

Through the Bible

2 Samuel 8-10 & 1 Chronicles 18-19

Chapter 8 – David's Military Victories

- We recap a lot of David's military victories, and though it feels like these battles are happening back to back, they are not, they are just grouped together here instead of spread out chronologically.
- The list of battles, among other things, shows how God was working to fulfill his covenant with David
- Some of these details are repeated in Chronicles, and if you compare stories, you will notice that Chronicles leaves out the more personal details
- we've already talked about why that is but **let's review** (Chronicles as a look back/trajectory of covenant fulfillment/reminder of what's been learned, more than David's personal growth and failure
- 2 Samuel is a docuseries, and Chronicles is a news story
- David is a winning king
- his victories are granted by God ("The Lord gave victory") David wins, not because of his own strength or ability but by God's. God is the hero of the story.
- David often gives credit to the Lord and the spoils of war to the Lord and offers them for the good of all of the people
- Later when Solomon will begin to build a Temple for God, Solomon will use those spoils of war to make holy vessels for the Temple

A few things from ch 8:

- Did you wonder why David used rope to measure off who would die in Moab? (8:1-2)
- Commentators point back to numbers 22-24 when the king of Moab (Balak) hires Balaam (who was a diviner or magician of sorts) to curse Israel.
- Balaam can only bless Israel but because Moab had hired someone to curse Israel the Lord had declared war on Moab and David was continuing that crusade.
- One way to look at it: most conquerors would have slaughtered the entire army, but David spared every third soldier and settled for tribute from the nation.
- Another interesting note: if you read NU 24:17...some translations (and footnotes) say a star will rise and smite the "corners" of Moab.
- Some commentators speculate that though this prophecy is eventually fulfilled in Jesus, David too is only "smiting the corners" here.

Why hamstringing the horses?

- sometimes this is done so the enemy can't use their horses anymore, but for David it could also be careful to keep God's command from Deuteronomy 17 which says kings "shouldn't acquire many horses" (two possibilities)

- some commentators say this word is better translated as sterilize or neuter...although I would say hamstringing seemed more accurate to me
- we don't know for sure but we do know that David reigns with justice and equity and chapter 8 ends with stating this "David reigned over all Israel and did what was just and right for all his people." 2 Sam. 8:15

Chapter 9 David's Kindness to Mephibosheth

- ch 9 is a story about Mephibosheth (also called Meribaal in 1 Chron 8:34)
- Son of Jonathan and grandson of Saul
- His life **seems to have been, from beginning to end, one of trial and discomfort.**
- When his father and grandfather were slain on Mt. Gilboa he was just five years old and he had an accident which deprived him for life of the use of both feet. (2 Samuel 4:4: his nurse tried to flee with him when she got word of Saul & Jonathan's death)
- David goes above and beyond to keep his word to his dear friend Jonathan, SEEKING OUT any family that he might bless/show kindness to (after all, Jonathan was dead, he would never know if David didn't keep his word)
- **This is true character/integrity: fulfilling a promise that no one is around to make sure you keep
- David calls in Ziba (one of Saul's former servants) to seek out any remaining family (note: he is seeking family of **Saul** to show kindness to) and this is how he finds Mephibosheth, with a man named Makir (son of Ammiel), who had raised him
- Mephibosheth also has a son named Micha
- David invites both to Jerusalem and shows them great kindness, restoring land to him and having him eat at his table "Like the king's own sons" (9:11)
- Ziba and his sons are commissioned to serve Mephibosheth by farming the land
- in later chapters of 2 Samuel (16-17) when David's son Absalom starts an insurrection, Mephibosheth will appear to align with Absalom
- There are two accounts of this story, his own (2 Sam 19:24-30) and Ziba's (2 Samuel 17:1-4)
- Ziba will claim that Mephibosheth turns on David (in order to get back his grandfather's kingdom) and Mephibosheth (who remains alive to share his version of the story) who claims Ziba is slandering him
 - he is unkept (not cared for his feet or trimmed his beard or washed his clothes)
 - he claims he asked Ziba to saddle his horse (he couldn't do it himself because he is crippled of course)
 - David shows kindness again AND shows wisdom..rather than choosing between the two he divides saul's kingdom in half between them
 - Mephibosheth says Ziba can have it all, he is just glad David is back
 - this ends his story
- Something to consider: The way David treats Mephibosheth (because of Jonathan), is like how God treats us because of Jesus

-Quite simply, we too are invited to live in God's kingdom and eat at His table
-but there are even more ways we can connect to this story, consider Mephibosheth as a lost sinner:

1. He was born in a rejected family

As the son of Jonathan, Mephibosheth was a member of a rejected family. He was a son of a prince, yet was living in dependence on others away from the city of Jerusalem. Every lost sinner today is born in sin, is away from the family they belong to.

2. He experienced a fall and could not walk

Mephibosheth was lame in both his feet and thus could not walk. All people today are sinners because of the fall of Adam and they cannot walk so as to please God. Instead of walking in obedience, sinners walk "according to the course of this world" ([Eph 2:2](#)). They may try to walk to please God, but no amount of self-effort or good works will save them.

3. He was missing the "best"

Mephibosheth lived at Lo-debar which means "no pasture." That is a fitting description of this present world — no pasture, no place for the souls to be satisfied. Sinners are hungry and thirsty, but this world and its pleasures cannot satisfy.

4. He would have (likely) perished without David's help

We would never have heard of Mephibosheth were it not for the gracious steps David took to save him.

The lost sinner is in a tragic situation. He has fallen; he cannot walk to please God; he is separated from home; he is under condemnation; he cannot help himself.

-Now consider David as the Gracious Savior

1. David made the first move

Salvation is of the Lord! He must take the first steps, because the lost sinner will not by nature seek God ([Rom 3:10-12](#)). David sent for Mephibosheth, just as God sent Christ to this earth to "seek and to save that which was lost" ([Luk 19:10](#)).

2. David acted for Jonathan's sake

This grew out of the loving covenant that David had made with Jonathan years before ([1Sa 20:11-23](#)). David had never seen Mephibosheth, yet he loved him for Jonathan's sake. We are not saved because of our own merit; we are saved for the sake of Christ. We are forgiven for His sake ([Eph 4:32](#)). We are accepted "in the beloved" ([Eph 1:6](#)). It was part of that "everlasting covenant" ([Heb 13:20-21](#)) that the Father should save for Jesus' sake all that trust the Savior.

3. It was an act of kindness

In [2Sa 9:3](#), David calls it "the kindness of God." Christ shows His kindness to us in saving us ([Eph 2:7](#); [Tit 3:4-7](#)). David's throne was a throne of grace, not just a throne of justice. Mephibosheth had no claim upon David; he had absolutely no case to present. Had he appeared before that throne asking for justice, he would have received condemnation.

4. David called him personally and Mephibosheth came

David sent a servant to bring him, but the servant then stepped out of the way to make room for the king. Nobody is saved by a preacher or evangelist; all the servant can do is usher the sinner into the presence of Christ. Note how Mephibosheth fell humbly before David, for he knew his place as a condemned man. How tenderly David said, “Mephibosheth.”

5. David took Mephibosheth into his own family

Like many sinners today, Mephibosheth wanted to work his way into forgiveness ([2Sa 9:6](#), [2Sa 9:8](#)), but David made him a son ([2Sa 9:11](#)).

6. David spoke peace to him

“Fear not!” were David’s words of grace to the trembling crippled man; and “Fear not!” is what Christ says to every believing sinner. “There is therefore now no condemnation . . .” ([Rom 8:1](#)). Through the Word of God before us and the Spirit of God within us, we experience peace.

7. David provided for his every need

Mephibosheth would no longer live at “no pasture”; now he would eat daily at the king’s table. Furthermore, the servant Ziba and his sons became servants to Mephibosheth. And David gave to Mephibosheth all of the inheritance that belonged to him. So Christ satisfies the spiritual and material needs of His family. He has given us an eternal inheritance ([Eph 1:11](#), [Eph 1:18](#); [1Pe 1:4](#); [Col 1:12](#)). If he gave us our rightful inheritance, we would go to hell! But in His grace He has chosen us to share His inheritance with Him, for we are “joint-heirs with Christ” ([Rom 8:17](#)).

I. David protected him from judgment

In [2Sa 21:1-11](#), we see that God sent a famine to the land to chastise His people. When David sought God’s will, it became evident that the famine came because of the wicked way Saul treated the Gibeonites. There is no record of Saul’s exact treatment of them in the Bible, but since Israel had made a treaty with these people ([Jos 9:1-27](#)), Saul’s actions were a direct violation of the truth and were a sin against God. God had waited many years to reveal this sin and send this judgment. Note that David deliberately spared Mephibosheth ([2Sa 9:7](#)).

Of course, as we study this illustration, we must keep in mind that the salvation we have in Christ supplies “much more.” David rescued Mephibosheth from physical danger and supplied his physical needs, but Christ has saved us from eternal hell and daily meets our physical and spiritual needs. We are not sons of some earthly king; we are the very children of God.

Chapter 10 David defeats the Ammonites

- So far David’s life is one of good, sound decisions,
- He is in right relationship with God
- He is a man after God’s heart, a man of justice, grace, kindness and character
- He has military might and a lion’s heart
- He has zeal for the Lord
- And he has not yet made the major mistakes that we know are coming
- He has also GREATLY expanded Israel’s territory (show map)

Let’s recap David’s life/career so far:

-born	1035 ish	
-anointed	1025	10-13 Yrs
-Goliath	1020	15-17 yrs?
-Flees Saul	1007	28-30
-King at Hebron	1000	35 ish

-7 yrs on run

-25 yrs since he was anointed by Samuel

-Jerusalem 997

-2 Samuel 10 981 54-56 ish

-7 yrs solidifying his kingdom

-40 year journey

-David barely gets to see the “top” before his troubles begin

-ch 10 is a story about victory but it contains the seeds of strife

-the Ammonites were a Semitic people, closely related to the Israelites. Despite that relationship, they were more often counted enemies than friends

-Ammonites are descendants of Lot (Abraham’s nephew)

-(recap: after Abraham and Lot separate, Lot settles in Sodom, God destroys Sodom but Lot and his wife and daughter are allowed to escape, they probably think they are the only ppl left and daughters get dad drunk to have incestuous relations to produce children, older daughter has a son named Moab (“from father”) and younger has a son named Ben-Ammi (“son of my people”), Ammonites are descendants of Ben-Ammi and are nomadic and live in territory of modern day Jordan (capital city Amman reflects the name of these ancient ancestors)

-at this time, the Ammonites are a pagan people who worship pagan gods like Molech

-God commanded the Israelites not to marry these pagans, because intermarriage would lead the Israelites to worship false gods

-There is strife between these nations, but it appears there has been a treaty of some sort reached between them that we don’t have a biblical record of

-When King Nahash dies, David decides to show loyalty to him by sending ambassadors to express sympathy to his son, the new king, Hanun

-This simple gesture sparks a series of events that will lead to the worst mistake of David’s life:

-The Ammonite commanders convince Hanun that these ambassadors are spies, sent by David so he can conquer them

-Hanun is convinced and seizes the ambassadors, cutting off half of their beards and cutting off half of their robes above their buttocks in order to send them back to David in deep shame

-these two acts were emasculating

-according to one commentary I read, the beard was a symbol of manhood and cutting the garments is symbolic of castration (something done to prisoners of war to shame them)

-the first campaign:

- the Ammonites figure out that their disrespect for the Israelite ambassadors is going to lead to war....so rather than apologize or make it right, King Hanun hires 33,000 mercenaries from the Aramean states to the north (Syria)
- when David hears of this large troop movement, he deploys Joab and the Israelite army to attack
- Ammonites form battle ranks at the entrance of their capital
- While Aramean mercenaries were strategically positioned nearby in the open field, probably out of sight.
- Their assignment was to attack Joab from the rear once the Israelite army launched a frontal attack on the Ammonites (10:8)
- The Israelites apparently marched into a trap at Rabbah/land of Ammon*
- Joab was forced to divide his army/quickly selected some of the better units to lead personally against the Arameans
- Remainder of the army was placed under the command of **his brother** Abishai
- battle plan: whoever needs help, the other will come to help
- Joab urged all the troops to fight courageously (10:9–12)
- While Abishai held the Ammonites in check, Joab took the battle to the Arameans
- After a fierce struggle the enemy broke ranks and fled
- When the Ammonites saw that their allies had fled, they retreated behind the walls of their capital
- At that point Joab terminated the campaign either because the casualties had been too heavy, or because he did not have the resources to lay siege to the city (10:13–14)
- That battle ended but a new battle commenced/**the second campaign**
- v. 15: “The Arameans now realized that they were no match for Israel so they regrouped” adding additional Aramean troops at Helam (northeast border of Israel)
- When David heard this, he mobilized “all Israel” and crossed the Jordan River, possibly surprising the enemy with this rapid mobilization and deployment because in the battle of Helam, again the Arameans fled before Israel
- *note: 2 Samuel 10 and 1 Chronicles 19 are almost carbon copies of these 2 battles. There is one significant numerical difference, and it shows up now
- Samuel’s account says that David’s forces killed 700 charioteers and 40,000 foot soldiers, the chronicler says 7,000 charioteers and 40,000 soldiers
- *2 possible reasons for this difference:
 - transcription error (not in original text)
 - samuel is numbering chariots and chronicler is numbering the men in the chariots
 - there is also a small discrepancy between horsemen and footmen
- either way, the commander of the united Aramean troops is killed and the remaining Arameans make peace with David...they would no longer come to the aid of the Ammonites (v. 19 says they were afraid to help the Ammonites)
- this brings us to ch 11-12 of 2 Samuel (ch 20 in 1 Chronicles), which is not part of today’s reading, but a couple of things to note:

- they start off with the **3 campaign**: in the spring, David dispatches Joab and the Israelite army to attack the Ammonites
- both versions note that David stays behind while Israel attacks the city of Rabbah
- the version in Samuel then describes David's sin with Bathsheba and succeeding sin to cover it up while also describing what happens in the siege of Rabbah:
 - the Ammonites hole up and hope to outlast the siege
 - although sustaining heavy losses, eventually Joab and the Israelites take the lower city where the water supply is located
 - with the end in sight, Joab sends for David to deliver the final blow...this loyal general wanted his king to receive the credit for capturing this capital
 - David did as Joab suggested, leading the final assault against Rabbah and was credited with conquering them
- the version in Chronicles skips to this point, describing the 75 pound crown taken from the king's head with one of the gems placed into David's own crown
- this part of the story ends with David and Israel bringing home vast amounts of plunder and the people of Ammon being made slaves

Let me end with a thought: this all happened because of the kindness of David...

That kindness led to war.

Sometimes "bad things" happen even when we are doing the right things.