

SECOND SAMUEL

Chapter 8

David's Victories

After this David defeated the Philistines and subdued them, and David took Metheg-ammah out of the hand of the Philistines. 2 And he defeated Moab and he measured them with a line, making them lie down on the ground. Two lines he measured to be put to death, and one full line to be spared. And the Moabites became servants to David and brought tribute. 3 David also defeated Hadadezer the son of Rehob, king of Zobah, as he went to restore his power at the river Euphrates. 4 And David took from him 1,700 horsemen, and 20,000 foot soldiers. And David hamstrung all the chariot horses but left enough for 100 chariots. 5 And when the Syrians of Damascus came to help Hadadezer king of Zobah, David struck down 22,000 men of the Syrians. 6 Then David put garrisons in Aram of Damascus, and the Syrians became servants to David and brought tribute. And the LORD gave victory to David wherever he went. 7 And David took the shields of gold that were carried by the servants of Hadadezer and brought them to Jerusalem. 8 And from Betah and from Berothai, cities of Hadadezer, King David took very much bronze. 9 When Toi king of Hamath heard that David had defeated the whole army of Hadadezer, 10 Toi sent his son Joram to King David, to ask about his health and to bless him because he had fought against Hadadezer and defeated him, for Hadadezer had often been at war with Toi. And Joram brought with him articles of silver, of gold, and of bronze. 11 These also King David dedicated to the LORD, together with the silver and gold that he dedicated from all the nations he subdued, 12 from Edom, Moab, the Ammonites, the Philistines, Amalek, and from the spoil of Hadadezer the son of Rehob, king of Zobah. 13 And David made a name for himself when he returned from striking down 18,000 Edomites in the Valley of Salt. 14 Then he put garrisons in Edom; throughout all Edom he put garrisons, and all the Edomites became David's servants. And the LORD gave victory to David wherever he went.

8:1 *after this.* Chronologically the events of this chapter, or many of them, are probably to be placed between chs. 5 and 6. (CSB)

Metheg Ammah. An unknown site, perhaps near Gath (see 1Ch 18:1). (CSB)

Lit, “bridle of the mother [city].” As David drove out the Philistines, he took their center of power, their bridle. May refer to the events of 5:17–25. (TLSB)

8:2 *Moabites.* Descendants of Lot (Ge 19:37), occupying territory east of the Dead Sea. Saul fought with the Moabites (1Sa 14:47), and David sought refuge in Moab for his parents during his exile from Israel (1Sa 22:3–4). (CSB)

Two lines ... put to death ... one ... spared. Two of every three Moabite fighting men were executed to prevent them from rising up again as a threat. (TLSB)

8:3 *Hadadezer.* Means “Hadad is (my) help.” Hadad was an Aramean deity equivalent to the Canaanite Baal. (CSB)

Lit, “Hadad [the storm god of the Syrians] is [my] help.” (TLSB)

Zobah. Saul had previously fought against the kings of Zobah (1Sa 14:47), whose territory was apparently located in the Beqaa Valley between the Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon mountains, thus on Israel's northern border. (CSB)

Also known as Aram-Zobah (Ps 60 prescript). One of several independent Syrian kingdoms near Damascus. David and Saul both fought against the kings of Zobah. (TLSB)

restore. Saul's earlier victories over the kings of Zobah had extended Israelite control, if only briefly, as far as the fringes of the Euphrates Valley. (CSB)

Euphrates River. The land promised to Abraham had included borders from Egypt to the Euphrates (Ge 15:18–21; Dt 1:7; 11:24; Jos 1:4). Here is at least another provisional fulfillment of this promise (see 1Ki 4:21–24; see also Ge 17:8; Jos 21:43–45). (CSB)

Upper Euphrates, northeast of the Sea of Chinnereth. (TLSB)

8:4 *took from him.* Captured and removed from King Hadadezer's use. (TLSB)

hamstrung ... the chariot horses. Crippled to prevent their use as cavalry or chariots. (TLSB)

8:5–6 *Aram of Damascus.* Major areas and provinces around Damascus. (CSB)

8:5 *came to help Hadadezer.* They feared Israelite expansion to the north. (CSB)

8:7 *shields of gold.* Shields adorned with gold—the phrase is similar to “iron chariots” (see Jos 17:16 and note). (CSB)

8:8 *Betah ... Berothai.* Cities in the kingdom of Zobah under the rule of Hadadezer. Named Tibhath and Cun in 1Ch 18:8. (TLSB)

bronze. Later used by Solomon in the construction of the temple (1Ch 18:8). (CSB)

Later used by Solomon in building the temple (1Ch 18:8). (TLSB)

8:9 *Toi.* Tou in 1Ch 18:9. (TLSB)

Hamath. A kingdom centered on the Orontes River, north of Zobah. (CSB)

Lit, “fortress.” Kingdom of Upper Syria on the Orontes River (Nu 13:21, 34:8), at the foot of Mount Hermon. Cf Am 6:2. (TLSB)

8:10 *to ask about his health and to bless him.* Act of thanksgiving and alliance. (TLSB)

bless. The blessing consisted of silver, gold, and the goodwill of Toi. (TLSB)

8:11 *dedicated to the LORD.* To be used later to build the temple. (TLSB)

8:12 *Ammonites, the Philistines, Amalek.* Unlike other groups listed here, archaeologists have had difficulty distinguishing and defining Amalekite cultural remains. Amalekites largely disappeared as a group in David's time. (TLSB)

8:13 *Valley of Salt.* Region east of the Salt Sea, in the Negeb. (TLSB)

8:1–14 The Lord gives David great victories over the kingdoms around Canaan and Syria and also much wealth as the spoils of war. We, too, are in a battle against temptation and sin. As it was for David, our victory comes only when the Lord gives it. Beginning in Baptism and through faith in Jesus Christ, the Lord gives us Christ’s blood-bought victory over sin, death, and the devil. • Gracious Lord, many are the battles of the sinner and the saint within me, many are the losses I have suffered. Forgive my sins and keep my faith in the one glorious victory won by Jesus Christ. Amen.

David’s Officials

15 So David reigned over all Israel. And David administered justice and equity to all his people. **16** Joab the son of Zeruiah was over the army, and Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud was recorder, **17** and Zadok the son of Ahitub and Ahimelech the son of Abiathar were priests, and Seraiah was secretary, **18** and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was over the Cherethites and the Pelethites, and David’s sons were priests.

8:15 *justice and equity.* As a true theocratic king, David’s reign was characterized by adherence to God’s standards of right rule, as no doubt laid down in Samuel’s “regulations of the kingship.” (CSB)

8:16 *Zeruiah.* David’s sister. (TLSB)

recorder. The precise duties of this official are not indicated, though the position was an important one in the court and was maintained throughout the period of the monarchy (see 2Ki 18:18, 37; 2Ch 34:8; Isa 36:3, 11, 22). He may have been a kind of chancellor or chief administrator of royal affairs, responsible among other things for the royal chronicles and annals. (CSB)

Official charged with recording important events of the kingdom and with briefing the king on critical issues. (TLSB)

8:17 *Zadok son of Ahitub.* First mentioned here, Zadok was a descendant of Eleazar son of Aaron (see 1Ch 6:4–8, 50–52; 24:1–3). His father, Ahitub, is not to be identified with Ichabod’s brother of the same name (1Sa 14:3). Zadok remained loyal to David throughout his reign (15:24–29; 17:15–16; 19:11) and eventually anointed Solomon as David’s successor (1Ki 1:8, 45; 2:35; 4:4). (CSB)

Ahimelech son of Abiathar. It appears that a copyist’s error may have occurred here (repeated in 1Ch 24:3, 6, 31) in which these two names have been transposed. Abiathar is referred to as son of Ahimelech in 1Sa 22:20. While it is true that the Abiathar of 1Sa 22:20 could have had a son named Ahimelech (after his grandfather), such a person does not appear elsewhere in the narratives of Samuel and Kings as a colleague of Zadok, but Abiathar consistently does (15:29, 35; 17:15; 19:11; 20:25; 1Ki 1:7–8, 19; 2:27, 35; 4:4). Abiathar was a descendant of Aaron through Ithamar (1Ch 24:3) in the line of Eli. (CSB)

Seraiah. Also called Sheva (20:25), Shisha (1Ki 4:3) and Shavsha (1Ch 18:16). (CSB)

secretary. His duties presumably included domestic and foreign correspondence, perhaps keeping records of important political events, and various administrative functions (2Ki 12:10–12). (CSB)

Official charged with preparing official public documents and messages from the king. (TLSB)

8:18 *Kerethites and Pelethites.* Under the leadership of Benaiah, they formed a sort of special royal guard for David (23:22–23). “Pelethite” is probably an alternate form of “Philistine.” (CSB)

royal advisers. The Hebrew has the common word for “priests,” but the usage is obscure since that sense appears unlikely. Chronicles has “chief officials at the king’s side,” which supports the meaning “royal advisers.” (CSB)

Or, “chief officials” (cf LXX). Not Levitical priests but ministers of state through whom the king ruled and through whom others would do business with the king. (TLSB)

8:15–18 David rules justly and relies on his ministers of state. Today, the Lord calls each of us to treat others with justice and equity, and not lord the authority of our vocation over them. God is both just and merciful, so He sent His Son, Jesus, to deal with the just judgment we deserve, that we might receive His mercy. • Gracious God and Father, thank You for sending Jesus to answer the demands of Your justice and to show us Your grace. Amen. (TLSB)