

unfoldingWord® Simplified Text

v92

Second Samuel

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2 Samuel

1 After they defeated the Amalekites, David and the men
who were with him returned to the city of Ziklag. By that
time, the Philistines had already killed Saul. David and his
men stayed there that day and the next one *without receiving
any news of the battle between the Philistines and Israelites*.
2 But on the day after that, a young man unexpectedly arrived there
who had been in the camp where Saul's soldiers had set up
their tents. He had torn his clothes and put dust on his head to
show that he was grieving. He came to David and knelt down
and lay flat on the ground *to show respect for him*.
3 David asked him, "Where have you come from?" The man
replied, "I have fled here from the camp where the Israelite
soldiers set up their tents."
4 David asked him, "What happened? Please tell me about
the battle!" The man replied, "The Philistines defeated our
army so badly that our soldiers ran away. The Philistines
killed many of them. They even killed King Saul and his son
Jonathan."
5 David asked the young man who told him this, "How do
you know that the Philistines killed Saul and Jonathan?"
6 The young man replied, "As it happened, I was on Mount
Gilboa *where the Israelites had fled from the Philistines*. I saw
Saul. *He was wounded and* leaning on his spear *for support*. I
noticed that the Philistine chariot drivers and the commanders
of their soldiers on horseback *had seen him, and they all* were
rushing toward him. 7 Saul turned around and saw me, and he
called out to me. I called back, 'What do you want me to do?'
8 He asked me, 'Who are you?' I replied, 'I am an Amalekite.'
9 Then he said to me, 'I can no longer fight, because I am
in such pain from my many wounds. But those wounds will
not kill me. So please use one of the weapons here to kill me
yourself.'
10 I knew that the Philistines would soon come and kill
him, so he was not going to live anyway. So I used one of the
weapons there to kill him. Then I took the crown he had been
wearing and his armband. Here they are for you to see, sir."
11 Then David took hold of his clothing and ripped it *to
show how sad he was* All the men who were with him ripped
their clothes as well. 12 They felt very sad, and they cried.
They did not eat anything for the rest of that day. This was
to honor and remember Saul and his son Jonathan and all of
the Israelite soldiers whom the Philistines had killed in the
battle. They were also very sorry for all of the Israelite people*,
who had lost their king and many of their men and much of their
territory*.
13 But then David asked the young man who had told him
about the battle, "Where do you come from?" He replied, "I
come from an Amalekite family, but we are living here in
Israel."
14 David told him, "You should have respected Saul as the
man whom Yahweh chose to be the king of Israel and not dared
to kill him!" 15 Then David summoned one of his soldiers and
told him, "Come over here and kill this man!" So the soldier
came over and killed him. 16 David said to the Amalekite,
"You yourself said, 'I killed the man whom Yahweh appointed
to be the king.' So you admitted that you were guilty and
deserved to die!" 17 Then David composed a sad song about
Saul and Jonathan. 18 He called this song "The Bow." *When
David became the king of Judah shortly afterward,* he told his
officials to teach this song to the people of Judah. You can
find the words in the Book of Jashar*. These are the words to the
song*:

19 "You Israelite people, the Philistines have pursued
your great warriors even onto the mountains
and killed them there!
It is very sad that these strong soldiers have died!
20 Do not let anyone who lives in cities such as Gath
and Ashkelon find out about this!
Otherwise, the women among the pagan Philistines
will have victory celebrations.
21 The shield of Saul, that mighty king, remains on
the ground on Mount Gilboa.
No one is caring for it by rubbing it with olive oil.
So I hope there will never be rain or dew there
again *so that the shield does not rust*.
I hope that there is so little rain that the fields do not
even produce the small amount of grain that
someone would bring as an offering.
22 When Jonathan shot arrows from his bow at
enemy soldiers, the arrows struck them
so that they bled and died.
When Saul stabbed strong men with his sword, he
wounded them so deeply that they died.
23 People loved Saul and Jonathan. They delighted many
people during their lives. And they died
fighting together against their enemies.
They were warriors who could run fast, as eagles fly
fast, and who were strong, as lions are strong.
24 You women in Israel should mourn for Saul.
He made Israel a safe and prosperous place in which
you had beautiful scarlet clothes and expensive
jewelry and gold ornaments to wear.
25 It is very sad that Jonathan, that strong soldier,
has died while fighting a war!
The Philistines pursued him even onto a mountain
and killed him there.
26 Jonathan, my dear friend, I grieve for you. You
were very dear to me.
You loved me in a wonderful way. It was much better
than the fleeting feelings of romance that
men and women have for each other.
27 It is very sad that these strong soldiers have died.
Saul and Jonathan are not using their sword
and bow anymore."

2 Sometime after that, David asked Yahweh, "Should I return
to Judah and live in one of the cities there?" Yahweh
replied, "Yes, return to Judah." Then David asked, "To which
city should I go?" Yahweh replied, "You should go to Hebron."
2 So David went to Hebron. He brought his two wives with
him. They were Ahinoam, who was from the city of Jezreel,

and Abigail, who was from the city of Carmel. She had been married to Nabal before he died. 3 David also brought the men who had been with him, together with their families. They all settled in the city of Hebron and in the surrounding towns and villages. 4 Then the men who were the leaders of the tribe of Judah came to Hebron. One of them poured olive oil on David's head to show they were appointing him to be the king of the tribe of Judah. Someone told David how soldiers from the city of Jabesh in the region of Gilead had recaptured Saul's body *from the wall of Beth Shan* and how the people of that city had buried his body honorably.

5 So David sent messengers to the people who lived in that city. He told the messengers to tell them, "I hope that Yahweh will do good things for you because you buried Saul's body honorably. By doing that, you treated Saul with the loyalty that he deserved as your king. 6 So this is what I hope will happen. I hope that Yahweh will be just as loyal to you all the time. And I will personally do good things for you because of the good way you treated Saul. 7 Now this is what I hope you will do. Even though Saul, who was your king, has died, do not become discouraged. Instead, continue to fight bravely against the Philistines. The people of the tribe of Judah have appointed me to be their king*, and I will lead their army to come and help you as soon as I can*."

8 But instead, Abner son of Ner, who had been Saul's army commander, brought Ish Bosheth son of Saul across the Jordan River to the city of Mahanaim. 9 So that Ish Bosheth could rule over it, Abner steadily reconquered the territory that the Philistines had captured from the Israelites. Ish Bosheth first ruled the region of Gilead east of the Jordan River, which the Philistines had not captured. Abner then reconquered the territory west of the Jordan River and north of the Valley of Jezreel, where the people of tribes such as Asher lived. Abner then reconquered the Valley of Jezreel itself. He then reconquered the territory west of the Jordan River and south of the Valley of Jezreel, where the people of tribes such as Ephraim lived. Abner was able to reconquer that territory all the way south to the territory of the tribe of Benjamin. That made Ish Bosheth the king of all the territory that would later be the northern kingdom of Israel*after it divided from the southern kingdom of Judah*.

10 Ish Bosheth son of Saul was 40 years old when he started to rule over the Israelite people. He ruled them for two years. But David was the king of the people of the tribe of Judah. 11 David ruled them for seven and a half years while he was living in Hebron.

12 One day Abner son of Ner led some soldiers from the army of Ish Bosheth son of Saul across the Jordan River from Mahanaim to the city of Gibeon. 13 Joab son of Zeruiah led a group of David's soldiers from Hebron to Gibeon. They found Abner and his soldiers near the large pool of water there. Joab had his soldiers stay on one side of the pool and sit down. Abner had his soldiers sit down on the other side.

14 Then Abner said to Joab, "Let us have some of our soldiers fight each other while the rest of us watch!" Joab replied, "Yes, let us do that!"

15 So Abner chose 12 men from his own tribe of Benjamin to fight on behalf of Ish Bosheth son of Saul. They went over to the other side of the pool and fought against 12 soldiers whom Joab chose to fight on behalf of David. 16 Each soldier grabbed the man he was fighting against by the hair. That enabled him to thrust his dagger into that man's side. The result was that these 24 soldiers all killed each other. That is why people now call the place near Gibeon where they fought Helkath Hazzurim.

17 Then the two whole groups of soldiers started fighting each other. It was a very fierce battle. But as they fought, David's soldiers defeated Abner and the soldiers from the other tribes of Israel.

18 Joab, Abishai, and Asahel, Zeruiah's three sons, were in that battle. Asahel was able to run very fast, the way wild gazelles run very fast. 19 When Abner fled from the battle, Asahel chased him. No matter which way Abner went to try to escape, Asahel kept following him. 20 Abner looked behind him to see who was chasing him. He called out, "Is that you, Asahel?" Asahel answered, "Yes, it is!"

21 Abner shouted back, "Chase somebody else! Try to catch one of the younger soldiers and defeat him and take his armor." But Asahel would not stop chasing Abner.

22 So Abner shouted at him again, "Stop chasing me! Do not make me fight you, because I would kill you. Then I could never again have a peaceful relationship with your brother Joab, because he would want to get revenge against me."

23 But Asahel refused to stop chasing Abner. So Abner let Asahel nearly catch him, then he suddenly stopped and swung the butt end of his spear into Asahel's stomach as he was still running fast toward him. The force was so great that the end of the spear went right through Asahel's stomach and came out his back. Asahel was wounded so badly that he fell down and died right there. When other soldiers came to the place where Asahel's dead body was lying in the roadway, they all stopped and stood there.

24 But when Joab and Abishai saw what had happened, they ran off in pursuit of Abner. At sunset they came to the hill of Ammah, which is near the town of Giah along the road that leads into the desolate area near Gibeon. 25 The soldiers who had come with Abner were from the tribe of Benjamin. He had regrouped them into a line of battle on the top of that hill.

26 Then Abner called out to Joab, "We should not continue this deadly battle any longer! You must realize that if we continue fighting, many people will suffer great harm. We are all Israelites, so please tell your soldiers right now to stop chasing us!"

27 Joab replied, "Even if you had not said that, I would certainly have told my soldiers tonight to stop chasing their fellow Israelites. I swear by God that this is true."

28 Then Joab blew a long, loud note on a ram's horn to signal that his soldiers should stop fighting. So all his men stopped where they were and no longer pursued the soldiers from the other tribes of Israel. That was the end of that battle.

29 That night Abner led his soldiers back through the Jordan River valley. They crossed the river and marched all the next morning. Then they finally arrived back at Mahanaim.

30 After his soldiers stopped chasing Abner, Joab gathered them all together. He counted them, and he found out that besides Asahel, 19 of them had died in the battle. 31 But David's soldiers had killed 360 soldiers from the tribe of Benjamin and among the soldiers from other tribes who had come to Gibeon with Abner. 32 Some of Joab's soldiers carried Asahel's body

from the battlefield to the town of Bethlehem and buried it in the same tomb where people had buried his father. Then Joab and his soldiers marched all through the night, and at dawn they arrived back home at Hebron.

3 After that, the people who wanted Saul's son to be the next king fought a long war against those who wanted David to be the king. As the war continued, more people began to support David, while fewer people supported Saul's son.
2 After David moved to Hebron, his wives gave birth to sons. The oldest was Amnon, whose mother was Ahinoam from the city of Jezreel. 3 The next son was Chileab, whose mother was Abigail, the widow of Nabal, from the city of Carmel. The next son was Absalom, whose mother was Maacah, the daughter of Talmai, the king of the region of Geshur. 4 The next son was Adonijah, whose mother was Haggith. The next son was Shephatiah, whose mother was Abital. 5 The youngest son was Ithream, whose mother was Eglah, another one of David's wives. Their mothers all gave birth to these sons of David in Hebron.

6 During the war between those who wanted Saul's son to be the next king and those who wanted David to be the king, Abner became a powerful leader among those who wanted Saul's son to be the king. 7 Saul had a secondary wife whose name was Rizpah. Aiah was her father. One day Ishbosheth accused Abner of having sexual relations with her.

8 Abner became very angry about what Ish Bosheth said to him. He said to Ish Bosheth, "I am not some disloyal person from the tribe of Judah! From the beginning I have been loyal to Saul your father, to his brothers, and to his friends. And I have kept David's army from defeating you. So you should not be accusing me now of doing something wrong with this woman! 9–10 Yahweh solemnly promised David that he would make him the next king instead of one of Saul's descendants. He promised to make David the ruler not just of the tribe of Judah but also of all the other tribes of Israel. He promised that David would rule all the territory extending from the city of Dan far in the north to the city of Beersheba far in the south. I am going to make that happen! If I do not, may God take away my position and my possessions and do even worse things to me." 11 What Abner said made Ishbosheth so afraid of him that he could not say anything to him in reply.

12 Then Abner sent some of his men to David at Hebron with this message: "I am the most powerful leader among the other tribes of Israel. So if you make an agreement with me, then I can help you. I will make all the people of Israel want you to be their king." 13 David told the messengers to tell Abner. "All right, I am willing to make an agreement with you. But there is one thing you must do. Otherwise, I will not meet with you so that we can make that agreement in person. When you come to meet with me, you must bring my wife Michal, Saul's daughter, to me." 14 *Abner agreed to get Michal for David.* So David sent messengers to Ish Bosheth to tell him, "I killed 100 Philistine soldiers and cut off their foreskins to give to Saul to pay for Michal to be my wife. So now, give her back to me!"

15 Saul had taken Michal away from David and given her to Paltiel son of Laish. But Ish Bosheth sent some men to take Michal away from Paltiel. 16 But when they took her, Paltiel followed her, crying as he went along. But when they reached the city of Bahurim, Abner told him, "You must go back home!" So he did.

17 *Before going to see David,* Abner had sent messengers to the Israelite leaders to tell them, "I know that for a long time you have wanted David to be your king. 18 So this is what you should do. Make him your king now. Keep in mind that Yahweh spoke of David as someone who served him well. Remember that he said he would use David to rescue us Israelites, his people, from the Philistines and all the other enemies who would oppress us." 19 Abner had also spoken personally with the leaders of the tribe of Benjamin*, to which Saul had belonged*. The people of that tribe and of all the other Israelite tribes had agreed to make David their king. So Abner went to Hebron to tell David that personally.

20 Abner respectfully brought 20 of his soldiers with him when he went to see David at Hebron. David served a feast to all of them. 21 After they had eaten, Abner said to David, "Sir, I know that you have wanted to be the king of all the Israelites. Let me now go and get leaders from all the tribes of Israel and bring them here so they can make an agreement with you to be their king." David agreed, and he allowed Abner and his men to leave safely.

22 While Abner was visiting with David, Joab was leading David's soldiers to attack some of their enemies. They defeated those enemies and captured many valuable possessions. When they brought what they had captured back to Hebron, Abner was no longer there, since David had already sent him away safely. 23 When Joab and the soldiers who were with him arrived, someone told Joab that Abner had come there and talked with the king and that the king had allowed Abner to leave safely.

24 So Joab went to the king and said, "You should not have done that! Listen to me! You had Abner, the commander of your enemy's army, right here where you could have made him your prisoner. But instead, you allowed him to leave, and now he has gotten away! 25 You know what kind of person Abner son of Ner is! He only pretended that he wanted to make an agreement with you. He really wanted to find out how you lead your armies and what plans you were making!"

26 Then Joab left David and sent some messengers to get Abner. They found him at the cistern of Sirah and brought him back to Hebron. David did not know that they had done this.
27 When Abner returned to Hebron, Joab pretended he wanted to speak with him privately. He led him into the shaded area between the inner and outer gate in the city wall. But there he stabbed Abner in the stomach and killed him. Joab did that to get revenge against Abner for killing his brother Asahel.

28 David later found out what had happened. He said, "I was not involved in any way in the murder of Abner son of Ner. So may Yahweh never punish me or any of my descendants who are kings after me for his death. 29 May Yahweh punish Joab and his relatives instead. I hope that there will always be someone in his family who has sores or who is a leper or who cannot walk without a crutch or who dies in battle or who does not have enough food to eat!"

30 *David cursed Joab in this way because it was not right for* Joab and his brother Abishai to have murdered Abner. He had killed their brother Asahel in battle at Gibeon*, so they should not have taken revenge*.

31 Then David told Joab and all of his soldiers, "I want you
to tear your clothes and wear rough cloth *to show that you are
sad that Abner has died*!" When men carried Abner's body to
his grave in a casket, King David walked right behind it *to
honor him*. 32 They buried Abner's body at Hebron. At Abner's
grave, King David cried loudly, and all the other people also
cried.
33 Then King David sang a sad song about Abner. He sang,
"It was not right for Abner to die like a criminal! 34 No one
tied his hands or put chains on his feet, as they would have
done if he had been guilty of a crime. No, men murdered him
unjustly!" After the other people heard David sing this song
for Abner, they cried even more sadly.
35 Later that day some people came and invited David to
join in the customary funeral meal. But David refused *since he
wanted to go without eating to show how sad he was that Abner
had died*. He said, "I swear that I will not even taste any kind
of food for the rest of this day *on which we buried Abner*! If I
do, I hope that God will make very bad things happen to me."
36 Everyone who was present at the funeral saw what David
did, and it pleased them, just as other things that King David
had done had pleased the people he ruled.
37 *Because he had mourned deeply and sincerely for Abner,* the
people of the tribe of Judah and the people of all the other
tribes of Israel realized then that King David had not wanted
Joab to kill Abner. 38 King David told his officials, "I hope
you realize that a great leader has now died in Israel. 39 Even
though Yahweh appointed me to be the king, I now feel weak.
These two sons of Zeruiah, Joab and Abishai, are very violent.
I cannot control them. So I hope that Yahweh will punish them
as they deserve for this wicked thing that they have done!"

4 When Saul's son Ishbosheth heard that Joab had killed
Abner at Hebron, he lost his courage. The people of the
Israelite tribes he ruled worried greatly about what would
happen next. 2 Two of the officers who led groups of soldiers
for Ishbosheth were brothers whose names were Baanah and
Rechab. Their father was Rimmon. They came from the city of
Beeroth. People considered them to be Benjaminites because
Beeroth is within the territory that Joshua assigned to the
tribe of Benjamin. 3 (But the *original Gibeonite* inhabitants of
Beeroth had fled to the town of Gittaim, and they are still
staying there now.)
4 Saul's son Jonathan had a son whose name was
Mephibosheth. Mephibosheth was five years old when Saul
and Jonathan died in the battle at Jezreel. When people
came to Gibeah and told what had happened, Mephibosheth's
nursemaid picked him up and ran away *to escape from the
Philistines*. She ran so fast that she dropped him. That injured
his legs, so that he could no longer walk well.
5 One day, Rimmon's sons Rechab and Baanah traveled to
Ish Bosheth's house. They arrived there at the hottest time of
the day. Ish Bosheth was lying on a bed in a cool part of his
house where he rested when it was hot. 6–7 Rechab and Baanah
acted as if they were going into the house to get some wheat
to give to their soldiers. This allowed them to get as far into
the house as Ish Bosheth's private bedroom. He was asleep on
his bed. They killed him by stabbing him in the stomach with
their swords. Then they cut off his head. Rechab and Baanah
fled from the house, carrying Ish Bosheth's head. They walked
all night through the plain along the Jordan River 8 so they
could go to Hebron. When they got there, they presented Ish
Bosheth's head to David. They told him, "Here is the head of
Ish Bosheth, the son of your enemy Saul, who tried to kill you!
Your Majesty, today Yahweh has allowed you to get revenge
on Saul and his descendants."
9 But David replied to them, "I swear by Yahweh, who was
the one who kept Saul from killing me, that what I am about
to say is true. 10 When a messenger came to Ziklag and told me
that he had killed Saul, he thought he was bringing news that
I would be glad to hear. But instead, I told one of my soldiers
to kill him. He expected me to reward him for bringing this
news, but I gave him what he really deserved. 11 If I punished
him by killing him, I should certainly do the same to you. You
two evil men murdered a man who had done nothing wrong,
and you killed him while he was sleeping on his bed in his own
house! Because you murdered him, it is right for me to punish
you by executing you. I am going to remove you completely
from the earth!"
12 Then David gave orders to his soldiers, and they killed
Rechab and Baanah. They cut off their hands and their feet
and hung them near the pool at Hebron. But they took the
head of Ish Bosheth and buried it respectfully in the tomb of
Abner, there at Hebron.

5 Then the leaders of all the tribes of Israel came to David
at Hebron. They told him, "Listen, *even though we belong to
different tribes,* we are all Israelites. 2 Previously, even though
Saul was our king, you were the one who led our soldiers into
battle. Yahweh promised you, 'You will be the leader of the
Israelite people, who belong to me. You will be their king.'"
3 Then, with Yahweh as their witness, all the leaders of the
people of Israel came and made an agreement with David at
Hebron that he would be their king. They poured olive oil on
his head to show that he was now the king of the Israelites.
4 David was 30 years old when he first became the king of
Judah. He was a king for a total of 40 years. 5 In Hebron, he
had ruled over the tribe of Judah for seven and a half years.
He would then rule over all the people of Judah and Israel for
33 more years in Jerusalem.
6 Once he became king, David led his soldiers to Jerusalem
to fight against the Jebusites who lived there. The Jebusites
believed that David's army would never be able to capture
their fortress in the city. So they called out mockingly to David,
"Even our soldiers who have become blind or crippled will
be able to keep you from getting inside our city walls!" 7 But
David's army did indeed capture the fortress on Mount Zion.
(Later David named it the City of David.) 8 On that day, David
told his soldiers, "In order to attack the Jebusites, crawl up
through the water supply tunnel into the city. That is how
you will get to those crippled and blind soldiers who can
supposedly defeat us. They are my enemies!" (Because David
called them his enemies, people now say that no one who is
blind or crippled may enter the royal palace.)
9 After David and his soldiers captured the fortress, David
moved into it. That was when he named it the City of David.
David had people build more buildings in the area between
the fortress and the Millo. 10 David continued to become more
and more powerful because Yahweh, the commander of the
heavenly armies, was helping him.

11 One day Hiram, the king of the city of Tyre, sent
ambassadors to *make a peace treaty with* David. Hiram agreed
to provide cedar trees to make lumber, and he also agreed that
he would send carpenters and stone masons to build a palace
for David. 12 Because Hiram did these things, David realized
that Yahweh truly wanted him to be the king of Israel. He also
realized that Yahweh wanted him to be a powerful king so
that he could protect the Israelites, since Yahweh had chosen
them as his own people.
13 After David moved from Hebron to Jerusalem, he married
more women as wives and secondary wives. All of those women
gave birth to more sons and daughters of David. 14 The names
of his sons whom his wives bore in Jerusalem were Shammua,
Shobab, Nathan, Solomon, 15 Ibhar, Elishua, Nepheg, Japhia,
16 Elishama, Eliada, and Eliphelet.
17 When the Philistines learned that the Israelites had made
David their king, they assembled their army, and it marched
toward Jerusalem to try to capture David. But David learned
that they were coming, so he left the city and went to another
place where he would be safe. 18 The Philistine army marched
into the Valley of the Raphaites *southwest of Jerusalem* and set
up its battle lines there. 19 David asked Yahweh, "Should I lead
my soldiers to attack the Philistine army? Will you enable us
to defeat them?" Yahweh replied, "Yes, attack them, because
I will definitely enable your army to defeat them."
20 So David led his army to where the Philistine army was,
and they defeated them there. Then David said, "Yahweh
enabled us to break through the enemy battle lines just as a
flood of water breaks through a dam!" So David named that
place Baal Perazim. 21 The Philistine men left their idols there,
and David and his soldiers took them away.
22 But after that, the Philistine army marched into the Valley
of the Raphaites again and set up its battle lines there once
more. 23 So David asked Yahweh again what he should do.
Yahweh replied, "Do not attack their battle lines directly. Tell
your soldiers to go around them and attack them from the
back. Come through the grove of balsam trees. 24 You will hear
the sound of an army marching in the tops of the balsam trees.
When you do, you will know that I am going ahead of you to
enable your army to defeat the Philistine army. So when you
hear that sound, attack them right away." 25 So David did what
Yahweh told him to do. His soldiers defeated the Philistine
soldiers and chased them from the city of Geba all the way
west to the city of Gezer.

6 After this, David assembled all of his best soldiers once
again. There were 30,000 of them. 2 He led them to the
city of Baalah in Judah so that they could bring the sacred
chest from there to Jerusalem. People call that chest "The
Box of Yahweh, the Commander of the Heavenly Armies."
Yahweh himself is invisibly present between the statues of the
winged creatures on top of it. 3 They went to the hilltop house
of Abinadab. They used a new cart to carry the chest from
there. Two oxen were pulling the cart, and Abinadab's two
sons Uzzah and Ahio were guiding them. 4 In order to bring the
sacred chest from Abinadab's hilltop house, Ahio walked in
front of the cart*, while Uzzah walked alongside it*. 5 David and his
soldiers and a large crowd of other Israelites were singing and
dancing in Yahweh's presence. People were playing musical
instruments to accompany the singing and dancing, including
wooden instruments, harps, lyres, tambourines, rattles, and
cymbals.
6 But when they came to the place in the area of Nacon
where people threshed grain, the oxen tripped. *Because that
made the cart tilt so that the sacred chest might have fallen off of it,*
Uzzah put his hand on the sacred chest to steady it. 7 Yahweh
immediately became very angry with Uzzah for touching the
chest. God killed him right there next to it.
8 David became angry because Yahweh had punished Uzzah.
David called that place Perez Uzzah, and that has been its
name ever since.
9 Then David became afraid of *what else* Yahweh *might do
to punish them*, and he said, "It is too dangerous for me to try
to bring the sacred chest to where I live in Jerusalem!" 10 So
David decided not to bring the sacred chest to the City of
David where he lived. Instead, he had the people take it into
a house that was there by the road. A man whose name was
Obed Edom the Gittite lived in that house. 11 The sacred chest
stayed in the house of Obed Edom for the next three months.
During that time, Yahweh made good things happen for him
and his whole family.
12 After that time, people told King David, "Because Obed
Edom is taking care of the sacred chest, Yahweh is making good
things happen for his family and all of his servants!" When
David heard that, he *gathered many of the Levites and* went to
Obed Edom's house. Together they very joyfully brought the
sacred chest from there to the City of David. 13 On the way,
once the Levites who were carrying the sacred chest had taken
their first six steps, David had them stop. Right at that place,
David killed a bull and a fat calf and offered them to Yahweh
as sacrifices. 14 David was wearing just a plain linen robe. He
danced to honor Yahweh, leaping as high as he could and
whirling around fast. 15 David and a large crowd of Israelites
brought the sacred chest to Jerusalem, shouting loudly and
blowing ram's horns.
16 While they were bringing the sacred chest into the City
of David, Michal daughter of Saul*, his wife, was on an upper
floor of her house. She* looked through a window down onto the
street. She saw *her husband* King David leaping and whirling to
honor Yahweh. That made her feel disgusted with him *because
she did not think a king should dress and act that way*.
17 David had put up a tent for the sacred chest, and the
Levites carried the sacred chest into it and set it up there. Then
David made some offerings to Yahweh that he completely
burned on an altar. He made other offerings whose meat the
people could share at a meal to celebrate this happy occasion.
18 When David finished offering those sacrifices, he asked
Yahweh, the commander of the heavenly armies, to do good
things for the people. 19 Then he gave special gifts of food to
all the Israelites who had come for the celebration. To each
man and woman he gave a loaf of bread, a date cake, and a
raisin cake. Then they all returned to their homes.
20 Then David went home to ask Yahweh to do good things
for his family. *His wife* Michal daughter of Saul came out to
meet him. She told him, "As the king of Israel, you should not
have acted so disgracefully today! You took off almost all of
your clothes, and you let the female servants of your officials
see you that way! Only immoral men take off their clothes in
public as you did."

21 David replied to Michal, “I danced in that simple way in
order to honor Yahweh! He chose me instead of your father or
any member of his family to be the king of the Israelite people,
who belong to him. I was celebrating to honor Yahweh! 22 And
so I am willing to act even more humbly than that. I will do
things that seem undignified. But those female servants you
were talking about will respect me *as a king who serves Yahweh devotedly*!”
23 Michal daughter of Saul did not have children for as long
as she lived.

7 King David was living in his palace, and Yahweh caused
the enemy people groups that surrounded the Israelites
to stop attacking them. 2 So one day David said to the prophet
Nathan, “Consider that I live in a palace that King Hiram’s
craftsmen built for me from cedar wood. But the sacred chest
is only in a tent *rather than a splendid temple*!”
3 Then Nathan told King David, “Yahweh will help you, so
you may do what you want to do.”
4 But that night, Yahweh *appeared to* Nathan and told him,
5 “Go and give my servant David this message from me. He is
not the one who will build a temple to hold the sacred chest
on which I am invisibly present. 6 I have not been especially
present in any building from the time when I brought the
Israelites here from Egypt until now. Instead, I have been
present in my sacred tent, moving from one place to another
with the people. 7 I went with the Israelites wherever they
traveled, but I never told any of the leaders whom I appointed
to rule them that they should have built a temple for me out of
cedar wood. 8 So give my servant David this message from me,
Yahweh, the commander of the heavenly armies. Although
he worked out in the fields caring for his father’s sheep, I
appointed him to become the king of my Israelite people.
9 Remind him that I have protected him wherever he has gone.
I have enabled him to defeat all the enemies who attacked
him. Now I will make him very famous. He will become as
famous as the greatest people who have ever lived on earth.
10–11 When my Israelite people were slaves in Egypt, violent
people oppressed them. They also oppressed them in this land
during the time when I was appointing judges to lead them.
But this will not happen anymore. I have made a place where
my people can live, and I will enable them to keep living there.
They will no longer be afraid. I will make all their enemies
stop attacking them. Tell David that I promise that I, Yahweh,
will enable his descendants to rule as kings. 12 Tell David that
after he has lived out his life and died, I will appoint one of
his own sons to be king. One of his wives will give birth to this
son in the future. I will make sure that he remains the king.
13 Assure David that that son of his will build a temple for me.
No one will ever replace him as the king. 14 It will be as if I am
his father and he is my son. When he does something wrong, I
will punish him the way human fathers properly punish their
sons. 15 But I will never stop showing kindness to David and
his descendants the way I stopped showing kindness to Saul. I
made him no longer the king so that David could become the
king. 16 So assure David that his descendants will continually
rule the kingdom of Israel after him. No other family will ever
replace them as the royal family.”
17 Nathan went and told David everything that Yahweh had
told him when he appeared to him.
18 *When he heard Nathan’s message,* King David went into the
sacred tent and sat in Yahweh’s presence. He prayed, “Yahweh,
my master, I am not a very important person, and I do not come
from a very important family. So I do not deserve any of the
things that you have done for me already. 19 And yet, Yahweh
my Lord, you are telling me that you want to do even more for
me. After all, you have now told me that my descendants will
reign over Israel long into the future! And you have said that
you will require people to obey them as their kings. 20 Yahweh
my Lord, I am not able to say anything further to you. But you
know me so well that you know what I would say if I could
say it. 21 You are going to do a wonderful thing *and make my descendants kings after me*. You are going to do this because you
promised to make me a king, and because it is what you really
want to do. It was also wonderful for you to tell me about this
now. 22 This shows how great you are, Yahweh my Lord. We
have never heard of any other God besides you. The gods that
the people of other nations worship are nothing like you. 23 No
other nation in the world is like us, your Israelite people. None
of the gods that other people groups worship rescued them
so that those people would belong to them. You rescued us
from being slaves in Egypt. You also rescued us from enemy
nations *here in Canaan* that thought their gods would enable
them to defeat us. You did miracles to enable us to settle
in this land. Because of the powerful things you have done,
people throughout the world now respect you. 24 You caused
us Israelites to be your people forever, and you, Yahweh, have
become our God! 25 Yahweh, my God, you have promised to
do wonderful things for me and my descendants. So please
do make those things you said happen always. 26 When that
happens, you will become famous forever. People will exclaim,
‘Yahweh, the commander of the heavenly armies, is the God
who rules Israel!’ And you will make sure that a descendant of
mine will always rule the Israelites. 27 I am confident that you
will do this, because you, Yahweh, have chosen us Israelites to
be your people. You have revealed to me that you will make
some of my descendants kings. For that reason, I have been
bold enough to pray like this to you. 28 So now, Yahweh my
Lord, because you are God, we can trust that you will do what
you promise. You have promised to do these good things to
me. 29 So now I pray that it will please you to do good things
for my descendants. Please enable them to keep ruling your
Israelite people. Yahweh my Lord, you have promised these
things, and so I know that you will always keep doing good
things for my descendants.”

8 Some time later, David and his army defeated the Philistine
army. They captured Metheg Ammah and made the
Philistines subject to the Israelites.
2 David and his army also defeated the Moabite army.
Afterwards, David forced their soldiers to lie down on the
ground *close to each other in a long line*. His soldiers went down
the line and measured two lengths of a rope. They killed all
of the Moabite soldiers in that part of the line. Then they
measured one length of that rope and let the Moabite soldiers
in that part of the line live. They continued to do this all the
way down the line. The rest of the Moabites had to accept
David as their ruler. Every year they had to give him the
payment that he demanded.

3 David's army also defeated the army of Hadadezer son of
Rehob, who ruled the region of Zobah in Aram. That happened
when Hadadezer led his army out to try to get control over
the territory that bordered the Euphrates River. 4 David's army
captured 1,700 of Hadadezer's soldiers who were chariot
drivers, and they also captured 20,000 footsoldiers. They
crippled most of the horses that had pulled chariots. But they
spared 100 of the horses *for their own use*.
5 Then an army of Arameans from the kingdom whose capital
was the city of Damascus came to help King Hadadezer's army.
But David's soldiers killed 22,000 of those Arameans. 6 Then
David stationed groups of his soldiers in that kingdom. Those
Arameans had to accept David as their ruler. Every year they
had to give him the payment that he demanded. Each time
David led his soldiers into battle, Yahweh enabled them to
win victories over their enemies.
7 Some of Hadadezer's soldiers had carried shields that
had a plating of gold. King David's soldiers captured those
shields and brought them to Jerusalem. 8 They also brought to
Jerusalem large quantities of bronze from Betah and Berothai,
two cities in Hadadezer's kingdom.
9 When Toi, the king of the city of Hamath, heard that
David's army had defeated the entire army of King Hadadezer,
10 he sent his son Joram to make a peace treaty with King
David and to congratulate him for defeating Hadadezer's army.
Toi congratulated David because Hadadezer's army had fought
many times against his own army. Joram brought David many
articles of gold, silver, and bronze as gifts.
11 King David dedicated all those items to Yahweh, just as he
had dedicated the silver and gold that his army had captured
from the nations they had conquered. 12 They had taken
valuable items from the Arameans, Moabites, Ammonites,
Philistines, and Amalekites. They had also captured many
valuable items from Hadadezer son of Rehob, king of Zobah.
13 David became even more famous after his army killed
18,000 Aramean soldiers in a battle in the Valley of Salt.
14 David stationed groups of his soldiers throughout the
region of Edom. The Edomites had to accept him as their king.
Each time David led his soldiers into battle, Yahweh enabled
them to win victories over their enemies.
15 So David ruled over all the Israelite people. As king, he
decided the people's cases, and he judged them fairly. 16 Joab
son of Zeruiah was the army commander. Jehoshaphat son of
Ahilud was the man who reported to the people everything
that David decided that they should do. 17 Zadok son of Ahitub
and Ahimelech son of Abiathar were the priests. Seraiah was
the official secretary. 18 Benaiah son of Jehoiada was the
commander of David's elite corps of bodyguards. David's sons
were his advisors.

9 One day David asked some of his officials, "Are there any
descendants of Saul still living? I promised Jonathan that
I would act kindly toward his family, and I would like to do
that if I can."
2 They told him that Saul's family had a household official
whose name was Ziba. So David sent messengers to summon
Ziba. When he arrived, King David asked him, "Are you Ziba?"
He replied, "Yes, your Majesty, I am."
3 Then King David asked him, "Is there anyone still alive
in Saul's family toward whom I can act kindly, as I promised
God that I would do?" Ziba replied, "Yes, there is one son of
Jonathan who is still alive. But he is not able to walk."
4 Then the king asked him, "Where is he?" Ziba replied, "I
can tell you that he is living in the house of Machir son of
Ammiel in the city of Lo Debar."
5 So King David sent messengers to Machir's house in Lo
Debar, and they brought Mephibosheth to Jerusalem.
6 When Mephibosheth came to David, he knelt down with
his face on the ground, to show respect. Then David said,
"Mephibosheth." He replied, "What may I do for you, your
Majesty?"
7 David said to him, "Do not be afraid. You can be sure that
I am going to be kind to you because Jonathan your father was
my friend. I will give back to you all the land that belonged
to your grandfather Saul. And I want you to always eat meals
with my family in the royal palace."
8 Mephibosheth bowed in front of David again and said,
"Sir, I am as worthless as a dead dog. I do not deserve for you
to act kindly toward me!"
9 Then the king summoned Saul's servant Ziba. He told him,
"I am now giving Mephibosheth everything that belonged to
your master Saul and his family. 10 You and your sons and
your servants must plow the land and plant crops and harvest
them for Mephibosheth's family. That way they will have food
to eat. Mephibosheth will eat meals regularly with me in my
palace." (Ziba had 15 sons and 20 servants.)
11 Ziba replied to the king, "Your Majesty, I will do
everything that you command me to do about this." After
that, Mephibosheth always ate with David's family as if he
were one of his sons.
12 Mephibosheth had a young son named Mica. All of Ziba's
family and servants became servants of Mephibosheth. 13 So
Mephibosheth came to live in Jerusalem, since he always ate
meals with David's family in the royal palace. He was still not
able to walk, because he had injured both of his legs.

10 Sometime later, Nahash, the king of the Ammonites,
died. His son Hanun became the next Ammonite king.
2 David thought to himself, "Nahash was kind to me, so I will
be kind to his son Hanun." So David sent some of his officials
to tell Hanun that David was sorry that Hanun's father had
died. When those messengers arrived in the land of Ammon,
3 the Ammonite military leaders said to King Hanun, "You
should not think that when David sent these men to tell you he
is sorry that your father died, he did that to honor your father.
He sent them here to look around the city to determine how
his army can conquer us!" 4 *Hanun believed what they said.* So
he commanded some of his soldiers to seize David's officials
and *insult them by* shaving off one side of their beards. He also
had them cut off the lower part of their robes so that their
buttocks would show. Then he made them leave Ammon and
go back to Israel.
5 This made the men feel very ashamed. When David found
out about what Hanun had done to his officials, he sent
messengers to meet them on their way back to Jerusalem. *The
messengers met them at the city of Jericho.* They told the men,
"The king says you may stay here at Jericho until your beards
have grown back and only return home after that."
6 Then the Ammonite leaders realized that they had greatly
insulted David. So they sent some men to hire some soldiers

from other nearby areas to help defend them. They hired 20,000 soldiers from the Aramean regions of Beth Rehob and Zobah. They also hired 1,000 soldiers from the army of the king of Maacah and 12,000 soldiers from the region of Tob.

7 When David heard about that, he sent Joab with all of the best Israelite soldiers to fight against them. 8 The Ammonite soldiers came from their city and formed a battle line in front of its wall. At the same time, the foreign soldiers whom their king had hired from Zobah, Rehob, Tob, and Maacah formed a separate battle line in the open fields nearby.

9 Joab saw that there were enemy armies in front of his troops and behind his troops. So he chose some of the best Israelite soldiers and put them in position to fight against the soldiers who were in the fields. 10 He told his brother Abishai to command the rest of the soldiers. They would oppose the Ammonite soldiers who had formed a battle line in front of their city wall. 11 Joab told Abishai, "If the soldiers from Aram are too strong for my men to defeat, then your men must come and help us. But if the Ammonite soldiers are too strong for your men, then my men will come and help them. 12 We must be strong and fight hard so that our enemies do not defeat us and then come and kill our people and destroy the cities in Israel, where we worship the true God. We will depend on Yahweh to make the right army win this battle."

13 Then Joab and the soldiers he commanded advanced to attack the army of Aram. *They defeated the Arameans so badly that* the Arameans ran away from them. 14 When the Ammonites saw that the Arameans were running away, they also ran away from Abishai and the soldiers he was commanding. They retreated back inside their city. So Joab and his army stopped fighting against them and went back to Jerusalem.

15 The Arameans thought about how the Israelite army had defeated them. They decided to gather a much bigger army. 16 King Hadadezer summoned a great number of soldiers from the Aramean kingdoms that were on the other side of the Euphrates River. They gathered at the city of Helam. Hadadezer had his own army commander, Shobach, lead this army.

17 When David learned about this, he gathered all of the Israelite fighting men and led them across the Jordan River. They marched to Helam. The Aramean army formed a battle line there, and the two armies fought. 18 *The Israelites defeated the Arameans so badly that* the Aramean soldiers ran away from the Israelite soldiers. David and his army killed 700 of their chariot drivers and 40,000 other soldiers. They also wounded Shobach, Hadadezer's army commander, so badly that he died on the battlefield. 19 Then all the kings who has been Hadadezer's subjects thought about how the Israelites had defeated their combined armies. They decided to make a peace treaty with the Israelites. They agreed to accept David as their king. The Arameans would not help the Ammonites anymore after that, because they were afraid of Israel.

11 The following spring, at the time when kings usually led their armies to fight against their enemies, David sent out his commander Joab with his officers and the rest of the Israelite army. They fought the Ammonites and severely defeated them. Then they surrounded Rabbah*, their capital city,* and tried to capture it. But David himself stayed in Jerusalem.

2 Late one afternoon, after David had finished sleeping during the heat of the day, he got up and walked around on the flat roof of his palace. From there, he could look down and see a woman who was bathing in the enclosed courtyard of her house. The woman was very beautiful. 3 David sent someone to find out who she was. He returned and told David, "That woman is Bathsheba daughter of Eliam. She is the wife of Uriah the Hittite."

4 But David sent messengers to get her anyway. They brought her to David, and he had sexual relations with her. (She had just finished performing the rituals to make herself pure after her menstrual period.) Then Bathsheba went back home. 5 Later, she realized that she was going to have a child. So she sent a messenger to tell David this news.

6 So David sent a message to Joab. He said, "Tell Uriah the Hittite to come back to Jerusalem so that I can speak with him." So Joab sent Uriah to go and speak with David. 7 When he arrived, David asked whether Joab was well, whether the other soldiers were well, and whether the Israelites were doing well fighting the war. 8 Then David told Uriah, "Now go home and relax for a while." So Uriah left, and David sent someone to bring some special food to Uriah for him to enjoy. 9 But Uriah did not go home. Instead, he slept at the palace entrance with the palace guards.

10 The next morning, someone told David that Uriah had not gone to his house that night. So David summoned him again. He asked him, "Why did you not go home and relax last night? You needed to rest after walking so far to get here."

11 Uriah replied, "The soldiers of Israel and Judah are camping in the open fields. Even our commander Joab and his officers are sleeping in tents like the rest of us. We brought the sacred chest with us, and it is also in a tent. *As a soldier who is part of this military campaign,* it would not be right for me to go to my home, enjoy food and drink, and have sexual relations with my wife. I swear by your life that I would never do such a thing!"

12 Then David said to Uriah, "Stay here another day, and I will let you return to the battle tomorrow." So Uriah stayed in Jerusalem that day and that night. 13 That evening, David invited Uriah to dine with him in the palace. David gave Uriah so much wine to drink that he got drunk. But after the meal, Uriah still did not go home. Instead, he slept that night on a cot in a room with the palace guard.

14 David *found out that Uriah had not gone home, so* the next morning he wrote a letter to Joab and gave it to Uriah to bring to him. 15 In the letter, he wrote, "Put Uriah in the front line at the place where he will be in the greatest danger. Then command the soldiers who are supporting him to retreat. That way our enemies will wound him so badly that he will die."

16 *When Joab got the letter,* he carefully observed the city's defenses. He found a place where the Ammonites had put many of their best soldiers. So he put Uriah in the front line there. 17 The Ammonite soldiers came out from that part of the city and fought with Joab's soldiers. They killed several of David's soldiers. Uriah was one of the soldiers they killed.

18 Then Joab sent a messenger to bring David news about what had happened in the battle. 19 He told the messenger, "Tell David the news about what happened in the battle. Once you finish telling him, 20 David may become angry *because we allowed the Ammonites to kill some of our soldiers*. He may tell

you, ‘Your soldiers should not have gone so close to the city to fight! You should have known that the Ammonite soldiers would shoot arrows at you from the top of the city wall! 21 You must remember how Abimelech son of Jerubbesheth died! A woman who lived in Thebez threw a heavy millstone onto him from the top of a tower, and that killed him. So our troops should not have gone near the city wall!’ If the king says this, then tell him that his soldier Uriah the Hittite also died in the battle.”

22 So the messenger went and told David everything that Joab had told him to say. 23 The messenger said to David, “The Ammonite soldiers organized an attack against us. They came out of the city to fight against us in the fields. We were able to force them to retreat right back to the city. 24 But then their archers shot arrows at us from the top of the city wall. They killed some of your soldiers, and Uriah the Hittite was one of the soldiers they killed.”

25 David said to the messenger, “Go back to Joab and tell him, ‘Do not feel badly about what happened, because no one ever knows who might die in a battle. Make an even stronger attack against the city and conquer it.’ Encourage Joab by telling him those things.”

26 When Uriah’s wife Bathsheba heard that her husband had died, she mourned for him. 27 After her time of mourning ended, David sent messengers to bring her to the palace, and he married her. She later gave birth to a son whose father was David. But Yahweh was very displeased with what David had done.

12 Yahweh told the prophet Nathan what David had done, and he sent Nathan to correct David. Nathan came and told him a story *to help him recognize that he had done was very wrong*. He said, “Once there were two men in a certain city. One man was rich and the other was poor. 2 The rich man owned a lot of sheep and cattle. 3 But the poor man had only one little female lamb, which he had bought. He raised the lamb, and it grew up with his own children. He would give the lamb some of his own food and let it drink from his cup. He let the lamb sleep as he held it next to him. The lamb was like a daughter to him.

4 One day a visitor came to see the rich man. The rich man did not want to take one of his own sheep or cattle and kill it to prepare a meal for his guest. Instead, he sent men to take the poor man’s lamb. Then he had someone kill it and prepare it as a meal for his guest.”

5 When David heard that, he became very angry with the rich man. He told Nathan, “I swear by Yahweh that I want to execute the man who did that! 6 *I cannot actually execute him, but at least* he must pay back four lambs to the poor man for so cruelly taking his one lamb.”

7 Nathan said to David, “You have acted like the man I told you about. Now this is what Yahweh, the God whom we Israelites worship, says to you: ‘I was the one who chose you to be the king of Israel. When Saul was trying to kill you, I was the one who rescued you. 8 I gave you all of his property. I let you marry the women who had been his wives and concubines. I made you king over Israel and Judah. And if you had told me that you were not content with all that I had given you, I would have given you even more! 9 But you have not taken seriously what I commanded *when I said that my people must not commit adultery or murder*. You have done things that I consider to be very evil! You arranged for Uriah the Hittite to die in battle, and after the Ammonite soldiers killed him, then you took his wife as your own wife! 10 You did not respect me. Instead you took Uriah’s wife to be your wife. As a result, people in your family will constantly be killing each other.’ 11 This is what Yahweh says to you: ‘I am going to make someone from your own family cause disaster for you. I will take your wives away from you and give them to that person instead. He will have sexual relations with them in public. And you will know about it. 12 While you tried to make sure that no one found out about what you did, I will make this happen in public. That way people throughout Israel will either see it or hear about it.’”

13 David replied, “I have sinned against Yahweh.” Nathan said to David, “Yahweh has forgiven you for sinning. He is not going to punish you by killing you for committing this sin. 14 But you have shown great contempt for Yahweh by doing this. So the son you have just had is going to die.”

15 Then Nathan went home. Uriah’s wife had given birth to a baby boy who was David’s son. Yahweh caused him to become very sick. 16 So David prayed to God that the child would not die. *To show how concerned he was,* he ate very little food. He also did not sleep in his bed at night. Instead, he slept on the floor of his room. 17 His most senior servants came and urged him to get up off the floor. But he refused to get up, and he refused to eat any meals with them.

18 After a week, the baby died. David’s servants were afraid to tell him that. They said to each other, “Consider that while the baby was still alive, we encouraged him to take better care of himself, but he refused. Now if we tell him that the baby has died, he may do something to hurt himself!”

19 David saw that his servants were whispering something to each other. He recognized that the baby must have died. So he asked them, “Is the baby dead?” They replied, “Yes, he is dead.”

20 Then David got up from the floor. He bathed himself, put olive oil on his hair and skin, and put on different clothes. Then he went to Yahweh’s sacred tent and worshiped him there. After that, he came home. He asked his servants to bring him some food, and when they did, he ate it.

21 Then his servants said to him, “We do not understand why you have done this! While the baby was still alive, you cried for him and refused to eat. But now that the baby has died, you have gotten up and eaten some food!”

22 He replied, “While the baby was still alive, I ate little food and wept because I thought, ‘Perhaps Yahweh will be merciful to me and allow the baby to live.’ 23 But now that the baby is dead, there is no reason for me to go without food anymore. I cannot bring him back to me. Someday I will go to where he is, but he will not return to me.”

24 Then David comforted his wife, Bathsheba. He had sexual relations with her, and she became pregnant again and gave birth to another son. David named this boy Solomon. Yahweh loved that little boy. 25 Yahweh told the prophet Nathan to tell David to name the baby boy Jedidiah, since he loved him.

26 Meanwhile, Joab’s soldiers were still fighting to conquer Rabbah, the Ammonite capital city. They captured the part of the city where the king had his palace. 27 Then Joab sent messengers to David to tell him, “My troops have been attacking

Rabbah, and we have captured the part of the city that is down by the river. 28 Now assemble all the rest of our soldiers. Come and attack the fortress that is on higher ground and capture it. If you do not do that, my soldiers will capture the fortress, and then people will give the whole city a new name, The City of Joab."

29 So David assembled the rest of the Israelite soldiers. They went to Rabbah and attacked it, and they captured it. 30 Then David took the golden crown off the head of their king and put it on his own head. It weighed 34 kilograms, and it had a very valuable stone in it. David's soldiers also took many other valuable things from the city. 31 Then the Israelite soldiers brought the Ammonite people out of the city and forced them to work for them using saws, iron picks, and iron axes. David's troops also forced them to make bricks. David's soldiers made the people who lived in the other Ammonite cities work for them in the same way. Then David and all of his army returned to Jerusalem.

13 After this, the trouble that Nathan had announced began in David's family. David's son Absalom had a beautiful sister whose name was Tamar. Another of David's sons, Amnon, wanted to have sexual relations with her. 2 He wanted so badly to have sexual relations with his half-sister Tamar that he felt sick. But because she was an unmarried young woman*, she lived separately from the men in the palace, so* Amnon thought he would never have a relationship with her.

3 But Amnon had a friend whose name was Jonadab. He was the son of David's brother Shimeah. Jonadab knew well how to deceive people in order to get what he wanted.

4 One day Jonadab said to Amnon, "Even though you are the king's son, every day *when I see you,* you seem depressed. Please tell me why." Amnon replied, "I feel sexual desire toward Tamar, the sister of my half-brother Absalom."

5 Jonadab said to him, "Lie down on your bed and pretend that you are sick. Your father will come to visit you. *Tell him that you do not feel like eating anything, but you might eat* if someone prepared food while you were watching so you could see what the person was doing and if the person then served you the food directly. Suggest that you half-sister Tamar could come and do this for you."

6 So Amnon lay down and pretended that he was sick. When King David came to visit him, Amnon told him, "*I might eat something if* someone made a couple of pancakes for me while I was watching and then served them to me directly. Please allow my half-sister Tamar to come and do that for me."

7 So David sent a message to Tamar in the palace. He told her, "Amnon your half-brother *is sick, so* please go to his house and prepare some food for him *so that he will eat*." 8 So Tamar went to Amnon's house. He was lying on a couch there. While he was watching her, she took some dough and kneaded it, then she formed it into some pancakes and baked them. 9 She brought the pan and served the pancakes from it onto a plate in front of Amnon. But he refused to eat them. He said to everyone else who was present, "All the rest of you, leave me!" So they all left.

10 Then Amnon said to Tamar, "*I need to lie in bed, so* bring the food into my bedroom and serve it to me there." So Tamar brought the pancakes that she had made into his bedroom. 11 But when she brought them close for him to eat them, he grabbed her and told her, "I want to have sex with you!"

12 She replied, "No, do not force me to have sex with you! Israelites should not do things like that. You are my half-brother! So do not commit this crime against me! 13 If you did, I would always have shame afterwards. And as for you, you would be acting like the Israelite men who do wrong things without regard for God. So I plead with you, ask the king *to allow you to marry me*. I am sure he would agree to let me become your wife." 14 But he refused to do what she said he should do. He was stronger than she was, so he forcibly had sexual relations with her.

15 Afterwards, Amnon felt great hatred toward her. He hated her much more than he had desired her. He told her, "Now I want you to leave!"

16 But she told him, "No! You should not send me away. That would be very wrong. It would be worse than what you just did to me!" But again he refused to do what she said he should do.

17 Instead, he summoned his personal servant and told him, "Take this woman outside, away from me, and lock the door so that she cannot come in again!" 18 So the servant put her outside and locked the door so that she could not come in again. Now Tamar was wearing a long robe. That was the clothing that the unmarried daughters of the king customarily wore at that time.

19 But *to show how distressed she was,* Tamar put ashes on her head. She tore the long robe that she was wearing. She also placed her hand on her head. As she went away, she kept screaming.

20 Her brother Absalom *saw her and* said to her, "Did your half-brother Amnon force you to have sex with him? Please, my sister, do not tell anyone. He is your half-brother. Do not let this bother you." Then Tamar went to live in Absalom's house, and she never got married.

21 When King David learned what had happened, it made him very angry *but he did not do anything about it*. 22 Absalom hated Amnon because he had forcibly had sexual relations with his sister Tamar. But he did not say anything to Amnon about this*, because he did not want Amnon to suspect that he wanted to kill him*.

23 However, two years later, Absalom hired men to cut the wool off his sheep at Baal Hazor, where he lived. That place is near the tribal land of Ephraim. He was going to host a celebration when they finished cutting the wool off the sheep, and Absalom invited all the king's sons to come to the celebration. 24 Absalom went to King David and said to him, "Sir, I have workers shearing my sheep *and we are going to celebrate when they finish*. Please come with your officials to celebrate with us!"

25 But the king replied, "No, my son, it would not be good for all of us to come. That would be too great an expense for you." Absalom kept inviting him, but King David finally refused. Instead, he said that he hoped that God would make them happy while they celebrated.

26 Then Absalom said, "If you will not come, please send my half-brother Amnon *the crown prince* with us *as your representative*." But the king replied, "You do not need to invite him to the celebration either."

27 But Absalom insisted, and finally King David agreed to
let Amnon go with Absalom. He sent all of his other sons with
him.
28 At the celebration, Absalom told his servants, “Pay
attention to these instructions. Once Amnon has become a bit
drunk from the wine, I will shout out, ‘Kill Amnon!’ When I
say that, you must kill him. Do not be afraid. You will be doing
this only because I told you to do it. So be very brave *and*
do it!” 29 So Absalom’s servants did what Absalom told them
to do. They killed Amnon. When the rest of David’s sons saw
what had happened, they left the celebration. They got onto
their mules and escaped by riding away fast.
30 While they were still on their way home, someone *who*
had fled when the servants first killed Amnon rushed back and
reported *incorrectly* to David, “Absalom has killed all of your
other sons! None of them is still alive!” 31 When King David
heard this, he got up from his throne, tore his clothes, and then
lay down on the ground *to show how sad he was*. His officials
also tore their clothes, and they stood around him *to show their*
sympathy.
32 But Jonadab, the son of David’s brother Shimeah, said,
“Your Majesty, please do not believe that Absalom has killed
all your sons. I am sure that only Amnon is dead. I say this
because Absalom has wanted to kill him ever since the day
that Amnon raped his sister Tamar. 33 So, your Majesty, please
do not let the thought that all your sons may be dead cause
you great distress. I am sure that only Amnon is dead.”
34 (Absalom had fled *from the celebration after his servants*
killed Amnon.) One of the city guards looked out and saw a
large crowd of people coming around from behind a hill on
the road from the west *and reported this to King David*.
35 Jonadab said to the king, “You see, what I told you is
true. Your other sons are alive, and they are coming here now.”
36 And as soon as he said that, David’s sons came in. They
were all crying loudly, and David and all his officials also cried
very much.
37 Absalom fled *for safety* to the kingdom of Geshur, where
his grandfather Talmai son of Ammihud was the king. King David
mourned continually for his son Amnon. 38 When Absalom
fled to the kingdom of Geshur, he stayed there for three years.
39 King David had intended to attack Absalom *to capture him*
and punish him for killing Amnon. But by the end of those three
years, David was not grieving as severely that Amnon had
died, so he no longer planned to attack Absalom.

14 But Joab recognized that the king was still angry with
Absalom. 2 So Joab sent someone to the city of Tekoa
to bring to him a woman who was very clever. When she
arrived, Joab said to her, “I want you to look very sad, as if
you are grieving because someone you love has died. Put on
the clothes that people wear who are mourning. Do not put
any olive oil on your hair or skin. Act as if you are a woman
who has been mourning for a long time for someone who has
died. 3 Then go to King David and tell him what I tell you to
say.” Then Joab told her what to say.
4 So the woman who was from Tekoa went to the king. She
got down and lay flat out in front of him to honor him, and
then she cried out, “Your Majesty, please help me!”
5 The king replied, “What is your problem?” She replied,
“Sadly I am a widow. My husband died some time ago. 6 I
had two sons. But one day they quarreled with each other
while they were working out in the field. There was no one
to separate them, and one of them hit the other one so hard
that he killed him. 7 Now, all of my extended family has come
to me and insisted that I surrender to them my son who is
still alive. They want to kill him to punish him for killing his
brother. But if they do that, I will not have any son to inherit
my late husband’s land *and the family will take it*. My son is
the only relative I have left. If they kill him, my husband will
have no living descendants to preserve our family’s name.”
8 Then the king said to the woman, “I will forbid anyone to
punish your surviving son by killing him. So you may go back
home *without appealing any further*.”
9 The woman from Tekoa replied to the king, “Your Majesty,
let me reassure you that if my son actually is guilty of murder
and deserves to die, then I will accept the blame and expect
Yahweh to punish me and my family. May Yahweh not punish
you or the kingdom of Israel because you have said that no
one should kill my surviving son.”
10 The king said to her, “If anyone continues to demand
that you surrender your surviving son for execution, bring
that person to me. I will make sure that he never causes you
trouble again.”
11 Then the woman said, “Your Majesty, please swear by
Yahweh your God that you will do this. That way the relative
who would be responsible to kill my son if he had actually
murdered his brother will not kill him and cause someone
further to die in my family.” David replied, “I swear by Yahweh
that I will not allow anyone to hurt your son at all.”
12 Then the woman said, “Your Majesty, please allow me
to say one more thing to you.” He replied, “Speak!”
13 The woman said, “You have been acting badly toward
God’s people. Based on the judgment you have just given, you
have been doing the wrong thing. *Since you take circumstances*
into account when judging cases of manslaughter, you should
allow your son Absalom*, our crown prince,* to return home.
14 Consider that all of us are going to die. Like water that no
one can pick up from the ground once someone has spilled it,
death is permanent *so you should reconcile with Absalom while*
you are both still alive. And it is not God who makes people die
even to punish them when they have done wrong things. Instead,
God forgives people who have sinned against him so that they
can once more be in a good relationship with him.
15 I came to appeal to you, Your Majesty, because I was
very afraid that the members of my extended family would
kill my son. I said to myself, ‘I will go and talk to the king,
and maybe he will do what I ask him to do. 16 Perhaps he
will listen to me and save my son from the man who is trying
to kill him. If that man kills my son, I might die too *without*
his support. Then we would both no longer be a part of the
Israelite community.’
17 And I decided, ‘What the king says will comfort me,
because he is like an angel of God. He knows how to determine
what is right and what is wrong.’ I pray that Yahweh your
God will help you.”
18 In response King David told the woman, “I am going to
ask you about something, and I want you to tell me the whole
truth about it.” The woman replied, “Go ahead and ask, Your
Majesty*, and I will answer truthfully*.”

19 The king said, “Did Joab arrange for you to do all this?”
She replied, “I swear by your life, Your Majesty, that it is not
possible to say otherwise than you have said! Yes, it was in
fact Joab who told me to come here, and he was the one who
told me what to say. 20 Joab did that to try to get you to feel
differently about this matter. But Your Majesty, you seem to
be as wise as one of God’s angels. You know what is happening
throughout your kingdom*, and that is how you knew that Joab
sent me here*.”
21 Then King David had his servants bring Joab to him.
David told Joab, “Listen! I have decided to do what you want.
So you may go and get that young man Absalom and bring
him back here to Jerusalem.”
22 Joab got down and lay flat out in front of David to honor
him. Then he asked God to do good things for him. Then Joab
said, “Your Majesty, now I know that you are pleased with
me, since you have agreed to do what I asked.”
23 Then Joab did what David had said he could do. He
went to Geshur and got Absalom and brought him back to
Jerusalem. 24 But King David had said that while Absalom
could live in his own house again, he could not come and
speak with him. So Absalom lived in his own house, but he
did not go and speak with the king.
25 Now people throughout Israel praised Absalom for being
a very handsome man. He did not seem to have any flaws in
any part of his body. 26 Absalom wore his hair long and only
cut it once a year when it became too heavy on his head.
When he cut his hair, he would weigh it, and *because it was
so thick* it always weighed nearly a kilogram. 27 Absalom had
three sons. He also had a daughter, whose name was Tamar.
She was a very beautiful woman.
28 Even though Absalom had lived in Jerusalem for two
entire years, David had still not allowed him to come and
speak with him. 29 So Absalom sent a messenger to ask Joab
to come and speak with him. Absalom wanted to ask Joab to
help him receive permission to speak with King David. But
Joab refused to come and speak with Absalom. So Absalom
sent another messenger to ask Joab to come and speak with
him. But Joab still would not come.
30 Then Absalom told his servants, “Here is what I want you
to do. Joab owns a piece of land next to my land, and he has
barley growing there. Go over and start a fire there to burn
up the barley.” So Absalom’s servants went over and started
a fire, and it burned up all the barley.
31 Joab *realized who must have started the fire, so he* went
to Absalom’s house and demanded to know, “Why did your
servants burn up the barley that was growing on my piece of
land?” 32 Absalom replied, “I had them do that because when
I sent messengers to ask you to come and speak with me, you
refused. I wanted you to go to the king and tell him on my
behalf that it seemed useless for me to have come here from
Geshur and that I thought it would have been better for me
to stay there. Now please get the king to allow me to come
and speak with him. Tell him that if he is keeping me away
to punish me for doing something wrong, he can go ahead
and execute me!” 33 So Joab went to the king and told him
what Absalom had said. Then the king sent messengers to
bring Absalom to the royal court. Absalom came to the king
and, to honor him, he knelt down in front of him with his
face touching the ground. Then the king *indicated that Absalom
could get up, and he* kissed Absalom on the cheek to show that
he was no longer hostile to him.

15 Soon afterwards, Absalom got a chariot and horses to
pull it. He hired 50 men to run in front of him while
he was riding around Jerusalem in the chariot. 2 And Absalom
would also go and stand by the city gate starting early each
morning. When a person came toward the gate so they could
go into the city and ask the king to decide a case for him,
Absalom would call out to him. He would ask what city he
was from. Then the person would tell him what *city and* tribe
he was from. 3 Then Absalom would *ask the person about his
case* and tell him, “It certainly seems to me that you deserve
to win your case. But the king *is not able to decide everyone’s
case, and he* has not appointed anyone else to judge cases for
people like you.” 4 Absalom would then add, “I should really
be a judge for all the Israelites. That way anyone who had a
legal case could come to me, and I would decide it fairly.”
5 And whenever anyone approached Absalom and started
to bow respectfully in front of him, Absalom would reach out
and hold him up and kiss him on the cheek. 6 Absalom acted
this way toward every Israelite who came to King David to ask
him to judge a case. As a result, the Israelites began to wish
that Absalom were their king instead of David.
7 After four years, Absalom went to King David and said, “I
made a promise to Yahweh. Please allow me to go to the city
of Hebron so that I can do what I promised. 8 I ask this because
when I was living in Geshur, in Aram, I promised Yahweh that
if he made it possible for me to return to Jerusalem, then I
would worship him in Hebron *and thank him publicly*.”
9 The king replied, “You have my permission to go.” So
Absalom went to Hebron.
10 But while he was there, he secretly sent messengers
throughout the territory of all the tribes of Israel. The messengers
told people, “When you hear the sound of people blowing
rams’ horns, shout, ‘Absalom has become the king at Hebron!’”
11 There were 200 men who came from Jerusalem to Hebron
with Absalom. But they came because he had invited them to
the feast he was going to host there. They were not part of his
conspiracy. They knew nothing about what he was planning to
do. 12 King David had an advisor whose name was Ahithophel
the Gilonite. While Absalom was offering sacrifices at Hebron,
he sent messengers to bring Ahithophel from his home in the
city of Giloh. Many other people also came and joined Absalom
in his rebellion against David.
13 Then someone came to David and warned him, “The
Israelites now want Absalom to be their king!”
14 So David told all the officials in his royal court, “We
must leave immediately if we want to escape from Absalom!
We must go quickly, before he and his men arrive. If we do
not do that, they will kill us and everyone else in the city!”
15 The king’s officials replied, “Very well, your Majesty, we
are ready to do whatever you wish.”
16 So King David quickly left Jerusalem. His family and
officials went with him. But David left ten of his secondary
wives at the palace to take care of it. 17 Many of the people
of Jerusalem also left the city with King David. They stopped
at the edge of the city *to organize an orderly retreat*. 18 David
stepped out of the roadway so that his officials could walk
past him. He also let his elite corps of bodyguards go in front

of him *to lead the way*. The 600 men who had been David's soldiers when he fled to the city of Gath also walked by in front of him.

19 Then David said to Ittai*, a military commander who had come* from Gath *to serve David*, "You do not need to come with us. You may safely return to Jerusalem and serve whoever is the king. After all, you are not an Israelite, and this is not your own country*, so people will consider you to be impartial*. 20 You have lived here in Israel for only a short time. And we do not even know where we will be going. So it is not right for me to make you come with us now and wander around with us. Please return to your country and take your troops with you. May people treat you kindly and be loyal to you."

21 But Ittai replied, "Your Majesty, I swear by Yahweh and I swear by your own life that I will go wherever you go. I will fight to defend you even if I have to die doing that."

22 David replied to Ittai, "Very well, please come with us!" So Ittai and all his troops and their families went with David.

23 All the people who lived along the road cried loudly when they saw King David and the people with him walking by. *Since Absalom would be coming from the southwest,* the king and the others crossed the Kidron Valley and then went up the hill on the road that goes through the desolate area *east of Jerusalem*.

24 Zadok the high priest had also left the city. He had brought the sacred chest of God. Some Levites were with him, and they were carrying it. But they *did not carry it across the Kidron Valley right away. Instead, they* set it on the ground. Abiathar, the other high priest, went up *the Mount of Olives on the other side of the valley and stood there*until all of the people fleeing from Jerusalem had gone by*, and then he came back down to where the sacred chest was*.

25 Then the king told Zadok, "I want you to take the sacred chest back into Jerusalem. If Yahweh chooses to be kind to me, someday he will allow me to return and see the sacred chest in the place where he is especially present. 26 But if he says that he is not pleased with me, then I am willing for him to do to me whatever he thinks is right."

27 He also told Zadok, "Now listen to what I want you to do. Go back to the city peacefully. Take your son Ahimaaz with you. Abiathar should also take his son Jonathan, and you should both go back. 28 This will be the plan. I will wait in the wilderness at the place where people can walk across the Jordan River until you send a message to me *telling me what I should do*." 29 So Zadok and Abiathar carried the sacred chest back to Jerusalem, and they remained in the city.

30 Then David walked up the Mount of Olives. He was crying as he walked. To show that he was very sad, he covered his head *with part of his cloak*. He also took off his sandals. All the people who were walking with him also covered their heads, and they too cried while they walked. 31 Then someone told David that Ahithophel had joined the Israelites who were rebelling against David and supporting Absalom as their king. So David prayed, "Yahweh, please make Ahithophel give Absalom bad advice!"

32 When they arrived at the top of the hill, where there was a place where people worshiped God, David unexpectedly met Hushai the Archite. To show that he was very sad, Hushai had torn his clothes and put dirt on his head. 33 David said to him, "If you come with me, you will make us travel more slowly. 34 But if you return to the city, you can help me by telling Absalom, 'Your Majesty, I will be your advisor. In the past, I was your father's advisor. But just as I advised him then, so I will advise you now.' If you do that, you will be able to help me by countering any good advice that Ahithophel gives to Absalom. 35 Zadok and Abiathar the priests are already there. Whatever you hear people say in the king's palace, tell it to Zadok and Abiathar. 36 Keep in mind that Zadok's son Ahimaaz and Abiathar's son Jonathan are there. Whatever any of you find out, send them to report it to me."

37 So David's friend Hushai returned to the city. He arrived just as Absalom was entering Jerusalem.

16 When David and the others had gone a little way past the top of the hill, he unexpectedly met Mephibosheth's servant Ziba. He had two donkeys with him that were carrying 200 loaves of bread, 100 bunches of raisins, 100 bunches of fresh figs, and a leather bag full of wine.

2 The king said to Ziba, "What is all this for?" Ziba replied, "The donkeys are for your family to ride on. The bread and the fruit are for your soldiers to eat. And the wine is for anyone to drink who becomes tired in this desolate area."

3 The king said, "Where is Mephibosheth, the grandson of your former master Saul?" Ziba answered, "You should know that he has remained in Jerusalem, because he thinks that now the Israelites will allow him to rule their kingdom as his grandfather Saul did."

4 The king said to Ziba, "In that case, everything that belonged to Mephibosheth is now yours." Ziba replied, "Your Majesty, I will humbly serve you. I hope that you will always be pleased with me."

5 When King David and those with him arrived at the city of Bahurim, a man whose name was Shimei unexpectedly came out of his house to meet him. Shimei's father was Gera. They were members of the same clan that Saul's family belonged to. Shimei kept cursing David as he approached. 6 Then he threw stones at David and his officials. David's soldiers and bodyguards surrounded David *to try to protect him from the stones*. 7 Shimei cursed David and said to him, "Go away and never come back, you murderer, you scoundrel! 8 Yahweh is punishing you for killing so many people who were Saul's relatives and supporters. You took Saul's place as king, and now Yahweh is making your son Absalom take your place as king. You are getting what you deserve for killing so many people!"

9 Then Abishai said to the king, "Your Majesty, this man is as worthless as a dead dog! You should not allow him to curse you! Permit me to go over there and cut off his head!"

10 But the king replied, "I do not agree at all with what you two sons of Zeruiah want to do. If he is cursing me because Yahweh told him to curse me, then no one should challenge him for doing that."

11 Then David said to Abishai and to all his officials, "You know that my very own son is trying to kill me. So it is not surprising that this man from the tribe of Benjamin also wants me to die. Just ignore him and let him curse me if Yahweh has told him to do that. 12 Perhaps Yahweh will see how much trouble I am having and decide to make good things happen to me instead of the curses that this man is shouting at me today." 13 So David and those who were with him continued

walking along the road. Shimei walked along the hillside next to the road, and as he walked along next to them, he kept cursing David and throwing stones and dirt at him. 14 King David and the people who were traveling with him were very tired by the time they got to the place where people can walk across the Jordan River. But they were able to get a good rest there.

15 While that was happening, Absalom and all the Israelites who were supporting him had arrived in Jerusalem. Ahithophel had also arrived there. 16 Then David's friend Hushai came to Absalom and said, "May you, the king, live a long time!"

17 Absalom said to Hushai, "You have been a loyal friend of my father David for a long time. So I do not understand why you did not leave Jerusalem with him."

18 Hushai replied, "Yahweh has chosen you to be the king. So have all these people here, and so have all the other Israelites. So I will now be loyal to you and stay here in Jerusalem with you. 19 Besides, it makes sense for me to serve you. After all, you are his son. Just as I served in your father's royal court, in the same way, I will serve in your royal court."

20 Then Absalom said to Ahithophel, "What would you advise that we should do?"

21 Ahithophel replied, "Your father left some of his secondary wives in the palace to take care of it. I advise you to have sexual relations with them. When people throughout Israel hear that you have done that, they will realize that you will never be able to reconcile with your father. Then all of the Israelites who are supporting you will fight hard to make sure that you defeat him." 22 So they set up a tent for Absalom on the roof of the palace. Then Absalom had sexual relations in the tent with each of his father's secondary wives, one at a time. The Israelites in Jerusalem could see Absalom's officials bringing each secondary wife into the tent, and they could see Absalom going into the tent afterwards to have sexual relations with each one.

23 In those days, people did what Ahithophel recommended just as if God himself had recommended it. That was how David had regarded what Ahithophel recommended, and Absalom regarded it in that same way.

17 Then Ahithophel said to Absalom, "Please allow me to pick 12,000 of our best soldiers so that I can lead them tonight to chase David. 2 When we catch up to him, he will be tired from traveling and physically weak. When our soldiers appear, this will terrify him. The other people who are with him will run away *and not fight against us*. We will only need to kill the king. 3 After that, the others who left Jerusalem with him will return to the city and accept you as their king. If we just kill the man you want to catch, that will be enough to get all the others to come back. It will not be necessary to hurt anyone else." 4 Absalom and all the Israelite leaders who were with him thought that it would be good to do what Ahithophel had recommended.

5 But then Absalom said, "Ask Hushai to come and speak to us as well. We should find out whether he recommends anything different that we should consider." 6 When Hushai arrived, Absalom told him what Ahithophel had suggested. Then he asked Hushai, "What do you think we should do? If you do not think that we should do what Ahithophel advises, then tell us what you think we should do instead."

7 Hushai replied, "This time, what Ahithophel has suggested is not good advice." 8 He continued, "You know that your father and the men who are with him are elite soldiers. You know that they must be very angry, like a wild mother bear whose cubs someone has stolen from her. Furthermore, your father has fought in many battles*, so he knows what he should do now*. He will not spend the night with the crowd of people who left Jerusalem with him. 9 Right now he is probably already hiding in a cave or in some other safe place. If Ahithophel leads soldiers out to attack David's soldiers, David's soldiers will certainly kill some of them at the start of the battle. When people hear about that, they will say, 'David's soldiers are slaughtering Absalom's soldiers!' 10 Then your other soldiers, even if they are as fierce as lions, will become very afraid. After all, everyone in Israel knows that your father is a great soldier and that the soldiers who are with him are very brave.

11 So this is what I recommend. You should really summon the entire Israelite army. Have the solders come here even if they live as far away as Dan *in the far north* or Beersheba *in the far south*. You will have too many soldiers to count, like the grains of sand on the seashore. *Wait until they come, and then* you yourself should lead the army into battle. 12 We will find your father, wherever he is, and our great army will overwhelm his smaller army, just as dew covers the entire ground. Neither he nor any of the soldiers who are with him will survive. 13 If he decides to retreat into some city, all our soldiers will bring ropes to that city and pull it down into the valley below. As a result, not one stone will remain on top of the hill where that city was!"

14 Absalom and the other Israelite leaders who were with him decided, "What Hushai suggests is better than what Ahithophel suggested." Yahweh led them not to accept Ahithophel's advice, which actually would have been better for Absalom. As a result, Yahweh caused a great defeat for Absalom.

15 Then Hushai *went secretly and* told the two priests, Zadok and Abiathar, what both he and Ahithophel had suggested to Absalom and the Israelite leaders. 16 Then he said to them, "*There is still a risk that Absalom might decide to do what Ahithophel suggested, so* send a message quickly to David. Tell him not to stay overnight at the place where people can walk across the Jordan River. Instead, he and his soldiers must cross the Jordan River immediately. Otherwise, Absalom and his army may come and kill them."

17 The priests' two sons, Jonathan and Ahimaaz, were staying near En Rogel*, outside Jerusalem*. They did not dare to enter the city*, because if someone saw them, he would report it to Absalom*. Instead, they had arranged for a woman who served the two priests to come and report to them what was happening. They would then go and report it to King David. 18 But a young man saw them at En Rogel, and he went and reported this to Absalom. *They knew the young man had recognized them,* so both of them left quickly and went to the house of a man who lived in the city of Bahurim. That man had a well in his courtyard, and he let Jonathan and Ahimaaz go down into the well to hide. 19 The man's wife took a cloth and covered the opening of the well. Then she scattered grain on top of it *to make it look as if this was the place where she dried the grain in the sun*. As a result, it was not evident that there was a well beneath the cloth.

20 Some of Absalom's soldiers learned in what direction the
two men had gone. So they went *in that direction* and came to
the house *where they were hiding*. They asked the wife, "Where
are Ahimaaz and Jonathan?" She replied, "They went across
that stream over there." So the soldiers went in that direction
and searched for them. But they could not find them, so they
went back to Jerusalem.
21 After the soldiers had gone, the two men came out of
the well and went and reported to King David. They told
him, "Ahithophel has encouraged Absalom to attack you
immediately. So you must get all these people across the
Jordan River quickly!" 22 So David and all his soldiers quickly
started to cross the Jordan River, and by the next morning
they had all crossed to the other side.
23 When Ahithophel realized that Absalom was not going
to do what he had recommended, *he knew that David would
defeat Absalom, so* he put a saddle on his donkey and returned
home to his own city. He gave to his family instructions about
what to do with his possessions, and then he hanged himself
because he knew that otherwise David would kill him as a traitor.
People buried his body in the same tomb where people had
buried his father.
24 David and his soldiers arrived at Mahanaim. At the same
time, Absalom and all his soldiers also crossed the Jordan River.
25 Now Absalom had appointed Amasa to be the commander of
his army instead of Joab. Amasa was the son of an Israelite man
whose name was Ithra. Amasa's mother was Abigail. She was
the daughter of Nahash and the sister of Joab's mother Zeruiah.
26 Absalom and his Israelite soldiers set up their military camp
in the region of Gilead.
27 When David and his soldiers arrived at Mahanaim, Shobi
son of Nahash from the Ammonite city of Rabbah, Machir son
of Ammiel from the city of Lo Debar, and Barzillai from the
city of Rogelim in Gilead came to them. 28 They brought mats
for them to sleep on and bowls and clay pots that they could
use to prepare and serve food. They also brought wheat and
barley, as raw grains, as flour, and as roasted grains. They
also brought beans and lentils, some raw and some roasted.
29 They also brought honey, curds, sheep, and cow's cheese.
They knew that David and his soldiers would need to have
these things to eat because they would be hungry and thirsty
and tired from marching through a desolate area.

18 David organized his soldiers for the battle. He counted
them and then appointed someone to lead each group
of a hundred soldiers. He then appointed someone to lead
each group of one thousand soldiers *that contained ten groups
of a hundred soldiers*. 2 David then sent the soldiers out in
three divisions. Joab commanded one division, Joab's brother
Abishai commanded a second division, and Ittai from Gath
commanded the third division. Before they left, David told the
soldiers, "I will go with you personally into the battle."
3 But his soldiers said, "No, we will not permit you to come
into the battle with us. Even if they defeat us so that we all
run away, they will not care about us. Or even if they kill
half of us, they will not care about that either. There are ten
thousand soldiers like us*, but only one king like you*. So it would
be better for you to stay here inside the city of Mahanaim. You
can receive reports of the battle and send soldiers to where
we need them, and you can keep the city secure as a place to
which we can retreat if we need to."
4 The king replied to them, "Very well, I will do whatever
seems best to you." So he stood beside the city gate and
observed while his soldiers marched out in their groups of
hundreds and thousands.
5 As they were leaving, the king ordered Joab, Abishai, and
Ittai, "For my sake, do not harm that young man Absalom!"
All the soldiers heard David give this order about Absalom to
his three main commanders.
6 So David's soldiers went out to fight against the Israelite
soldiers who were supporting Absalom. They fought a battle in
the Forest of Ephraim. 7 David's soldiers won the battle there
against Absalom's soldiers. They badly defeated them that
day. They killed 20,000 of them. 8 The battle broke up into
small skirmishes all over that area. The number of Absalom's
soldiers who died that day because of accidents in the forest
was greater than the number of them whom David's soldiers
killed in the battle.
9 In the forest, Absalom suddenly noticed that some of
David's soldiers were near him. Absalom was riding on the
mule *that the Israelite king rode*. *To get away from David's soldiers,
he made the mule run away, and* the mule ran under the thick
branches of a large oak tree. Absalom's head got caught in the
branches. The mule he was riding kept going, and that left
Absalom dangling in the air.
10 One of David's soldiers saw what happened. He went and
told Joab, "Listen, I saw Absalom hanging in an oak tree!"
11 Joab said to the man, "Listen, when you saw him hanging
there, you should have killed him immediately! If you had
killed him, I would have rewarded you with ten pieces of silver
and a soldier's belt!"
12 The man replied to Joab, "Even if you gave me a thousand
pieces of silver, I would not do anything to harm the king's
son. I say this because we all heard the king command you and
Abishai and Ittai, 'For my sake, keep any soldier from hurting
that young man Absalom!' 13 If I had killed Absalom, I would
have put my own life in danger. *The king would have heard
about it, since* the king hears about everything. You would not
have protected me by saying I was obeying your orders*, and
the king would have executed me*."
14 Joab said, "I am not going to stay here and speak with
you any longer!" Then he got three spears and went to where
Absalom was. Absalom was still alive, dangling from the
branches of the oak tree. Joab thrust the spears into Absalom's
chest. 15 Then ten young men who carried Joab's weapons
gathered around Absalom, and they stabbed him repeatedly
to finish killing him.
16 Then Joab blew on his ram's horn to signal to his soldiers
that they should stop fighting. So his soldiers stopped chasing
Absalom's soldiers and came back *to their camp*. 17 They took
Absalom's body and threw it into a huge pit in the forest.
They covered it with a huge pile of stones. Meanwhile, all the
remaining Israelite soldiers who had been supporting Absalom
ran away back to their own homes.
18 (Absalom had no sons to preserve his family name *because
his sons had died while they were still young*. So while Absalom
was alive, he had built a monument in the Valley of Kings
near Jerusalem. He thought that if he did that, people would

remember him. He named the monument after himself, and people still call it Absalom's Monument.)

19 Ahimaaz son of Zadok said to Joab, "Allow me to run to King David and tell him the good news. I want to do this because Yahweh has shown that he wants David to remain as king, because he enabled his soldiers to defeat his enemies!"

20 But Joab said to him, "No, I will not allow you to run and tell this news to the king today. Some other day you may do that, but not today. I do not want you to bring to the king the news that his son is dead."

21 Then Joab said to the man from Ethiopia who ran carrying messages for him, "You go and tell the king what you have seen." So that man bowed respectfully to Joab *to show that he would obey* and started to run.

22 Then Ahimaaz said again to Joab, "However the king might respond to the news, even though your servant from Ethiopia has already left, please allow me to run too." Joab replied, "My boy, you should not want to do that! You will not receive any reward for your news!"

23 But Ahimaaz replied, "However the king might respond to the news, I want to go." So Joab said, "Very well, then, go." Ahimaaz ran on the flat ground through which the Jordan River flows and arrived where David was before the man from Ethiopia did *because he had run through hills and forests*.

24 David was sitting in the area between the inner and outer gate in the city wall. A watchman went up on top of the city wall and stood on the roof over the gates. As he was looking around, he suddenly noticed a lone runner. 25 The watchman called down and reported this to King David. David said, "If he is alone, that indicates that he is coming to tell us news." The man who was running continued to come closer.

26 Then the watchman saw another man running. So he called down to those below, "I see another man running alone!" And King David said, "He is also coming to tell us some news."

27 The watchman said, "The first man seems to be Ahimaaz son of Zadok. He is running the way Ahimaaz runs." The king said, "He must be coming to tell us good news, because Joab would not have sent someone like him to tell us bad news."

28 When Ahimaaz got close enough, he called out to King David, "All is well!" When he arrived, he knelt down in front of him with his face on the ground to show respect. Then he said, "Your Majesty, praise Yahweh your God, who made your soldiers defeat the men who were rebelling against you!"

29 King David asked, "Is the young man Absalom safe?" Ahimaaz *did not want to answer that question, so he* replied, "When Joab sent the man from Ethiopia and me to bring news to you, I saw that there was a lot of confusion, but I do not know what it was about."

30 So the king said, "Stand over there and wait." So Ahimaaz stepped aside and stood nearby.

31 Then the man from Ethiopia arrived. He said, "Your Majesty, I have some good news to share with you. Here it is. Today Yahweh has shown that he wants you to remain as king, because he has enabled your soldiers to defeat the enemies who rebelled against you!"

32 The king said to him, "Is the young man Absalom safe?" The man from Ethiopia replied, "Sir, I wish that what happened to him would happen to all of your enemies and to anyone who violently rebels against you!"

33 *Realizing that he meant that Absalom was dead,* David became extremely distressed. He went up to the room above the gateway and cried. As he was going up, he kept crying out, "O, my son Absalom! O, my dear son Absalom, I wish that I had died instead of you, Absalom, my dear son!"

19 Someone told Joab that the king was crying because he was so sad that Absalom had died. 2 All of David's soldiers heard that he was unhappy that their army had killed Absalom. So even though they had won the battle against Absalom's soldiers, they could not celebrate that day. 3 The soldiers came back into the city quietly that day, the way soldiers do so that no one will find out that they have run away from a battle. 4 The king covered his face *with part of his cloak*, and he kept crying loudly, "O, my son Absalom! Absalom, my dear son!"

5 Joab went to the house where the king was and told him, "Today your soldiers saved your life and the lives of your sons and daughters and wives and secondary wives. But you are making them feel shame for what they did! 6 You seem to love those who hate you and hate those who love you! It is as if you have said that you do not care about your own commanders and your soldiers. I can see that if Absalom were still alive and all of us were dead today, you would like that better. 7 So now you must go out and thank your soldiers for what they did. I swear by Yahweh that if you do not do that, they will all have abandoned you by tomorrow morning. Then you will be in more trouble than you have already had in your entire life!"

8 So the king went and sat at the city gate. People told the soldiers, "Look, the king is sitting at the gate!" So the soldiers came and gathered around him*, and he thanked them*. Meanwhile, all the remaining Israelite soldiers who had been supporting Absalom had run away back to their own homes.

9 Then people throughout the territory of Israel began to argue with each other about what they should do. Some of them said, "King David led our armies to defeat the Philistines and the other enemies who were oppressing us. But then he left Israel in order to escape from Absalom! 10 We appointed Absalom to be our king, but he died in the battle against David's soldiers. So we should do something to bring King David back!"

11 *King David learned what the people were saying,* so he sent the two priests, Zadok and Abiathar, to say to the leaders of Judah, "The king says that he has heard that the Israelite people want him to be king again. He says that you should not be the last ones to bring him back to his palace. 12 He says that you are his relatives. You and he have the same ancestor. So you should not be the last ones to bring him back!" 13 He also told them to say to Amasa, "You are one of my relatives. I swear that I am going to make you my army commander from now on instead of Joab. If I do not do that, then may God not make me the king again."

14 After David sent that message to them, the people of Judah agreed that he should be their king again. So they sent him a message that said, "We would like you and all your officials to come back." 15 So King David and his officials started back toward Jerusalem. When they arrived at *the eastern shore of* Jordan River, the leaders of the tribe of Judah met them.

They had come to Gilgal *on the western shore* to escort the king and his officials across the river.

16 Shimei son of Gera, that man from the tribe of Benjamin who lived in Bahurim, hurried to the river with the leaders of Judah to meet King David. 17 There were 1,000 men from the tribe of Benjamin who came with him. Ziba, the servant of Saul, also hurried to the Jordan River. He brought his 15 sons and 20 servants with him. Shimei and Ziba quickly waded across the river to meet King David *on the eastern shore*. 18 The elders of Judah then crossed the river at the place where people could walk across it so that they could escort King David and his officials back to the other side. They wanted to do whatever the king wanted. Shimei came and bowed down in front of David.

19 He said to the king, "Your Majesty, please forgive me for the terrible thing that I did on the day that you left Jerusalem. I hope that you will not punish me for it, and I hope that you will not continue to feel hostile toward me. 20 I acknowledge that I have sinned against you. But please consider that I have been first one from the northern tribes to come here today to welcome you back, Your Majesty."

21 But Abishai son of Zeruiah, told David, "Shimei cursed you, the man whom Yahweh appointed to be the king of Israel! So you should not forgive him. You should execute him for doing that!"

22 But David said, "I do not agree at all with what you two sons of Zeruiah want me to do. You are encouraging me to do something now that would not be good for me. I am not going to execute anyone in Israel today. I know confidently that the Israelites want me to be their king*, so I do not need to execute this man to make my reign more secure*." 23 Then King David told Shimei, "I promise that I will not execute you," and he swore an oath that he would not execute him.

24 Mephibosheth, Saul's grandson, also came to the Jordan River to welcome King David back. *To show his grief,* Mephibosheth had not cut his toenails or trimmed his mustache or washed his clothes from the time that the king left Jerusalem up to the time when he returned safely. 25 When he arrived from Jerusalem to welcome King David, he said to him, "Mephibosheth, why did you not go with me?"

26 He replied, "Your Majesty, *when I heard that you were leaving Jerusalem,* I told my servant Ziba, 'Saddle my donkey so that I can ride on it and go with the king.' But he deceived me *and left without me. I could not follow him,* because I am crippled. 27 He lied to you about me. But your Majesty, you are as wise as one of God's angels. So do whatever seems right to you. 28 I consider that all of my grandfather's family expected that you would execute us. But instead, you allowed me to eat my meals with your household! So I certainly do not have the right to ask you for anything further."

29 King David replied, "You do not need to say anything more. I have decided that you and Ziba will equally divide the land *that belonged to your grandfather Saul*."

30 Mephibosheth replied to the king, "Your Majesty, Ziba may have all of the land. All that matters to me is that you have returned safely."

31 Barzillai the Gileadite had come down to the Jordan River from his home in Rogelim to escort the king across the river. 32 By this time Barzillai was elderly. He was 80 years old. But he was such a wealthy man that he had been able to provide all of the food that the king and his soldiers needed while they were at Mahanaim. 33 The king said to Barzillai, "Come across the Jordan River with me to Jerusalem, and I will take care of you there."

34 But Barzillai replied, "I do not have many more years to live. So there is no reason for me to go with you to Jerusalem. 35 I am now 80 years old. I do not know what is enjoyable and what is not enjoyable. I cannot enjoy what I eat and what I drink. I cannot hear anymore the voices of men and women as they sing. You would have to make difficult arrangements for me. I do not want you to have to do that. 36 I will cross the Jordan River with you and walk a short distance with you toward Jerusalem. But you do not need to entertain me there in your royal court. 37 Instead, please allow me to return to my home. That is where I want to die, near my parents' grave *so people can bury me there*. But here is my son Chimham. Your Majesty, please allow him to go with you and serve you, and do for him whatever seems right to you."

38 The king replied, "Very well, Chimham may cross the river with me, and I will do for him whatever seems good to you. And I will also do for you whatever you want me to do."

39 Then the leaders of Judah and the people who had been with David honored him by leading the way across the Jordan River. David followed them across. He kissed Barzillai *on the cheek to show his affection and gratitude* and asked God to do good things for him. Then Barzillai returned to his home.

40 But Chimham stayed with King David as he continued on to Gilgal. Now the leaders of the tribe of Judah had escorted David across the Jordan River. But only some of the leaders of the other tribes arrived in time to do that with them*, since the leaders of Judah did not wait for them*.

41 Then, when the rest of the Israelite leaders arrived, they complained to David, "It was not fair for our fellow Israelites, those leaders from the tribe of Judah, to take you away from us! We all wanted to escort you and your family and your soldiers across the Jordan River. But they did that without waiting for us!"

42 The leaders from Judah told the leaders of the other tribes, "We escorted the king because he is from our tribe of Judah. You should not be angry about this. The king never paid for our food, and he never gave us any gifts."

43 The men of the other Israelite tribes replied, "We represent ten of the tribes that the Israelite king rules, and you represent only one. So you should not have treated us with disrespect *by bringing the king back across the Jordan River without us*. We were the first ones to talk about bringing David back to Jerusalem to be our king again." But the leaders of Judah angrily disagreed with the leaders of the other tribes of Israel.

20 There was a man there at Gilgal whose name was Sheba. He was the son of Bichri. He was a man who often caused trouble. He came from the tribe of Benjamin. He blew a ram's horn and called out, "David, that son of Jesse, does not belong to us at all! So, my fellow Israelites, let us return to our homes!"

2 Then the leaders of the Israelite tribes decided not to escort David back to Jerusalem. Instead, they did what Sheba had said *and returned to their homes*. But the leaders of the tribe of Judah remained with David. They still wanted him to be

their king. So they escorted him from near the Jordan River back to the city of Jerusalem.

3 When David arrived at the palace in Jerusalem, he took the ten secondary wives whom he had left there to take care of the palace and put them in another residence where someone guarded them. David provided what they needed, but he never had sexual relations with them again. It was as if they were widows, even though their husband was still alive. They had to stay in that residence until they died.

4 Then King David told Amasa, "Summon the soldiers of the tribe of Judah to come here by the day after tomorrow. You must be here also*, ready to lead them into battle*." 5 So Amasa went to summon the Judean soldiers. But he did not return within the time that David had specified.

6 Then David told Abishai, "*If we do not capture him quickly,* Sheba son of Bichri will hurt us even more than Absalom did. So I want you to take the soldiers who are already here with me and go to capture him. If you do not do that, we will no longer know where he is going. That would allow him and his soldiers to go into cities that have walls *and then it would be difficult to defeat them*." 7 So Abishai led those soldiers out of Jerusalem to pursue Sheba. They included Joab's personal guard, the king's elite bodyguards, and the men who had been David's army when he was in Gath.

8 When they arrived at the large rock that is in the region of Gibeah, Amasa met them*, leading a large army of Judean soldiers*. Joab was wearing armor for battle, and he had fastened a *short* sword in its sheath to his belt. He approached Amasa, and as he did, he made the sword fall out of its sheath into his hand.

9 Joab said to Amasa, "Hello, cousin! Are you doing well?" Then Joab grabbed Amasa's beard with his right hand so that he could kiss him *on the cheek as a friendly greeting*. 10 Amasa did not think that Joab would hurt him with the sword he was holding in his hand. But Joab thrust it into Amasa's belly, and his insides spilled out onto the ground. Amasa eventually died from this wound. Joab did not stab him again. Then Joab and his brother Abishai *and the soldiers they were leading* left and continued to pursue Sheba.

11 One of the young men who carried Joab's weapons stayed next to Amasa's body. He called out *to the Judean soldiers*, "Everyone who wants Joab to be our commander and who wants David to be our king, go with Joab *to capture Sheba*!" 12 Amasa *had fallen onto the road, and* he was rocking back and forth and bleeding severely *as he lay slowly dying*. Joab's soldier saw that the Judean soldiers were all stopping when they came to where Amasa was. So he dragged him off the road into a field and threw a cloth over him. 13 After that soldier took Amasa's body off the road, the other soldiers continued on and went with Joab to pursue Sheba.

14 Sheba fled north through the whole length of the territory of Israel and finally came to the city of Abel Beth Maacah. The soldiers of the Berites had formed their army and had also come north with Sheba as their commander. 15 Joab and the soldiers he was commanding *found out that Sheba had gone there, so they* went there and surrounded the city. They built a dirt ramp up against the outer wall of the city. Then they started battering the wall to try to make it collapse. 16 But a wise woman who lived in that city *stood on the top of the wall and* shouted, "Listen to me! Please ask Joab to come here, because I want to talk to him!" 17 So *they told Joab and* he came there, and the woman asked, "Are you Joab?" He replied, "Yes, I am." She said to him, "Please listen to what I say." He replied, "I am listening."

18 She said, "For a long time people have said, 'When people have problems, they ought to ask the people who live in the city of Abel what they should do.' By getting good advice here, they have solved their problems. 19 We who live in this city are peaceful and loyal Israelites. But you are trying to destroy our city. Many towns and villages in this area depend on us. You should not be trying to destroy a community that belongs to Yahweh!"

20 Joab replied, "I certainly do not want to destroy your city at all! 21 That is not what we want to do. But Sheba son of Bichri, a man from the hilly area where the people of the tribe of Ephraim live, is rebelling against King David. If you surrender only him to us, then we will go away from this city." The woman replied to Joab, "We agree. We will cut off his head and throw it over the wall to you."

22 Then this woman went to the leaders of the city and told them what she had said to Joab. *They agreed, and* they cut off Sheba's head and threw it over the wall to Joab. Then Joab blew his ram's horn *to signal that his soldiers should stop fighting*. They left that city and returned to their homes. Joab returned to Jerusalem and told King David what had happened.

23 *After David became king again,* Joab was the commander of the entire Israelite army. Benaiah son of Jehoiada was the commander of David's elite corps of bodyguards. 24 Adoniram supervised the men whom the king forced to work for him. Jehoshaphat son of Ahilud was the man who reported to the people everything that David decided. 25 Sheva was the official secretary. Zadok and Abiathar were the priests. 26 And Ira from the city of Jair was David's advisor.

21 During the time when David ruled, there was a famine in Israel continuously for three years. David asked Yahweh why this was happening. Yahweh told him, "*There is a famine to show that* you need to punish Saul's family because Saul killed so many people from the Gibeonite group."

2 So the king asked the leaders of Gibeon to come and speak with him. (The people of Gibeon were not Israelites. They were instead an Amorite people group that had survived *when the Israelites invaded the land of Canaan and killed the rest of the Amorites*. The Israelites had solemnly promised that they would not kill them. But Saul had tried to kill all of them because he eagerly wanted the people of Israel and Judah to be the only ones living in that land.) 3 David said to the Gibeonite leaders, "What can I do to make up for what Saul did to your people so that you would then ask Yahweh to do good things for us Israelites again?"

4 They replied, "You cannot make up for what Saul did to us by having his family pay us any amount of money. And we do not have the right to kill any Israelites." So David asked, "So what are you asking me to do for you?"

5 They replied, "That man Saul wanted to destroy us so that none of us would live anywhere in Israel. And he killed many of us. 6 Give us seven of Saul's descendants *and allow us to execute them*. We will *kill them and* hang up their bodies in public so that Yahweh can see that we have punished Saul's family for what he did. We will do this in the city of Gibeah where Saul lived. Yahweh chose him to be the king of Israel

and he should have protected us." The king replied, "Very well, I will give them to you *so that you can execute them*."

7 The king did not give Saul's grandson Mephibosheth to them. He was Jonathan's son, and David and Jonathan had made a solemn promise that they would never harm each other's descendants. They had sworn by Yahweh that they would keep that promise. 8 Instead, he took two sons whom Rizpah daughter of Aiah, had borne to Saul *as his secondary wife*. Their names were Armoni and Mephibosheth. David also took five of the sons of Merab, Saul's daughter. Merab's husband was Adriel son of Barzillai. He was from the city of Meholah. 9 David gave these men to the people of Gibeon *to execute*. They took those seven men to Gibeon and killed them and hanged their bodies up on the hill in that city. That was where people worshiped Yahweh and considered him to be present. The Gibeonites killed those seven men at the same time. Those men died at the beginning of the time of year when people harvest their grain, beginning with barley.

10 Then Rizpah took some rough cloth and hung it from a rock *near the bodies* so she could sit under it and have shade from the sun. She stayed there from the time that people started to harvest barley until the autumn rains began. She did not allow any birds to come near the corpses during the day, and she did not allow any wild animals to come near them during the night. 11 Someone told David what Rizpah daughter of Aiah, Saul's secondary wife, had done. 12 So he went *with some of his servants* to Jabesh Gilead, where the leaders of that city allowed him to take the bones of Saul and his son Jonathan. The soldiers from that city had gone stealthily at night and taken their bones from the plaza in the city of Beth Shan. That was where Philistine soldiers had hung them on the day when they had killed Saul *and Jonathan* on Mount Gilboa. 13 David *and his servants* took the bones of Saul and Jonathan. Some other servants also took the bones of the seven men whom the Gibeonites had hanged.

14 David's servants went to the tomb of Saul's father Kish, in the city of Zela in the land of the tribe of Benjamin. There they buried the bones of Saul and Jonathan *and the bones of the men whom the Gibeonites had hanged*. In this way, they did all that the king had commanded them to do. After the Gibeonites punished Saul's family for what he had done, God answered the Israelites' prayers for their land *and caused the famine to end*.

15 Later the Philistine army began to fight again against the army of Israel. David went with his soldiers to fight them. During the battle, David became tired. 16 One of the Philistine soldiers in the battle was a man whose name was Ishbi Benob. He was a giant as his ancestors had been. He carried a bronze spear that weighed almost three and a half kilograms. He also had a dangerous weapon. It seemed to him that he was going to be able to kill David. 17 But Abishai son of Zeruiah came to help David. He attacked the giant and killed him. Then David's soldiers made David promise that he would not go with them into a battle again. They said that if enemy soldiers killed him in battle, Israel would no longer have him as king to guide them.

18 Later, the Israelite soldiers fought another battle with the Philistines. This happened near Gob. During the battle, Sibbecai, from the clan of Hushah, killed Saph, who was a giant as his ancestors had been.

19 Later, the Israelite soldiers fought another battle with the Philistines near Gob. During that battle, Elhanan son of Jaare Oregim from Bethlehem killed Goliath from Gath. Goliath had a great spear whose shaft was very thick, like the bar on a weaver's loom.

20 Later, there was another battle near Gath. One of the Philistine soldiers was very tall. He had six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot. He was a giant as his ancestors had been. 21 He challenged any Israelite soldier to fight him in single combat. David's older brother Shimeah had a son whose name was Jonathan. Jonathan accepted the challenge, fought this Philistine soldier, and killed him.

22 Those four men lived in Gath and were giants as their ancestors had been. David and his soldiers fought them and killed them.

22 After Yahweh had rescued David from Saul and his other enemies, David sang a song to Yahweh. 2 This is what he sang: "Yahweh, you are like a huge rock or fortress *where I can go to be safe*. I can be confident that you will rescue me when I am in trouble. 3 Yahweh, you protect me. I am as safe as I would be if I were hiding on top of a cliff. It is as if you are a shield that defends me. You are the powerful God who saves me. You are like a high place where I find refuge. You save me from those who act violently toward me. 4 You deserve for people to praise you, Yahweh. When I cry to you *for help*, you rescue me from my enemies. 5 *Someone was trying to kill me, and* I was in such danger of dying that it was as if a huge wave was crashing over me. His wicked plans against me were like floodwaters that were carrying me away, and this made me very afraid. 6 I did not think I could escape going to the place where dead people go. It was as if that place had wrapped ropes around me and was pulling me down into it. It was as if the only direction I could walk was right into a trap where I would surely die. 7 But when I was very distressed, I cried out to you, Yahweh my God. From your temple in heaven you could hear me calling, and you listened to my prayer. 8 It made you so angry *that someone was trying to kill me, and you responded so powerfully,* that it was as if there was a great earthquake. It seemed as if the sky itself was shaking. 9 *Your power was so great that* it was as if there was a volcano from which smoke was rising, a stream of fire was flowing out that burned up everything in its path, and hot coals were flying into the air that started fires where they landed. 10 *Your power was so great* when you came *to help me that* it was as if there was a great thunderstorm, with only a little sky visible below the low-hanging dark clouds. 11 *You came very fast to help me, as if* you were riding on a creature that had wings. It was as if the strong winds *of a thunderstorm* were a bird that you were riding. 12 It was as if you had made the darkness of the storm a safe place for you to stay. Yes, it was as if you had a temporary shelter within the clouds that were full of water. 13 It was as if it became bright where you were within the clouds, and then lightning bolts came from there. 14 It was as if there was a loud sound of thunder in the sky because you, Yahweh, the God who is greater than all other gods, had spoken *to announce that you were coming to rescue me*. 15 It was as if you sent flashes of lightning that made my enemies so afraid that they ran away in different directions, as if you had shot arrows at them. 16 Then it was as if you shouted at my enemies *to tell*

them to stop trying to kill me. It was as if you blew away all the water that was covering the bottom of the ocean and all the ground that was over the deepest part of the earth. 17 It was as if you reached down from heaven and grabbed me so that you could pull me up out of the deep water of the ocean. 18 There was a powerful man who wanted to harm me, and there were people who hated me. They were too strong for me to defeat, but you rescued me from them. 19 They attacked me, and they would have destroyed me, but you, Yahweh, protected me. 20 You brought me to a place where I was safe. You love me, and so you rescued me. 21 Yahweh, you did good things for me because I did what was right. I did not harm my enemies, so you made sure that they did not harm me. 22 Yahweh, I have lived as you want people to live. I have not stopped obeying you, my God, and done wicked things instead. 23 I have remained aware of what you have said people should do, and I have continued to obey all your laws. 24 I have not done anything for which you would blame me. I have been careful not to do anything for which you would punish me. 25 You have done good things for me because I did what is right. You recognize that I am innocent. 26 When people are loyal to you, you act loyally toward them. When people are careful to do good things for others, you do good things for them. 27 You allow sincere people to recognize how sincere you are. But when people try to trick others, you show that you are much more clever than they are. 28 You rescue people whom others are afflicting. You are aware of people who are arrogant, and you humiliate them. 29 Yahweh, you are like a lamp that shines light so that I can see even when it is dark. 30 With your help I have caught and defeated a band of raiders. With your help I have captured a city that had walls around it, as if I had leaped over those walls. 31 My God, everything that you do is perfect. Everything that you say is right. You protect everyone who depends on you, as if you are a shield that defends them. 32 Yahweh, you are the only real God. Only you are like a huge rock *where I can go to be safe*. 33 My God, you are like a very secure place where I can go to hide from danger. You make sure that nothing prevents me from doing what you want me to do. 34 You enable me to walk about safely in the mountains, as a deer does, without falling. 35 You teach me how to fight in a battle. You give me the strength to bend *and string* a bronze bow. 36 You have saved me by protecting me like a shield, and by answering my prayers, you have enabled me to defeat my enemies. 37 You have given me many ways to respond to each situation. As a result, I have been able to carry out my plans successfully. 38 I chased my enemies and defeated them. I did not stop fighting them until I had killed them all. 39 I defeated them so completely that they had no army left. The ones who fell to the ground never got up, because they died of their wounds. 40 You have given me the strength and courage to fight battles. When people revolted against me, you enabled me to subdue them. 41 You enabled me to defeat my enemies and step in triumph on their necks. You gave me power over those who hated me so that I was able to destroy them. 42 They looked for someone to rescue them, but no one did. They cried out *for help* to you, Yahweh, but you did not help them. 43 I defeated them so completely that they were no longer any threat to me, no more than tiny particles of dust would be. It was as if I had flattened them smoothly on the ground like the mud on the streets. 44 You rescued me from the Israelites who tried to rebel against me. You preserved me as the ruler of many nations. Foreign people are now my subjects. 45 Foreign rulers fearfully bow down in front of me *to show their submission*. When they heard about what Yahweh enabled me to do, they obeyed me. 46 I defeat foreign armies that resist me so that they become weak, like a plant that dries up in the sun. They surrender and come out of their cities with walls shaking with weakness and fear. 47 Yahweh, you are the only real God! I praise you! You are like a huge rock *where I can go to be safe*! You are the powerful God who rescues me. Everyone should exalt you. 48 You are the God who enables me to conquer enemies who have attacked me. You cause the people of other nations to be subject to my rule. 49 You kept my enemies from capturing me. People rebelled against me, but it as if their armies had been floodwaters and you lifted me out of them to safety. You rescued me from men who tried to harm me. 50 Because of all this, I thank you, Yahweh, so that all people groups will know that you are the one who has helped me. I sing to praise you for what you have done that has made you famous. 51 You chose me to be king, and you have done great things to save me from my enemies. You faithfully show kindness to me, David, whom you anointed as king, and you will always show kindness faithfully to my descendants."

23 David son of Jesse was a man whom God caused to become great. The God whom the descendants of Jacob worship chose him to be the king of Israel. David wrote beautiful songs for the people of Israel. This is the last song that he wrote. 2 "The Spirit of Yahweh used me to say what he wanted to say. The message that I spoke came from him. 3 The God whom we Israelite people worship has spoken. The one who protects us Israelites said to me, 'Kings who rule fairly over people have great respect for me. 4 They are like the light that appears at dawn when the sun rises on a cloudless morning. The sunshine causes grass to sprout after the rain ends.' 5 And that is how God will surely bless my family, since he made a covenant with me that will last forever. He prepared that covenant carefully and guaranteed it. He will certainly act to help me and make the things happen that I truly want. 6 But God will remove all the people who disrespect him, just as people throw away thorns that hurt their hands when they try to pick them up. 7 Someone who wants to get rid of thornbushes does not grab them. Instead, he uses an iron shovel or a wooden stick to dig them out. Then he burns them right there."

8 Here is a description of David's greatest warriors. Three of them were the very greatest. Their leader was Josheb Basshebeth the Tahchemonite. HeonceHe fought and killed 800 enemy soldiers in a single battle.

9 The next of David's very greatest warriors was Eleazar son of Dodo, son of Ahohi. The Philistine army invaded Israel, and the Israelite army came to fight them. The *Philistines were winning the battle, so the* other Israelite soldiers retreated. 10 But Eleazar fought even harder against the Philistine soldiers until he had almost no strength left. He had held his sword so hard for so long that his hand cramped and he could not let go of his sword. Yahweh won a great victory for the Israelites on that day. The other Israelite soldiers only came back to the battlefield to take the armor from the Philistines whom Eleazar had killed.

11 The next of David's very greatest warriors was Shammah
son of Agee the Hararite. Once the Philistine army invaded
Israel and came to the city of Lehi, where there was a field of
ripe lentils *that they wanted to steal*. The other Israelite soldiers
ran away from the Philistine troops. 12 But Shammah stood in
the middle of the field. He fought and killed Philistine soldiers
so that they could not steal the lentils. And so Yahweh won a
great victory for the Israelites.
13 At the time when David was staying in the cave of
Adullam, three other men who were among his 30 greatest
warriors came to help him. It was summer. A group of Philistine
soldiers had set up their tents in the Valley of the Raphaites.
14 David was staying in the cave *because it was safe there*,
and another group of Philistine soldiers was occupying *his*
home town of Bethlehem. 15 One day David felt very thirsty.
He said, "If only someone would bring me some water from
the well near the gate of Bethlehem!" 16 So these three of
his greatest warriors fought their way through the camp of
Philistine soldiers at Bethlehem. They drew some water from
the well there and carried it back to David. But he refused to
drink it. Instead, he poured it out on the ground *as an offering*
to Yahweh. 17 He said, "Yahweh, it would certainly not be
right for me to drink this water! That would be like drinking
the blood of these men who were willing to die to get it for
me!" So he refused to drink it. That was one of the things that
those three of his greatest warriors did.
18 Abishai son of Zeruiah, Joab's younger brother, was the
leader of those three of David's greatest soldiers. He once
fought against 300 enemy soldiers and killed them all. As a
result, he became famous like the three very greatest soldiers.
19 He was the most famous of those three of David's greatest
soldiers, and he became their leader, although the three very
greatest warriors were even more famous.
20 Benaiah son of Jehoiada from the city of Kabzeel was
another of David's greatest soldiers. He won many great
victories. He killed two of the best warriors in the Moabite
army in single combat. He also went down into a pit on a snowy
day and killed a lion there. 21 He also killed a huge Egyptian
soldier. That soldier had a spear as a weapon. Benaiah had only
a thick wooden rod. But he attacked the soldier and pulled the
spear out of his hand. Then he killed him with his own spear.
22 Those are some of the things that Benaiah son of Jehoiada
did. As a result, he became famous as one of those three of
David's greatest warriors. 23 He was more famous than David's
other thirty greatest warriors, although the three very greatest
warriors were even more famous. David appointed him to be
the commander of his bodyguards. 24 These are the names of
David's greatest warriors: Asahel the brother of Joab; Elhanan
son of Dodo from Bethlehem; 25 Shammah the Harodite; Elika
the Harodite; 26 Helez the Paltite; Ira son of Ikkesh the Tekoite;
27 Abiezer the Anathothite; Mebunnai the Hushathite; 28 Zalmon
the Ahohite; Maharai the Netophathite; 29 Heleb son of Baanah
the Netophathite; Ithai son of Ribai from Gibeah in the territory
of Benjamin; 30 Benaiah the Pirathonite; Hiddai from the place
where streams flow through Gaash; 31 Abi Albon the Arbathite;
Azmaveth the Barhumite; 32 Eliahba the Shaalbonite; Jonathan
son of Jashen; 33 Shammah the Hararite; Ahiam son of Sharar
the Hararite; 34 Eliphelet son of Ahasbai son of the Maacathite;
Eliam son of Ahithophel the Gilonite; 35 Hezro the Carmelite;
Paarai the Arbite; 36 Igal son of Nathan from Zobah; Bani the
Gadite; 37 Zelek the Ammonite; Naharai the Beerothite, who
carried the weapons of Joab son of Zeruiah; 38 Ira the Ithrite;
Gareb the Ithrite; 39 and Uriah the Hittite. Altogether, these
were 37 of David's greatest warriors.

24 Yahweh was angry with the Israelite people again,
and he led David to do something that caused trouble
for them. David caused that trouble by saying, "Find out how
many soldiers Israel and Judah have."
2 King David said to Joab, the commander of his regular
army, "I want you to go with your officers through the territories
of all the tribes of Israel, from Dan *in the far north* to Beersheba
in the far south, and count the men who can fight as soldiers.
That way I will know how many Israelite men we have who
can fight as soldiers in the army."
3 But Joab replied to the king, "Your Majesty, I hope that
Yahweh our God will give us Israelites a hundred times more
soldiers than we have now. I hope that you will see this happen
in your own lifetime. But I do not think it is a good idea to
count how many soldiers we have."
4 But King David insisted that Joab do as he had said, and
he ordered the commanders of the army to do it. So they left
his court and went out to count the Israelite men who could
fight in war.
5 They crossed the Jordan River and set up their tents south
of Aroer, in the middle of the valley. From there they went
through the territory of the tribe of Gad, and from there they
went *north* to Jazer. 6 Then they went *north* to Gilead and to
the area of Tahtim Hodshi. Then they went to Dan Jaan *in the*
far north of Israel, and then they went *farther west* to Sidon.
7 Then they went south to Tyre, a city that had high walls
around it, and also to all the cities where some Hivites and
Canaanites still lived. Then they went to Beersheba, in the
desolate area in the southern part of the territory of Judah.
8 It took them nine months and 20 days to finish going
throughout the land *and counting the people*. After that, they
returned to Jerusalem.
9 They reported to King David the number of men that they
had counted. There were 800,000 men in Israel and 500,000
men in Judah who were fit to serve as soldiers in the army.
10 But after David's officers had counted the fighting men
of Israel, David felt very badly that he had told them to do
that. He confessed to Yahweh, "When I ordered them to do
that, I committed a very serious sin. Please forgive me. But
now, Yahweh, I admit that what I did was very foolish."
11 When David got up the next morning, Yahweh gave
a message to the prophet Gad. He was a man who helped
David know what God wanted him to do. Gad said to David,
12 "Go and tell David that I say he must choose one of three
punishments that I will describe. I will punish him with the
one that he chooses."
13 So Gad went to David and told him that Yahweh had
said he would need to choose one of three punishments. He
then told David, "You can choose for there to be seven years
of famine in Israel. You can choose for your enemies to keep
defeating you so badly over the course of three months that
your army keeps running away from them. Or you can choose
for there to be a plague here in Israel for three days. I will go
back and tell Yahweh your answer. So think carefully about
what you will choose."

14 David said to Gad, “All those are very terrible things for
me to choose between! But let Yahweh be the one to punish
me *with a plague*, since he is very merciful. Do not let humans
be the ones to punish me.”
15 So Yahweh sent a plague on the Israelite people. It started
that morning and continued for three days. Throughout the
territory of Israel there were 70,000 Israelites who died because
of the plague. 16 Then the angel who had killed all those people
lifted his hand toward the city of Jerusalem in order to cause
a plague that would kill many of the people who lived there.
But Yahweh grieved about punishing any more people, and
said to the angel “Put your hand back down *and do not cause
a plague in Jerusalem*!” When Yahweh said that, his angel was
standing near the place where Araunah the Jebusite threshed
grain.
17 When David saw the angel who was causing the people
to become sick and die, he spoke to Yahweh. He said, “Truly,
I am the one who has committed the sin. I have done a very
wicked thing, but these people are as innocent as sheep. They
have certainly not done anything that is wrong. So you should
punish me and my family, not these people!”
18 That day Gad came to David and told him, “Go to the
place where Araunah the Jebusite threshes grain and build an
altar to worship Yahweh there.” 19 So David did what Gad told
him to do, which was what Yahweh had commanded, and he
went there. 20 When Araunah looked down and saw the king
and his officials coming toward him, he came out of his house
and lay down on the ground in front of the king *to honor him*,
with his face touching the ground.
21 Araunah said, “Your Majesty, may I ask why you have
come to me?” David replied, “I have come to buy this ground
where you thresh grain. That way I can build an altar here to
Yahweh *and offer sacrifices on it* so that he will stop the plague
that has been killing so many Israelites.”
22 Araunah replied to David, “Your Majesty, please offer to
Yahweh whatever you wish. You may take the oxen that you
see here and use them for an offering that you burn completely
on the altar. And you may take their yokes and the boards that
I use for the threshing, which you also see here, and you may
use them for the wood that you will burn. 23 Your Majesty, I,
Araunah, hereby give all these things to you.” Then he said,
“I hope that Yahweh your God will accept your offering and
grant your request.”
24 But the king said to Araunah, “No, I will not accept these
things as a gift. I will pay you for them. I will not take things
that have cost me nothing and burn them completely on an
altar as offerings to Yahweh.” So David paid 50 shekels of
silver to Araunah for the oxen and the ground.
25 Then David built an altar there to Yahweh. He burned
the oxen completely on the altar as an offering. He also offered
fellowship sacrifices. Then Yahweh answered David’s prayers
for the people of his land, and he ended the plague that had
been killing so many Israelites.