I will belong, and I will stay with him. ¹⁹Also, what man should I serve? Should I not serve in the presence of his son? As I have served in your father's presence, I will serve in your presence."

²⁰Then Absalom said to Ahithophel, "Give us your advice about what we should do." ²¹Ahithophel answered Absalom, "Go into your father's slave wives whom he has left to keep the palace, and all Israel will hear that you have become a stench to your father. Then the hands of all who are with you will be strong." ²²So they spread for Absalom a tent on the top of the palace, and Absalom went in to his father's slave wives in the sight of all Israel. ²³Now the advice of Ahithophel that he gave in those days was as if a man heard from the mouth of God himself. That was how all of Ahithophel's advice was viewed by both David and Absalom.

Chapter 17

¹Then Ahithophel said to Absalom, "Now let me choose 12000 men, and I will arise and pursue David tonight. ²I will come on him while he is weary and weak and will surprise him with fear. The people who are with him will flee, and I will attack only the king. ³I will bring back all the people to you, like a bride coming to her husband, and all the people will be at peace under you." ⁴What Ahithophel said pleased Absalom and all the elders of Israel.

⁵Then Absalom said, "Now call Hushai the Arkite, too, and let us hear what he says." ⁶When Hushai had come to Absalom, Absalom explained to him what Ahithophel had said and then asked Hushai, "Should we do what Ahithophel has said? If not, tell us what you advise." ⁷So Hushai said to Absalom, "The advice that Ahithophel has given this time is not good." ⁸Hushai added, "You know your father and his men are strong warriors, and that they are bitter, and they are like a bear robbed of her cubs in a field. Your father is a man of war; he will not sleep with the army tonight. ⁹Look, right now he is probably hidden in some pit or in some other place. It will happen that when some of your men have been killed at the beginning of an attack, that whoever hears it will say, 'A slaughter has taken place among the soldiers who follow Absalom.' ¹⁰Then even the bravest soldiers, whose hearts are like the heart of a lion, will be afraid because all Israel knows that your father is a mighty man, and that the men who are with him are very strong. ¹¹So I advise you that all Israel should be gathered together to you, from Dan to Beersheba, as numerous as the sands that are by the sea, and that you go to battle in person. ¹²Then we will come on him wherever he may be found, and we will cover him as the dew falls on the ground. We will not leave even one of his men, or him himself, alive. ¹³If he retreats into a city, then all Israel will bring ropes to that city and we will drag it into the river, until there is no longer even a small stone found there." ¹⁴Then Absalom and the men of

Israel said, "Hushai the Arkite's advice is better than Ahithophel's." Yahweh had ordained the rejection of Ahithophel's good advice in order to bring destruction on Absalom.

¹⁵Then Hushai said to Zadok and to Abiathar the priests, "Ahithophel advised Absalom and the elders of Israel in such and such a way, but I have advised something else. ¹⁶Now then, go quickly and report to David; say to him, 'Do not camp tonight at the fords of the Arabah, but by all means cross over, or the king will be swallowed up along with all the people who are with him.'" ¹⁷Now Jonathan and Ahimaaz were staying at the spring of Rogel. A female servant used to go and inform them what they needed to know, for they could not risk being seen going into the city. When the message came, then they were to go and tell King David. ¹⁸But a young man saw them this time and told Absalom. So Jonathan and Ahimaaz went away quickly and came to the house of a man in Bahurim, who had a well in his courtyard, into which they descended. ¹⁹The man's wife took the covering for the well and spread it over the well's opening, and tossed grain over it, so no one knew Jonathan and Ahimaaz were in the well. ²⁰Absalom's men came to the woman of the house and said, "Where are Ahimaaz and Jonathan?" The woman told them, "They have crossed over the river." So after they had looked around and could not find them, they returned to Jerusalem.

²¹It came about after they had left that Jonathan and Ahimaaz came up out of the well. They went to report to King David; they said to him, "Get up and cross quickly over the water because Ahithophel has given such and such advice about you." ²²Then David arose and all the people who were with him, and they crossed over the Jordan. By morning daylight not one of them had failed to cross over the Jordan. ²³When Ahithophel saw that his advice had not been followed, he saddled his donkey and left. He went home to his own city, set his affairs in order, and hanged himself. In this way he died and was buried in the tomb of his father.

²⁴Then David came to Mahanaim. As for Absalom, he crossed over the Jordan, he and all the men of Israel with him. ²⁵Absalom had set Amasa over the army instead of Joab. Amasa was the son of a man called Jether the Ishmaelite^[1], who went in to Abigail, who was the daughter of Nahash and sister of Zeruiah, the mother of Joab. ²⁶Then Israel and Absalom camped in the land of Gilead.

²⁷It came about when David had come to Mahanaim, that Shobi son of Nahash from Rabbah of the Ammonites, and Machir son of Ammiel from Lo Debar, and Barzillai the Gileadite from Rogelim, ²⁸brought sleeping mats and blankets, bowls and pots, and wheat, barley flour, roasted grain, beans, lentils, ²⁹honey, butter, sheep, and milk curds, so that David and the people with him could eat. These men had said, "The people are hungry, weary, and thirsty in the wilderness."

17:25 ^[1]

Chapter 18

¹David counted the soldiers who were with him and appointed captains of thousands and captains of hundreds over them. ²Then David sent out the army, one-third under the command of Joab, another third under the command of Abishai son of Zeruiah, Joab's brother, and still another third under the command of Ittai the Gittite. The king said to the army, "I will certainly go out with you myself, too." ³But the men said, "You must not go to battle, for if we flee away they will not care about us, or if half of us die they will not care. But you are worth 10000 of us! Therefore it is better that you be ready to help us from the city." ⁴So the king answered them, "I will do whatever seems best to you." The king stood by the city gate while all the army went out by hundreds and by thousands. ⁵The king commanded Joab, Abishai, and Ittai saying, "Deal gently for my sake with the young man, with Absalom." All the people heard that the king had given the captains this command about Absalom.

⁶So the army went out into the countryside against Israel; the battle spread into the forest of Ephraim. ⁷The army of Israel was defeated there before the soldiers of David; there was a great slaughter there that day of 20000 men.

⁸The battle spread throughout the whole countryside, and more men were consumed by the forest than by the sword that day.

⁹Absalom happened to meet some of David's soldiers. Absalom was riding his mule, and the mule went under the thick branches of a large oak tree, and his head was caught up in the tree branches. He was left dangling between the ground and the sky while the mule he was riding kept going. ¹⁰Someone saw this and told Joab, "Look, I saw Absalom hanging in an oak tree!" ¹¹Joab said to the man who told him about Absalom, "Look! You saw him! Why did you not strike him down to the ground? I would have given you ten silver shekels and a belt." ¹²The man replied to Joab, "Even if I received 1000 silver shekels, still I would not have reached out my hand against the king's son, because we all heard the king command you, Abishai, and Ittai, saying, 'No one must touch the young man Absalom.' ¹³If I had risked my life by a falsehood (and there is nothing hidden from the king), you would have abandoned me." ¹⁴Then Joab said, "I will not wait for you." So Joab took three javelins in his hand and thrust them through the heart of Absalom, while he was still alive and hanging from the oak. ¹⁵Then ten young men who carried Joab's armor surrounded Absalom, attacked him, and killed him.

¹⁶Then Joab blew the trumpet, and the army returned from pursuing Israel, for Joab held back the army. ¹⁷They took Absalom and threw him into a large pit in the forest; they buried his body under a very large pile of stones, while all Israel fled, every man to his own home. ¹⁸Now Absalom, while still alive, had built for himself a large stone pillar in the King's Valley, for he said, "I have no son to carry along the memory of my name." He named the pillar after his own name, so it is called Absalom's Monument to this very day.

¹⁹Then Ahimaaz son of Zadok said, "Let me now run to the king with the good news, how Yahweh has rescued him from the hand of his enemies." ²⁰Joab answered him, "You will not be the bearer of news today; you must do it another day. Today you will bear no news because the king's son is dead." ²¹Then Joab said to a Cushite, "Go, tell the king what you have seen." The Cushite bowed down to Joab, and ran. ²²Then Ahimaaz son of Zadok said again to Joab, "Regardless of what may happen, please let me also run and follow the Cushite." Joab replied, "Why do you want to run, my son, seeing that you will have no reward for the news?" ²³"Whatever happens," said Ahimaaz, "I will run." So Joab answered him, "Run." Then Ahimaaz ran by the way of the plain, and outran the Cushite.

²⁴Now David was sitting between the inner and outer gates. The watchman had gone up to the roof of the gate to the wall and raised his eyes. As he looked, he saw a man approaching, running alone. ²⁵The watchman shouted out and told the king. Then the king said, "If he is alone, there is news in his mouth." The runner came closer and neared the city. ²⁶Then the watchman noticed another man running, and the watchman called to the gatekeeper; he said, "Look, there is another man running alone." The king said, "He is also bringing news." ²⁷So the watchman said, "I think the running of the man in front is like the running of Ahimaaz son of Zadok." The king said, "He is a good man and is coming with good news."

²⁸Then Ahimaaz called out and said to the king, "All is well." He bowed himself before the king with his face to the ground and said, "Blessed be Yahweh your God! He has delivered the men who lifted up their hand against my master the king." ²⁹So the king replied, "Is it well with the young man Absalom?" Ahimaaz answered, "When Joab sent me, the king's servant, to you, king, I saw a great disturbance, but I did not know what it was." ³⁰Then the king said, "Turn aside and stand here." So Ahimaaz turned aside, and stood still.

³¹Immediately then the Cushite arrived and said, "There is good news for my master the king, for Yahweh has avenged you today from all who rose up against you." ³²Then the king said to the Cushite, "Is it well with the young man Absalom?" The Cushite answered, "The enemies of my master the king, and all who rise up against you to do harm to you, should be as that young man is." ³³Then the king was deeply unnerved, and he went up to the room over the gate and wept. As he went he grieved, "My son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! I wish I had died instead of you, Absalom, my son, my son!"

Chapter 19

¹Joab was told, "Look, the king is weeping and mourning for Absalom." ²So the victory that day was turned into mourning for all the army, for the army heard it said that day, "The king is mourning for his son." ³The soldiers had

to sneak quietly into the city that day, like people who are ashamed sneak away when they run from battle. ⁴The king covered his face and cried in a loud voice, "My son Absalom, Absalom, my son, my son!" ⁵Then Joab entered into the house to the king and said to him, "You have shamed the faces of all your soldiers today, who have saved your life today, and the lives of your sons and of your daughters, and the lives of your wives, and the lives of your concubines, ⁶because you love those who hate you, and you hate those who love you. For today you have shown that commanders and soldiers are nothing to you. Today I believe that if Absalom had lived, and we all had died, then that would have pleased you. ⁷Now therefore get up and go out and speak kindly to your soldiers, for I swear by Yahweh, if you do not go, not one man will remain with you tonight. That would be worse for you than all the disasters that have ever happened to you from your youth until now." ⁸So the king got up and sat in the city gate, and all the people were told, "Look, the king is sitting in the gate," and all the people came before the king.

So Israel fled, every man to his home. ⁹It happened that all the people were arguing with each other throughout all the tribes of Israel saying, "The king rescued us out of the hand of our enemies, and he saved us out of the hand of the Philistines, but now he has run out of the land because of Absalom. ¹⁰Absalom, whom we anointed over us, has died in battle. So why do you say nothing about bringing the king back?"

¹¹King David sent to Zadok and to Abiathar the priests saying, "Speak to the elders of Judah saying, 'Why are you the last to bring the king back to his palace, since the talk of all Israel favors the king, to bring him back to his palace? ¹²You are my brothers, my flesh and bone. Why then are you the last to bring back the king?' ¹³Then say to Amasa, 'Are you not my flesh and my bone? God do so to me, and more also, if you are not captain of my army from now on in the place of Joab.'" ¹⁴So he won the hearts of all the men of Judah as one man. They sent to the king saying, "Return, you and all your men." ¹⁵So the king returned and came to the Jordan. Now the men of Judah came to Gilgal to go to meet the king and then to bring the king across the Jordan.

¹⁶Shimei son of Gera, the Benjamite, who was from Bahurim, hurried down with the men of Judah to meet King David. ¹⁷There were 1000 men from Benjamin with him, and Ziba the servant of Saul, and his 15 sons and 20 servants with him. They crossed through the Jordan in the presence of the king. ¹⁸They crossed to bring over the king's family and to do whatever he thought good. Shimei son of Gera bowed down before the king just before he began to cross the Jordan. ¹⁹Shimei said to the king, "Do not, my master, find me guilty or remember the wrong your servant did the day my master the king left Jerusalem. Please, may the king not take it to heart. ²⁰For your servant knows that I have sinned. See, that is why I have come today as the first from all the family of Joseph to come down to meet my master the king."

²¹But Abishai son of Zeruah answered and said, "Should not Shimei be put to death for this, because he cursed Yahweh's anointed?" ²²Then David said, "What have I to do with you, you sons of Zeruah, that you should today be adversaries to me? Will any man be put to death today in Israel? For do I not know that today I am king over Israel?" ²³So the king said to Shimei, "You will not die." So the king promised him with an oath.

²⁴Then Mephibosheth son of Saul came down to meet the king. He had not dressed his feet, or trimmed his beard, or washed his clothes from the day the king left until the day he came home in peace. ²⁵So when he came from Jerusalem to meet the king, the king said to him, "Why did you not go with me, Mephibosheth?" ²⁶He answered, "My master the king, my servant deceived me, for I said, 'I will saddle a donkey so I may ride on it and go with the king.' For your servant is lame. ²⁷My servant Ziba has slandered me, your servant, to my master the king. But my master the king is like an angel of God. Therefore, do what is good in your eyes. ²⁸For all my father's house were dead men before my master the king, but you set your servant among those who ate at your own table. What right therefore have I that I should still cry any more to the king?" ²⁹Then the king said to him, "Why explain anything further? I have decided that you and Ziba will divide the fields." ³⁰So Mephibosheth replied to the king, "Yes, let him take it all, since my master the king has come safely to his own home."

³¹Then Barzillai the Gileadite came down from Rogelim to cross over the Jordan with the king, and he accompanied the king over the Jordan. ³²Now Barzillai was a very old man, 80 years old. He had provided the king with provisions while he stayed at Mahanaim, for he was a very wealthy man. ³³The king said to Barzillai, "Come over with me, and

I will provide for you to stay with me in Jerusalem.” ³⁴Barzillai replied to the king, “How many days are left in the years of my life, that I should go up with the king to Jerusalem? ³⁵I am eighty years old. Can I distinguish between good and bad? Can your servant taste what I eat or what I drink? Can I hear any more the voice of singing men and singing women? Why then should your servant be a burden to my master the king? ³⁶Your servant would like to just go over the Jordan with the king. Why should the king repay me with such a reward? ³⁷Please let your servant return back home, so I may die in my own city by the grave of my father and my mother. But see, here is your servant Kimham. Let him cross over with my master the king, and do for him what seems good to you.” ³⁸The king answered, “Kimham will go over with me, and I will do for him what seems good to you, and whatever you desire from me, I will do that for you.” ³⁹Then all the people crossed the Jordan, and the king crossed over, and the king kissed Barzillai and blessed him. Then Barzillai returned to his own home.

⁴⁰So the king crossed over to Gilgal, and Kimham crossed over with him. All the army of Judah brought the king over, and also half the army of Israel. ⁴¹Soon all the men of Israel began to come to the king and say to the king, “Why have our brothers, the men of Judah, stolen you away and brought the king and his family over the Jordan, and all David’s men with him?” ⁴²So the men of Judah answered the men of Israel, “It is because the king is more closely related to us. Why then are you angry about this? Have we eaten anything that the king had to pay for? Has he given us any gifts?” ⁴³The men of Israel answered the men of Judah, “We have ten tribes related to the king, so we have even more right to David than you. Why then did you despise us? Was not our proposal to bring back our king the first to be heard?” But the words of the men of Judah were even more harsh than the words of the men of Israel.

Chapter 20

¹There also happened to be at the same place a troublemaker whose name was Sheba son of Bikri, a Benjamite. He blew the trumpet and said, “We have no part in David, neither have we any inheritance in the son of Jesse. Let every man go back to his home, Israel.” ²So all the men of Israel deserted David and followed Sheba son of Bikri. But the men of Judah followed closely their king, from the Jordan all the way to Jerusalem.

³When David came to his palace in Jerusalem, he took the ten concubines whom he had left to keep the palace, and he put them in a house under guard. He provided for their needs, but he did not lie with them any longer. So they were shut up to the day of their death, living as if they were widows.

⁴Then the king said to Amasa, “Call the men of Judah together within three days; you must be here, too.” ⁵So Amasa went to call Judah, but he was delayed beyond the time that the king had allotted for him. ⁶So David said to Abishai, “Now Sheba son of Bikri will do us more harm than Absalom did. Take your master’s servants, my soldiers, and pursue after him, or he will find fortified cities and escape out of our sight.” ⁷Then Joab’s men went out after him, along with the Kerethites and the Pelethites and all the mighty warriors. They left Jerusalem to pursue Sheba son of Bikri. ⁸When they were at the great stone which is at Gibeon, Amasa came to meet them. Joab was wearing the battle armor that he had put on, which included a belt around his waist with a sheathed sword fastened to it. As he walked forward, the sword fell out. ⁹So Joab said to Amasa, “Is it well with you, my cousin?” Joab took Amasa by the beard with his right hand to kiss him. ¹⁰Amasa did not notice the dagger that was in Joab’s left hand. Joab stabbed Amasa in the stomach and his bowels spilled out to the ground. Joab did not strike him again, and Amasa died.

So Joab and Abishai his brother pursued Sheba son of Bikri. ¹¹Then one of Joab’s men stood by Amasa, and the man said, “He who favors Joab, and he who is for David, let him follow Joab.” ¹²Amasa lay wallowing in his blood in the middle of the road. When the man saw that all the people stood still, he carried Amasa off of the road and into a field. He threw a garment over him because he saw that everyone who came by him stood still. ¹³After Amasa was taken off the road, all the men followed on after Joab in pursuit of Sheba son of Bikri.

¹⁴Sheba passed through all the tribes of Israel to Abel Beth Maacah, and through all the land of the Bikrites, who gathered together and also pursued Sheba. ¹⁵They caught up with him and besieged him in Abel Beth Maacah.

They built up a siege ramp against the city against the wall. All the army who were with Joab battered the wall to knock it down. ¹⁶Then a wise woman cried out of the city, "Listen, please listen, Joab! Come near me so I may speak with you." ¹⁷So Joab came near to her, and the woman said, "Are you Joab?" He answered, "I am." Then she said to him, "Listen to the words of your servant." He answered, "I am listening." ¹⁸Then she spoke, "They used to say in old times, 'Surely seek advice at Abel,' and that advice would end the matter. ¹⁹We are a city that is one of the most peaceful and faithful in Israel. You are trying to destroy a city that is a mother in Israel. Why do you want to swallow up the inheritance of Yahweh?" ²⁰So Joab answered and said, "Far be it, far be it from me, that I should swallow up or destroy. ²¹That is not true. But a man from the hill country of Ephraim, named Sheba son of Bikri, has lifted up his hand against the king, against David. Give up him alone, and I will withdraw from the city." The woman said to Joab, "His head will be thrown to you over the wall." ²²Then the woman went to all the people in her wisdom. They cut off the head of Sheba son of Bikri, and threw it out to Joab. Then he blew the trumpet and Joab's men left the city, every man to his home. Then Joab returned to Jerusalem to the king.

²³Now Joab was over all the army of Israel, and Benaiah son of Jehoiada was over the Kerethites and over the Pelethites. ²⁴Adoniram was over the men who did forced labor, and Jehoshaphat son of Ahilud was the recorder. ²⁵Sheva was scribe and Zadok and Abiathar were priests. ²⁶Ira the Jairite was chief minister to David.

Chapter 21

¹There was a famine in David's time for three years in a row, and David sought the face of Yahweh. So Yahweh said, "This famine is on you because of Saul and his murderous family, because he put the Gibeonites to death." ²So the king called together the Gibeonites and spoke to them. Now the Gibeonites were not from the people of Israel; they were from what remained of the Amorites. The people of Israel had sworn not to kill them, but Saul tried to kill them all anyway in his zeal for the people of Israel and Judah. ³So David said to the Gibeonites, "What should I do for you? How can I make atonement, so that you may bless the people of Yahweh, who are his inheritance?" ⁴The Gibeonites responded to him, "It is not a matter of silver or gold between us and Saul or his family. In the same way it is not for us to put to death any man in Israel." David replied, "What are you saying that I should do for you?" ⁵They answered the king, "The man who tried to kill us all, who schemed against us, so that we are now destroyed and have no place within the borders of Israel— ⁶let seven men from his descendants be handed over to us, and we will hang them before Yahweh in Gibeah of Saul, the one chosen by Yahweh." So the king said, "I will give them to you."

⁷But the king spared Mephibosheth son of Jonathan son of Saul, because of Yahweh's oath between them, between David and Jonathan son of Saul. ⁸But the king took the two sons of Rizpah daughter of Aiah, sons whom she bore to Saul—the two sons were named Armoni and Mephibosheth; and David also took the five sons of Merab^[1] daughter of Saul, whom she bore to Adriel son of Barzillai the Meholathite. ⁹He handed them over into the hands of the Gibeonites. They hanged them on the mountain before Yahweh, and they died all seven together. They were put to death during the time of harvest, during the first days at the beginning of barley harvest.

¹⁰Then Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah, took sackcloth and spread it for herself on the mountain beside the dead bodies, from the beginning of harvest until the rain poured down on them from the sky. She did not allow the birds of the sky to disturb the bodies by day or the wild animals by night. ¹¹It was told to David what Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah, the concubine of Saul, had done.

¹²So David went and took the bones of Saul and the bones of Jonathan his son from the men of Jabesh Gilead, who had stolen them from the public square of Beth Shan, where the Philistines had hanged them, after the Philistines had killed Saul in Gilboa. ¹³David took away from there the bones of Saul and the bones of Jonathan his son, and they gathered the bones of the seven men who had been hanged, as well. ¹⁴They buried the bones of Saul and Jonathan his son in the country of Benjamin in Zela, in the tomb of Kish his father. They performed all that the king commanded. After that God answered their prayers for the land.

¹⁵Then the Philistines went to war again with Israel. So David went down with his army and fought against the Philistines. David was overcome with battle fatigue. ¹⁶Ishbi-Benob, a descendant of the giants, whose bronze spear weighed 300 shekels, and who was armed with a new sword, intended to kill David. ¹⁷But Abishai son of Zeruiah rescued David, attacked the Philistine, and killed him. Then the men of David swore to him, saying, "You must not go to battle anymore with us, so that you do not put out the lamp of Israel."

¹⁸It came about after this that there was again a battle with the Philistines at Gob, when Sibbekai the Hushathite killed Saph, who was one of the descendants of the Rephaim.^[2] ¹⁹It came about again in a battle with the Philistines at Gob, that Elhanan son of Jair the Bethlehemite killed Goliath the Gittite, the staff of whose spear was like a weaver's beam. ²⁰It came about in another battle at Gath that there was a man of great height who had six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot, 24 in number. He also was descended from the Rephaim. ²¹When he taunted Israel, Jonathan son of Shimeah, David's brother, killed him. ²²These four were descendants of the Rephaim of Gath, and they were killed by the hand of David and by the hand of his soldiers.

21:8 ^[1] but 2SA 6:23 says she had no children; or Michal may have been another name for Merab.

21:18 ^[2] in the Hebrew text, some versions have or .

Chapter 22

¹David sang to Yahweh the words of this song on the day that Yahweh rescued him out of the hand of all his enemies, and out of the hand of Saul. ²He said,

"Yahweh is my rock, my fortress, the one who rescues me.

³God is my rock. I take refuge in him.

He is my shield, the horn of my salvation, my stronghold, and my refuge,
the one who saves me from violence.

⁴I will call on Yahweh, who is worthy to be praised,
and I will be saved from my enemies.

⁵For the waves of death surrounded me,
the rushing waters of destruction overwhelmed me.

⁶The cords of Sheol surrounded me;
the snares of death trapped me.

⁷In my distress I called to Yahweh;
I called to my God;
he heard my voice from his temple,
and my call for help went into his ears.

⁸Then the earth shook and trembled.
The foundations of the heavens were shaken
and trembled, because God was angry.

⁹Smoke went up from out of his nostrils,

and blazing fire came out of his mouth.

Coals were ignited by it.

10He opened the heavens and came down,

and thick darkness was under his feet.

11He rode on a cherub and flew.

He was seen on the wings of the wind.^[1]

12He made darkness a tent around him,

gathering heavy rain clouds in the skies.

13From the lightning before him

coals of fire fell.

14Yahweh thundered from the heavens.

The Most High shouted.

15He shot arrows and scattered them—

lightning bolts and dispersed them.

16Then the channels of the sea were seen;

the foundations of the world were laid bare

at the rebuke of Yahweh,

at the blast of the breath of his nostrils.

17He reached down from above; he took hold of me!

He pulled me out of the surging water.

18He rescued me from my strong enemy,

from those who hated me, for they were too strong for me.

19They came against me on the day of my distress,

but Yahweh was my support.

20He also brought me out to a wide open place.

He saved me because he was pleased with me.

21Yahweh has rewarded me according to my righteousness;

he has restored me according to the cleanness of my hands.

22For I have kept the ways of Yahweh

and have not acted wickedly by turning from my God.

23For all his righteous decrees have been before me;

as for his statutes, I have not turned away from them.

²⁴I have also been innocent before him,
and I have kept myself from sin.

²⁵Therefore Yahweh has restored me according to my righteousness,
according to my cleanness in his sight.

²⁶To the faithful one, you show yourself to be faithful;
to a man who is blameless, you show yourself to be blameless.

²⁷With the pure you show yourself pure,
but you are perverse to the twisted.

²⁸You save afflicted people,
but your eyes are against the proud, and you bring them down.

²⁹For you are my lamp, Yahweh.
Yahweh lights up my darkness.

³⁰For by you I can run over a troop of men;
by my God I can leap over a wall.

³¹As for God, his way is perfect.
The word of Yahweh is pure.

He is a shield to everyone who takes refuge in him.

³²For who is God except Yahweh,
and who is a rock except our God?

³³God is my refuge,
and he leads the blameless person on his path.

³⁴He makes my feet swift like a deer
and places me on the high hills.

³⁵He trains my hands for war,
and my arms to bend a bow of bronze.

³⁶You have given me the shield of your salvation,
and your favor has made me great.

³⁷You have made a wide place for my feet beneath me,
so my feet have not slipped.

³⁸I pursued my enemies and destroyed them.

I did not turn back until they were destroyed.

³⁹I devoured them and smashed them; they cannot rise.

They have fallen under my feet.

⁴⁰You put strength on me like a belt for battle;

you put under me those who rise up against me.

⁴¹You gave me the back of my enemies' necks;

I annihilated those who hated me.

⁴²They cried for help, but no one saved them;

they cried out to Yahweh, but he did not answer them.

⁴³I beat them into fine pieces like dust on the ground,

I pulverized them and stamped on them like mud in the streets.

⁴⁴You also have rescued me from the disputes of my own people.

You have kept me as the head of nations.

A people that I have not known serves me.

⁴⁵Sons of foreigners were forced to bow to me.

As soon as they heard of me, they obeyed me.

⁴⁶The sons of foreigners faded away; they came trembling out of their strongholds.

⁴⁷Yahweh lives! May my rock be praised.

May God be exalted, the rock of my salvation.

⁴⁸This is the God who executes vengeance for me,

the one who brings down peoples under me.

⁴⁹He sets me free from my enemies.

Indeed, you lifted me up above those who rose up against me.

You rescue me from violent men.

⁵⁰Therefore I will worship you, Yahweh, among the nations;

I will sing praises to your name.

⁵¹God gives great victory to his king,

and he shows his covenant faithfulness to his anointed one,

to David and to his descendants forever."

22:11 ^[1] .

Chapter 23

¹Now these are the last words of David, a declaration by David son of Jesse, a declaration by the man who was highly honored, the one anointed by the God of Jacob, the sweet psalmist of Israel.

²"The Spirit of Yahweh spoke by me, and his word was on my tongue.

³The God of Israel spoke, the Rock of Israel said to me, 'The one who rules righteously over men, who rules in the fear of God.

⁴He will be like the morning light when the sun rises, a morning without clouds, when the tender grass springs up from the earth through bright sunshine after rain.

⁵Indeed, is my family not like this before God? Has he not made an everlasting covenant with me, ordered and sure in every way? Does he not increase my salvation and fulfill my every desire?

⁶But the worthless will all be like thorns to be thrown away, because they cannot be gathered by one's hands.

⁷The man who touches them must use an iron tool or the shaft of a spear. They must be burned up where they lie."

⁸These are the names of David's mighty men: Jeshbaal the Hachmonite was the leader of the mighty men. He wielded his spear and killed 800 men on one occasion.^[1]

⁹After him was Eleazar son of Dodai the Ahohite, one of the three mighty men. He was with David when they taunted the Philistines who had gathered together to do battle, and when the men of Israel had retreated.

¹⁰Eleazar stood and fought the Philistines until his hand became weary and his hand stiffened to the grip of his sword. Yahweh brought about a great victory that day. The army returned after Eleazar, only to strip the bodies.

¹¹After him was Shammah son of Agee, a Hararite. The Philistines gathered together where there was an area of a field full of lentils, and the army fled from them. ¹²But Shammah stood in the middle of the field and defended it. He killed the Philistines, and Yahweh brought about a great victory.

¹³Three of the thirty soldiers went down to David at harvest time, to the cave of Adullam. The army of the Philistines was camped in the Valley of Rephaim. ¹⁴At that time David was in his stronghold, while the Philistines had established a garrison at Bethlehem. ¹⁵David was longing for water and said, "If only someone would give me water to drink from the well at Bethlehem, the well that is by the gate!" ¹⁶So these three mighty men broke through the army of the Philistines and drew water out of the well of Bethlehem, the well at the gate. They took the water and brought it to David, but he refused to drink it. Instead, he poured it out to Yahweh. ¹⁷Then he said, "Yahweh, far be it from me, that I should do this. Should I drink the blood of men who have risked their lives?" So he refused to drink it.

These things were done by the three mighty men.

¹⁸Abishai, brother of Joab and son of Zeruah, was captain over the three. He once fought with his spear against 300 men and killed them. He was often mentioned along with the three. ¹⁹Was he not even more famous than the three? He was made their captain. However, his fame did not equal the fame of the three most famous soldiers.

²⁰Benaiah from Kabzeel was the son of Jehoiada; he was a strong man who did mighty feats. He killed the two sons of Ariel of Moab. He also went down into a pit and killed a lion while it was snowing. ²¹Then he killed a very large Egyptian man. The Egyptian had a spear in his hand, but Benaiah fought against him with only a staff. He seized the spear out of the Egyptian's hand and then killed him with his own spear. ²²Benaiah son of Jehoiada did these feats, and he was named alongside the three mighty men. ²³He was more highly regarded than the thirty soldiers in general, but he was not regarded quite as highly as the three mighty men. Yet David put him in charge of his bodyguard.

²⁴The thirty included the following men: Asahel brother of Joab, Elhanan son of Dodo from Bethlehem, ²⁵Shammah the Harodite, Elikah the Harodite, ²⁶Helez the Paltite, Ira son of Ikkesh the Tekoite, ²⁷Abiezer the Anathothite, Sibbekai^[2] the Hushathite, ²⁸Zalmon the Ahohite, Maharai the Netophathite; ²⁹Heleb son of Baanah, the Netophathite, Ithai son of Ribai from Gibeah of the Benjamites, ³⁰Benaiah the Pirathonite, Hiddai of the valleys of Gaash. ³¹Abi-Albon the Arbathite, Azmaveth the Barhumite, ³²Eliabha the Shaalbonite, the sons of Jashen, Jonathan, ³³Shammah the Hararite, Ahiam son of Sharar the Hararite, ³⁴Eliphelet son of Ahasbai the Maakathite, Eliam son of Ahithophel the Gilonite, ³⁵Hezro the Carmelite, Paarai the Arbite, ³⁶Igal son of Nathan from Zobah, Bani from the tribe of Gad, ³⁷Zekek the Ammonite, Naharai the Beerothite, armor bearer to Joab son of Zeruah, ³⁸Ira the Ithrite, Gareb the Ithrite, ³⁹Uriah the Hittite—37 in all.

23:8 ^[1], some versions have , , , or . These all are probably forms of the same name.

23:27 ^[2]. See also 2 Samuel 21:18 and 1 Chronicles 11:29. The Hebrew text has, .

Chapter 24

¹Again the anger of Yahweh was ignited against Israel, and he moved David against them saying, "Go, count Israel and Judah." ²The king said to Joab the commander of the army, who was with him, "Go, now, throughout all the tribes of Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, and count all the people, so that I may know the total number of men fit for battle." ³Joab said to the king, "May Yahweh your God multiply the number of people a hundred times, and may the eyes of my master the king see it take place. But why does my master the king want this?" ⁴Nevertheless, the king's word was final against Joab and against the commanders of the army. So Joab and the commanders went out from the king's presence to count the people of Israel. ⁵They crossed over the Jordan and encamped near Aroer, south of the city in the valley. Then they traveled on through Gad to Jazer. ⁶They came to Gilead and to the land of Tahtim Hodshi, then on to Dan Jaan and around toward Sidon. ⁷They reached the stronghold of Tyre and all

the cities of the Hivites and the Canaanites. Then they went out to the Negev in Judah at Beersheba. ⁸When they had gone throughout all the land, they came back to Jerusalem at the end of nine months and 20 days. ⁹Then Joab reported the total of the count of the fighting men to the king. There were in Israel 800000 brave men who drew the sword, and the men of Judah were 500000 men.

¹⁰Then David's heart afflicted him after he had counted the men. So he said to Yahweh, "I have greatly sinned by doing this. Now, please, Yahweh, take away your servant's guilt, for I have acted very foolishly." ¹¹When David rose up in the morning, the word of Yahweh came to the prophet Gad, David's seer, saying, ¹²"Go say to David: 'This is what Yahweh says: "I am giving you three choices. Choose one of them for me to do to you.'"" ¹³So Gad went to David and said to him, "Will three years of famine come to you in your land? Or will you flee three months from your enemies while they pursue you? Or will there be three days of plague in your land? Now decide what answer I should return to him who sent me this message." ¹⁴Then David said to Gad, "I am in deep trouble. Let us fall into Yahweh's hands rather than into the hand of man, for his merciful actions are very great."

¹⁵So Yahweh sent a plague on Israel from the morning to a fixed time, and 70000 people died from Dan to Beersheba. ¹⁶When the angel reached out with his hand toward Jerusalem to destroy it, Yahweh changed his mind because of the harm it would cause, and he said to the angel who was destroying people, "Enough! Now draw back your hand." At that time the angel of Yahweh was standing at the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite. ¹⁷Then David spoke to Yahweh when he saw the angel who had attacked the people, and said, "Behold, I have sinned, and I have acted perversely. But these sheep, what have they done? Please let your hand punish me and my father's family!"

¹⁸Then Gad came that day to David and said to him, "Go up and build an altar for Yahweh at the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite." ¹⁹So David went up as Gad instructed him to do, as Yahweh had commanded. ²⁰Araunah looked out and saw the king and his servants approaching. So Araunah went out and bowed to the king with his face to the ground. ²¹Then Araunah said, "Why has my master the king come to me, his servant?" David replied, "To buy your threshing floor, so I can build an altar for Yahweh, so that the plague may be removed from the people." ²²Araunah said to David, "Take it and offer it, my master the king. Do with it what is good in your sight. Look, here are oxen for the burnt offering and threshing sledges and ox yokes for the wood. ²³All this, my king, I, Araunah, will give to you." Then he said to the king, "May Yahweh your God accept you." ²⁴The king said to Araunah, "No, I insist on buying it at a price. I will not offer as a burnt offering to Yahweh, my God, anything that costs me nothing." So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver. ²⁵David built an altar for Yahweh there and offered on it burnt offerings and fellowship offerings. So Yahweh answered the prayer on behalf of the land, and the plague on Israel was confined.

Contributors

unfoldingWord® Literal Text Contributors

Nicholas Alsop
Scott Bayer
Larry T Brooks, M.Div., Assemblies of God Theological Seminary
Matt Carlton
George "Drew" Curley, M.Div., PhD, Professor of Biblical Languages
Dan Dennison
Jamie Duguid
Paul M Fahnestock, M.Div. Reformed Theological Seminary, D.Min. Pittsburgh Theological Seminary
Michael Francis
Laura Glassel, MA in Bible Translation
Jesse Griffin, BA Biblical Studies, MA Biblical Languages
Jesse Harris
C. Harry Harriss, M.Div.
Alrick G. Headley, M.Div., Th.M.
Bram van den Heuvel, M.A.
John Huffman
D. Allen Hutchison, MA in Old Testament, MA in New Testament
Jack Messarra
Gene Mullen
Adam W. Nagelvoort, M.Div. Academic Ministries, Columbia International University
Timothy Neu, Ph.D. Biblical Studies
Kristy Nickell
Tom Nickell
Elizabeth Oakes, BA in Religious Studies, Linguistics
Perry Oakes, PhD in Old Testament, MA in Linguistics
James N. Pohlig, M.Div., MA in Linguistics, D. Litt. in Biblical Languages
Ward Pyles, M.Div., Western Baptist Theological Seminary
Susan Quigley, MA in Linguistics
Dean Ropp
Joel D. Ruark, M.A.Th., Th.M., Ph.D. in Old Testament, University of Stellenbosch
Larry Sallee, Th.M Dallas Theological Seminary, D.Min. Columbia Biblical Seminary
Peter Smircich, BA Philosophy
Doug Smith, M.T.S., M.Div., Th.M., Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary
Leonard Smith
Suzanna Smith
Tim Span
Dave Statezni, BA Orig langs., M.Div. Fuller Theological Seminary
Maria Tijerina
David Trombold, M. Div.
Aaron Valdizan, M.Div., Th.M. in Old Testament, The Masters Seminary
James Vigen
Hendrik "Henry" de Vries
Thomas Warren, M.Div., Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, D.Min, Reformed Theological Seminary
Angela Westmoreland, M.A. in Theological Studies (Biblical Language track)
Henry Whitney, BA Linguistics
Benjamin Wright, MA Applied Linguistics, Dallas International University
Grant Ailie, BA Biblical Studies, M.Div.

