



DAILY
B I B L E G U I D E

The Book of II Samuel

Days 98-105 of a Yearly Bible Reading Program

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Table of Contents

| | |
|-----------------------------------|----|
| Daily Bible Reading Plan | 6 |
| Welcome to the Book of II Samuel! | 7 |
| Chapter 1 Notes | 8 |
| Chapter 2 Notes | 9 |
| Chapter 3 Notes | 10 |
| Devotional Thoughts for Day 98 | 11 |
| Hymn for Day 98 | 11 |
| Chapter 4 Notes | 13 |
| Chapter 5 Notes | 14 |
| Chapter 6 Notes | 15 |
| Chapter 7 Notes | 16 |
| Devotional Thoughts for Day 99 | 17 |
| Hymn for Day 99 | 17 |
| Chapter 8 Notes | 19 |
| Chapter 9 Notes | 20 |
| Chapter 10 Notes | 21 |
| Chapter 11 Notes | 22 |
| Devotional Thoughts for Day 100 | 23 |
| Hymn for Day 100 | 23 |
| Chapter 12 Notes | 25 |
| Chapter 13 Notes | 26 |
| Chapter 14 Notes | 27 |
| Devotional Thoughts for Day 101 | 28 |
| Hymn for Day 101 | 28 |
| Chapter 15 Notes | 29 |
| Chapter 16 Notes | 30 |
| Chapter 17 Notes | 31 |
| Devotional Thoughts for Day 102 | 32 |

| | |
|---------------------------------|----|
| Hymn for Day 102 | 32 |
| Chapter 18 Notes | 33 |
| Chapter 19 Notes | 34 |
| Devotional Thoughts for Day 103 | 35 |
| Hymn for Day 103 | 35 |
| Chapter 20 Notes | 36 |
| Chapter 21 Notes | 37 |
| Chapter 22 Notes | 38 |
| Devotional Thoughts for Day 104 | 39 |
| Hymn for Day 104 | 39 |
| Chapter 23 Notes | 41 |
| Chapter 24 Notes | 42 |
| Devotional Thoughts for Day 105 | 43 |
| Hymn for Day 105 | 43 |

Daily Bible Reading Plan

| Day | Passage | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
|------------|-----------------|-------------------------------------|
| Day 98 | II Samuel 1-3 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Day 99 | II Samuel 4-7 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Day 100 | II Samuel 8-11 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Day 101 | II Samuel 12-14 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Day 102 | II Samuel 15-17 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Day 103 | II Samuel 18-19 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Day 104 | II Samuel 20-22 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Day 105 | II Samuel 23-24 | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Welcome to the Book of II Samuel!

The book of II (second) Samuel is largely the story of David's reign over Israel. It is an honest report of his life and rule. We will see its great highs and its terrible lows.

A few quick facts about II Samuel:

- Probably written by Nathan and/or Gad.
- It covers from David's reaction to Saul and Jonathan's deaths to David's sin in numbering the people, a period of about 38 years.
- A quick outline:
 - David's Triumphs – Chapters 1-10
 - David's Troubles – Chapters 11-21
 - David's Fading – Chapters 22-24
- Key events:
 - Moving the Ark to Jerusalem – Chapter 6
 - David and Mephibosheth – Chapter 9
 - David and Bathsheba – Chapters 11-12
 - Absalom's Rebellion – Chapters 14-19

Chapter 1 Notes

In this chapter David learns of Saul's death and mourns over him.

vs. 1-16 – David learns of Saul's death when an Amalekite arrives, claiming to have seen the dying Saul. His story is that he killed Saul and brought Saul's crown and bracelet as proof. This is not a contradiction of the account of Saul's death in I Samuel 31. This man is lying to try to gain favor with David. David pronounces him guilty by his own testimony and has him killed.

vs. 17-27 – David composes a lament for Saul and Jonathan. There is some confusion on vs. 18 regarding the word bow. Some see it is a name of the song ("the Song of the Bow") but there is little evidence that songs had titles in that manner this early in history. I think it is through this song and the impact of the defeat that David encourages greater uses of the bow in battle.

Chapter 2 Notes

In this chapter a civil war begins between the tribes with two rival kings.

vs. 1-7 – After Saul’s death, David is told by the Lord that it is time to return to his country and his people. The tribe of Judah anoints David as their king, not waiting for the other tribes to act. David’s first official act is to express his gratitude to the men of Jabeshgilead for their bravery and kindness in recovering Saul’s body.

vs. 8-11 – Saul’s general Abner works to make Saul’s son Ishbosheth (“man of shame”) king over the other tribes of Israel. There is a state of civil war between the tribes and the two rival kings for the next 7 ½ years.

vs. 12-16 – Ishbosheth’s forces clash with David’s forces, led by his nephew Joab (“who father is Jehovah”), at Gibeon. It seems that both sides have some reluctance to initiate a fight, so 12 men from each side meet in an opening skirmish to prime the bloodlust of the soldiers. It is a sad spectacle as the men have all been trained the same way, so each grabs the other’s head with one hand and strikes with their sword with the other. All 24 men perish in mere moments. The place is called Helkathhazzurim (“the field of rocks”), referring to the men who died without gaining or losing ground.

vs. 17-32 – As the men under Abner are retreating, Joab’s brother Asahel (“made by God”) gave chase to Abner. Abner thrusts backwards with the butt of his spear and struck his adversary down. The loss of Asahel slows the pursuit and allows Abner to establish a fortified position. Joab calls off the attack, but he does not forget that Abner killed his brother.

Chapter 3 Notes

In this chapter Abner attempts to change sides but is murdered by Joab.

vs. 1 – This is a snapshot view of the 7 ½ years when David only reigned over Judah. It was still a very difficult time for David, but better than being on the run from Saul.

vs. 2-5 – We pause to see David's growing family. His sons in order of birth are Amnon, Chileab, Absalom, and Adonijah. Chileab is thought to have died young since little is said about him other than noting his birth and existence. The other three sons will all cause David great heartache.

vs. 6-21 – Abner is the real power behind Ishbosheth, and everyone knows it. But Ishbosheth tires of it and call Abner out for his encroaching on royal prerogatives. Abner is enraged and decides to switch sides and go to David. David welcomes the opportunity to hopefully put an end to the civil war. David's request to open negotiations is the return of his first wife Michal, who had been given to another man after David went on the run.

vs. 22-39 – Joab returns from a battle to see David negotiating with Abner and is infuriated. Joab and Abishai murder Abner in cold blood in revenge for the death of their brother Asahel. David is quick to distance himself from the action and fully blames Joab. He mourns the death of Abner and the tribes of Israel take notice.

Devotional Thoughts for Day 98

David had to patiently trust God to keep him safe from Saul until the day he could be made king. Even with Saul's death there was not full realization of this. For over seven years he had to endure civil war until finally all the tribes united under him. The remarkable things about David during these times is that his patience never broke causing him to make terrible, rash decisions. He could have tried to conquer the other tribes, but he did not press the matter as he could have. We should so trust the Lord to work His will in His time. Even if it takes decades to come to fruition, it is worth trusting God and letting Him work.

Hymn for Day 98

Our hymn today is a metrical setting of David's lament over Saul and Jonathan. It is found in the 1742 "Psalms Hymns, and Spiritual Songs of the Old and New Testament" under the heading "David's mournful Elegy".

*19 Upon the places high is slain
The flow'r of Israel.
How are the mighty fallen down:
20 In Gath this never tell:
Nor shew't in streets of Askelon,
Lest Philistines rejoyce,
Lest daughters of th' uncircumcis'd
Should make triumphant noise.*

*21 Ye mountains high of Gilboah
Left there be never dew.
Nor rain, nor fields of offerings
Let ever be on you.
For there the mighty one his shield
Receiv'd disgraceful foil:
The shield of Saul, as he had not
Anointed been with oyl.*

*22 The bow of Jon'than did not turn
Back from the blood of slain,
From fat of mighty, and Saul's sword
Did not return in vain.*

*23 Most lovely Saul and Jonathan,
And pleasant did abide
Whilst they did live and in their death
Them nothing did divide*

*They swifter than the eagles were,
The lions did excell
24 In strength. O weep ye over Saul,
Daughters of Israel.
Who did in scarlet you array,
With deckings manifold,
Who did on your apparel lay
The ornaments of gold.*

*25 In midst of the fierce battle how,
The mighty fallen lie.
O Jonathan cut off wast thou,
Upon thy places high!
26 O thou my brother Jonathan,
I am diftress'd for thee
A loving dear companion
Thou hast been unto me.*

*Thy love to me in wonder past
The love of women far:
27 How are the mighty fallen, and waste
The weapons are of war!*

Chapter 4 Notes

In this chapter Ishbosheth is assassinated.

vs. 1-8 – Without Abner's support, Ishbosheth become the target of assassins. Two of his lieutenants murder him in hopes of ingratiating themselves with David.

vs. 9-12 - David has the assassins killed and honors Ishbosheth in death.

Chapter 5 Notes

In this chapter David establishes himself as king with a new capital and decisive victories against the Philistines.

vs. 1-5 – The tribes that had initially rejected David now come to him and make him king. Note that they acknowledge (1) that God had chosen David to be their king, (2) that he would care for them like a shepherd would his sheep, and (3) that he would be their military leader.

vs. 6-10 – Now that he is king over all Israel, David seeks a more central capital than Hebron, which was deep in Judah's territory. He decides upon Jerusalem ("the habitation of peace") and leads a campaign to take it from the Jebusites. In vs. 8 the Jebusites mock David saying that the blind and lame could keep him out of their fortified position. Those words are turned against them as a proverb when David and his men succeed in taking their position by attacking through the water chute. The parallel passage in I Chronicles 11 says that Joab was first in the attack and solidified his place as general

vs. 11-16 – Hiram of Tyre, which was on the Phoenician coast north of Israel, partners with David and helps him build a palace. David's family grows now that he is settled in Jerusalem. This list does look forward in time as it includes Solomon who will not be born for a few more years.

vs. 17-21 – The Philistines make an attack to try to dislodge David from his new, very defensible capital. The armies meet in the Valley of Rephaim ("giants") about three miles from Jerusalem. God intervenes and Israel wins a great victory. The location was then named Baalperazim ("master or possessor of breaches") because they had broken through and destroyed their enemy. It is of note that their enemy is so thoroughly routed that they discard their idols and leave them. David wisely does not keep these as trophies of war but instead burns them.

vs. 22-25 - The Philistines invaded again. David inquires of the Lord again, and God directs him to attack from the rear after God caused a stir in the trees. This must have caused a surprise attack or perhaps frightened the enemy before the attack came. Regardless, God aided them in the victory that day when they obeyed and patiently waited for His timing. The place of battle is Geba, which is a shortened version of Gibeah.

Chapter 6 Notes

In this chapter moves the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem

vs. 1-11 – Now that David has a secure capital, he seeks to move the Ark of the Covenant there. The Ark has been at Kirjathjearim since the Philistines returned it 74 years earlier. David does not seem to have inquired on how to move it properly. They try to move it on a cart like the Philistines did. Uzzah (“strength”) is killed for touching the Ark when trying to steady it. The Ark is left in the care of Obededom (“servant of Edom”), who is believed to be a Kohathite.

vs. 12-19 – David is more careful in his second attempt to move the Ark. It is carried properly by the priests. The way is filled with sacrifices and singing. David is seen in the midst leaping for joy and not wearing his royal garments. The Ark is placed in a special tent at Jerusalem. It will not be reunited with the Tabernacle, which sat at Gibeon.

vs. 20-23 – Michal harshly criticizes David for his actions and demeanor on this day. The root of her anger has more to do with David accomplishing something that her father could not. David has established himself as his own king, not Saul’s heir. Saul never cared for such spiritual matters.

Chapter 7 Notes

In this chapter David is denied permission to build the Temple but God gives him the Davidic Covenant.

vs. 1-11 – Deuteronomy 12:10-11 says that when Israel was settled in the Promised Land and at peace there that God would choose a central place of worship. David senses that the time has come, but God does not allow David to build the Temple. Had David built the Temple it would have seemed like a monument to him and not something built for God's glory.

vs. 12-17 – This is an extremely important passage. This is the Davidic Covenant, a series of promises made by God to David regarding his kingdom and his heirs. There are five key promises made: (1) David will have another child (Solomon) that will rule after him, (2) Solomon would build the Temple, (3) the throne would be established through Solomon, (4) God would not remove Solomon, even though he would deserve it, and (5) David's house (posterity), throne (regal line), and kingdom (rule or kingdom) would be established forever.

vs. 18-29 – David responds to God denying him the privilege of building the Temple by going before God in a wonderful prayer of submission and gratitude. David never felt slighted by God's refusal. Instead, he works to get things in order so that his future son may build the Temple.

Devotional Thoughts for Day 99

David was a great man, and one of the primary reasons is because he remained humbled. When his pride crept up he would get himself in trouble. Lesser men may have rebelled against God's prohibition in building the Temple, but David responds in humble praise. It is a great example for us to follow. God lifts up those who are humble.

Hymn for Day 99

Our hymn today, "The Riches of His Grace" by Charles Wesley, echoes David's words in II Samuel 7:18 – "Who am I, O Lord GOD? and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?"

*What am I, O Thou glorious God!
And what my father's house to Thee,
That Thou such mercies hast bestowed
On me, the chief of sinners, me!
I take the blessing from above,
And wonder at Thy boundless love.*

*Me in my blood Thy love passed by,
And stopped, my ruin to retrieve;
Wept o'er my soul Thy pitying eye,
Thy bowels yearned, and sounded Live!
Dying, I heard the welcome sound,
And pardon in Thy mercy found.*

*Honor, and might, and thanks, and praise,
I render to my pardoning God,
Extol the riches of Thy grace,
And spread Thy saving name abroad,
That only name to sinners giv'n,
Which lifts poor dying worms to Heav'n.*

*Jesus, I bless Thy gracious power,
And all within me shouts Thy name;
Thy name let every soul adore,
Thy power let every tongue proclaim;
Thy grace let every sinner know,
And find with me their heaven below.*

Chapter 8 Notes

In this chapter we have an overview of David's victories and administration.

vs. 1-14 – This section is an overview of David's military victories and expansion of territory. Much of this is done through defeating kingdoms and making them client states under David's rule. It is not the case that David swept the areas clean and Israelites settled in them. The area is vast, roughly the size of the territory promised to Abraham in Genesis 15:18. Of note in this discussion is vs. 2, where David sorts the conquered Moabites into three equal groups and kills 2 of those groups. One has to wonder if something had happened since David had placed his parents in the care of the Moabites in I Samuel 22:3-5. We simply do not know the motivation behind David's harsh actions singled out against them.

vs. 15-18 – One of David's greatest and most overlooked strengths is that of administration. Saul had a functional government, but David greatly expands the power and organization of the kingdom. Note that there are two high priests: Zadok ("the just") and Ahimelech ("brother of the king"). Zadok is a descendant of Aaron through his son Eleazar. Ahimelech is a descendant of Aaron through the line of Ithamar and is from the family of Eli. The Cherithites and Pelethites are David's personal bodyguard. The names are linked to the Philistines (I Samuel 30:14). It is unclear if these are Philistines or David's mighty men that had been with him in Philistia.

Chapter 9 Notes

In this chapter David finds and blesses Mephibosheth.

vs. 1-8 – David had sworn to Jonathan that he would not wipe out the house of Saul, as seen in such passages as I Samuel 20:14-17. Now that David is established in his rule, he seeks out someone from Jonathan’s family to bless. We first met Mephibosheth (“exterminator of shame; i.e., of idols.”) in I Samuel 4:4. He is a cripple that is hiding in Lodebar (“no pasture”), surely fearing the vengeance of the David. He is enough to have a son, who is named Micha (“who is like God?”). One of Saul’s old servants named Ziba (“post, statue”) points David to Mephibosheth. I think the reason Ziba did so was in hopes of gaining wealth or power through Mephibosheth, either as a reward or swooping up what he could if David killed him.

vs. 9-13 – What a wonderful picture of God’s grace that we see in David’s treatment of Mephibosheth. Instead of punishing or killing him, David brings him into the royal court. He gives him control of Saul’s former estates, which surely made him a very rich man. Ziba and his sons are appointed to serve his family. The lame man who feared the king’s vengeance is now part of the royal household.

Chapter 10 Notes

In this chapter a war against the Ammonites begins that will continue in the background through the end of Chapter 12.

vs. 1-5 – Once again we do not know all of the history behind what is happening. Nahash, the king of Ammon that Saul defeated at Jabeshgilead, has died. He had at some point aided David, probably because they shared a common enemy in Saul. David sends representatives to offer his respect to Ammonites on their loss and to begin good relations with the new king, Hunan (“favored”). Hunan suspects that the visitors are spies and humiliates them. The Ammonites shave off half their beards and cut their robes so short as to make modesty impossible. David is infuriated. He tells the ill-treated ambassadors to stay at Jericho until their beards grow back and their shame alleviated.

vs. 6-14 – The Ammonites realize their mistake and hire Syrian mercenaries to aid them. Joab is dispatched at the head of Israel’s army. In the day of battle, Israel is caught between the Ammonite forces on one side and the Syrian on the other. Joab takes the best men to fight the Syrians while his brother Abishai commands most of the force against the Ammonites. The fierceness of Joab’s attack drives the Syrians from the field, which the Ammonites see and go into retreat.

vs. 15-19 – The Syrians seek to regain their lost honor by attacking Israel. David defeats them at a place called Helam (“place of abundance”), which was somewhere between the Jordan and Euphrates Rivers. Despite these early victories, the war continues on. The Ammonites fortify themselves in their capital of Rabbah.

Chapter 11 Notes

In this chapter David commits adultery with Bathsheba and attempts to cover the sin.

vs. 1-5 – David’s pride gets him in trouble again. He stays home and does not go with his troops into battle, trusting Joab to finish the siege of Rabbah. David is tempted when he witnesses a woman bathing. His inquiries show that this is Bathsheba (“daughter of the oath”) was the wife of Uriah (“light of Jehovah”) the Hittite, one of David’s mighty men listed in II Samuel 23:39 and I Chronicles 11:41. Her father Eliam (“God’s people”) may have been one the mighty men also, if it is the same person as listed in II Samuel 23:34. Yet the connections do not stop there. If the Eliam of II Samuel 23:34 is her father, that will make her grandfather to be Ahithophel (“brother of foolishness”), one of David’s most trusted advisors (II Samuel 16:23). None of this stops him. He fetches Bathsheba to the palace and the two willfully commit adultery together. The act causes her to become pregnant with David’s child.

vs. 6-27 – Instead of confessing his sin and accepting the consequences, David attempts to hide it. He calls Uriah back from the battlefield, hoping that he will return home, and the child could be believed to be Uriah’s. Uriah does not cooperate with the plan, so David takes drastic measures. He plans the death of his faithful servant Uriah to cover his sin. Uriah returns to the battlefield unknowingly carrying his own death sentence. He is placed in the fiercest fighting then abandoned by the army. His death is reported back to David via messenger. David’s callous remark in vs. 25 exposes the coldness of his heart. After the appropriate time of mourning, David takes Bathsheba as his wife. Note the closing words of the chapter, “But the thing that David had done displeased the LORD.”

Devotional Thoughts for Day 100

Again I want to highlight David's pride. It was his wounded pride that caused him to go to war with Ammon. It was his pride that let him send his troops into battle without joining them. It was his pride that thought he could cover up his sin with Bathsheba. His son Solomon would later write, "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall." Even the best of men may fall, and so many are because pride crept in.

Hymn for Day 100

Our hymn today is "At the Table of the King" by Eliza E. Hewitt. It is inspired by Mephibosheth's story.

*I was starving in the desert
For a crumb of living bread,
When the Lord my wand'ring footsteps
To his own pavilion led.
Tho' the waves may roll around me,
Shadows to the hillside cling,
Yet I'm feasting, daily feasting,
At the table of the King.*

*Refrain:
At the table of the King,
I am feasting at the table of the King;
Of his goodness I am telling,
Of his wondrous love I'll sing.*

*I was wounded in the battle,
Crippled by the darts of sin,
But my Savior, in his mercy,
Brought his healing pow'r within;
For his uttermost salvation
Let unceasing praises ring,
While I'm feasting, daily feasting,
At the table of the King. [Refrain]*

*In his word there's full provision,
For his children, goodly fare;
Here are milk and wine and honey,
Every blessing I may share;
His bright banner floats above me,
Love its spicy sweets will bring,
While I'm feasting, daily feasting,
At the table of the King. [Refrain]*

Chapter 12 Notes

In this chapter David is confronted and repents of his sins.

vs. 1-14 – God sends the prophet Nathan to confront David for his sin with Bathsheba. He tells him a story first, of a rich man that stole a poor man's lamb. David's background as a shepherd likely made this extremely personal. David declares that whoever committed the crime would repay fourfold. Nathan then reveals that the guilty man was David, who stole another man's wife. David will be judged severely for his crimes. The child that Bathsheba carried will die and his family will be fractured and kingdom will be fractured moving forward.

vs. 15-23 – The child dies after a long illness, just as Nathan had said. David mourns while the child lives but once it passes, he begins to return to normal life. The servants are amazed. David reveals his faith that he would one day see that child again in the everlasting life that awaits every believer. Take note of vs. 23 because it is a powerful help for those that mourn.

vs. 24-25 – There is so much that could be said here that we must read between the lines. David has repented of his sin. We see this in his actions and the words he penned in Psalm 51. I believe he helps Bathsheba to repent also. They have a second child that they name Solomon ("peaceful") and Nathan names Jedidiah ("beloved of the Jehovah"). Every indication is that Solomon is marked to be the heir to the throne.

vs. 26-31 – While the drama with David and Bathsheba played out, Joab was in the field with the army besieging the Ammonites. Finally, the capital of Rabbah is ready to fall. Careful that the king would get the credit, Joab brings David to be present at the final assault. There is some confusion about the size of the king's crown in vs. 30. A talent of gold is about 75 pounds. I do not think this is literally the weight of the crown, but rather the value of the crown. We see this type of phrasing in these historical books fairly often. There was no system of coinage, so precious metals were weighed at each transaction. I think the value of the crown with its precious stones and design work make it worth one talent of gold. One last thing is the treatment of the Ammonite prisoners in vs. 31. More modern interpreters have tried to read this as if they put them to work as slaves. The literal and historic reading, which I believe is correct, is that David brutally slaughtered these prisoners. Here is an article I wrote about this:

<https://www.baptistbasics.org/2022/01/28/what-did-david-do-to-the-ammonites-in-ii-samuel-1231-and-i-chronicles-203/>

Chapter 13 Notes

In this chapter David fails to deal with Amnon's sin so Absalom does.

vs. 1-20 – Amnon (“faithful”) lusted for Tamar (“palm tree”), his half-sister and the full sister of Absalom (“father of peace”). Reese suggests the Amnon is 23 years old, Absalom 21, and Tamar 15. Amnon's “friend” Jonadab (“whom Jehovah impels”) hatches a plan that Amnon uses to rape Tamar. Tamar tries to resist and convince Amnon not to do it. She even suggests that David would give her to Amnon as wife if only he would ask for her, a situation expressly forbidden in Leviticus 18:9-11. Amnon's lust turns to hate and casts her from his house. Tamar is left to bear the shame of her brother's sin.

vs. 21-29 – David does nothing to punish Amnon's terrible crime. B.H. Carroll observes: “You will find that whenever you do wrong, it will make you more silent in your condemnation of wrong in others.” But Absalom would not sit idly by. He plots for two years and then murders Amnon.

vs. 30-39 – Note that David feared Absalom had killed all of the other princes. He surely believed it was possible. It is Jonadab's twisted mind that sees the scheme for what it is. Absalom flees to Geshur, a region east of the Sea of Galilee, where his maternal grandfather ruled (see 3:3). He remains there for three years.

Chapter 14 Notes

In this chapter Joab and Absalom scheme a reunion between David and Absalom.

vs. 1-24 – Joab senses that David did want Absalom to return so he takes it upon himself to facilitate it. Why he does so is a bit of mystery. He is usually brutal against those who go against David, so perhaps he thought Absalom would be the next king was trying to get in good favor with him. Joab takes inspiration from Nathan's rebuke of David and uses a widow from Tekoah to weave a story that would sway David's heart. The story is a good one. The old woman has two sons, which got into a fight, and one killed the other. Justice demanded that the murderer be put to death, but that would mean no heirs for her house. David's verdict that no harm should come to the living son is turned back on him as the woman praises him for deciding in such a merciful and God-like manner. It is then that David realizes what the ploy by Joab was and relents to have Absalom return to Jerusalem. Absalom is allowed to return but not to be in the royal court or in the presence of David. This goes on for two years.

vs. 25-27 – Absalom looked like a king. His physical appearance and his personality drew admirers. It is noted here that he is hair "weighed" 200 shekels (5 pounds). I believe this is another case where the word is not literal weight but value, saying that his hair was valued at 200 shekels (~\$6,200).

vs. 28-33 – Joab was content with his part in bringing Absalom to Jerusalem but refused to aid any further. Absalom burns Joab's barley fields to get his attention. Joab speaks to David and David finally reunites with Absalom after not seeing him for five years.

Devotional Thoughts for Day 101

Paul wrote that “the wages of sin is death”. James wrote that “sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.” We tend to think of these in spiritual terms, that sin causes us to go to hell and miss Heaven. I think there is a far more practical application. Sin is a deadly poison. It is not satisfied with hindering or delaying. It brings about destruction. Look here at the fallout from David and Bathsheba’s sin. Their child is dead. Tamar is raped and never marries. Amnon is dead. Absalom will be dead soon. It is a bitter and deadly harvest that springs when we sow the seeds of sin.

Hymn for Day 101

Today’s hymn is an obscure text by Charles Wesley that has been published under the title of “Death of a Child”. It is heavily influenced by David’s response to the loss of his child with Bathsheba. It is not the usual topic for a hymn but a very necessary one to aid us in our struggles of life.

*Wherefore should I make my moan,
Now the darling child is dead?
He to early rest is gone,
He to paradise is fled;
I shall go to him, but he
Never shall return to me.*

*God forbids his longer stay,
God recalls the precious loan,
God hath taken him away,
From my bosom to His own;
Surely what He wills is best,
Happy in His will I rest.*

*Faith cries out, "It is the Lord!
Let Him do as seems Him good";
Be Thy holy name adored,
Take the gift awhile bestowed;
Take the child, no longer mine,
Thine he is, forever Thine.*

Chapter 15 Notes

In this chapter Absalom begins his rebellion against David.

vs. 1-6 – Absalom begins his plot to seize the throne in earnest. He moves about with great pomp and fanfare with chariots and runners. He involves himself in matters of civil judgment while planting seeds of doubt about David’s abilities. He honored those that honored him.

vs. 7-12 – The time marker of 40 years in vs. 7 is often misunderstood assumed to be an error and changed to 4. Reese says at this time Absalom is 27 and David is 59. I think the 40 years is the time that David held the hearts of the people from I Samuel 18:16 to II Samuel 15:6. I wrote an article detailing this -

<https://www.baptistbasics.org/2022/02/10/ii-samuel-157-forty-years-or-four-years/> - if anyone is interested. Absalom decides that the time has come and readies to proclaim himself king. We also note that Ahithophel, David’s counselor and grandfather of Bathsheba, is one of the conspirators.

vs. 13-18 – David does not confront Absalom head on. He retreats from Jerusalem, taking his family and those loyal to him.

vs. 19-37 - David’s escape across the Jordan River is marked by many episodes where he interacts with various people. The first is Ittai (“with the Lord”), a Philistine mercenary, who with his men willingly choose to follow David. The second is Zadok the High Priest, who arrives carrying the Ark. David sends them back with instructions that Zadok should signal him when it was safe to return (vs. 28). The third is Hushai (“hasting”), who is sent back as a spy to counter the counsels of Ahithophel.

Chapter 16 Notes

In this chapter David continues his flight and Absalom takes Jerusalem.

vs. 1-14 – We continue from the previous chapter the various encounters David had as he flees Jerusalem. The fourth encounter is Ziba, the servant of Mephibosheth. He comes bearing gifts with a story that his master stayed behind in hopes of taking the kingdom for himself. It is a rather absurd story if considered thoughtfully and it appears to me that Ziba is seeking to profit in the situation. David carelessly says that Ziba can have all of Mephibosheth's properties. The fifth is Shimei ("renowned"), a kinsman of Saul that uses the opportunity to curse David while he is at such a low point. The sixth is Abishai, Joab's brother, who helpfully offers to kill Shimei. David refuses his offer.

vs. 15-23 – Absalom marches into Jerusalem and takes the capital without a fight. Hushai is able to convince Absalom that he is turned against David and is welcomed into Absalom's inner circle. Ahithophel advises Absalom to take a drastic and evil action (Leviticus 18:8, 20:11) in publicly claiming the ten concubines David had left as his own wives. This act made reconciliation impossible.

Chapter 17 Notes

In this chapter Ahithophel's plans are defeated which allows David to escape and prepare the battle ahead.

vs. 1-14 – Ahithophel enters with a plan to defeat David by quickly striking him with a small force of 12,000 men. This tactic would not allow David time to regroup his supporters or seek refuge in a defensible position. This plan would have likely worked in defeating David and establishing Absalom as the king. Note in verses 4 that “all the elders of Israel” support the plan. This shows how widespread Absalom's rebellion is. Hushai had been left behind in Jerusalem for just such a situation and is able to appeal to Absalom's pride. Absalom is swayed by the thought of himself riding at the front of a large army to defeat his father. This plan allowed David more time to escape and the ability to decide when and how he would counter Absalom.

vs. 15-22 – Hushai sends word to the high priests Zadok and Abiathar so they can warn David. Their sons Jonathan and Ahimaaz are sent with the message and narrowly escape capture at Bahurim (“low ground”). They hid in a camouflaged well to escape Absalom's men. Once David receives their message, he springs into action and crossed over Jordan to put more distance between Absalom and himself.

vs. 23 – Ahithophel could anticipate the outcome of following Hushai's advice. He knew David would be allowed time to escape and his forces would be able to defeat the prideful Absalom. Seeing the sureness of David's victory, he commits suicide rather than being captured by David. It may be observed that there are some parallels between Ahithophel and Judas Iscariot. Both betrayed their masters, and both hung themselves. Some believe that Psalms 41:9 and 55:12-13, which speak prophetically of Judas, speak of Ahithophel in their primary application.

vs. 24-29 - David makes camp near Mahanaim on the east side of Jordan. Absalom gathers his forces and crosses over in pursuit. Amasa (“a burden”), who is made the general over the armies of Absalom. Amasa's lineage is difficult to unpack, but do take note that he is related to Joab and that makes him also related to David. Three allies come to David's aid with much needed supplies. Shobi (“glorious”) appears to be the son of the Ammonite king Nahash, brother of the deposed king Hanun. Machir (“sold”) is the man who had cared for Mephibosheth (II Samuel 9:5), perhaps here repaying David's kindness toward Mephibosheth. Barzillai (“iron, that is strong”) will have his kindness to David repaid by Solomon.

Devotional Thoughts for Day 102

Why did David allow Absalom to steal the hearts of the people and the throne? Some speculate that his health is already failing (he only lives about 10 more years). I think there are two reasons. First, because David understood the true cause of the calamity was his own failures. You can trace this rebellion directly to David's sin with Bathsheba. Second, that because it was so personal to David he felt he had no moral high ground to discipline Absalom. Rarely do we weigh the true consequences of our actions or count the people that will be affected.

Hymn for Day 102

Our hymn today is a short verse written by Charles Wesley. It is based on David's flight and his abuse at the hands of Shimei. It challenged us to regard such attacks as not targeted at us, but at the Lord as they truly are.

*Lord, I adore thy righteous will,
Thro' every instrument of ill
My Father's goodness see,
Accept the complicated wrong
Of Shimei's hand, and Shimei's tongue,
As kind rebukes from thee.*

Chapter 18 Notes

In this chapter Absalom is defeated and killed in battle.

vs. 1-5 – David’s battle plan revolves around dividing his forces into thirds under independent commands of Joab, Abishai, and Ittai. He is prevented from going to battle himself by his generals. David is getting older now and not in his prime. He likely would have been the sole target of attack for Absalom, so removing him from the field may have given them a tactical edge. David’s one request, heard by all the people, was that Absalom should be shown mercy.

vs. 6-8 – The name of the battlefield likely comes from an earlier battle there in Judges 12:4. The terrain was forested, hilly, and with many pits and crevices. From a tactical standpoint, the divided command of David’s army was better able to deal with the confusion of the battle than the unified command of Absalom’s forces under Amasa. Verse 8 appears to refer to the confused retreat through the woods as Absalom was driven from the field.

vs. 9-18 – It is common today to say that Absalom’s hair caught in the tree. Go back and read vs. 9 carefully. His head is what is caught, not specifically his hair. The reason for this misunderstanding is that his hair was mentioned before. One of David’s men reports to Joab the situation of Absalom. Joab remarks that he would have given him ten shekels (roughly four ounces) of silver if he would have killed him. The man responds that he would not do it for a thousand shekels (roughly twenty-five pounds of silver!). Joab acts quickly before anyone can intervene and strikes him three times with “darts”, which may have been nothing more than pointed sticks. Absalom still lived, though likely mortally wounded. Joab’s men finish him off. Joab signals for his forces to cease their pursuit of the fleeing enemy. The victory was won with the death of Absalom. His manner of death was shameful (Deuteronomy 21:23) and his burial seems to be also, reminiscent of the punishment of a rebellious son (Deuteronomy 21:21). Mention is made of a monument in vs. 18 that Absalom had erected in his lifetime to leave a legacy. Never did he consider his true legacy that he left behind!

vs. 19-33 - The story of how Ahimaaz and Cushai bear the message to David would almost be comical if in another setting. Ahimaaz left second, without instructions on delivering the news about Absalom, but arrives first. David hears of the victory from him. Cushai then arrives, with the additional message that Absalom had been killed. David’s grief overshadows the victory of the battle.

Chapter 19 Notes

In this chapter David works to restore the kingdom after Absalom's defeat.

vs. 1-8 – David's mourning affects the morale of his men. Instead of celebrating the victory, they mourn it as a loss. It takes a stern word from Joab for him to end his mourning. Thus ends the rebellion of Absalom.

vs. 9-10 – There is uncertainty about David returning. The people remember the good that he has done for them. Now that Absalom was dead, do they bring David back or seek another?

vs. 11-40 – David makes overtures to his own tribe of Judah, who also seems hesitant to bring David back. Zadok and Abiathar are sent as his emissaries to sway the people and to court Amasa to join him as general, replacing Joab. Judah is moved and David is greeted warmly on his return. Notice that David's actions are not that of a strong monarch here. He is instead cautious and careful of his actions as he comes back across Jordan. Shimei, the kinsmen of Saul that had cursed David on his flight from Jerusalem, seeks forgiveness. Abishai wants to kill him, but David spares him, for now at least. I believe David mishandles the case of Mephibosheth. I think Ziba's accusations were not true. David did not dispense justice in this case, merely a reset to the way it was before. All that David did for Mephibosheth was revoke the order of 16:4 and restore the agreement of 9:10. Ziba's plot to usurp his master fails, but he faces no punishment for his actions. David rewards Barzillai for his support, apparently giving his son Chimham an estate (see Jeremiah 41:17).

vs. 41-43 - The Northern tribes appear to feel slighted in Judah acting alone in reaccepting David and transporting him to Jerusalem. The growing political division that will rupture in about 50 years' time is apparent here. The kingdom is far from united.

Devotional Thoughts for Day 103

Again, I must emphasize the long range results of sin. David's sin with Bathsheba has brought the deaths of three sons (the baby, Amnon, and Absalom). It brought the humiliation of his daughter Tamar. It nearly cost him his kingdom in Absalom's rebellion. It will cast a shadow over the remaining ten years of his reign. Then we also not the widening divide between Judah and the other tribes which will cause the kingdom to split in 50 years. Sadly, we are not done with the fallout. It is a cautionary tale for us all. Even the greatest of men – even those mightily used by God – pay high costs for their sins. “Be sure your sin will find you out.”

Hymn for Day 103

Our hymn today is a text from the Sacred Harp tradition. This form of singing gained popularity in the United States in the 1800's using a shape note system to make it easy to learn. “David's Lamentation” is found in two of the most influential songbooks of this genre, The Sacred Harp and William Walker's Southern Harmony. It was originally written by William Billings in in the 1770's. To really appreciate this style of singing with its use of solfege, I would highly recommend you watch a video such as this:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wslI4dulUjg>

*David the king was grieved and moved;
He went to his chamber, his chamber, and wept;
And as he went, he wept and said,
O my son! O my son!
Would to God I had died,
Would to God I had died,
For thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!*

Chapter 20 Notes

vs. 1-3 – Before David can even return to Jerusalem, a wicked man named Sheba (“an oath, seven”) leads a revolt of the northern tribes against David. Because Sheba is a Benjaminite, we assume some jealousy at the loss of the throne from Benjamin to Judah. Judah remains faithful to David. Included as a side note in vs. 3, David cares for the concubines that Absalom defiled. These are taken care of for the rest of their lives but are no longer concubines to David.

vs. 4-13 – David tasks Amasa, not Joab, with quelling the revolt. Joab appears to have lost favor because of his killing Absalom. When Amasa delays, David again bypasses Joab by sending Abishai. Joab does not sit idly by but goes with David’s bodyguard and his mighty men to join the other forces. Joab had not forgotten the slight against him when David replaced him with Amasa. That is deepened in that Amasa had been with the enemy before David’s return. Joab makes a show of stumbling and losing his sword. When Amasa draws near Joab makes as if to greet him but instead kills him. Joab then asserts himself as commander.

vs. 14-22 – Joab besieges the stronghold of Abel (“breath”)²⁵ on the far north of Israel in the territory belonging to Naphtali. There Sheba has gathered his supporters to make a stand against David. Joab works to overcome the city’s defenses. There appears to be a trench or moat that he fills to cross. He then begins battering the walls. There was a “wise woman” in the city, perhaps the only inhabitant that had any sense in the situation. She appeals to the city’s reputation as a place where wisdom could be found and asks if Joab truly desired to destroy the city of his fellow Israelites. Joab replies that all he wants is Sheba. The woman promises his head and delivers it. Joab leads his forces back to Jerusalem,

vs. 23-26 - We last saw David’s administrators in Chapter 8, about 20 years before this. Joab is still over the military and Benaiah over the bodyguard. Jehoshaphat is still the recorder. Zadok is still high priest but is now paired with Abiathar instead of Ahimelech. A new office appears here over the tribute received by David, filled by Adoram. Ira is the “chief ruler”, replacing David’s sons in that role.

Chapter 21 Notes

In this chapter, one of the strangest in the Bible, David brings justice to the Gibeonites.

vs. 1-11 – After a three-year famine, it is revealed that the cause is a lack of justice against Saul's house for crimes against the Gibeonites. The Gibeonites were descendants of the Amorite people that tricked Joshua into a peace treaty (Joshua 9). They became slaves to Israel, were support staff for the Tabernacle (Joshua 9:27) and settled with Benjamin (Joshua 21:17). When Saul killed the Gibeonites in violation of the treaty of Joshua 9 is not known. The best assumption is they were killed during the attack on Nob in I Samuel 22:17-19 roughly 40 years before. To make restitution for the crimes of Saul, the Gibeonites request that seven men of Saul's family be slain. They would be killed and then "hung" in shame as a sign of the reproach of Saul's house. This appears to go against the principle of Deuteronomy 24:16 that children should not be put to death for the sins of their fathers. David spares Mephibosheth from this fate, but delivers two sons of Rizpah, Saul's concubine, and five of his Merab, Saul's daughter, which were been raised by Michal. These were executed by the Gibeonites in the spring and left hanging from spring to fall. Rizpah showed her motherly devotion by watching over the remains

vs. 12-14 – David appears to have been moved by Rizpah's devotion. He buries the remains of the seven hanged by Saul, along with the remains with remains of Saul and Jonathan, in the family tomb of Kish.

vs. 15-22 - The Philistines make another offensive against Israel. David is almost slain in battle by a giant named Ishbibenob ("he that dwells at Nob"), who had a spear weighing 7½ pounds.³⁵ Abishai comes to his aid and slays the giant. David is now 64 years old and the trials of his life have taken their toll. However, his men follow in the footsteps of their leader and become giant killers themselves. Joining Abishai in those ranks are Sibbechai ("a weaver") who slew the giant Saph ("tall"), Elhanan ("the grace of God") who slew the brother of Goliath named Lahmi ("warrior"), and Jonathan who slew the giant with 12 fingers and 12 toes.

Chapter 22 Notes

In this chapter we have one of David's greatest psalms.

vs. 1 - This chapter is essentially identical in content to Psalm 18. The differences between the two are almost all minor wording changes that practically never affect the meaning of the phrases. The appearance of this Psalm does not appear to be chronological. Reese places the writing of this Psalm to when David sought refuge in Gath in I Samuel 27:2-4. Spurgeon writes that the two appearances of this Psalm "suggests the idea that it was sung by David at different times when he reviewed his own remarkable history, and observed the gracious hand of God in it all." Why is this psalm included here? We are coming into the final few years of David's life and chapters 22 and 23 are largely retrospective. Of all the psalms to include, this one must have had special meaning to David. I think we can assume it was something of a "theme song" to his life, written in his youth while running from Saul and repeated many times over the course of his reign.

vs. 2-7 – The first section of this psalm sees David in distress. God is his refuge and God responds to his cry for aid.

vs. 8-20 – The second section of this psalm is God in action. Note the poetic descriptions of God's might and power. It reminds of us of the "shock and awe" military tactic that completely overwhelms the enemy. Through this display of God's strength, David is rescued and secured.

vs. 21-31 – The third section of this psalm is an examination of David's character and God's response to it. David claims righteousness in his actions on the basis that he was faithfully obeying God. His faith is recognized and rewarded by God.

vs. 32-46 – The fourth section of this psalm is David in victory. Not only has God delivered him from certain doom, but now David is empowered to conquer his foes.

vs. 47-51 – The fifth section of this psalm is David praising God. It is the natural and proper response to seeing God act that we should pour out His praises in thanksgiving.

Devotional Thoughts for Day 104

Though David's physical and political strength have both weakened, his faith in God has not. The man may have been wounded and even broken, but God remained ever faithful. This is one of the keys to understanding David's success. Though he could fall, he always sought God through repentance. Though we may fail, God never will. Trust in His strength and His care.

Hymn for Day 104

Our hymn today is "Thee Will I Love". It was originally written in German in 1657 by Johann Shefler under the pen name of Angelus Silesius. This translation is by John Wesley and appears in early Methodist hymnbooks.

*Thee will I love, my strength, my tow'r,
Thee will I love, my joy, my crown;
Thee will I love with all my pow'r,
In all my works, and thee alone.
Thee will I love, till the pure fire
Fill my whole soul with chaste desire.*

*Ah! why did I so late thee know,
Thee, lovelier than the sons of men?
Ah! why did I no sooner go
To thee, the only ease in pain?
Asham'd I sigh and inly mourn,
That I so late to thee did turn.*

*In darkness willingly I stray'd;
I sought thee, yet from thee I rov'd;
Far wide my wand'ring thoughts were spread,
Thy creatures more than thee I lov'd;
And now if more at length I see,
'Tis thro' thy light and comes from thee.*

*I thank thee, uncreated Sun,
That thy bright beams on me have shin'd:
I thank thee, who hast overthrown
My foes, and heal'd my wounded mind;
I thank thee, whose enliv'ning voice,
Bids my freed heart in thee rejoice.*

*Uphold me in the doubtful race,
Nor suffer me again to stray;
Strengthen my feet, with steady pace,
Still to press forward in thy way;
My soul and flesh, O Lord of might!
Fill, satiate with thy heav'nly light!*

Chapter 23 Notes

In this chapter we find David's last song and the roster of his mighty men.

vs. 1-7 – The “last words” of David here are not to be understood as his final words before he died, but rather as the last psalm he composed. I divide this into five sections: the Great Power of God (vs. 1-2), the Great Standard of Rule (vs. 3), the Great Kingdom to Come (vs. 4), the Great Covenant with David (vs. 5), the Great Judgment of Evil (vs. 6-7).

vs. 8-39 – Here is a roster of the mighty men that served under David. The exploits of these warriors are legendary. 37 are on the roster, and here 36 are given by name. The one excluded seems to be Joab. The list is repeated in I Chronicles 11 with some additional names which were probably replacements for those that retired or perhaps even killed.

Chapter 24 Notes

In this chapter David commits sin by numbering the people.

vs. 1-9 – What occurs here is a military census. David is attempting to see how many men can be mustered in the day of battle so that the strength of the nation can be measured. Until these days the Israelites simply blew the call to arms and whoever was willing and able gathered for battle. That plan required faith that God would provide the necessary forces for war. But if you knew how many men you could expect or force to muster, then you begin to trust in your army and not in God. Why was this census a sin? The taking of a census was not in itself sinful, as God commanded two in Numbers 1 and 26. Josephus wrote that it was because David forgot to have the people pay the half-shekel tax associated with taking a census in Exodus 30:11-16, but the sin does appear to be in how the numbering took place but rather in that it took place at all. The best explanation is that it was an expression of David's pride and lack of faith in God. But how does this census show David's pride and unbelief? Pride is easy to picture, since David could very well just want to see how large his kingdom was. I suspect David felt guilty initially but did not fully repent until he witnessed the judgment because he made no effort to pay a personal price (sacrifice) until then.

vs. 10-14 – I admittedly have a different opinion on this section than most others. I do not think that David truly repents in vs. 10. I think he knows he has sinned and carries a guilty conscience. Yet he does not place himself at God's mercy, he only asks that his iniquity be removed. There are echoes in here of when the prophet Nathan confronted David over his sin with Bathsheba. Then and now, David does not seek the prophet, instead the prophet seeks him. Then and now, David makes a choice that affects the judgment he will face. Then and now, it takes judgment to come before he fully turns back to God. David's choice of punishment is to subject his nation – his people – to three days of deadly pestilence. Note that all the punishments affect the nation and not just David. David is not the only one that needs correction.

vs. 15-25 – David finally repents fully after 70,000 people are dead and the judgment is on his doorstep. David purchases the threshing floor and implements thereof from Araunah ("ark"). Verse 24 is a tremendous principle: we do not truly offer anything to God except that which costs us something. That threshing floor was on Mt. Moriah. It will become the future site of the Temple. God is working even in judgment.

Devotional Thoughts for Day 105

One of the greatest things about David is not his greatness, but rather his relatability. Who among us has not had fears and doubts that cause us to stumble and fall? From his actions to his poetry we find a kinship with David. Though 3,000 years removed from his time we relate to his experiences, the highs and the lows. No matter where you are in life, you can find a parallel in him. Grab on to that. Then, as David himself would do, starting climbing higher. Climb out of despair and doubt to the joys of fellowship with God.

Hymn for Day 105

Our hymn today is “The Stability of the Covenant” by John Kent (1766-1843). It speaks of a sure covenant between the saint and God, echoing David in 23:5.

*Come, saints, and sing in sweet accord,
Nor let your sorrows swell
The cov'nant made with David's Lord,
In all things order'd well.*

*This cov'nant stood, ere time began.
That God with men might dwell:
Eternal wisdom drew the plan,
In all things order'd well.*

*This cov'nant, O believer, stands.
Thy rising fears to quell;
Seal'd by thy Surety's bleeding hands,
In all things order'd well.*

*Ere Adam stretch'd his hand to take
That fruit by which he fell,
This cov'nant stood, for Jesu's sake,
In all things order'd well.*

*No sinner, once within its bound,
Shall ever sink to hell;
Here's pardon, love, and grace profound,
In all things order'd well.*

*'Twas made with Jesus, for his bride.
Before the sinner fell;
T'was sign'd, and seal'd, and ratified,
In all things order'd well.*

*When rolling worlds depart on fire,
And thousands sinks to hell,
This cov'nant shall the saints admire,
In all things order'd well.*

*In glory soon, with Christ their King,
His saints shall surely dwell,
And this bless'd cov'nant ever sing,
In all things order'd well.*