



# KINGDOM POLITICS

## Part Two

Forty Daily Devotions  
From the Book of 2 Samuel  
(Based on the NKJV)

## Introduction

After reading the sad and tragic ending to 1 Samuel, one might think that we can now breathe a sigh of relief at the thought that the bitter conflict and persecution that David felt at the hand of Saul is finally over and that he might now be able to move forward and be the king that God had called him to be. But even though Saul is now dead, David still has a few more enemies to face before he is finally recognized as God's chosen king of Israel. You might look at this book as one that has two important sections with the first section covering "The Triumphs of David" (2 Samuel 1-10) and the second covering "The Troubles of David" (2 Samuel 12-24). In between those two sections we will read the sad story of David and Bathsheba (Chapter 11). From this we will see that a person's life can hinge on just one "chapter" or bad decision made in a moment of uncontrolled selfishness, lust, and desire. As delightful as David's triumphs might have been – his troubles proved to be equally dark. After his adulterous affair with Bathsheba, he commits murder and then watches helplessly as the child born to their union dies. After that, one of his sons raped his sister (David's daughter) and another of his sons killed his brother (David's son). Add to all that the fact that David's son, Absalom, rebelled against him and sought to kill him, and you soon see that there are some very sad stories included in this book that is mostly about David and his reign as king. Reading 2 Samuel will help us all to see the *glory* that can be enjoyed in a life that is committed to obedience and service to God, but it will also help us to see that *gloom* that sin and disobedience can bring into the lives of God's people. As you read this important book, ask God to show you His plan for the one, true King that He has provided for us in His own Son, Jesus.

## Daily Reading Schedule

Day	Scripture Reading	Date
1	2 Samuel 1:1-16	5/13/23
2	2 Samuel 1:17-27	5/14/23
3	2 Samuel 2:1-16	5/15/23
4	2 Samuel 2:17-32	5/16/23
5	2 Samuel 3:1-21	5/17/23
6	2 Samuel 3:22-39	5/18/23
7	2 Samuel 4:1-12	5/19/23
8	2 Samuel 5:1-25	5/20/23
9	2 Samuel 6:1-23	5/21/23
10	2 Samuel 7:1-17	5/22/23
11	2 Samuel 7:18-29	5/23/23
12	2 Samuel 8:1-18	5/24/23
13	2 Samuel 9:1-13	5/25/23
14	2 Samuel 10:1-19	5/26/23
15	2 Samuel 11:1-27	5/27/23
16	2 Samuel 12:1-15	5/28/23
17	2 Samuel 12:16-31	5/29/23
18	2 Samuel 13:1-22	5/30/23
19	2 Samuel 13:23-39	5/31/23
20	2 Samuel 14:1-17	6/01/23

Day	Scripture Reading	Date
21	2 Samuel 14:18-33	6/02/23
22	2 Samuel 15:1-12	6/03/23
23	2 Samuel 15:13-37	6/04/23
24	2 Samuel 16:1-23	6/05/23
25	2 Samuel 17:1-14	6/06/23
26	2 Samuel 17:15-29	6/07/23
27	2 Samuel 18:1-18	6/08/23
28	2 Samuel 18:19-33	6/09/23
29	2 Samuel 19:1-23	6/10/23
30	2 Samuel 19:24-43	6/11/23
31	2 Samuel 20:1-12	6/12/23
32	2 Samuel 20:13-26	6/13/23
33	2 Samuel 21:1-22	6/14/23
34	2 Samuel 22:1-17	6/15/23
35	2 Samuel 22:18-34	6/16/23
36	2 Samuel 22:35-51	6/17/23
37	2 Samuel 23:1-17	6/18/23
38	2 Samuel 23:18-39	6/19/23
39	2 Samuel 24:1-9	6/20/23
40	2 Samuel 24:10-25	6/21/23

## Day 1: 2 Samuel 1:1-16

*“Now it came to pass after the death of Saul...” (2 Samuel 1:1)*

Just like 1 Samuel began where Judges left off, 2 Samuel is a continuation of what we have been reading in 1 Samuel. The transition is seamless because 1 & 2 Samuel, when first written, were combined into one, large book. The translators of the Greek version of the Old Testament were the first to divide the book into two parts around the second century. Although the two books are still combined in some Jewish Bibles, even most of them began dividing the book in the early sixteenth century. We are told that, while David was in Ziklag “a man came from Saul’s camp with his clothes torn and dust on his head” (v. 2). The torn clothes and dust were traditional symbols of mourning. The messenger reported to David, “Saul and Jonathan his son are dead” (v. 4). He went on to explain to David that he had found Saul only wounded and had been asked by the king to kill him. He went on to say, “So I stood over him and killed him...and I took the crown that was on his head and the bracelet that was on his arm, and have brought them here” (v. 10). We can only conclude that this man was lying to David because 1 Samuel 31:5 clearly states that Saul’s “armorbearer saw that Saul was dead.” Since Saul’s evil intentions towards David were well known, it is possible that this man brought Saul’s crown and bracelet to David in hope of receiving some kind of reward. He probably thought that David would be thrilled to learn of Saul’s death. But David did not rejoice at the news of Saul’s death. We are told that he and his men “mourned and wept and fasted until evening for Saul and for Jonathan...because they had fallen by the sword” (v. 12). We can only imagine how shocked the Amalekite who supposedly had killed Saul must have been when David had him executed for killing “the LORD’s anointed” (v. 16).

**Prayer Emphasis: Remember** that David had been provided with several opportunities to kill Saul but had refused to do so, choosing to wait for God to decide when Saul should die, and he should be king. **Refuse** to take such matters into your own hands and **choose** to patiently **wait** on God to perform His will.

## Day 2: 2 Samuel 1:17-27

*“Then David lamented with this lamentation over Saul and over Jonathan his son,” (2 Samuel 1:17)*

Although it is easy to assume that David’s grief might have been greater over the loss of his dear friend Jonathan than King Saul himself, it is obvious that his grief was for both men. It is also obvious that David’s sorrow was strong and sincere when we read the words to the song that he wrote to commemorate their lives. There are many wonderful things said about Jonathan in the song, but there are also many wonderful comments about Saul contained in it as well. He described his former king as one who had possessed “beauty” as well as one who had been “mighty” (v. 19). He did not want the circumstances of Saul’s tragic death to be revealed to their enemies “lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice” (v. 20). He referred to both Jonathan and Saul as “beloved” and “pleasant” and said that “*they* were swifter than eagles (and) stronger than lions” (v. 23). He encouraged the people of Israel to “weep over Saul” and reminded them of the blessings and benefits that their first king had brought to them as a nation (v. 24). It is amazing to see that David was able to maintain such love and appreciation for a man who had made his life so miserable for such a long time! Even though David had been treated cruelly and unfairly, God had protected his heart from the blight of bitterness.

**Prayer Emphasis: Meditate** on 1 Corinthians 13:8 today – “Love never fails” and then **consider** and **obey** the admonition of 1 Peter 4:8 and strive to, “Above all things have fervent love for one another” and **believe** that “love will cover a multitude of sins.”

## Day 3: 2 Samuel 2:1-16

*“It happened after this that David inquired of the LORD, saying, ‘Shall I go up to any of the cities of Judah?’ And the LORD said to him, ‘Go up.’ David said, ‘Where shall I go up?’ And He said, ‘To Hebron.’” (2 Samuel 2:1)*

We first read the phrase, “David inquired of the LORD” when we read through 1 Samuel. We saw those words twice in 1 Samuel 23 and then again in 1 Samuel 30:8. We see it again in today’s focus verse. This is the first time that we will see this phrase in 2 Samuel but watch for it twice more when you get to chapter five. David’s faithfulness to prayer was obviously a key to his spiritual successes. As you review this part of the prayer life of David, make note of several important characteristics that are contained therein. First, David prayed *faithfully*. Although this specific phrase is not found every time, there are many records of David praying in 2 Samuel, so watch for them as you read through this book. Second, notice that David prayed very *specifically*. Notice how David’s desire to be in the center of God’s will led him to systematically word his prayer in a way that would best reveal God’s desires to him. He began with a general inquiry as to whether or not God wanted him to go to “any of the cities of Judah.” When God “said to him, ‘Go up,’” David wanted to know the details. His follow-up question was, “Where shall I go up?” When believers are faithful and specific in their prayers God is always faithful and specific in His answers. Upon David’s request for clarification, God specifically told him to go “to Hebron.”

**Prayer Emphasis:** **Pray** *faithfully* but be careful to pray *specifically*. **Avoid** filling your prayer time with nothing but glittering generalities. **Provide** God with all the details and then **ask** Him for detailed advice in return.

## Day 4: 2 Samuel 2:17-32

*“So there was a very fierce battle that day, and Abner and the men of Israel were defeated before the servants of David.” (2 Samuel 2:17)*

We first read about Abner back in 1 Samuel 14:50 where we learned that the “commander of (Saul’s) army was Abner the son of Ner, Saul’s uncle.” (Some people understand that to say that Abner was Saul’s uncle while others read it to say that Abner was the son of Saul’s uncle and, therefore, his cousin.) Whether uncle or cousin, we know that Abner was a close relative of Saul and that he served as a mighty leader in Saul’s military. It was this same Abner who introduced young David to Saul after his victory over the giant, Goliath (1 Samuel 17:57). After King Saul and his son Jonathan were killed in battle (1 Samuel 31:1-6), David became king over the tribe of Judah and reigned in Hebron. However, the other tribes of Israel were not yet willing to accept David as their king at that time. In yesterday’s reading we saw where Abner, in faithful support of the house of Saul, had Saul’s surviving son, Ishbosheth, proclaimed king (2 Samuel 2:8-11). Verse 18 of today’s reading reveals that David had three of his nephews with him – Joab, Abishai and Asahel. We know that these men were David’s nephews because they are described as “the three sons of Zeruah.” (1 Chronicles 2:16 clearly states that Zeruah was David’s sister.) In the heat of battle “Asahel pursued Abner” and, despite Abner’s warnings and pleas, refused to relent in his intent to catch and kill him (v. 19). Initially, Joab and Abishai set out to kill Abner and avenge their brother’s death. But an agreement for a truce was reached and the bloodshed, at least for that day, came to an end.

**Prayer Emphasis:** **Refuse** to enter into “battle” with a brother in Christ whenever there is any possibility of settling our disagreements otherwise. **Imagine** how sad it must have been for God’s children to war among themselves and to bring physical harm to one another. **Repent** and **seek** forgiveness for any hateful words or deeds that you have expressed or exhibited to anyone, especially a fellow Christian.

## Day 5: 2 Samuel 3:1-21

*“Sons were born to David in Hebron...” (2 Samuel 3:2)*

I have often reminded you that God does not hide his children’s “dirty laundry” to prevent us from seeing their many flaws and failures. One of those failures was their failure to adhere to God’s warning against having multiple wives (Deuteronomy 17:15-17). 2 Samuel 5:13 reveals that David had many wives beyond those who will be discussed in this devotional. Of his many wives, only eight of them are mentioned by name and only three of their stories are recorded with much detail. Those three are Michal (1 Samuel 18-19), Abigail (1 Samuel 25), and Bathsheba (2 Samuel 11). Six of those wives are mentioned in our Scripture reading today (2 Samuel 3:2-5). Of those six wives that are mentioned in those verses, each bore “sons...to David in Hebron.” The stories of several of David’s sons are sad stories. Amnon raped his half-sister and was murdered by his half-brother. Absalom murdered his half-brother and led a civil war against his father David and even tried to kill him. Adonijah rebelled against David, tried to seize the throne from him and was eventually executed for treason. Bear in mind that multiple wives was something that God *condoned* but never *commanded*. In the beginning God gave Adam one wife. In the New Testament we see that God takes a clear stand on multiple wives and even commands that the elders and deacons in the church be the “husband of one wife” (1 Timothy 3:2 & 12).

**Prayer Emphasis:** **Realize** that not all the examples in the Bible are good examples. **Learn** from the mistakes of others and **seek** to avoid them in your own life. **Remember** that the Bible was given to us to help us to live godly lives that bring glory to our Heavenly Father.

## Day 6: 2 Samuel 3:22-39

*“...Abner was not with David in Hebron, for he (David) had sent him away and he had gone in peace...when Joab...had come they told Joab... ‘Abner...came to the king, and he sent him away, and he has gone in peace.’ Then Abner came to the king and said, ‘What have you done?’” (2 Samuel 3:22-24)*

Convinced that Abner remained loyal to Ishbosheth, Joab (David’s nephew) was shocked and saddened to learn that the king had not arrested or killed him while he had the chance. Joab had several good reasons for hating Abner with the most notable one being that Abner had killed his brother, Asahel. According to the Old Testament Law, Joab had every right to act as an avenger on the behalf of his family and his slain brother (Numbers 35:9-28). Without David’s knowledge or permission, Joab “sent messengers after Abner, who brought him back...but David did not know it” (v. 26). Upon Abner’s return, “Joab took him aside in the gate to speak with him privately, and there stabbed him in the stomach, so that he died for the blood of Asahel his brother” (v. 27). Verse 30 indicates that Asahel’s other brother, Abishai, had a part in the murder of Abner. Bear in mind that Israel was still not far removed from the times of the Judges where “everyone did what was right in his own eyes” (Judges 21:25). Perhaps the saddest thing about Joab and Abishai’s deceitful act is that they did it under the guise of honoring the king. However, neither *their* king nor *our* King can ever be honored when we refuse to follow the appropriate leadership and take the appropriate actions. The king’s pardon of Abner should have been honored by all the king’s loyal subjects. As such, David pronounced a curse upon “the head of Joab and all his father’s house” (v. 29).

**Prayer Emphasis:** **Remember** that “revenge” is a word that God would love to purge from every man’s vocabulary, especially of those who claim Him as their King! **Refuse** to take matters that belong to God into your own hands – however “right” it might seem “in your own eyes.”

## Day 7: 2 Samuel 4:1-12

*“When Saul’s son heard that Abner had died in Hebron, he lost heart, and all Israel was troubled.”*  
(2 Samuel 4:1)

Because Saul’s three older sons were slain with him in the battle at Gilboa, only Ishbosheth, the youngest of Saul’s four sons, was available to the people as an heir to the throne of Israel. Ishbosheth means “man of shame” and, for the most part he did a pretty good job of living up to his name! He had come to the throne with the help of his uncle Abner (2 Samuel 2:8-9). When Ishbosheth heard that the man who had been instrumental in his ascension to the throne was dead, “he lost heart.” Many translations express what happened to Ishbosheth after he heard about the death of Abner as “he lost courage” or even “his hands were feeble.” The sense is that Ishbosheth could not function without the support of the man who had made it possible for him to sit on the throne. Only two days ago, in 2 Samuel 3:11, we read that Ishbosheth “feared” Abner. Now we see this same man afraid to move forward *without* Abner. Eventually Ishbosheth was murdered by Baanah and Rechab, two men from his own tribe of Benjamin, while he was taking a midday nap (v. 5). In hopes of receiving some kind of a reward from David for killing the son of Saul, these men “brought the head of Ishbosheth to David at Hebron” (v. 8). To their surprise, David rebuked them for murdering “a righteous person in his own house on his bed” (v. 11) and had Baanah and Rechab executed as murderers (v. 12).

**Prayer Emphasis:** Follow David’s example and **commit** to leaving all vengeance to God! **Realize** that evil acts never promote the righteousness of God. **Weigh** all that you do and say against God’s commands and act only when you can do so in full compliance to God’s Word.

## Day 8: 2 Samuel 5:1-25

*“David was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years. In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months, and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty-three years over all Israel and Judah.”* (2 Samuel 5:4-5)

David’s reign of “forty years” included “seven years” in Hebron over Judah alone and an additional thirty-three years “in Jerusalem...over all Israel and Judah.” But bear in mind that all of this happened some 15 years after Samuel had first sought the young, shepherd boy out and anointed him as king. As you read about and study the life of David, you will see that he spent much of his life waiting. After his first anointing, he waited about fifteen years to be king. After being made king over Judah, he waited seven more years before he became king over all Israel. So, it was approximately twenty-two years after God’s promise before David finally saw it fulfilled. There are many things that we can learn from the life of David and at least one of them is how to wait on the Lord! One can only imagine the joy that David was experiencing as the fulfillment of God’s plans and promises began to unfold in his life. 1 Chronicles 12:23-40 describes the great assembly that gathered at Hebron for David’s inauguration as king over all of God’s people. That text indicates that there were over 340,000 soldiers there – much less a great number of citizens. This is how God described the moment: “All these men of war...came to Hebron with a loyal heart, to make David king over all Israel; and all the rest of Israel were of one mind to make David king...for there was joy in Israel” (1 Chronicles 12:38-40).

**Prayer Emphasis:** Ask God to teach you many things as you spend time with Him in the Word and in prayer, but don’t forget to ask Him to teach you how to wait! **Believe** that all of God’s promises are true and faithful and **refuse** to settle for anything less than God’s perfect will for your life.

## Day 9: 2 Samuel 6:1-23

*“And David arose and went with all the people who were with him from Baale Judah to bring up from there the ark of God...” (2 Samuel 6:2)*

The “ark of God” that is mentioned here is none other than the “Ark of the Covenant” which God had commanded Moses to build about four centuries before David was even born. In the plainest of descriptions, it was a wooden box about four feet long, two feet wide, and two feet high that was completely covered in gold. The word “ark” literally means “box” or “chest.” The ornate, gold covered lid to the ark was called the mercy seat where Israel believed that God’s presence dwelt. In the ark Israel kept the tablets upon which God had written the law, a jar of the manna that He had provided for them during their walk through the wilderness, and Aaron’s rod that had miraculously budded to confirm the fact that God had called him to be the high priest. Because the ark of God represented God’s presence and glory, David gathered some of his most loyal soldiers and assigned them the task of bringing the ark to Jerusalem. Until this time, the last mention of the ark of God was back in 1 Samuel 7:1 when it was returned from the land of the Philistines. There is no doubt but that David believed that emphasizing respect for the ark would remind the people to respect and glorify God. David knew that he was now the king of Israel, but he desperately wanted the people to worship and serve the true King that had formed them as a nation. If nothing else, the presence of the ark would emphasize the presence and glory of God in Israel.

**Prayer Emphasis:** Pray for God’s presence in your life – and in the life of our nation and church! **Live** every day with the understanding that God is watching all that we do and hearing all that we say. **Honor** God by living a godly life before others.

## Day 10: 2 Samuel 7:1-17

*“Now it came to pass when the king was dwelling in his house, and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies all around, that the king said to Nathan the prophet, ‘See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of the LORD dwells inside tent curtains.’” (2 Samuel 7:1-2)*

In today’s Scripture we have an opportunity to go behind the scenes and see David in his own private residence. Many people believe that, if they had money, power, and position, their lives would be fulfilled, and they would be happy. But that didn’t seem to be true for David. First, we see that God had given David *peace*. We read that “the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies all around.” The word that is translated “rest” in our focus verse is sometimes translated “safe” or “peace” in other translations of the Bible. Second, we see that God had given David a *place*. It was a time when David “was dwelling in his house.” The text states that David’s house was “a house of cedar.” Cedar was an expensive building material and was primarily used in the building of palaces and other important buildings. We can only imagine how it must have been for David – who once lived in caves and in the wilderness – to now live in a beautiful home of cedar wood. Finally, we see that God had given David a *problem*. David explained his problem when he said, “I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells inside tent curtains.” The “tent curtains” to which David referred was the tabernacle the king had erected when he brought the ark of the LORD to Jerusalem (2 Samuel 6:17).

**Prayer Emphasis:** Consider all that God has done for you and **ask** yourself the tough question: “What can I do for God to show Him how much I appreciate the many things that He has done for me?” **Look** for ways that you can be a blessing to God and His people through acts of charity and kindness. **Seek** opportunities to express your love to God daily.



## Day 11: 2 Samuel 7:18-29

*“Now what more can David say to you? For you, LORD God, know Your servant. For Your word’s sake, and according to Your own heart, You have done all these great things, to make Your servant know them.”*  
(2 Samuel 7:20-21)

Twice in the first half of chapter seven we saw God refer to David as “My servant” (7:5,8). Today, as we read the last half of this chapter – at least in the NKJV – we will see David speaking to God and referring to himself as “Your servant” no less than ten times. You might want to read back through today’s Scriptures and see if you can find that phrase in your Bible. When you consider that David’s expressions of humility and service followed some wonderful promises from God, you can see that such blessings did not fill the king’s head with pride. God had just told him, “Your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever” (7:16) but David’s heart seems to be more focused on kneeling before God’s throne than sitting on his own. The word that David used to describe himself as a “servant” was the same word that God had used when He had said that David was His “servant.” Wonderful things happen to the attitude of God’s people when they allow God to define their roles in life. It is always good when our own self-evaluation is in agreement with God’s evaluations of our capabilities and service.

**Prayer Emphasis:** **Allow** God to define your role in His divine service. **Remember** that there is no greater service than that which is performed for God. **Bow** before God daily and do so as a humble servant that is willing to do whatever is asked of you.

## Day 12: 2 Samuel 8:1-18

*“So David reigned over all Israel; and David administered judgment and justice to all his people.”*  
(2 Samuel 8:15)

Today’s Scripture reading describes many victories that God gave Israel under the leadership of King David. Under his leadership Israel “attacked the Philistines and subdued them...then he defeated Moab” (vs. 1-2). Then we are told that “David also defeated Hadadezer the son of Rehob, king of Zobah” taking from him “one thousand chariots, seven hundred horsemen, and twenty thousand foot soldiers” (vs. 3-4). I don’t know how fast news travelled in Bible times, but the news of these decisive victories eventually reached “Toi king of Hamath” so he “sent Joram his son to King David, to greet him and to bless him” bringing with him “articles of silver...gold...and bronze” (vs. 9-10). Verse 12 includes a listing of all the nations that David had subdued and verse 13 states that “David made himself a name when he returned from killing eighteen thousand Syrians in the Valley of Salt.” It was only after all this great effort was put forth by King David and his loyal followers that we are told that “David reigned over all Israel.” The great victories that we have read about today are just some of the reasons that David is still regarded as the greatest king of Israel. But notice that God does not describe David’s leadership in times of battle only. He goes on to allow us to see David as the kind of king that would administer “judgment and justice to all his people.” Certainly, this was what God probably had in mind for Saul – but Saul was not willing to be the kind of humble servant that God could so wonderfully bless.

**Prayer Emphasis:** **Count** some of your blessings today and then praise God for all that He has done for you. Then **remember** that what you have counted is just what you know about! **Believe** that God is always at work for you and that He will never leave you nor forsake you.

## Day 13: 2 Samuel 9:1-13

*“Now David said, ‘Is there still anyone who is left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan’s sake?’” (2 Samuel 9:1)*

Ephesians 2:7 teaches us that God reveals “the exceeding riches of His grace *in his kindness toward us* in Christ Jesus.” There is no better story to remind us of the meaning of the word “kindness” than the one that we are reading today. Earlier, back in 1 Samuel 20:14-15, Jonathan had asked David to make this vow to him: “And you shall not only show me the *kindness* of the LORD while I still live...but you shall not cut off your *kindness* from my house forever.” It is a wonderful testimony to David that he remembered his vow to Jonathan and that he went to great extremes to fulfill it. The story of Mephibosheth tells itself. It really needs very little comment. As you read through this chapter, look for the word “kindness” and mark it every time that you see it. In this story you will see a poor, crippled man elevated from poverty to plenty as he is eventually found sitting and dining at the king’s table “like one of the king’s sons” (v. 11). Mephibosheth received a brief mention back in 2 Samuel 4:4 where we learned that “he was five years old when the news about Saul and Jonathan came from Jezreel.” Many years had passed since David’s promise to Jonathan. Verse 12 of today’s reading reveals that Mephibosheth had a son of his own by the time that David set out to seek a way to honor Jonathan and his earlier vow to him. Mephibosheth had every reason to fear David. It was customary for an incoming king to seek out and eliminate any remaining heirs of the former king that might lay claim to the throne. David did “seek out” Mephibosheth, but for a very different and special reason.

**Prayer Emphasis:** **Seek** to exhibit kindness to everyone but make a concentrated effort to perform some act of kindness on a specific person today. **Enlist** others to help you to make that act of kindness happen and **involve** them in it, if possible. **Pray** for the benevolent ministries of our church today.

## Day 14: 2 Samuel 10:1-19

*“...the people of Ammon sent out and hired the Syrians...twenty thousand foot soldiers; and from the king of Maacah one thousand men, and from Ish-Tob twelve thousand men. Now when David heard of it, he sent Joab and all the army of the mighty men.” (2 Samuel 10:6-7)*

Today’s Scripture contains the first mention of David’s “mighty men” in the Bible. The Hebrew word that is translated “mighty” in this verse is translated in various ways in other places in the Bible. Probably the most well-known translation of this word is when it is used to describe Goliath as the “champion” of the Philistines. We will read more about these “mighty men” when we get to 2 Samuel 23, and we will be told four times that they were three in number (2 Samuel 23:9,16,17,22). The three that are mentioned then were probably “captains” over the larger group that is probably being referenced here in today’s verses. Notice that today’s focus verses reference “all the army of the mighty men.” This group of men was composed of David’s toughest military warriors – the “Green Beret” of his day. Some of these men performed some heroic feats in battle. 2 Samuel 23:8 reports, “Adino the Eznite...killed eight hundred men at one time.” That same chapter will list the names of thirty-seven of these “mighty men.” But we shouldn’t overlook the fact that “Joab” is also mentioned in this verse. David “sent Joab and all the army of the mighty men.” Joab was David’s nephew, the son of Zeruiah, his sister (2:13). This is the same Joab who avenged the death of his brother by killing Abner (3:27).

**Prayer Emphasis:** **Enlist** now in the Army of the Lord and **seek** to be one of His “mighty” servants! **Spend time** daily in Bible reading and prayer and **apply** what you learn to your current life situations.

## Day 15: 2 Samuel 11:1-27

*“It happened in the spring of the year, at the time when kings go out to battle, that David sent Joab and his servants with him, and all Israel...But David remained at home. Then it happened...” (2 Samuel 11:1-2)*

Until this point in time, David has been nothing less than a hero to God’s people – then and now. But the opening words of verse 2 hang like a dark cloud about us – “Then it happened!” The story goes on to say that “it happened one evening” (v. 2). One day a hero and the next a heel! One day a great champion for God who could slay wild beasts and giants and the next a weakling who could not even control his own lust and evil desires! A great preacher once said, “When God paints a verbal portrait of a man, He paints the whole thing. He doesn’t hide the scars.” When you read the Scripture carefully, you might see that it was a sin of *omission* that led to David’s great sin of *commission* – adultery. In verse 1 we see that “it happened in the spring of the year, at the time when kings go out to battle.” So, because David did not do what he should have done (go out to battle) he soon found himself doing something that he never dreamed he would do (commit adultery and murder)! Notice the progression of this sin in David’s life. First, David “saw a woman bathing, and the woman was very beautiful to behold” (v. 2). Then David “sent and inquired about the woman” (v. 3). Finally, David *sinned* with the woman – “and he lay with her” (v. 4).

**Prayer Emphasis:** Take care to avoid being in the wrong place at the wrong time! **Realize** the danger of not doing the right things at the right time! **Practice** the fine art of “bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ” (2 Corinthians 10:5).

## Day 16: 2 Samuel 12:1-15

*“Then Nathan departed to his house. And the LORD struck the child that Uriah’s wife bore to David, and it became ill.” (2 Samuel 12:15)*

Nathan told David a sad story about a very rich man who had “exceedingly many flocks and herds” who had taken the one, pet lamb from a poor man to feed a visiting guest (v. 2). When David heard that sad story, his “anger was greatly aroused.” (v. 5). He immediately pronounced a judgment against the rich man. That was when Nathan confronted David with his own sin with Bathsheba and against Uriah the Hittite, her husband. I find it difficult to imagine what it must have been like for David when the prophet Nathan told him that he was that rich man! Farther along in the conversation “David said to Nathan, ‘I have sinned against the LORD’” (v. 13). Even though “Nathan said to David, ‘The LORD also has put away your sin’” (v. 13), there were still consequences from that sin that soon manifested themselves in David’s life. Almost one year after David sinned with Bathsheba those consequences came sadly upon David and his house. The poor child that was born to David and Bathsheba “became ill” (v. 15). We have talked about the three laws of sowing and reaping on a number of occasions, but today’s story reminds us of one of those laws – the third one. Before I mention that third law, let’s take the time to review all three of God’s laws on sowing and reaping. Law One: We always reap *what* we sow. “Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for *whatever a man sows, that he will also reap*” (Galatians 6:7). Law Two: We always reap *more* than we sow. “They sow the wind and reap the *whirlwind*” (Hosea 8:7). Law Three: We always reap *later* than we sow. “Cast your bread upon the waters, for you will find it *after many days*” (Ecclesiastes 11:1).

**Prayer Emphasis:** Make it a rule in life to **pray first!** **Involve** God in your every spiritual decision and **remember** that all decisions have a spiritual impact and implication in your life. **Commit** now to daily Bible reading and prayer.

## Day 17: 2 Samuel 12:16-31

*“Then David comforted Bathsheba his wife, and went in to her and lay with her. So she bore a son, and he called his name Solomon. Now the LORD loved him, and He sent word by the hand of Nathan the prophet: So he called his name Jedidiah, because of the LORD.” (2 Samuel 12:24-25)*

The birth of Solomon, and his eventual rise to the throne of Israel and Judah, is a story of God’s amazing grace. Of all the sons born to David, Solomon, one born from his marriage to a woman with whom he had committed adultery, follows him as the next king of God’s people. Solomon’s name means “peace” or “peaceable.” Perhaps his birth was a sign from God that David and Bathsheba had made peace with Him after sinning against His laws. Apparently God sent word through Nathan the prophet that Solomon should also be called Jedidiah, which means “beloved of Jehovah.” God chose this son to be the heir to the throne and ultimately the ancestor of the Messiah. To me this is a clear message from God that He forgives repentant sinners and restores them to His fellowship and service. As a matter of fact, some of David’s most godly children came from his marriage to Bathsheba. 1 Chronicles 3:5 lists the children born to David and Bathsheba: “And these were born to him in Jerusalem: Shimea, Shobab, Nathan, and Solomon – four by Bathshua the daughter of Ammiel.” (Did you notice that she is *not* referred to as “the wife of Uriah” in that verse?) Of these four children, God’s Word records no troubles that they brought to David’s life. Nathan is listed as one of the forefathers of Mary in the genealogy of Christ that is found in Luke 3.

**Prayer Emphasis:** **Thank** God for His amazing grace! **Praise** Him for His willingness to forgive sin and restore His people to a place of blessing and productivity. **Share** a testimony of God’s grace with someone you meet today.

## Day 18: 2 Samuel 13:1-22

*“But Amnon had a friend whose name was Jonadab the son of Shimeah, David’s brother. Now Jonadab was a very crafty man. And he said to him, ‘Why are you, the king’s son, becoming thinner day after day? Will you not tell me?’ Amnon said to him, ‘I love Tamar, my brother Absalom’s sister.’ So Jonadab said to him, ‘Lie down on your bed and pretend to be ill. And when your father comes to see you, say to him, Please let my sister Tamar come and give me food, and prepare the food in my sight, that I may see it and eat it from her hand.’” (2 Samuel 13:3-5)*

Just yesterday I mentioned that none of the children born to David by Bathsheba brought great trouble or shame into the king’s life. When we are sometimes disappointed in some of the good that our children do not do, we should be careful to consider the bad that they leave undone! There is much to be said about a child that lives in such a way as to avoid the many pitfalls of pride, sin, and rebellion. Today’s story really needs no explanation. Amnon believed that he loved his stepsister, Tamar, and was so lovesick that he could not even eat. As the story plays out, we will see that it was lust, and not love, that plagued Amnon and led him to lie to his father and commit a great sin against his sister. Perhaps Amnon’s sin could have been avoided had he had a better friend than Jonadab! When Amnon confided to Jonadab about his desires for Tamar, Jonadab encouraged Amnon to act on his sinful desires and even helped Amnon to plot a way to trap Tamar and rape her. Later, in the New Testament, believers are warned that, “Evil company corrupts good habits” (1 Corinthians 15:33). One translation says, “Evil company does damage to good behavior” while yet another translates this verse to say, “Associating with bad people will ruin good people.”

**Prayer Emphasis:** **Choose** your friends wisely. **Seek** and **heed** counsel from godly people who are personally walking with the Lord. **Refuse** to support or encourage bad behavior on the part of anyone, much less a Christian friend.

## Day 19: 2 Samuel 13:23-39

*“Then Jonadab the son of Shimeah, David’s brother, answered and said, ‘Let not my lord suppose they have killed all the young men, the king’s sons, for only Amnon is dead. For by the command of Absalom this has been determined from the day that he forced his sister Tamar.’” (2 Samuel 13:32)*

Near the end of yesterday’s reading, we saw that Absalom sought to comfort his sister, Tamar, and took her into his own house. No doubt, his intentions were to protect his sister and make sure that Amnon never molested her again (13:20). But today we read that Absalom took further actions to make sure that Tamar was safe from her incestuous brother. One cannot help but notice that there is no biblical record of Amnon ever showing any remorse or regret for what he had done, and there is no record of his ever confessing or repenting of his horrible sin against his sister, his father, and God. Sometimes the wheels of justice grind slowly, and such was the case with Amnon. It was “after two full years” (v. 23) that Absalom used the same weapon of deceit that Amnon had used against his sister to lure Amnon away so that he could kill him. It is at this point that Jonadab has his last few mentions in the Bible. This same man who had been an evil friend to Amnon now comes as a “friend” to David to comfort him by assuring him that “only Amnon” was dead. His words, “only Amnon,” reveal his true attitude towards his “friend” that he had so evilly advised. One cannot help but think that Jonadab might have been relieved that Amnon was dead and that he secretly hoped that the story about his evil encouragement had died with him. There are many “Jonadabs” still operating within God’s kingdom today because there are many people who are highly skilled at being a “friend” to whoever they are with at the moment.

**Prayer Emphasis:** **Refuse** to be a “Jonadab”! **Stand** for what is right and *against* what is wrong. **Be faithful** to God and His Word and you will know how to be a true friend at all times and in all situations.

## Day 20: 2 Samuel 14:1-17

*“And Joab sent to Tekoa and brought from there a wise woman, and said to her, ‘Please pretend to be a mourner...act like a woman who has been mourning for a long time for the dead. Go to the king and speak to him in this manner.’” So Joab put the words in her mouth. (2 Samuel 14:2-3)*

We read earlier about Joab being made captain of the armies of Israel under King David. Joab became a very powerful man in David’s kingdom. Earlier we read where Uriah referred to Joab as “my lord” (11:11) and then, in that same chapter, we read where Joab played a key role in the assignation of Uriah, his loyal servant (11:14-16). Now we find this same Joab practicing deceit against the king that had placed so much trust in him. Many defend what Joab does in this situation, but there is no ignoring the fact that he deceived David – no matter how well intentioned he might have been at the time. As we read through these chapters in Second Samuel, we must be reminded that Israel is not far removed from the time when “everyone did what was right in his own eyes” (Judges 21:25). No doubt Amnon considered it “right in his own eyes” to desire his sister and force her to have sex with him. There is also no doubt that Absalom considered it “right in his own eyes” to deceive his father and brother when he laid out a plan to kill Amnon. Now Joab is probably considering it “right in his own eyes” to use deceit to try to heal the damaged relationship between the king and his son. But instead of approaching the king on his own, he finds a willing partner in his deceit and puts “words in her mouth.” There will always be those who find someone to say what they fear to say themselves. It was so then – and it is still so today.

**Prayer Emphasis:** **Realize** that it is never right to do wrong. **Refuse** to become the “spokesperson” for those who will not speak for themselves. **Avoid** practicing deceit and disloyalty at all costs.

## Day 21: 2 Samuel 14:18-33

*“Then the king answered and said to the woman, ‘Please do not hide from me anything that I ask you.’ And the woman said, ‘Please, let my lord the king speak.’ So the king said, ‘Is the hand of Joab with you in all this?...’” (2 Samuel 14:18-19)*

As we read David’s response to this “pretender” who was willing to “act like” a woman who was mourning for her dead son (14:2) we see that he sensed the real purpose for her visit to him from the very beginning. One might wonder if Joab had already tried to speak up for Absalom to the king. But if that is the case, the Bible never records those conversations. Several translations phrase David’s question like this: “Did Joab put you up to this?” However, most translations include the phrase “the hand of Joab” in this verse. And well they should because the Hebrew word for “hand” is clearly in the manuscripts. The word translated “hand” there is a word that refers to the “hand” or “power” of man. To this woman’s credit, she did not lie to the king but confessed “Your servant Joab commanded me, and he put all these words in the mouth of your maidservant” (v. 19). Her phrase “all these words” was enough to convince David that none of her story was true, but he still heard exactly what she was trying to say to him. She went on to say that “to bring about this change of affairs your servant Joab has done this thing” (v. 20). There is no doubt that this woman believed that Joab’s intentions were noble and that he sincerely desired to see Absalom reconciled with his father, David. The next words that David spoke were directly to Joab when he said, “All right, I have granted this thing. Go therefore, bring back the young man Absalom” (v. 21).

**Prayer Emphasis: Praise God** today for His amazing grace that will allow His will to be accomplished even when our actions are not fully pleasing in His sight! **Thank God** for overlooking our selfish ambitions and actions and granting our requests based on His grace and mercy.

## Day 22: 2 Samuel 15:1-12

*“In this manner Absalom acted toward all Israel who came to see the king for judgment. So Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel.” (2 Samuel 15:6)*

Although yesterday’s story revealed that David allowed Absalom to return to his home, it also revealed that the breach between David and his son was not completely healed. “The king said, ‘Let him return to his own house, but do not let him see my face’” (14:24). Verse 28 went on to say that “Absalom dwelt two full years in Jerusalem but did not see the king’s face.” The story ended with David eventually allowing Absalom to visit him, and when he did, we are told that “the king kissed” him (14:33). However, today’s Scripture reading discloses that Absalom began to win the hearts of the king’s followers by acting as a judge over them and always ruling in their favor. By his deceitful actions, Absalom soon “stole the hearts of the men of Israel” (v. 6). Absalom proved to be quite the politician as he told the people what they wanted to hear. When he told the people that their “case (was) good and right; but there is no deputy of the king to hear you” (v. 3) he was causing the people to believe that David had no interest in their concerns and did not want to listen to them. “Forty years” (v. 7) after David allowed Absalom to return to Jerusalem, the young rebel put together a plan to become king in Hebron. Some of David’s followers “went along innocently” (v. 11) because they never suspected Absalom’s true intentions. The Scriptures state that, “the conspiracy grew strong, for the people with Absalom continually increased in number” (v. 12).

**Prayer Emphasis: Realize** that the only way for relationships to be truly healed is for there to be genuine *repentance* on the part of one party and then genuine *forgiveness* on the part of the other. **Notice** that a lack of either of these elements will lead to further animosity and great division.

## Day 23: 2 Samuel 15:13-37

*“Now a messenger came to David, saying, ‘the hearts of the men of Israel are with Absalom.’ So David said to all his servants who were with him at Jerusalem, ‘Arise, and let us flee, or we shall not escape from Absalom...’” (2 Samuel 15:13-14)*

David knew well that his son, Absalom, was a man possessed by a lust for power and revenge. He was advised of Absalom’s plan to seize the throne from him and took immediate evasive action to save himself and his people. One has to wonder if David was heartbroken to find that he was, once again, forced to flee for his life – and this time not from King Saul but from his own son! There is no question as to whom the Holy Spirit considered to be the king. No less than fourteen times you will find David referred to as “the king” in 2 Samuel 15:15-35. The two words, “the king” or “the king’s” may be found more or less than that in your translation, but I am sure that, if you will review those verses, you will find it enough times to convince you that Absalom may have been “king” in his own mind but that he certainly was not “king” in the mind of the Holy Spirit! Verse 16 reveals that King David had at least ten “concubines.” Although Absalom was a man given to his own selfish passions, he had, no doubt, been raised by a man who was known for his own uncontrolled passions. As sad as it is to say, the fruit really doesn’t fall far from the tree! In verse 19 we are introduced to a man known as Ittai, who, even though he was a foreigner and a new follower of David, refused to abandon David even though doing so might spare his own life.

**Prayer Emphasis:** When you feel alone and deserted, **look** around you and you will see that you have some true friends that will stand with you at all times. **Praise God** for your friends and **express** your love and appreciation to them on a regular basis.

## Day 24: 2 Samuel 16:1-23

*“Then Absalom said to Ahithophel, ‘Give advice as to what we should do.’” (2 Samuel 16:20)*

Today’s Scripture reading includes three stories about three different men. First, we have Ziba. He was a former servant of Saul who, back in chapter nine, reported to David that Mephibosheth was a surviving member of Jonathan’s family. After David restored all the land of Saul to Mephibosheth, he assigned Ziba and his family the responsibility of working the land for the benefit of the crippled Mephibosheth. Ziba falsely accuses his master of plotting to overthrow David and return the throne to his house. You only have to read 2 Samuel 19:24-30 to see that Ziba’s accusations were false and were made in an attempt to better his own situation. Second, we have Shimei. Shimei was an angry man who, as David fled from Absalom, ran out cursing and casting dirt and stones at the king and his servants. Verse 9 reveals that Abishai pled with David: “Please, let me go over and take off his head!” David mercifully spared the life of Shimei who, even as David and his men were leaving, followed them, and continued to cast dirt and stones at them. Then, we have Ahithophel. Here was a man whose advice and counsel had always been as if he had heard from God (v. 23). He advised Absalom to prove that his relationship with his father, the king, was irreparably broken by going in and having personal relations with the women of his father’s harem. This was an act of treason in that day and would prove to Absalom’s followers that he had no intention of ever going back to a right relationship with David. For the record, a comparison of 2 Samuel 11:3 and 23:34 will reveal that Bathsheba was Ahithophel’s granddaughter. One would have to think that revenge might have been on this counselor’s mind when he advised Absalom to sleep with David’s women.

**Prayer Emphasis: Remember** that this world is filled with greedy, angry, and vengeful people. **Avoid** those who allow their own personal gain, anger, or thirst for vengeance to dictate their actions.

## Day 25: 2 Samuel 17:1-24

*“Moreover Ahithophel said to Absalom, ‘Now let me choose twelve thousand men, and I will arise and pursue David tonight. I will come upon him while he is weary and weak, and make him afraid. And all the people who are with him will flee, and I will strike only the king.’” (2 Samuel 17:1-2)*

We read about Ahithophel yesterday. Remember that this man was Bathsheba’s grandfather and probably held some deep-seated resentment and animosity towards David. He offered Absalom some advice about how David might be killed. He suggested that Absalom allow him to take an army from the men who were present and pursue David that very night! He knew that David and his men were “weary and weak” and that they might be quickly caught, and David easily killed. One wonders if it was a slip of the tongue when Ahithophel said, “And I will strike only *the king*.” Two things might be determined by that statement. First, Ahithophel, in all his wisdom, probably knew that David was God’s true choice as king. And second, Ahithophel’s use of the personal pronoun “I” probably reveals his personal hatred of David as well as his personal desire to do him harm. But today’s story also contains the advice of another man, Hushai. We first met this man back in 1 Samuel 15, where, upon David’s suggestion, he had returned to the city where Absalom was so that he might, specifically, “defeat the counsel of Ahithophel” (15:34). David must have known of Ahithophel’s animosity towards him and that he would have been eager to help Absalom overthrow him. Hushai offered some counter-advice to Absalom that would delay his pursuit of David long enough for David to gather an army and be fully prepared for battle.

**Prayer Emphasis: Realize** that anger and hatred can blind you to even what you know to be God’s truth. **Never allow** your personal feelings to cause you to seek harm to anyone, especially another Christian.

## Day 26: 2 Samuel 17:15-29

*“Now therefore, send quickly and tell David, saying, ‘Do not spend this night in the plains of the wilderness, but speedily cross over...’” (2 Samuel 17:16)*

Back in 15:37, Hushai was referred to by the Holy Spirit as, “David’s friend.” Now we find him risking his own life to be a true and loyal friend to God’s true, anointed king. As an undercover agent for David, he advises against Ahithophel’s “quick strike” strategy and buys David enough time to flee from Absalom – but he clearly advises David to act quickly if he is going to escape with his life and retain his kingdom. When he told David to “speedily cross over” he was referring to the Jordan River. This would give the king ample room and enough time to gather and organize his army. One must wonder why Absalom would heed the advice of Hushai over Ahithophel. However, you might note that Ahithophel’s plan might seem to place the glory for the victory over David on himself while Hushai’s plan would have placed all the glory on Absalom. Absalom’s vanity was used as bait and it was, no doubt, bait on which Absalom quickly bit. At the closing of today’s Scripture reading, we see that Ahithophel’s life came to a sudden and sad end. When this angry advisor “saw that his advice was not followed, he saddled a donkey, and arose and went home to his house, to his city. Then he put his household in order, and *hanged himself*, and died” (v. 23). Ahithophel’s motivation to take his own life had nothing to do with his pride. It had everything to do with the fact that he had played his hand against David, and God had thwarted it and exposed him as the villainous traitor that he was!

**Prayer Emphasis: Remember** that Judas “*hanged himself*” after he betrayed the Lord Jesus for personal gain (Matthew 27:5). **Choose** to be a faithful friend and **refuse** to allow vanity and pride to sway your loyalties to leadership.



## Day 27: 2 Samuel 18:1-18

*“Now the king (David) had commanded Joab, Abishai, and Ittai, saying, ‘Deal gently for my sake with the young man Absalom.’ And all the people heard when the king gave all the captains orders concerning Absalom.” (2 Samuel 18:5)*

One can best see God’s amazing grace in the way that He teaches one believer to treat another! Didn’t Jesus Himself say in John 13:35 that the truest identifying mark for a believer was that they would “have love one for another”? Here we see David commanding that the life of his disloyal son be spared. He made this commandment in the presence of all the people so that there would be no misunderstanding that he wanted Absalom captured alive and not killed. In the great battle that took place “in the woods of Ephraim,” (v. 6), we read that “the people of Israel were overthrown there before the servants of David” (v. 7). However, it is obvious that David’s army did not win this battle by strength or strategy alone. In verse 8 we are told that “the woods devoured more people that day than the sword devoured.” No one is sure what happened here, but it is obvious that God intervened in some miraculous way to help David and his captains win a great victory. From what we read in verse 12, it was obvious that the people had heard David’s command that Absalom be spared. However, Joab still “took three spears in his hand and thrust them through Absalom’s heart” (v. 14). It is ironical that a man like Absalom could be so filled with pride and vanity that he would set up a monument to himself (v. 18) yet wind up being buried “in a large pit in the woods” with only “a very large heap of stones” to mark his grave (v. 17).

**Prayer Emphasis:** Thank God that He has “dealt gently” with us for His Son’s sake! Praise Him for teaching us about grace in every book of the Bible. Remain faithful to your Bible reading and prayer time and invite others to read along with you.

## Day 28: 2 Samuel 18:19-33

*“Then Ahimaaz the son of Zadok said, ‘Let me run now and take the news to the king, how the LORD has avenged him of his enemies.’” (2 Samuel 18:19)*

Although you might not have noticed it, this is the third time that we have read about Ahimaaz since we began reading through the book of 2 Samuel. He was the son of Zadok, the priest and, obviously, a very good runner. Back in 15:27 we saw where David asked that Ahimaaz and Jonathan, Abiathar’s son, be assigned the task of delivering messages to him. Such “runners” were common in Bible times and the job required that a man be not only swift of foot but also of a strong stamina. Then, in chapter 17, we saw where this same Ahimaaz (along with Jonathan) was sent to tell David that he should “cross over” the Jordan River “quickly” to save himself and his army. In that same chapter, we read about two messengers who had to be hidden in a well from Absalom’s men. One of those men was this same Ahimaaz. In today’s story we find Ahimaaz strongly desiring to do his job! There was news from the battlefield that Absalom was dead and Ahimaaz wanted to “run...and take the news to the king.” No doubt, his eagerness was based on the fact that he truly believed that David had been “avenged of his enemies” (v. 18). However eager Ahimaaz was to deliver the message, David was equally unprepared to receive it.

**Prayer Emphasis:** Realize that there have been many people who have faithfully used their talents and abilities in the Lord’s service but have served with little notice or fanfare. Pray for your fellow believers everywhere, asking God to bless and protect them as they seek to do His will.

## Day 29: 2 Samuel 19:1-23

*“And Joab was told, ‘Behold, the king is weeping and mourning for Absalom.’ So the victory that day was turned into mourning for all the people. For the people heard it said that day, ‘The king is grieved for his son.’” (2 Samuel 19:1-2)*

David obviously mourned deeply at the loss of his son, Absalom. One might wonder if the words of Nathan the prophet were being replayed in the king’s mind as he suffered over the loss of this son. After David’s sin with Bathsheba, and the murder of her husband Uriah, Nathan had said, “Thus says the LORD God of Israel...You have killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword...Now therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised Me, and taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife” (2 Samuel 12:7-10). How could a father not grieve the death of his son when he felt that he was to blame for it? The word that is translated “mourning” in today’s focus verse is a seldom used Hebrew word that is only found in three places before we get to the books of Samuel. In Genesis 37:34, it is the word that is used to describe how Jacob “mourned for his son (Joseph) for many days” after Joseph’s brothers had reported him dead. In Exodus 33:3-4 we find the children of Israel “mourning” in this same, deep way when God told them that they were “a stiff-necked people” and that He was going to “consume” them. Then, in its last appearance in the Bible prior to the books of Samuel, God used it to describe the “mourning” of the people when He told them that they were going to spend another forty years in the wilderness because of their unbelief and refusal to cross the Jordan River and conquer the land at the advice of Caleb and Joshua (Numbers 14:39).

**Prayer Emphasis:** Pray for those who are mourning the loss of a loved one. Find ways to **render** words and acts of kindness that may **comfort** the grieving during their time of suffering and sorrow. **Remember** that “availability” is one of the greatest “abilities” that a Christian can have!

## Day 30: 2 Samuel 19:24-43

*“And Barzillai the Gileadite came down from Rogelim and went across the Jordan with the king, to escort him across the Jordan. Now Barzillai was a very aged man...and he was very rich.” (2 Samuel 19:31-32)*

Believe it or not, there are three men named Barzillai mentioned in the Bible, and two of them are found in the book of 2 Samuel! When we get to chapter 21, we will read of a Barzillai who was the father-in-law of Merab, Saul’s daughter. So, as you read your way through this book, just remember that the two Barzillais of 2 Samuel are not the same man. The Barzillai that we are reading about today is not new to us. We first read about him back in chapter 17 when he was listed as one of the men who sent David and his men precious supplies in a time of great need after they were forced to flee from Absalom (17:27-29). Now, as David is returning to Jerusalem, we find that Barzillai escorted him part of the way there. David never forgot this man’s acts of kindness. Later, in 1 Kings, we will read that when “the days of David drew near that he should die” that he “charged Solomon” with many things – one of those being that he should “show kindness to the sons of Barzillai the Gileadite, and let them be among those who eat at your table, for so they came to me when I fled from Absalom your brother” (1 Kings 2:1 & 7). Our text tells us two things about Barzillai. It tells us that he was “a very aged man” and that he was also “a very rich man” (v. 32). He was obviously rich in good works and good friends.

**Prayer Emphasis:** Our church is so blessed to have many “aged” saints among us. **Look** around and you will see that many of them are still actively serving in many and various capacities. **Appreciate** our more mature members and **pray** for them daily. **Tell** them how much you love and appreciate them.

## Day 31: 2 Samuel 20:1-12

*“And David said to Abishai, ‘Now Sheba the son of Bichri will do us more harm than Absalom. Take your lord’s servants and pursue him, lest he find for himself fortified cities, and escape us.’” (2 Samuel 20:6)*

There are five men, one city, and one kingdom named “Sheba” in the Bible, but the Sheba that we are reading about today is only mentioned here in 2 Samuel. In the first verse of today’s reading, this man was described by the Holy Spirit as “a rebel.” Some translations render the word that is translated “rebel” in that verse as “a man of Belial.” “Belial” is often treated as if it was a proper name in some translations, but it is actually a term that was used to describe anyone who was considered to be worthless or unreliable. Other translations choose to use such words or phrases as “a wicked man,” “a worthless man,” or “a troublemaker” over the term “rebel.” You might want to use “all of the above” to describe Sheba because he was a very disloyal fellow who had been a leader in the Absalom insurrection. David considered this man to be a very real threat and publicly declared that “Sheba the son of Bichri will do us more harm than Absalom.” Sheba “blew a trumpet” to call the people to an assembly where he announced that “We have no share in David” (v. 1). Sheba obviously was a man of great power and influence for we are told that “every man of Israel deserted David, and followed Sheba.” However, “the men of Judah...remained loyal to David” (v. 2). In the pursuit of Sheba, Joab and Abishai met with Amasa, who had also joined with Absalom in the rebellion against David. Joab killed him, leaving his body to lie “in his blood in the middle of the highway” (v. 12).

**Prayer Emphasis: Remember** that we are not far removed from the times previously described in Judges 21:25 where, “everyone did what was right in his own eyes.” Joab seems to be a very fierce man, but it is apparent that he was “deadly” loyal to King David (pun intended).

## Day 32: 2 Samuel 20:13-26

*“...they cut off the head of Sheba...and threw it out to Joab. Then he blew a trumpet, and they withdrew from the city, every man to his tent. So Joab returned to the king at Jerusalem.” (2 Samuel 20:22)*

Sheba took refuge in the city of Abel, and Joab and his army besieged him there. This was a very old and prominent city which was referred to as “a mother in Israel” and as “the inheritance of the LORD” (v. 19). The term “inheritance of the LORD” indicated that this city was one that was originally assigned to these people during the times of Joshua and the disbursement that was made after the conquest. A siege was a terrible situation for the people of a city because they were cut off from bringing any food or water into the city as well as from taking any of the refuse or waste out. Cities that underwent long sieges often became disease ridden and plagued. Unfortunately, there were many innocent people caught up in the middle of this conflict between Joab and Sheba. As Joab and his men “battered the wall to throw it down” (v. 15) “a wise woman cried out from the city” asking to have a private conversation with Joab (v. 16). Joab knew that he was at war with Sheba and not the people of Abel, so he sent word to the people there that he would “depart from the city” if they would “deliver” Sheba to him (v. 21). And deliver him they did! The people of Abel “cut off the head of Sheba...and threw it out to Joab” so he “blew a trumpet, and they withdrew from the city” (v. 22).

**Prayer Emphasis: Pray** for the many military men and women who risk their lives daily to keep our country free and safe. **Pray** also for the many innocent victims of war and **ask** God to protect them from harm.

## Day 33: 2 Samuel 21:1-22

*“Now there was a famine in the days of David for three years, year after year; and David inquired of the LORD. And the LORD answered, ‘It is because of Saul and his bloodthirsty house, because he killed the Gibeonites.’” (2 Samuel 21:1)*

Drought and famine were common in Bible lands and times. But to have three years of famine was most unusual. The term “year after year” is an indication that these were three consecutive years of famine. Somewhere during that third year of famine “David inquired of the LORD” and obviously asked God if there was some specific reason for which this famine had come. God responded, “It is because of Saul...because he killed the Gibeonites.” While the Bible does not record Saul’s wars with the Gibeonites, it is apparent that he had attacked and killed many of them in battle. If you recall, it was the Gibeonites who had approached Joshua as he led the Israelites in the conquest of the Promised Land. They pretended to be ambassadors from a distant country by making all their clothing, baggage, and supplies appear to be very old – as if they had travelled for a long time and from a great distance. They used this scheme to trick Israel into signing a treaty with them (Joshua 9). Even though that treaty had been signed some 400 years prior to the times of 1 and 2 Samuel, God still expected his people to honor it! David sought to make amends with the Gibeonites by offering them silver and gold, but they would have none of it (v. 4). They remembered Saul as a man who had “consumed (them) and plotted against (them) that (they) should be destroyed” (v. 5). As a gesture of peace, they demanded that “seven men of (Saul’s) descendants be delivered to (them)” so that they could “hang them before the LORD” (v. 6).

**Prayer Emphasis: Realize** that God may use trials and tribulations to get our attention so that we will inquire of Him as to our own spiritual condition. **Seek** God’s face daily and **remember** that God never forgets His promises and that He fully expects us to honor our agreements made with others.

## Day 34: 2 Samuel 22:1-17

*“Then David spoke to the LORD the words of this song, on the day when the LORD had delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul.” (2 Samuel 22:1)*

The “song” that David sang at this time is the song that is found in Psalm 18. It is believed that David had written this song many years earlier when he had first been “delivered...from the hand of Saul.” It is interesting that the Holy Spirit clearly indicates that “David spoke to the LORD” when he sang or recited this psalm. When I read those words, I was reminded of what we read in Exodus 15 where we are told that, “Moses and the children of Israel sang...to the LORD” (Exodus 15:1) in celebration of their freedom from Egypt, their safe passage through the Red Sea, and the destruction of Pharaoh’s army. So, the very first song recorded in the Bible was sung to the LORD! We often think of singing *for* the Lord, but here we are reading about David singing *to* the LORD. The first words to the first song ever recorded in the Bible are “I will sing to the LORD” (Exodus 15:1). When it is time to sing in our services, we should consider the One to whom we are singing and honor Him with the very best praise that we can deliver to Him at that appointed time in the service. Singing is important to God, and it should be important to all His children.

**Prayer Emphasis: Pray** for the many people who are involved in our music ministry today. **Share** your appreciation for them at your next convenient opportunity. And, in the next service you attend, **sing** – and sing “to the Lord!”

## Day 35: 2 Samuel 22:18-34

*“God is my strength and power, and He makes my way perfect. He makes my feet like the feet of the deer, and sets me on my high places.” (2 Samuel 22:33-34)*

Early in this song David had referenced such things as “the waves of death,” “the floods of ungodliness,” “the sorrows of Sheol,” and “the snares of death” confronting him (22:5-6). But during those distressing times he said, “In my distress I called upon the LORD, and cried out to my God” (v. 7). The difference between “calling” to God and “crying out” to God is simple. The first term represents the act of *prayer* while the second represents the actual *petition* that is brought before God. The first time that the word translated “cried out” is found in the Bible is in Exodus when the children of Israel “cried out” to God while in bondage to Egypt (Exodus 2:23). As a result of his prayer and petitions, the last verses of today’s reading find David speaking of “strength and power” and referring to his ability to maneuver his way through life’s difficult paths as gracefully as a deer making its way through the wilderness. Notice that David first declared that “As for God, *His way is perfect*” (v. 31) before he later declared that “He makes *my way perfect*” (v. 33). The word that is translated “perfect” in both of those verses is translated from the same Hebrew word. It is a word that is not often used in the Bible and is most often used in the book of Leviticus where it is often used to refer to the sacrifices that were offered to God as being “without blemish.” When I read those words, I could not help but think of what Jesus said in His first recorded sermon in the Bible: “Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect” (Matthew 5:48).

**Prayer Emphasis: Realize** that you can go places beyond your own reach through the “strength and power” of God. **Believe** that God is only one “cry” away when you next encounter difficult circumstances and situations.

## Day 36: 2 Samuel 22:35-51

*“You have also given me the shield of Your salvation; Your gentleness has made me great. You enlarged my path under me; so my feet did not slip.” (2 Samuel 22:36-37)*

It is interesting that David sang, “Your *gentleness* has made me great.” That was obviously a part of his “song” when he was a young man and first wrote Psalm 18, and it is also obvious that he still felt the same way many years thereafter. The reason that I say that it is interesting that David spoke of God’s “gentleness” here is because the Hebrew word that is used there is translated “afflict” in many other places in the Bible. The KJV translates this word as “afflict” 50 of the 80 times that it is found in the manuscripts. How strange it may seem to us that David would consider God’s “affliction” as “gentleness.” Some of you are probably reading from a version of the Bible that translates that word as “help,” but most of you are probably seeing the word “gentleness” in this verse. The truth is that God does “afflict” his people when they sin. David knew that all too well. However, David also knew that God’s affliction comes in a gentle way so that it brings us *help* rather than *harm*. With that in mind, it is much easier to understand David’s words in Psalm 119:71: “It is good for me that I have been afflicted.” Compare that statement to the fact that David believed that “in faithfulness” God had “afflicted” him (Psalm 119:75), and you will see that David truly believed that God’s chastisement and affliction came in a gentle, helping way.

**Prayer Emphasis: Accept** chastisement when it is due and believe that God’s intention is to *help* you and not to *harm* you. **Trust** God to always be working on your behalf and in your best interest. **Recall** some ways that His *correction* has changed your *direction* in some past time or situation.

## Day 37: 2 Samuel 23:1-17

*“Now these are the last words of David. Thus says David the son of Jesse; thus says the man raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel.” (2 Samuel 23:1)*

It is not the intention of the Holy Spirit to record the final words of David here. If you want to read the last words that David spoke before he died, you will need to read 1 Kings 1 & 2. The “last words” that are referred to in our focus verse make up the last song, or poem, that David wrote. Those “last words” are recorded for us in 2 Samuel 23:1-7. Some have even suggested that “The Last Words of David” is actually the title to this song. You will notice that David does not refer to himself as a king but as “David the son of Jesse” and then as “the man raised up on high” (v.1). David never forgot his humble beginnings or that God was the One responsible for his every success. In the first part of the song we see him recall how God took him from the *pasture* and eventually put him in a *palace*. In verse 3 he spoke as one who “rules over men” and “ruling in the fear of God.” But the center of the song is about David’s “salvation” and the “everlasting covenant” that God had made with him (v. 5). In this song, David makes it clear that he knew that his relationship with God was based on grace and not merit. After waxing eloquent about how a leader should be “like the light of the morning when the sun rises” and like “a morning without clouds” (v. 4), David added, “Although my house is not so with God” (v. 5). David knew that there were some dark days in his life and that there had been many days that had been quite cloudy. In spite of all of that, David knew that he had been forgiven and saved by the grace and mercy of God.

**Prayer Emphasis:** **Recall** your own personal salvation experience and **consider** how far God has brought you since that day. **Share** a brief testimony of God’s grace with someone that you meet today.

## Day 38: 2 Samuel 23:18-39

*“These things Benaiah the son of Jehoida did, and won a name among three mighty men. He was more honored than the thirty, but he did not attain to the first three. And David appointed him over his guard.” (2 Samuel 23:22-23)*

Most of what we know about Banaiah’s family is recorded in verse 20 of today’s reading. His father, “Jehoiada,” was a priest (see 1 Chronicles 27:5). This man was obviously a powerful warrior because the “many deeds” mentioned in today’s Scripture included his killing of “two lion-like heroes of Moab” and an actual “lion in the midst of a pit on a snowy day” (v. 20). Verse 21 includes the fact that “he killed an Egyptian” who was “a spectacular man” by wrestling the man’s spear away from him and then killing him with it. These feats of strength caused him to win “a name among three mighty men.” This does not mean that Benaiah was one of David’s three mighty men, but that they had taken notice of him and probably had a part in David’s appointing him “over his guard” (v. 23). This “guard” was probably the “Cherethites and the Pelethites” that we read about earlier in 2 Samuel 8:18 and 20:23. Some think that the term “guard” there means “council” and that Banaiah had become one of David’s advisors. Verse 23 also mentions “the thirty.” These were men who were great warriors and deathly loyal to David. You can count the names of these men in verses 24-39. However, I hope that you will at least look at the last name on the list of David’s “thirty” who were willing to risk everything in his defense. If you look at verse 39 you will see the familiar name of “Uriah the Hittite” – the husband of Bathsheba that David had had killed in battle so that he could have his wife!

**Prayer Emphasis:** **Realize** that our sin nature can lead us to do things beyond our imagination. **Guard** your heart and **fill** your mind with God’s Word on a daily basis!

## Day 39: 2 Samuel 24:1-9

*“Then Joab gave the sum of the number of the people to the king. And there were in Israel eight hundred thousand valiant men who drew the sword, and the men of Judah were five hundred thousand men.” (2 Samuel 24:9)*

Although we are not told exactly when David demanded that “Joab the commander of the army...go throughout all the tribes of Israel ...and count the people” (v. 2), we can assume that it was somewhere near the end of his life because the book of 1 Chronicles also records this same event in 1 Chronicles 21, which is just before David’s instructions to Solomon on the building of the temple in 1 Chronicles 22. Perhaps David wanted his son to know what he was inheriting and the vastness of the kingdom over which he would eventually reign. The fact that only the military was counted gives some indication that David was interested in determining the nation’s military strength. Even loyal Joab questioned the king’s command to take this census, and verse 4 indicates that Joab was not alone when it said that “the king’s word prevailed against Joab *and* the captains of the army.” But David was the king, and Joab was his loyal follower, so he set out and covered the entire area of the kingdom until “they had gone through all the land” (v. 8). This mission took Joab and his helpers “nine months and twenty days” (v. 8). Some have expressed concern that the account in 1 Chronicles 21 numbers the men of Israel at 1,100,000 while the account in 2 Samuel numbers the same army at 800,000. Some have even claimed this as one of the “contradictions” that are found in the Bible. However, the 1 Chronicles count probably included the 12 units of 24,000 men each (288,000 total) that are mentioned in 1 Chronicles 27:1-15 plus the 12,000 that were attached to Jerusalem (2 Chronicles 1:14). If you add 800,000 + 288,000 + 12,000 you will get 1,100,000 every time!

**Prayer Emphasis:** **Trust** the Bible to be true and accurate! **Believe** that it is God’s message to you and **obey** its every command.

## Day 40: 2 Samuel 24:10-25

*“And Gad came that day to David and said to him, ‘Go up, erect an altar to the LORD on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite.’” (2 Samuel 24:18)*

God sent a prophet to tell David that His judgment was going to come against the people as a result of his sin of numbering the people. Of the three available choices, David must have selected the “three days’ plague” (v. 13) because verse 15 states that “the LORD sent a plague upon Israel” and that, as a result of that plague “seventy thousand men of the people died.” When David cried out to God to spare the people, God sent Gad back to see him and to order him to “erect an altar to the LORD on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite” (v. 18). This site where David was to erect his altar was the same site where Abraham had offered Isaac to God (Genesis 22:2) and on the same spot where Solomon later built the temple (1 Chronicles 22:1). 2 Chronicles 3:1 clearly states that “Solomon began to build the house of the LORD at Jerusalem on Mount Moriah, where the LORD had appeared to his father David, at the place where David had prepared on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite.” Tradition also teaches us that this was the same set of hills upon which Jesus would eventually die for the sins of the world.

**Prayer Emphasis:** **Pray** for our political leaders. **Ask** God to encourage them to stand strong and firm for the things of God. Join us in praying for our country on a daily basis. Exercise your right to **vote** and be a good citizen to both America and Heaven! **Contact us** at 850-562-8069 or [gary@seminolebc.com](mailto:gary@seminolebc.com) if we can pray for you or minister to you and your family in any way.