

2 Samuel 21-24

INTRO

Let's recap the *outline* for 2 Samuel.

I. David's Reign Over Judah Chs. 1-4

II. David's Reign Over All Israel Ch. 5-10

III. David's Troubles Chs. 11-20

IV. Appendices Chs. 21-24

We're in the *last section*; the Appendices where we read of some details about David's reign.

IV. Appendices Chs. 20:23-Ch. 24

A. *Administrative Details 20:23-26*

B. *David Avenges the Gibeonites 21:1-14*

We've already covered this. We'll pick it up at . . .

C. *Giant Killers 21:15-22*

¹⁵When the Philistines were at war again with Israel, David and his servants with him went down and fought against the Philistines; and David grew faint. ¹⁶Then Ishbi-Benob [he lives in Nob], who was one of the sons of the giant, the weight of whose bronze spear was three hundred *shekels*, [about 8 lbs.] who was bearing a new sword, thought he could kill David. ¹⁷But Abishai the son of Zeruiah [Joab's brother] came to his aid, and struck the Philistine and killed him. Then the men of David swore to him, saying, "You shall go out no more with us to battle, lest you quench the lamp of Israel."

It's at this point in David's story the writer begins the last chapter.

As great a man as David was, like everyone else, he grew old & the vigor that had marked his earlier life diminished.

While the Philistine domination was now forever broken, they still rallied now & then and came out to see if they could reassert themselves against Israel.

In one of their raids, when the battle was prolonged, the aged David grew faint and the Philistine champion, from the family of the giant mercenaries that had at one time formed the backbone of Philistia's army, saw his chance to strike a crippling blow by pressing the attack on Israel's king.

The NKJ says he carried a "new sword" – but notice the "sword" is italicized – because in Hebrew it just says, "New" – meaning something new, some new innovation in weaponry.

This might have been a mace, war club, or pike of some kind that was always *dreaded* in battle.

Any new weapon posed a grave threat because those it was used against would not know how to defend against it.

When Ishbi-Benob pressed his attack against the weak & fainting David, Abishai intervened and slew him.

After this the military leaders told David his presence at the head of the army was no longer helpful.

He was proving to be a liability rather than an asset.

In ancient warfare, if the king fell in battle it was so demoralizing that it usually meant defeat.

¹⁸Now it happened afterward that there was again a battle with the Philistines at Gob. Then Sibbechai the Hushathite killed Saph, who was one of the sons of the giant. ¹⁹Again there was war at Gob with the Philistines, where Elhanan the son of Jaare-Oregim the Bethlehemite killed *the brother of Goliath* the Gittite, the shaft of whose spear was like a weaver's beam.

Notice the words, "the brother of" in v. 19 are italicized. If we take them out, it would say that Elhanan killed Goliath.

But it was David who slew Goliath years before.

The translators add the words "brother of" here because 1 Chr. 20: 5 make it clear that Elhanan killed Goliath's brother Lahmi.

²⁰Yet again there was war at Gath, where there was a man of *great* stature, who had six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot, twenty-four in number; and he also was born to the giant. ²¹So when he defied Israel, Jonathan the son of Shimea, David's brother, killed him. ²²These four were born to the giant in Gath, and fell by the hand of David and by the hand of his servants.

Six digits on the hands & feet is not uncommon in those who carry a hereditary proclivity toward *gigantism*.

The reason the writer records the slaying of these 4 giants was to show how David's legacy wasn't limited to what he himself accomplished but in what he inspired in the lives of others.

His faith stirred up the faith of others. They were inspired by his example and rose to duplicate what he'd done.

In the final analysis that's the difference between a *good* leader & a *great* leader.

A good leader does a good job of leading, but the great leader makes sure good leaders *come after* him/her.

David's men told him he couldn't go out to battle anymore lest he fall & Israel's light go out.

But there was more than just David's light leading Israel at this time because his fire had kindled theirs.

D. David's Praise for Deliverance Ch. 22

¹Then 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.

While this is found at the end of 2 Samuel, there's good reason for understanding it as having been written much earlier in David's life, probably right after his long contest with Saul & his political cronies was finally over.

The reason for seeing it that way will become clear later.

With only slight variation, it's the same as Psalm 18.

²And he said: "The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; ³The God of my strength, in whom I will trust; My shield and the horn [strength] of my salvation, My stronghold and my refuge; My Savior, You save me from violence.

In the age of modern warfare, these idioms of battle don't translate well.

But when battle was conducted by massed armies facing each other across a field, and the killing was done with an arm's reach of your adversary, what David says here becomes immensely meaningful.

God is a rock, a fortress.

In battle, position was everything!

You wanted to stand on bedrock while your enemy was on dirt or sand.

And those stationed in a fortified position always had a huge advantage over attackers who were out in the open.

God is a shield – crucial when the enemy is firing arrows, throwing spears, shooting darts, or swinging a sword.

God is a stronghold & refuge.

This was the inner keep of a castle or fort. The central most tower that was the last place defenders would take their stand. The stronghold was *impregnable*.

Over the years, David had faced many seeming impossible difficulties & had dozens of narrow escapes.

And though his life has been one of constant warfare, as he looks back over it all, he sees that God has preserved him through it all.

God has not promised us an easy or conflict free life – but He has promised us *victory* in & through it all if we'll look to Him.

⁴I will call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised; So shall I be saved from my enemies.

David knew his salvation was to be found in calling to the Lord for help.

Not man, not a bottle, drugs, the help line or the latest self-help best-seller.

⁵"When the waves of death surrounded me, The floods of ungodliness made me afraid. ⁶The sorrows of Sheol surrounded me; The snares of death confronted me. ⁷In my distress I called upon the LORD, And cried out to my God; He heard my voice from His temple, And my cry entered His ears.

David Doesn't want anyone to think that his faith in God meant he never feared or struggled.

He knew what it was like to tremble & worry.

But fear wasn't the end of the story – faith always prevailed because God never fails.

He goes on now to speak in poetic form of the power of God.

⁸"Then the earth shook and trembled; The foundations of heaven quaked and were shaken, Because He was angry. ⁹Smoke went up from His nostrils, And devouring fire from His mouth; Coals were kindled by it. ¹⁰He bowed the heavens also, and came down With

darkness under His feet. ¹¹He rode upon a cherub, and flew; And He was seen upon the wings of the wind. ¹²He made darkness canopies around Him, Dark waters *and* thick clouds of the skies. ¹³From the brightness before Him Coals of fire were kindled. ¹⁴“The LORD thundered from heaven, And the Most High uttered His voice. ¹⁵He sent out arrows and scattered them; Lightning bolts, and He vanquished them. ¹⁶Then the channels of the sea were seen, The foundations of the world were uncovered, At the rebuke of the LORD, At the blast of the breath of His nostrils. ¹⁷“He sent from above, He took me, He drew me out of many waters. ¹⁸He delivered me from my strong enemy, From those who hated me; For they were too strong for me. ¹⁹They confronted me in the day of my calamity, But the LORD was my support. ²⁰He also brought me out into a broad place; He delivered me because He delighted in me.

David describes the power of God in picturesque & poetic fashion.

But it's the next verses that move us to conclude he authored this psalm when he was young, when his early faith in God was the most obvious thing about him. The hideous moral failures of his later years were still years in the future.

²¹“The LORD rewarded me according to my righteousness; According to the cleanness of my hands He has recompensed me. ²²For I have kept the ways of the LORD, And have not wickedly departed from my God. ²³For all His judgments were before me; And as for His statutes, I did not depart from them. ²⁴I was also blameless before Him, And I kept myself from my iniquity. ²⁵Therefore the LORD has recompensed me according to my righteousness, According to my cleanness in His eyes.

It's hard to imagine the same guy who wrote Psalm 51 after his fall with Bathsheba claiming this.

No – David is contrasting himself here with the spiritual hypocrisy he'd seen for years in his challenge with Saul and his supporters.

In comparison *with them*, David was a walking saint.

²⁶“With the merciful You will show Yourself merciful; With a blameless man You will show Yourself blameless; ²⁷With the pure You will show Yourself pure; And with the devious You will show Yourself shrewd. ²⁸You will save the humble people; But Your eyes are on the haughty, *that* You may bring *them* down. ²⁹“For You are my lamp, O LORD; The LORD shall enlighten my darkness. ³⁰For by You I can run against a troop; By my God I can leap over a wall.

David admits his source of energy, the well-spring of his life is his relationship with God.

³¹As for God, His way *is* perfect; The word of the LORD *is* proven; He *is* a shield to all who trust in Him. ³²“For who *is* God, except the

LORD? And who *is* a rock, except our God?

David returns to the idiom of war as he continues to praise God.

He sees the Lord as the One who'd trained & empowered him for armed conflict.

But the battle was with the forces of evil; it's a spiritual contest.

While David has been a soldier & has shed a lot of blood – he recognizes that warfare in the physical world is only the symptom of a deeper & more fundamental battle in the spiritual realm.

³³God *is* my strength *and* power, And He makes my way perfect. ³⁴He makes my feet like the *feet* of deer, And sets me on my high places. ³⁵He teaches my hands to make war, So that my arms can bend a bow of bronze. ³⁶“You have also given me the shield of Your salvation; Your gentleness has made me great. ³⁷You enlarged my path under me; So my feet did not slip. ³⁸“I have pursued my enemies and destroyed them; Neither did I turn back again till they were destroyed. ³⁹And I have destroyed them and wounded them, So that they could not rise; They have fallen under my feet. ⁴⁰For You have armed me with strength for the battle; You have subdued under me those who rose against me. ⁴¹You have also given me the necks of my enemies, So that I destroyed those who hated me. ⁴²They looked, but *there was none to save*; *Even to the LORD*, but He did not answer them.

In the ancient world, when nations went to war, they saw it as a profoundly spiritual contest.

The victors were believed to have won because the god they represented was stronger than his spiritual opponent, the god of the other nation.

So if a god was deemed as mighty, his name would be invoked by an army that was losing as a last resort – a kind of appeal to whatever deity was out there that wanted to grab some fame by giving them a turn-around victory.

David said Yahweh wasn't just some deity to be invoked as a last resort.

⁴³Then I beat them as fine as the dust of the earth; I trod them like dirt in the streets, *And* I spread them out. ⁴⁴“You have also delivered me from the strivings of my people; You have kept me as the head of the nations. A people I have not known shall serve me. ⁴⁵The foreigners submit to me; As soon as they hear, they obey me. ⁴⁶The foreigners fade away, *And* come frightened from their hideouts.

As I've mentioned before, during David's & Solomon's reign, Israel rose to great power – the pre-eminent nation in the middle east at that time.

Part of the reason for this is because of the *decline* of the empires around Israel.

Egypt, Mesopotamia, & Asia Minor all went through periods of inner struggle & turmoil that allowed Israel to rise in power & influence.

Of course God was behind all this, weakening the surrounding nations so that Israel's Golden Age could come.

He'd promised that when they looked to Him and put Him first, they would be

the head, not the tail.

Under David's inspired & faithful leadership, the nation prospered – in large part because their classic competitors declined.

What was true in David's day is equally true today.

Israel's security doesn't come from the EU, UN, US, or treaties with the Arab League.

It doesn't matter if Iran has nukes & Ahmadinejad has his finger on the button.

If Israel returned with a whole heart to her covenant with God, He would take care of her security & deal with those nations that rise against her – just as He's promised to.

47“The LORD lives! Blessed be my Rock! Let God be exalted, The Rock of my salvation! **48***It is* God who avenges me, And subdues the peoples under me; **49**He delivers me from my enemies. You also lift me up above those who rise against me; You have delivered me from the violent man. **50**Therefore I will give thanks to You, O LORD, among the Gentiles, And sing praises to Your name. **51***He is* the tower of salvation to His king, And shows mercy to His anointed, To David and his descendants forevermore.”

E. David's Last Words 23:1-7

1Now these are the last words of David.

Meaning, his last *poetic* composition – his last Psalm as is made clear by what comes next -

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“The Spirit of the LORD spoke by me, And His word was on my tongue. **3**The God of Israel said, The Rock of Israel spoke to me: ‘He who rules over men *must be* just, Ruling in the fear of God. **4**And *he shall be* like the light of the morning *when* the sun rises, A morning without clouds, *Like* the tender grass *springing* out of the earth, By clear shining after rain.’ **5**“Although my house *is* not so with God, Yet He has made with me an everlasting covenant, Ordered in all *things* and secure. For *this is* all my salvation and all *my* desire; Will He not make *it* increase? **6**But *the sons* of rebellion *shall all be* as thorns thrust away, Because they cannot be taken with hands. **7**But the man *who* touches them Must be armed with iron and the shaft of a spear, And they shall be utterly burned with fire in *their* place.”

David looks past his own reign to the Messiah, the One Who will sit on his throne and complete the rule he'd begun.

History under man's rule is like a stormy night that will break into clear, blue skies with the coming of the Messiah.

F. David's Mighty Men 23:8-39

⁸These are the names of the mighty men whom David had: Josheb-Basshebeth the Tachmonite, [the wise] chief among the captains. He was called Adino the Eznite, because he had killed eight hundred men at one time.

Josheb the Wise was nicknamed – Adino the Eznite / Ornament the Sharp.

In other words, Josheb was so clever, so sharp, specially when it came to battle, that he'd become a kind of ornament to David.

When *Joe Montana* was QB for the 49ers, he was brilliant!

It's like he was born to play football.

But Joe wasn't the only man on the team; there were dozens of guys.

But Joe had an ornament in *Jerry Rice*.

Josheb was Jerry Rice to David's Joe Montana.

⁹And after him was Eleazar the son of Dodo, the Ahohite, [a clan] one of the three mighty men with David when they defied the Philistines who were gathered there for battle, and the men of Israel had retreated. ¹⁰He arose and attacked the Philistines until his hand was weary, and his hand stuck to the sword. The LORD brought about a great victory that day; and the people returned after him only to plunder.

There was a battle with the Philistines in which all but David & 3 of his mighty men refused to retreat.

Eleazer was one of the 3 and instead of waiting for the Philistine onslaught, he took the battle to them.

He gripped his sword so long & hard, the muscles locked in a cramp he couldn't release.

¹¹And after him was Shammah the son of Agee the Hararite [mountain-dweller]. The Philistines had gathered together into a troop where there was a piece of ground full of lentils. So the people fled from the Philistines. ¹²But he stationed himself in the middle of the field, defended it, and killed the Philistines. So the LORD brought about a great victory.

Shammah took a stand like David had done with Goliath in the Valley of Elah.

He knew the land had been given to the people of Israel and that they had a command to possess it.

He trusted God to empower him to obey His command despite the odds.

¹³Then three of the thirty chief men [meaning the guys in vs. 8-12] went down at harvest time and came to David at the cave of Adullam. And the troop of Philistines encamped in the Valley of Rephaim.

This was in those years when David was on the run from Saul.

It was during this time many of the outcasts & misfits in Israel went to David and made him their leader.

It was from this band of unlikely social rejects that most of David's Mighty men were drawn.

¹⁴David was then in the stronghold, and the garrison of the Philistines was then in Bethlehem. [David's hometown] ¹⁵And David said with

longing, “Oh, that someone would give me a drink of the water from the well of Bethlehem, which *is* by the gate!”

David was homesick and just casually mentioned that he wished he could drink from the well he’d drunk so many times as a kid.

But the well was doubly off-limits since it meant exposure to both Saul’s troops and a Philistines outpost that had been set up in Bethlehem.

David was simply expressing a whimsical thought – he had no idea what was to come of it.

¹⁶So the three mighty men broke through the camp of the Philistines, drew water from the well of Bethlehem that was by the gate, and took it and brought *it* to David. Nevertheless he would not drink it, but poured it out to the LORD. ¹⁷And he said, “Far be it from me, O LORD, that I should do this! Is *this not* the blood of the men who went in *jeopardy of their lives?*” Therefore he would not drink it. These things were done by the three mighty men.

When these 3 guys returned carrying this drink to David, he was dumb-struck.

Remember, he was very young & this was still in the early days of his being a leader.

The reality of just how radically men would risk their lives for him hit him like a punch in the stomach.

David knew he’d been anointed by Samuel to lead the nation.

Though he was on the run from Saul, that didn’t in any way lessen his anointing.

The thought that something as simple as a careless word would move 3 men to risk their lives just to get him a drink of water was staggering, humbling, terrifying.

If he drank the water, that might only compel more guys to do it.

So he poured it out and vowed to be careful with how he would use the loyalty of his men.

He wouldn’t use the anointing of God for his own, selfish ends.

That’s a ***conviction & commitment*** we could hope & pray would be true of all God’s servants.

¹⁸Now Abishai the brother of Joab, the son of Zeruiah, was chief of *another* three. He lifted his spear against three hundred *men*, killed *them*, and won a name among *these* three. ¹⁹Was he not the most honored of three? Therefore he became their captain. However, he did not attain to the *first* three.

The guys listed in vs. 8-12.

²⁰Benaiah was the son of Jehoiada, the son of a valiant man from Kabzeel, who had done many deeds. He had killed two lion-like heroes of Moab. He also had gone down and killed a lion in the midst of a pit on a snowy day. ²¹And he killed an Egyptian, a spectacular man. The Egyptian *had* a spear in his hand; so he went down to him with a staff, wrested the spear out of the Egyptian’s hand, and killed him with his own spear. ²²These *things* Benaiah the son of Jehoiada

did, and won a name among three mighty men. ²³He was more honored than the thirty, but he did not attain to the *first* three. And David appointed him over his guard.

In vs. 24-39 is a listing of all 37 of David's mighty men.

What's so amazing about this list is that these guys didn't start out as mighty men – for the most part, they began as distressed, troubled, indebted losers.

The whole reason they began following David in the first place was because they didn't fit in anywhere else.

Society's rejects became the Kingdom's backbone!

That's what happens when you loyally follow God's anointed.

Remember who the 12 were when Jesus invited them to be His disciples –

Rejects, washouts from the Torah schools of Galilee.

Following Jesus turns rejects into leaders; losers into mighty warriors.

G. The Purchase of the Threshing Floor Ch. 24