

SECOND SAMUEL

Chapter 8

David's Victories

In the course of time, David defeated the Philistines and subdued them, and he took *Metheg Ammah* from the control of the Philistines. ² David also defeated the Moabites. He made them lie down on the ground and measured them off with a length of cord. Every two lengths of them were put to death, and the third length was allowed to live. So the Moabites became subject to David and brought tribute. ³ Moreover, David fought Hadadezer son of Rehob, king of Zobah, when he went to restore his control along the Euphrates River. ⁴ David captured a thousand of his chariots, seven thousand charioteers and twenty thousand foot soldiers. He hamstringed all but a hundred of the chariot horses. ⁵ When the Arameans of Damascus came to help Hadadezer king of Zobah, David struck down twenty-two thousand of them. ⁶ He put garrisons in the Aramean kingdom of Damascus, and the Arameans became subject to him and brought tribute. The LORD gave David victory wherever he went. ⁷ David took the gold shields that belonged to the officers of Hadadezer and brought them to Jerusalem. ⁸ From Tebah and Berothai, towns that belonged to Hadadezer, King David took a great quantity of bronze. ⁹ When Tou king of Hamath heard that David had defeated the entire army of Hadadezer, ¹⁰ he sent his son Joram to King David to greet him and congratulate him on his victory in battle over Hadadezer, who had been at war with Tou. Joram brought with him articles of silver and gold and bronze. ¹¹ King David dedicated these articles to the LORD, as he had done with the silver and gold from all the nations he had subdued: ¹² Edom and Moab, the Ammonites and the Philistines, and Amalek. He also dedicated the plunder taken from Hadadezer son of Rehob, king of Zobah. ¹³ And David became famous after he returned from striking down eighteen thousand Edomites in the Valley of Salt. ¹⁴ He put garrisons throughout Edom, and all the Edomites became subject to David. The LORD gave David victory wherever he went.

8:1 *In the course of time.* Chronologically the events of this chapter, or many of them, are probably to be placed between chs. 5 and 6 (see 7:1 and note). (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). See note on Ru 1:22. (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). See map No. 5 at the end of the Study Bible. (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. See Jos 11:6 and note. David may not have understood the value of the chariot as a military weapon. (CSB)

Crippled to prevent their use as cavalry or chariots. (TLSB)

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

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

8:7 *gold shields.* 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 (see v. 3 and note). (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.* See 2Ki 14:7; see also Ps 60 title. (CSB)

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 David reigned over all Israel, doing what was just and right for all his people. ¹⁶ Joab son of Zeruiah was over the army; Jehoshaphat son of Ahilud was recorder; ¹⁷ Zadok son of Ahitub and Ahimelech son of Abiathar were priests; Seraiah was secretary; ¹⁸ Benaiah son of Jehoiada was over the Kerethites and Pelethites; and David’s sons were royal advisers.

8:15 *just and right.* As a true theocratic king, David’s reign was characterized by adherence to God’s standards of right rule (see notes on 1Sa 8:3; 12:3), as no doubt laid down in Samuel’s “regulations of the kingship” (see 1Sa 10:25 and note; 1Ki 2:3–4). (CSB)

8:16 *Joab son of Zeruiah was over the army.* See notes on 2:13; 5:8. (CSB)

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 (see notes on 1Sa 2:31, 33). (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*. See note on 1Sa 30:14. 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" (see NIV text note; see also 20:26), but the usage is obscure since that sense appears unlikely. Chronicles has "chief officials at the king's side" (see 1Ch 18:17 and note), 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)