

# 1 Chronicles

## Chapter 18

### *David Defeats His Enemies*

After this David defeated the Philistines and subdued them, and he took Gath and its villages out of the hand of the Philistines. 2 And he defeated Moab, and the Moabites became servants to David and brought tribute. 3 David also defeated Hadadezer king of Zobah-Hamath, as he went to set up his monument at the river Euphrates. 4 And David took from him 1,000 chariots, 7,000 horsemen, and 20,000 foot soldiers. And David hamstringed 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 Syria 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 Tibhath and from Cun, cities of Hadadezer, David took a large amount of bronze. With it Solomon made the bronze sea and the pillars and the vessels of bronze. 9 When Tou king of Hamath heard that David had defeated the whole army of Hadadezer, king of Zobah, 10 he sent his son Hadoram 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 Tou. And he sent all sorts of articles of gold, of silver, and of bronze. 11 These also King David dedicated to the LORD, together with the silver and gold that he had carried off from all the nations, from Edom, Moab, the Ammonites, the Philistines, and Amalek. 12 And Abishai, the son of Zeruah, killed 18,000 Edomites in the Valley of Salt. 13 Then he put garrisons in Edom, and all the Edomites became David's servants. And the LORD gave victory to David wherever he went.

**18:1–20:8** The accounts of David's wars serve to show the blessing of God on his reign; God keeps his promise to subdue David's enemies (17:10). These accounts are also particularly relevant to a theme developed in the postexilic prophets: that the silver and gold of the nations would flow to Jerusalem; the tribute of enemy peoples builds the temple of God (18:7–8, 11; 22:2–5, 14–15; cf. Hag 2:1–9, 20–23; Zec 2:7–13; 6:9–15; 14:12–14). While this passage of Chronicles portrays God's blessing on David, it simultaneously explains the Chronicler's report later (22:6–8; 28:3) that David could not build the temple because he was a man of war. The material in these chapters essentially follows the Chronicler's source in 2 Samuel. The major differences are not changes the Chronicler introduces into the text, but items he chooses not to deal with—in particular 2Sa 9; 11:2–12:25, where accounts not compatible with his portrait of David occur. (CSB)

**18:1–13** Wars with Moab (v 2), Zobah-Hamath (vv 3–4), Syria (vv 5–6), and Edom (vv 12–13). The Chronicler follows 2Sm 8:1–14 with several significant changes. Not mentioned is David's cruel treatment of the Moabites (2Sm 8:2), perhaps because such actions would reflect poorly on his noble character. Though not permitted to engage directly in the construction of the temple, David did much to make the deferred project an eventual success. His first contribution to the cause was of a political nature. Through David's conquests, God ensured that neighboring nations that had previously harassed Israel, particularly during the period of the judges, would not interfere during Solomon's building of the temple. David also contributed directly to the building program. He supplied the site for the temple and stockpiled material for it (21:1–22:5). (TLSB)

**18:2** The Chronicler omits the harsh treatment of the Moabites recorded in 2Sa 8:2, perhaps so that no unnecessary cruelty or brutality would tarnish his portrait of David. (CSB)

*servants ... tribute.* Not slaves, but a vassal state to Israel. (TLSB)

**18:3** *Zobah-Hamath ... Euphrates.* Northernmost extent of David's influence, later controlled by Solomon. (TLSB)

**18:5** *Arameans.* Mentioned also among the enemies of Saul (1Sa 14:47, "Zobah"). By the time of David they were united north (Zobah) and south (Beth Rehob, 2Sa 10:6) under Hadadezer. They persisted as a foe of Israel for two centuries until they fell to Assyria shortly before the northern kingdom likewise fell (2Ki 16:7–9). (CSB)

**18:8** *Tebah and Cun.* Cities near the mountains of Lebanon under the rule of Hadadezer, king of Zobah. (TLSB)

*which Solomon used to make ... various bronze articles.* See 2Ch 4:2–5, 18. (CSB)

Spoil of David's victory, used by Solomon in the temple appointments, once again connecting David to the temple. (TLSB)

**18:11** *silver and gold.* Temple vessels could be made from these precious metals, or they were added to the temple treasuries and used to support the priests and festivals. (TLSB)

**18:12** *Abishai.* 2Sa 8:13 speaks only of David (see 1Ki 11:15–16; Ps 60 title). (CSB)

He acted for David, who is said to have done this in 2Sm 8:13. (TLSB)

*David's Administration*

**14 So David reigned over all Israel, and he administered justice and equity to all his people. 15 And Joab the son of Zeruiah was over the army; and Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud was recorder; 16 and Zadok the son of Ahitub and Ahimelech the son of Abiathar were priests; and Shavsha was secretary; 17 and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was over the Cherethites and the Pelethites; and David's sons were the chief officials in the service of the king.**

**18:14–17** David's officers and their duties are named: military leader, recorder, priests, secretaries, and chief officials. Cf 2Sm 8:15–18. (TLSB)

**18:14** *David ... administered justice.* He served as the high court (cf 1Ki 3:16–28). (TLSB)

*equity.* Fairness, equal treatment before the law. (TLSB)

**18:15–17** The titles and duties of these officers at David's court appear to be modeled on the organization of Egyptian functionaries serving Pharaoh. (CSB)

**18:16** *Zadok ... Ahimelech son of Abiathar.* (CSB)

Two priests are named: Zadok the son of Ahitub and Ahimelech the son of Abiathar. (TLSB)

**18:17** *Kerethites and Pelethites.* Apparently a group of foreign mercenaries who constituted part of the royal bodyguard (2Sa 8:18; 20:23). They remained loyal to David at the time of the rebellions of Absalom

(2Sa 15:18) and Sheba (2Sa 20:7) and supported the succession of Solomon against his rival Adonijah (1Ki 1:38, 44). (CSB)

*chief officials.* The earlier narrative at this point uses the Hebrew term ordinarily translated “priests.” The Chronicler has used a term for civil service instead of sacral service. Two approaches to this passage are ordinarily followed: 1. Some scholars see here an attempt by the Chronicler to keep the priesthood restricted to the Levitical line as part of his larger concern with legitimacy of cultic institutions in his own day. 2. Others argue that the Hebrew term used in 2Sa 8:18 could earlier have had a broader meaning than “priest” and could be used of some other types of officials (cf. 2Sa 20:26; 1Ki 4:5). The Chronicler used an equivalent term, since by his day the Hebrew term for “priest” was restricted to cultic functionaries. The Septuagint, Targum, Old Latin and Josephus all translate the term in Samuel by some word other than “priest.” (CSB)

Cf 2Sm 8:18, where David’s sons are referred to as “priests,” using the Hbr term for “priest” in an older broader sense, while 1Ch uses “heads” to describe their role as leaders (e.g., 27:1). (TLSB)