

II Samuel – Part 3

Establishing the Kingdom – II Samuel 8-11

The four narratives of II Samuel 5-7, setting up the capital in Jerusalem, freeing Israel from the rule of the Philistines, bringing the Ark into Jerusalem and setting it up as the center of religion, and receiving the covenant from God, all point to the strengthening of the house of David according to the promise of God. Within the setting of chapter 8, David's many years as king are condensed into two brief summaries.

Because II Samuel is ultimately concerned with David's character rather than his kingly achievements, he concludes with another narrative of David's kindness to the house of Saul (II Sam. 9-11). However, his goodness is overshadowed by his sin and its consequences (II Sam. 12-24), which bring the book and his life to a conclusion.

I. Bringing Rest and Peace

God had greatly blessed David and Jerusalem, but that didn't mean David's work was done. The enemies of Israel were still around, and David had to deal with them. As God's Word transitions from the narratives and praises of David, II Samuel 8 brings an abrupt transition. We are called to look at David, not just as a man after God's own heart, or as a shepherd, or even a poet, but as a professional warrior, a man of the sword, a man of blood. He wields weapons of destruction with all the precision and daring of the most valiant commander, but his heart remains filled with love for God, enabling him to pour out tender words of peace and comfort. His work as a warrior was indispensable to the very existence of his kingdom and to the fulfillment of God's promise to Israel. Without David's leadership on the battlefield, the hostile nations would have swallowed up Israel, and the covenant to Abraham, "In thee all families of the earth will be blessed," would not have found fulfillment.

In focusing on the key aspects of David's military conquests, the author is concise, leaving out the unnecessary details. Only David's victories and strategic decisions are given. Most campaigns are given no more than a single verse. By not describing battles in great detail, God restricts man's tendency toward pride. Instead, the emphasis is on the importance of God's favor, His grace, and His intervention in their success. Because of the crisp details, we can quickly grasp the heart of David's reign and the significance of his victories in God's plan and Israel's history.

The "rest from all his enemies" (II Sam. 7:1) refers to those enemies close to Israel. Now, David begins to push back and expand the nation to the outlying areas that God promised Abraham. Most of these nations were warlike and powerful, and would band together against him, making these battles very dangerous, but David's trust in God was immovable. He would not destroy these nations; God hadn't commanded him to do that. They would be kept alive to pay tribute and serve Israel; others would recognize the strength and dominance of God's people.

David wanted to complete the work Joshua had begun, so he began with the Philistines, who had plagued Israel forever. David entered Philistia, smote and subdued them, and took their main capital, Metheg-ammah (Gath, King Achish's city), away from them. Where before the Philistines had taken land from Israel and

established garrisons, Israel now took their cities and established garrisons in Philistia.

Next, David moved to the east and smote Moab, putting 2/3 of their army to death, keeping the remainder as servants and collecting tribute from them. It may seem harsh to enslave and kill your great-grandmother's ancestors, but David had no love lost for those who had mistreated or killed his parents when he ran from Saul.

From there, David moved north to Syria/Aram. This area consisted of a collection of small city-states, including Zobah, Rehob, Hamath, and Damascus. His attacks were against those in the northern large territory between Palestine and the Euphrates River. God had promised this land to Abraham, but since God had given no command to drive out the inhabitants at this time, they would be in "tributary subjection." In this political relationship, the less powerful state must acknowledge the more powerful state by paying tribute. It may continue to maintain its own government and manage its own internal affairs, while being influenced by the dominant power.

David began here with the city-state of Zobah where Hadadezer was king. He subdued him and took 1,000 chariots, 700 horsemen, 20,000 footmen, hamstringing all but 100 chariot horses. When the city-state of Damascus came to help Hadadezer, 22,000 men were killed. David put garrisons in these cities to maintain control. The golden shields of Hadadezer were brought to Jerusalem along with brass from the cities of Betah and Berthai. When Toi, the king of Hamath, heard what David had done to Hadadezer, he sent his son to bless David and give tribute of silver, gold, and brass vessels. David dedicated all these things to God.

When he returned home, David placed garrisons in Edom and took the Edomites as his servants. In all these things, the Lord preserved David. As he reigned over all Israel, David executed judgment and justice unto all the people.

The second summary of this transition is even shorter than the conquests, as David begins his work of peace. (II Sam. 8:15-18). In the briefest terms, Scripture outlines the departments that he set up to administer the kingdom. Joab officially becomes general of the armies, and Jehoshaphat becomes the court historian. Both Zadok and Ahimelech were anointed as priests. Seraiah was appointed the court secretary. The most trusted part of the king's army, which formed his special bodyguard, the Cherethites and Pelethites, was put under the charge of Benaiah. David's sons were made principal officers of his court, positions of the greatest authority and dignity.

II. *Exercising Grace*

Another side of David's character is seen in II Samuel 9. Here, he is not seen as a warrior or administrator, but as the giver of grace. As he contemplates the covenant he had made with Saul's son Jonathan (I Sam. 20:14-16), he asks, "Is there not yet any of the house of Saul, that I may show the kindness of God unto him?" He desired to show greater kindness, the kindness of God, kindness worthy of the covenant he had made before God. One of Saul's servants, Ziba, told him that Jonathan had a son, Mephibosheth, who was still alive, but he was lame.

Mephibosheth had become lame when he was just five years old. The palace had just learned of the death of Saul and Jonathan at the battle of Gilboa. (II Sam. 4:4). This typically meant that the remaining family of the deceased king would be killed by the one assuming power so that they would have no one contest their right to rule. In

trying to protect Jonathan's son, his nurse had grabbed him and fled. In her haste, she had tripped and fallen, hurting Mephibosheth and causing his lameness.

Now, Mephibosheth is an adult with his own son, Micha. (II Sam. 9:12). This, then, is about 17-18 years after Jonathan's death, since David has been king in Hebron for 7½ years and king over all Israel about 9 years. He has been fighting the Lord's battles, which have left him little time to think about Saul's house. Now that he is firmly established as king and there is peace all around, it is time to act on the promise.

Mephibosheth was living in the house of Machir in Lo-debar. Nothing is known of Lo-debar, but it is assumed to have been east of the Jordan, near Mahanaim, Ishbosheth's capital. Machir's father, Ammiel, was a man of wealth who would provide supplies for David and his men during the rebellion of Absalom. (II Sam. 17:27).

When Mephibosheth arrived, he fell on his face and said, "Behold, thy servant...What is thy servant, that thou should look upon such a dead dog as I am?" With this extreme self-humiliation, it may seem that Mephibosheth is a deformed, despised, contemptible person, but that is not true. In the East, it is only an example of their cultural politeness. They present themselves as the lowest of the low but expect the recipient to honor them twice what is appropriate. When Abraham purchased a cave for Sarah's burial (Gen. 23:11,15), Ephron offered his cave for free; Abraham, however, paid an exorbitant price for it. Mephibosheth is doing no more than expressing his great gratitude and acknowledging their difference in rank.

David invited Mephibosheth to eat at David's table as if he were one of the king's sons. He gave him all the land of Saul so that he could carry on a suitable lifestyle, and appointed Ziba as his steward to manage it. Half of the produce would be given in payment for his labor to provide for his own household of 15 sons and 20 servants. "So, Mephibosheth dwelt in Jerusalem: for he did eat continually at the king's table; and was lame on both his feet."

Another scene of grace opens in II Samuel 10. David tries to show kindness to Hanun, an Ammonite, whose father, Nahash, had died. Years before, Nahash had threatened to pluck out the eyes of the men of Jabesh-Gilead and cause them to serve him (I Sam. 11). Scripture doesn't record the kindness Nahash had shown. Still, David is doing what was customary among princes with whom they lived in friendship—sending servants to console them. David may also be reminding Hanun that, as the new leader, he is expecting tribute to be sent to him, just as his father had been obliged to do.

The princes of the Ammonites, however, rejected David's attempt at goodwill and assumed he was looking to take even more power for himself by sending his servants to spy on the land. Since they didn't accept the reason for the servant's visit, they decided to humiliate them instead of paying tribute. They shaved off one-half of the men's beards and cut their garments short enough to expose them before sending them away. When David heard what had happened, he told the men to wait at Jericho and let their beards grow before returning.

The Ammonites realized the gravity of their error, but instead of apologizing, they assumed David would retaliate and, in their fear, overreacted. They hired 33,000 mercenaries from various Syrian states to help them. Commentators estimate these soldiers would have been paid millions of dollars today. David had not intended to fight them, but when he heard that Ammon had prepared for war, he immediately

realized the great danger to Israel from this formidable alliance. He sent Joab and all his mighty men, his elite fighting unit that had been with David from the beginning, to avenge this affront to his people. The speed with which David deployed his army shows his leadership skills and trust in his troops. Tensions continued to mount.

Even with these hard-core, powerful, skilled veterans, these hostile forces presented a huge challenge to Joab. Only with God on their side would David's armies be invincible. Rabbah, Hanun's capital, was a well-fortified city and a tremendous stronghold. The Ammonites came out in battle array and stood at the entrance of the gate; the mercenaries, with their chariots and horsemen, stood by themselves in the open field, four miles away. It was this separation that prompted Joab's attack strategy.

Joab took in the scene: men in front of him and horses and chariots behind him. It would not be easy to win this battle! If he advanced against either one, the other could attack from the rear. Joab wisely divided his army, leading the elite men against the Syrian mercenaries and giving the rest to his brother, Abishai, to lead against the Ammonites. Joab told Abishai, "If the Syrians be too strong for me, then thou shalt help me: but if the children of Ammon be too strong for thee, then I will come and help thee. Be of good courage, and let us play the men for our people, and for the cities of our God [they didn't want Israel's cities to fall into the hands of the enemy again]: and the LORD do that which seemeth Him good." As with us, God wants us to be prepared for battles against tough obstacles (Eph. 6:10-18), but ultimately, the result must be left in God's hands.

Joab took his mighty men into the battle against the Syrians, and they fled before him. They had nothing to lose. It wasn't their battle; they were getting paid to fight! When the Ammonites saw the Syrians fleeing, they fled from Abishai back into the city. Israel's armies then quit their pursuit and returned to Jerusalem to show that, just like they had said, they weren't after the Ammonite territory.

The Ammonites were willing to accept defeat, but for some reason, the Syrians changed their mind and prepared for a second attack on Israel. This time, David did not stop when he turned back the attackers; he overran their country and seized political control. The power of the throne of David was firmly settled everywhere. As long as David zealously lived to honor the Lord and was faithful in his duties, God defended and protected him from his enemies, blessing him with glory and happiness. But the scene is about to change. David will provoke God by his sins.

III. *Provoking God*

II Samuel 11 introduces the turning point of David's life. Because of sin, his life goes from triumphs to troubles. "And it came to pass, after the year was expired, at the time when kings go forth to battle [springtime, because rains and cold weather made travel and fighting difficult], that David *sent* Joab, and his servants with him, and all Israel; and they destroyed the children of Ammon, and besieged Rabbah. But David *tarried* still at Jerusalem." This is the beginning of a chiasm, a mirror image of a truth found spread over the entire chapter. Look to see how each corresponding line expands, explains, or deepens the understanding of the other.

In both the first and last verses of this chapter, "David sent." He didn't go himself to do anything—not to fight a battle (he sent Joab to do that) or to bring Bathsheba to him

(he sent someone to bring her to him). These are our bookends, A and A' (stated as "A prime" for the mirrored counterpart).

Verses 2-5 tells what David did while he remained home—*he sinned* by lying with Bathsheba, and she got pregnant (B). When David found out the consequences of his sin, he tried to cover up the sin by making it seem that the child was her husband's. Unfortunately, Uriah, one of his mighty men, was on the battlefield with Joab, so *David commanded* (v. 6) that Uriah be sent home (C). Uriah did come home, but his actions didn't work as David expected. (v. 7-9). When Uriah came home, he remained at the king's house. David questioned him about the battle (trying to legitimize the reason for his return home) and fed him. He even told him that it was okay to go home, wash up, and sleep with his wife...but Uriah stayed with David's servants instead and "went not down to his house." (D).

When we come to verses 10-11, they seem to stand out as the turning point of the context. Nothing seems to mirror these verses. For the moment, we will leave that alone and continue with the mirror portions of the text beginning in verses 12-13.

In the morning, David again tried to get Uriah to go home and sleep with his wife, but he remained in Jerusalem. David even tried to get him drunk, but he went back to the servants' area to sleep and "went not down to his house." (D'). So, when Uriah needed to return to the battlefield, David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it with Uriah. (v. 14-15). He commanded Joab to put Uriah in the hottest part of the battle and pull away from him so he would die. (C'). Can you imagine having to carry a message of your own death!!!?

Verses 16-24 show us that David didn't just sin by not going to the battlefield when he should have led his men. He also looked AND acted on the temptation of a beautiful married woman, consequently, causing a child to be conceived. That sin was then compounded when he tried to hide his sin instead of confessing it and killing one of his mighty men who had been so faithful all those years, and who didn't fall into his plan of deception. (B').

There appear to be two or three lessons emphasized in this chiasm. The primary one focuses on David's sin and its consequences. David thought marrying Bathsheba would be good enough to protect him from criticism. It would provide for the child and give her support as a widow. "But the thing that David had done displeased the Lord." (v. 27). Other consequences also fell on the men and families that were killed while being near the battle that killed Uriah.

Another thing that stands out is Uriah's integrity in the turning point, verses 10-11, in contrast to David's sin. Uriah refused the luxury of being at home when "the ark, and Israel, and Judah abide in tents; and my lord Joab, and the servants of my lord, are encamped in the open fields: Shall I then go into mine house, to eat and to drink, and to lie with my wife? As thou livest, and as thy soul liveth, I will not do this thing!"

Conclusion:

How many times have we sinned and followed the same pattern that David did? No one likes to admit they've sinned if it seems like no one will ever know! David is no different from us, is he? You have to admire Uriah's stand, though. I imagine going home to a loving wife, getting in a nice hot bath to take the stench and sweat of battle away, and relaxing his tired muscles, getting a good night's sleep in a comfortable bed

was pretty tempting! But he held on to his integrity while David, the one who should have been setting the example, totally blew it!

David followed the typical pattern of sin: he looked, he questioned, and he took. The next time sin looks or sounds appealing to you, turn away. Don't continue to look or wonder what it would be like to do or taste or indulge yourself in it. The more you think about something, the more likely you will be to follow through and partake, committing sin, instead of resisting it!

How strong are you at resisting temptation when you're tired...or even when you're not? It takes some self-control to do what's right in times like this, doesn't it? Ask God to give you strength and integrity when you are tempted to do wrong. God will give you the strength...He promised!...and you won't have to deal with sin's consequences.

"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (I Cor. 10:13).

Fourfold Restoration (II Samuel Part 4)

1) Read II Samuel 11-14. Finish the chiasm we started in class if we didn't complete it yet. Highlight any "Behold" words, and determine why it is used. How does the parable that Nathan tells David compare to the sin that has been committed?

2) What judgments did David put on the rich man?

3) Circle or highlight the word "I" in II Samuel 12:7-11. What is God saying to David? What does God say was David's 3 sins?

4) What does God say He will do to David?

5) When David is confronted with this sin, what does he do? How is this different than when Saul was confronted with his sin? How does God show He has forgiven David?

6) Why does David so desperately before the child dies and stops afterward? How does the child's death begin the fulfillment of David's judgment?

7) How does Amnon's sin compare to David's? What are some of the consequences of it? (II Sam. 13-14) How does this fulfill another part of David's judgment?

8) What was Absalom's sin and its consequence? What does Joab do to "remedy" the problem? Is it effective?

9) How does David deal with Amnon's sin compared to Absalom's sin? What can we conclude as a parent with how he handled these?

Conclusion:

We've seen David grieve for Saul and Jonathan, the forgiveness he exhibited to Saul, and how he mourned for his good friend Jonathan. But now, he grieves for his own son, knowing too that his death was a direct result of his sin with Bathsheba. His mourning is profound (II Sam. 12:16-23). He pleads with God for the child, fasting and spending the night lying on the ground. His mourning was so intense that the servants could not get him up or entice him to eat. But when the child had passed, he submitted to God's will, got up, and cleaned himself, and "came into the house of the Lord, and worshipped." He knew his strength to go on would only come from God.

Grief is a powerful tool that God uses to draw us to Himself in times of mourning. In Psalm 6:6-7, David writes, "I am weary with my groaning; all the night make I my bed to swim; I water my couch with my tears. Mine eye is consumed because of grief; it waxeth old because of all mine enemies." Throughout the psalms that he shares about his grief, we see his reliance on God's strength to release his pain.

Despite loss and sorrow, we must respond by continually seeking God. God knows our sorrows and understands our pain, but we must not allow these things to consume us. While each of us may grieve in different ways, and in different timeframes, we must not let it consume us. Sorrow is part of the healing process, but God promises that "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning" (Ps. 35:5). Grief isn't forgotten, but it can be transformed into cherished memories and a deeper appreciation for the love we have experienced.

Finding strength in these moments often means recognizing that we do not have to go through grief alone. God promises to be with us in our sorrows, providing comfort and hope. Jesus "has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows" (Isa. 53:4), not from a distance, but personally experienced them. He tells us to "Cast our burden on the Lord, for He cares for you."

In recognizing the weight that Christ carries for us, we can find strength to face our own grief authentically. It is a reminder that we do not have to shoulder our burdens alone. Allowing ourselves to lean on Jesus provides a path toward healing and an opportunity to share the weight of our sorrow with One who understands intimately. As you embrace this truth, allow healing to begin.

"Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved" (Ps. 55:22).

		Chiasm of II Samuel 11
A	v. 1	
B	v. 2-5	
C	v. 6	
D	v. 7-9	
E	v. 10-11	
D'	v. 12-13	
C'	v. 14-15	
B'	v. 16-25	
A'	v. 26-27	

Lessons we can learn from this passage:

1

2

3