

## 2 Samuel 8-10 Chapter Study

### INTRO

David is now reigning over all 12 tribes of Israel from his new capital at Jerusalem.

He's not only brilliantly led the nation in political restructuring & unity,

He's also led a renewal of the Israel's covenant with God.

That means justice is becoming more consistent & uniform throughout the land as judges are installed who decided by God's law rather than whim.

As the people return to the Lord, & especially as the *leaders* make decisions based on God's Word, it means God's favor is returned to the land;

- 1) Foreign oppression is lifted.
- 2) Their fields & flocks produce bounty
- 3) Their health improves
- 4) Prosperity increases
- 5) Peace reigns

All these were the blessings God had promised through the covenant when they obediently followed Him. As king, *David led* in all this.

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Now the author gives us a summary of the military advances Israel made under David's leadership.

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

#### F. David's Conquests 8:1-14

##### 1. Defeat of Philistines 8:1

**<sup>1</sup>After this it came to pass that David attacked the Philistines and subdued them. And David took Metheg Ammah from the hand of the Philistines.**

Metheg Ammah means "Bridle of the Mother City" – it speaks of control, just as a bridle controls a horse.

In other words (IOW) whoever controlled this city controlled the entire region.

In 1 Chr. 18:1 we learn Metheg Ammah was another name for Gath – the chief city of the Philistines.

From this point forward, the Philistines *never* pose a significant threat to Israel.

##### 2. Defeat of Moab 8:2

**<sup>2</sup>Then he defeated Moab. Forcing them down to the ground, he measured them off with a line. With two lines he measured off those to be put to death, and with one full line those to be kept alive. So the Moabites became David's servants, and brought tribute.**

It's curious that David would attack Moab when his great grandmother Ruth had been from there.

It was because of that he'd sent his mother & father to hide there from Saul years before.

Jewish tradition says the king of Moab murdered them in an act of treachery

against David then turned all of Moab against Israel when David replaced Saul.

David conquered Moab & reduced its population by 2/3's, making them a vassal state.

This seems like a terrible atrocity & by modern standards *is*.

But David understood if he left Moab as it was, they'd quickly recover from defeat to endanger Israel's southeastern border .

David didn't possess enough troops to station in that region to protect it.

So he did what he had to do to ensure Moab wouldn't trouble the cities along Israel's border.

By reducing their population to 1/3 of normal, the Moabites would be so busy providing for their basic necessities & the tribute-fee David levied, they wouldn't have time to stage hostilities.

So this seems like an atrocity to us, but David did it with the intent of fulfilling his role as the protector of his people against what he deemed a valid, real threat.

### **3. Defeat of Zobah 8:3-4**

**<sup>3</sup>David also defeated Hadadezer the son of Rehob, king of Zobah, as he went to recover his territory at the River Euphrates. <sup>4</sup>David took from him one thousand *chariots*, seven hundred horsemen, and twenty thousand foot soldiers. Also David hamstrung all the chariot horses, except that he spared *enough* of them for one hundred chariots.**

*Hadadezer* was a title, not a personal name. It means "Hadad is my help"

It was given to the king of the Arameans who lived in Zobah, a region in northern Lebanon, just west of Damascus.

Hadad was the common name for *Baal*, the Canaanite storm god.

So really, Hadadezer meant – Baal is my helper.

When the empires of Egypt, the Hittites, & the Babylonians declined at this time, Hadadezer pressed the borders of his kingdom into the areas they left.

When he made a push north toward the Euphrates, David attacked his southern flank.

He easily defeated the troops left to protect that region.

Again, hamstringing horses seems cruel, but he didn't kill them.

By hamstringing them & turning them loose, he allowed them to live but they'd be unfit to use in battle.

Remember horses had primary values as a military asset & David knew God had given strict command Israel was not to amass a lot of horses, lest they begin to trust in their weaponry rather than Him.

In obedience to the Lord, David kept only a hundred horses to use in pulling chariots.

This was a huge defeat for the Arameans of Zobah.

### **4. Defeat of Syria 8:5-8**

**<sup>5</sup>When the Syrians of Damascus came to help Hadadezer king of Zobah, David killed twenty-two thousand of the Syrians. <sup>6</sup>Then David put garrisons in Syria of Damascus; and the Syrians became David's**

servants, *and* brought tribute. So the LORD preserved David wherever he went. <sup>7</sup>And David took the shields of gold that had belonged to the servants of Hadadezer, and brought them to Jerusalem. <sup>8</sup>Also from Betah and from Berothai, cities of Hadadezer, King David took a large amount of bronze.

The Syrians were also Arameans, relatives of the Arameans in Zobah.

When they saw Hadadezer going down, they came to his aid but suffered the same fate as Zobah.

David then put military garrisons throughout their territory to make sure the annual tribute was sent and that not insurrections could gain ground.

V. 6 says that where ever David turned, he had victory.

### **5. Alliance with Hamath 8:9-12**

<sup>9</sup>When Toi king of Hamath heard that David had defeated all the army of Hadadezer, <sup>10</sup>then Toi sent Joram his son to King David, to greet him and bless him, because he had fought against Hadadezer and defeated him (for Hadadezer had been at war with Toi); and *Joram* brought with him articles of silver, articles of gold, and articles of bronze.

Hamath was another Aramean city-state, like Damascus & Zobah who vied with each other for control.

Whereas Damascus came to the aid of their rival Zobah, when Toi saw that both had been whooped by Israel, he decided the best course was to capitulate early and present himself as an ally.

Sending his son with tribute went a long way in securing David's favor.

<sup>11</sup>King David also dedicated these to the LORD, along with the silver and gold that he had dedicated from all the nations which he had subdued—<sup>12</sup>from Syria, from Moab, from the people of Ammon, from the Philistines, from Amalek, and from the spoil of Hadadezer the son of Rehob, king of Zobah.

The King's share of the spoils from these victories went into the treasury of the tabernacle in Jerusalem rather than David's personal wealth.

### **6. Defeat of Edom 8:13-14**

<sup>13</sup>And David made *himself* a name when he returned from killing eighteen thousand Syrians in the Valley of Salt. <sup>14</sup>He also put garrisons in Edom; throughout all Edom he put garrisons, and all the Edomites became David's servants. And the LORD preserved David wherever he went.

The way v. 13 is *translated*, it sounds as though David went out *arrogantly*, trying to grab fame for himself.

The original Hebrew doesn't say that; it simply means this was such a notable victory David's reputation as a great leader spread far & wide.

### **G. David's Administration 8:15-18**

<sup>15</sup>So David reigned over all Israel; and David administered judgment

and justice to all his people. <sup>16</sup>Joab the son of Zeruiah was over the army; Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud was recorder; <sup>17</sup>Zadok the son of Ahitub and Ahimelech the son of Abiathar were the priests; Seraiah was the scribe; <sup>18</sup>Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was over both the Cherethites and the Pelethites; and David's sons were chief ministers.

The Cherethites & Pelethites were a sub-group of the Philistines who'd become loyal to David, probably when he'd lived in Ziklag.

As late arrivals along the coast of Israel from the island of Crete, the Philistines who'd settled there a couple hundred years before saw them as worthless newbies and kept them segregated in poor communities.

David showed them kindness and protected them from the raids of the nomadic Amalekites.

They'd responded by becoming his personal, loyal troops under the command of Benaiah, who was one of David's mighty men.

The Cherethites & Pelethites will play an important role later in the ascension of Solomon.

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In v. 17, both Zadok & Ahimelech are mentioned as priests, meaning the high priest.

Ahimelech was a descendant of Eli, whose line as high priest God had announced would cease.

As David grew in his knowledge of God's Word, he shifted the office of high priest away from Eli's line, who was a descendant of Aaron's son Ithamar, to his other son, Eleazar. Zadok was from *that* line.

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Finally, as *princes*, it was only right David *appoint his sons* to help in the administration of the kingdom.

#### **H. Fulfilling His Promise to Jonathan Ch. 9**

<sup>1</sup>Now David said, "Is there still anyone who is left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?"

David had made numerous promises to his good friend Jonathan that he would look after & protect his descendants. He moves to make good on that promise now.

<sup>2</sup>And *there was a servant of the house of Saul whose name was Ziba. So when they had called him to David, the king said to him, "Are you Ziba?" He said, "At your service!"* <sup>3</sup>Then the king said, "Is there not still someone of the house of Saul, to whom I may show the kindness of God?" And Ziba said to the king, "There is still a son of Jonathan *who is lame in his feet.*"

In Ch. 4 we read how when the news of Saul's defeat & death at the hands of the Philistines reached his home in Gibeah, the nanny keeping Jonathan's 5 year old son picked him up to flee.

But she dropped him, breaking both legs which never healed properly, leaving him lame. His name was *Mephibosheth*.

<sup>4</sup>So the king said to him, "Where is he?" And Ziba said to the king,

“Indeed he *is* in the house of Machir the son of Ammiel, in Lo Debar.”

<sup>5</sup>Then King David sent and brought him out of the house of Machir the son of Ammiel, from Lo Debar. <sup>6</sup>Now when Mephibosheth the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, had come to David, he fell on his face and prostrated himself. Then David said, “Mephibosheth?” And he answered, “Here is your servant!” <sup>7</sup>So David said to him, “Do not fear, for I will surely show you kindness for Jonathan your father’s sake, and will restore to you all the land of Saul your grandfather; and you shall eat bread at my table continually.”

Mephibosheth thought for sure he was done for because that’s what new kings did to anyone who posed a threat to their throne & dynasty.

What a surprise he had; David restored all of his grandfather’s property in the region of Gibeah.

That’s what the servant Ziba would take charge of while Mephibosheth stayed in David’s palace as a permanent guest.

<sup>8</sup>Then he bowed himself, and said, “What *is* your servant, that you should look upon such a dead dog as I?” <sup>9</sup>And the king called to Ziba, Saul’s servant, and said to him, “I have given to your master’s son all that belonged to Saul and to all his house. <sup>10</sup>You therefore, and your sons and your servants, shall work the land for him, and you shall bring in *the harvest*, that your master’s son may have food to eat. But Mephibosheth your master’s son shall eat bread at my table always.”

Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants. <sup>11</sup>Then Ziba said to the king, “According to all that my lord the king has commanded his servant, so will your servant do.” “As for Mephibosheth,” *said the king*, “he shall eat at my table like one of the king’s sons.” <sup>12</sup>Mephibosheth had a young son whose name was Micha. And all who dwelt in the house of Ziba were servants of Mephibosheth.

<sup>13</sup>So Mephibosheth dwelt in Jerusalem, for he ate continually at the king’s table. And he was lame in both his feet.

We’ll see some interesting intrigue with Ziba & Mephibosheth later.

## ***I. Defeat of Ammon & Syria Ch. 10***

### **1. A diplomatic blunder 10:1-5**

<sup>1</sup>It happened after this that the king of the people of Ammon died, and Hanun his son reigned in his place. <sup>2</sup>Then David said, “I will show kindness to Hanun the son of Nahash, as his father showed kindness to me.” So David sent by the hand of his servants to comfort him concerning his father. And David’s servants came into the land of the people of Ammon.

The Ammonites were long time enemies of Israel.

In fact, it was an invasion of Eastern Israel by Nahash & the Ammonites that had propelled Saul to the limelight at the very beginning of his reign.

Though we have no record of it, it seems when David had been on the run from

Saul, Nahash had helped him.  
Now that Nahash's son Hanun was reigning in his place, David wanted to renew the honor he had for Nahash's house by sending a message of goodwill to Hanun.

**<sup>3</sup>And the princes of the people of Ammon said to Hanun their lord, "Do you think that David really honors your father because he has sent comforters to you? Has David not *rather* sent his servants to you to search the city, to spy it out, and to overthrow it?"**

In a complete misread of David's intentions, these clowns call David's emissaries '*spies*.'

**<sup>4</sup>Therefore Hanun took David's servants, shaved off half of their beards, cut off their garments in the middle, at their buttocks, and sent them away.**

In that time & culture, the length of one's beard showed age, and the older you were, the more dignity a person possessed because of the added wisdom one supposedly had.

Cutting off half their beard was an insult, saying the person was only half as wise as they ought to be for their age; so it was equivalent to calling them *fools* – a serious insult for that time when wisdom was one of the most important virtues a person could possess.

To be naked in public was about as shameful a thing as one could endure.

If one got caught in public, nude, it was the kind of social stigma that would stick with you to the grave.

So Hanun utterly humiliated these guys.

**<sup>5</sup>When they told David, he sent to meet them, because the men were greatly ashamed. And the king said, "Wait at Jericho until your beards have grown, and *then* return."**

News reached David quickly about the way his emissaries had been treated.

He sent word back to them as they made their way home to stay at Jericho until some time had passed & their beards grew back so they wouldn't have to face the humiliation Hanun had sought to heap on them.

Of course, the real insult was to David.

## **2. Ammon's alliance with Syria 10:6-8**

**<sup>6</sup>When the people of Ammon saw that they had made themselves repulsive to David, the people of Ammon sent and hired the Syrians of Beth Rehob and the Syrians of Zoba, twenty thousand foot soldiers; and from the king of Maacah one thousand men, and from Ish-Tob twelve thousand men.**

When it comes to foreign policy, it's a good idea to think about what ramifications your actions are going to produce.

Israel was whopping everyone. So tweaking David's nose like this was a really stupid thing to do.

You don't wave red in front of a bull unless you're prepared to deal with its horns

You don't poke a hornets' nest unless you want to get stung.

The Ammonites realized they were in for a world of hurt because of the way they'd insulted David. Instead of sending their own emissaries to try & make peace, they decided to rally the growing fear of all their neighbors and try for a conquest of Israel.

The allies the Ammonites called for were the Arameans from north of Israel, David had already defeated & put under tribute.

This was a chance for them to end their vassalage to David.

**<sup>7</sup>Now when David heard of it, he sent Joab and all the army of the mighty men. <sup>8</sup>Then the people of Ammon came out and put themselves in battle array at the entrance of the gate. And the Syrians of Zoba, Beth Rehob, Ish-Tob, and Maacah were by themselves in the field.**

1 Chr. 19 says the battle took place at Medeba, across the Jordan, 12 miles east of the northern end of the Dead Sea in the heart of Ammonite territory.

### **3. Joab's strategy 10:9-14**

**<sup>9</sup>When Joab saw that the battle line was against him before and behind, he chose some of Israel's best and put *them* in battle array against the Syrians. <sup>10</sup>And the rest of the people he put under the command of Abishai his brother, that he might set *them* in battle array against the people of Ammon. <sup>11</sup>Then he said, "If the Syrians are too strong for me, then you shall help me; but if the people of Ammon are too strong for you, then I will come and help you. <sup>12</sup>Be of good courage, and let us be strong for our people and for the cities of our God. And may the LORD do *what is good* in His sight."**

That David wasn't with the army means this probably took place toward the end of his reign.

The Syrians allies numbered 33,000 men.

How many the Ammonites fielded isn't mentioned but since it was in their territory, it was probably many more. Israel was badly outnumbered.

But they made a huge tactical blunder –the two allies didn't coordinate their attacks.

Joab knew he could use this lack of coordination to his advantage.

He split the army in 2. He led the front facing the Syrian-Arameans. His brother commanded the front facing the Ammonites.

Once battle was joined, if one front began to cave, all they had to do was signal & troops would pull off the other front to bolster their ranks.

**<sup>13</sup>So Joab and the people who were with him drew near for the battle against the Syrians, and they fled before him. <sup>14</sup>When the people of Ammon saw that the Syrians were fleeing, they also fled before Abishai, and entered the city. So Joab returned from the people of Ammon and went to Jerusalem.**

Ancient battles were most often determined by whoever lost their nerve first.

As soon as a few soldiers turn around and run because they get scared or see a hopeless sitch, it starts an ever growing retreat that quickly turns into a

panicked flight from the field.  
That's what happened here. The Syrians had only come to help the Ammonites, hoping for a quick victory & easy spoils with their vastly superior numbers. They weren't defending their own land, homes, or families, so when they saw the battle going against them. They turned tail and beat it.  
The Ammonites saw their allies fleeing & lost their nerve & also retreated, probably running for refuge to their main fortress city of Rabbah.  
Joab knew he didn't have enough men to pursue either the Syrians or to lay siege to Rabbah, so he counted it a good day and returned to the capital, victorious.

#### **4. Syrian counter fails 10:15-19**

**<sup>15</sup>When the Syrians saw that they had been defeated by Israel, they gathered together.**

After they got back to their own territory, the Syrian-Arameans figured by *fleeing* from Israel, they'd shown a weakness Israel would try to exploit.

So they did what the Ammonites had done, called for allies to come help them.

**<sup>16</sup>Then Hadadezer sent and brought out the Syrians who were beyond the River, and they came to Helam. And Shobach the commander of Hadadezer's army went before them. <sup>17</sup>When it was told David, he gathered all Israel, crossed over the Jordan, and came to Helam. And the Syrians set themselves in battle array against David and fought with him. <sup>18</sup>Then the Syrians fled before Israel; and David killed seven hundred charioteers and forty thousand horsemen of the Syrians, and struck Shobach the commander of their army, who died there.**

The Syrian king Hadadezer called for all the Aramean city-states to unite.

They then marched south along the eastern side of the Jordan.

When David heard about this huge confederacy that was maneuvering on Israel's eastern border, he knew it was a crucial moment.

The battle would need his personal leadership, so they marched out to face the Syrians.

Israel's victory was stunning.

**<sup>19</sup>And when all the kings who were servants to Hadadezer saw that they were defeated by Israel, they made peace with Israel and served them. So the Syrians were afraid to help the people of Ammon anymore.**

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One of the things you'll notice if you compare the chapters we've covered tonight with their counterparts in 1 Chronicles is that the numbers given in the battle accounts don't line up.

The reason why is because ancient Hebrew didn't have unique numerals; they used letters and marks to identify numbers, and some of the manuscripts are difficult to discern exactly what number the scribe meant.

So, there are some pretty significant differences in the numbers that are given between 2 Sam. & 1 Chr. And these events.

If you take away that one issue, textual problem – the point of the record becomes clear in both cases: God was giving Israel victory over all those nations that



had at one time dominated & oppressed her.

The promises of blessing on Israel's obedience God had made in the Law of Moses were coming to pass in a most dramatic way under David's reign.

He had said that when the people obeyed & followed Him, they would be the head, not the tail, and would rise among the nations.

To be frank – Israel's ascension to that place during this time was due to one man's whole-hearted devotion to God = David, the King.

His influence for godliness was dramatic and effected the lives of millions!

Today – we need to pray for our leaders at every level.

1 Tim 2:1-4