

SECOND SAMUEL A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 8

- Vv. 1-13 *David's victories.* As a king David was just as effective as he had been when he was a soldier in Saul's army. He met every challenge that was thrown before him and was victorious over all the enemies which surrounded Israel.
- Vv. 14-18 *David's government.* David manifested a great deal of wisdom in organizing his kingdom. He placed officers over various responsibilities and functions of the government. Many of these men were very faithful to him and were still serving him at the close of his reign.

LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *The battle is won by the strong.* David had many enemies. There were the Moabites to the south and east. The Syrians were to the north and east. The Philistines were on the west. None of these caused David to fear. He was a brave man, and he went out and did battle for the Lord. The Lord gave him the victory. Victory is promised to a Christian soldier as he goes out to fight for the Lord.
2. *"Done decently and in order"* (I Chronicles 14:40). David was anxious that his people have good government. He had a valiant captain for his army in the person of Joab. He saw to it that the government business was properly recorded and appointed Jehoshaphat as his recorder. Zadok and Abiathar were his priests. Seraiah was his scribe. Benaiah was over his mercenaries. David's sons were provincial governors. God has given elders and deacons as well as evangelists and teachers in His church. The church's work should be done decently and in order.

STUDIES IN SAMUEL

3. The Throne of David Established, 8:1-18.

David's Victories. 8:1-13

And after this it came to pass, that David smote the Philistines, and subdued them: and David took Methegammah out of the hand of the Philistines.

2 And he smote Moab, and measured them with a line, casting them down to the ground; even with two lines measured he to put to death, and with one full line to keep alive. And *so* the Moabites became David's servants, *and* brought gifts.

3 David smote also Hadadezer, the son of Rehob, king of Zobah, as he went to recover his border at the river Euphrates.

4 And David took from him a thousand *chariots*, and seven hundred horsemen, and twenty thousand footmen: and David houghed all the chariot *horses*, but reserved of them *for* a hundred chariots.

5 And when the Syrians of Damascus came to succor Hadadezer king of Zobah, David slew of the Syrians two and twenty thousand men.

6 Then David put garrisons in Syria of Damascus: and the Syrians became servants to David, *and* brought gifts. And the Lord preserved David whithersoever he went.

7 And David took the shields of gold that were on the servants of Hadadezer, and brought them to Jerusalem.

8 And from Betah, and from Berothai, cities of Hadadezer, king David took exceeding much brass.

9 When Toi king of Hamath heard that David had smitten all the host of Hadadezer,

10 Then Toi sent Joram his son unto king David, to salute him, and to bless him, because he had fought against Hadadezer, and smitten him: for Hadadezer had wars with Toi. And *Joram* brought with him vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and vessels of brass:

SECOND SAMUEL

8:1-3

11 Which also king David did dedicate unto the Lord, with the silver and gold that he had dedicated of all nations which he subdued;

12 Of Syria, and of Moab, and of the children of Ammon, and of the Philistines, and of Amalek, and of the spoil of Hadadezer, son of Rehob, king of Zobah.

13 And David gat *him* a name when he returned from smiting of the Syrians in the valley of salt, *being* eighteen thousand *men*.

1. *What was the "bridle of the mother city"?* 8:1 (ASV)

David took "the bridle of the mother city of the land of the Philistines." This statement is hard to understand unless it means that one of the cities of the Philistines ruled the other Philistine cities and that David then in turn conquered this leading city. The King James translators transliterated the Hebrew word as Methegammah, but this hardly is the name of a Philistine city. More than likely Gath was the mother city.

2. *What was David's treatment of Moab?* 8:2

When David conquered the Moabites, he caused all the men to pass along to be measured. The actual procedure he used is not clear. It may have been that he caused all the men to lie on the ground and then taking a measure counted off two measures of men to be put to death, leaving every third measure to live. Or, it may have been that all the men that were tall enough to reach the upper two measures were put to death and only those that were short enough to come within the third measures were left alive.

3. *What battle did David fight in the north?* 8:3

David also warred against Hadadezer, the son of Rehob, king of Zobah. We are told that he had gone to recover his dominion at the river. David very evidently was extending his rule to the Euphrates river. This being true, the dominion was still within the land promised to

Abraham. Because horses were not very valuable in Palestine, David hocked all the chariot horses, reserving only enough for a hundred chariots. By so disabling the horses, David made them of no use to the king of Zobah. When the statement is made that “. . . the Syrians of Damascus came to succor Hadadezer . . .” (II Samuel 8:5), light is thrown on the fact that Syria used to mean either all of Palestine or country about Damascus. Such a specific statement makes clear which Syrians so came to Hadadezer.

4. *Where was Hamath?* 8:9

Hamath was the extreme northern boundary of the land of Israel. It lay near the Orontes River and was considered the most important town of upper Syria. The modern name is Hamah, and from this site inscribed stones have been taken by archaeologists. The civilization that was most outstanding was of Hittite background. Whether David's kingdom quite extended to the city or not, we can not tell; but his borders reached to the edge of the territory of Hamath.

5. *What did David do with the spoils of war?* 8:11

David dedicated the silver and gold which he took in his wars to make a treasury for God's house. These things were dedicated to the Lord. As David neared the end of his career, he encouraged Solomon and his subjects to enter into the building effort. He gave a pattern for all that was to be built, and gave gold and silver for the work itself (I Chronicles 28:16).

David's Government. 8:14-18

14 And he put garrisons in Edom; throughout all Edom put he garrisons, and all they of Edom became David's servants. And the Lord preserved David whithersoever he went.

15 And David reigned over all Israel; and David executed judgment and justice unto all his people.

16 And Joab the son of Zeruiah *was* over the host; and Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud *was* recorder;

17 And Zadok the son of Ahitub, and Ahimelech the son of Abiathar, *were* the priests; and Seriah *was* the scribe;

18 And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada *was over* both the Cherethites and the Pelethites; and David's sons were chief rulers.

6. *What was the extent of David's Kingdom? 8:13, 14*

The land of Edom reached from the southern part of the Dead Sea to the Gulf of Aqabah. The borders may be set as having extended from south of Akabah to the Euphrates river after David's extensive conquest. No student need wonder at the terrible severity shown with regard to the Edomites when it is remembered that the Edomites and the Israelites had always been enemies. Garrisons were needed in the land of Edom, because it was such an important country. The garrisons would provide means for controlling the country.

Thus it was that under the mighty hand of the warrior David as he was blessed by God the kingdom came to its mightiest influence. The land that was at times subdued first by the Egyptians and then by the Chaldeans, the land that was so important to link together the civilizations of the Nile and the Euphrates valley was now under the control of a people who knew Jehovah and feared him. The Promised Land became a glorious reality to the seed of Abraham.

7. *How did David organize his kingdom? 8:16-18*

In this passage we have a very accurate listing of the offices and officers instituted by David to care for the military, religious, and civil functions of the kingdom. A listing of these officers is as follows:

Joab	Chief of Staff (over the host)
Jehoshaphat	Recorder (Chronicler)
Abiathar (at Zion)	Priests
Zadok (Gibeon)	

Seraiah	Secretary of State (Scribe)
Benaiah	Provincial Governor (over the Cherethites and Pelethites)
David's sons	Chief Ministers

Most interesting is the way in which Seraiah, the scribe is mentioned. With all the other ministers, notice is made of their ancestry. No mention is made of the name of the father of Seraiah. It is possible that he was a foreigner. It was the duty of the recorder to keep the annals of the kingdom and call David's attention to the needs of the kingdom. The scribe's duty was the writing of the official documents. Other men were entrusted with the oversight of subdivisions of the kingdom. The Cherethites and the Pelethites were a part of the Philistine peoples.

Benaiah had been distinguished through his killing of two prominent men of Moab. He had also killed a lion in a pit, the account of which is one of the very interesting sidelights of the Scripture. It was this same Benaiah who met an Egyptian, disarmed him, took his spear from him, and killed him with his own weapon. Benaiah was a descendant of Eleazar, the son of Aaron.

8. *Who was the high priest? 8:17*

The listing of these names says, "Ahimelech the son of Abiathar." This is the mistake of taking the son for the father, for according to I Samuel 22:11, 20, Abiathar was the son of Ahimelech.

Keil and Delitzsch in their *Commentaries on the Old Testament*, suggest that Zadok officiated at the tabernacle at Gibeon (I Chronicles 16:39), and Abiathar probably tended the Ark of the Covenant upon Mount Zion. Even so, it is very strange to find an Ahimelech named since Abiathar was the son of an Ahimelech, according to I Samuel 22:20; and in other passages, Zadok and Abiathar are mentioned as the two high priests under David

(II Samuel 15:24, 35 and 17:15; 19:12; 20:25). Some commentators transpose the names and read here Abiathar, the son of Ahimelech. Such a solution to the problem is ruled out by the fact that in I Chronicles 24:3-6, 31, Ahimelech is mentioned along with Zadok as head of the priests of the line of Ithamar. According to verse six, in that reference, an Ahimelech was the son of Abiathar. It would, therefore, be necessary to change the name Ahimelech to Abiathar, and this is too great a change to ascribe to a copyist. It is possible that Abiathar, the son of Ahimelech, also had a son named Ahimelech. It is, by no means, uncommon for grandfather and grandson to have the same name (I Chronicles 5:30-41). The younger Ahimelech may have performed the duties of the high priest in connection with his father who was still living at the beginning of Solomon's reign (I Kings 2:27). Probably Ahimelech is mentioned here as the titular holder of the office, but since he was killed by Doeg, in the days of Saul, his son was serving in his place. Later references then attribute the office of priest to Abiathar.

CHAPTER 8 IN REVIEW

1. What did David take from the Philistines? _____
2. How many of the Moabites did David put to death? _____
3. What king of Zobah did David attack? _____
4. To what river did David extend his kingdom? _____
5. How many chariots did David capture? _____
6. What did David do to the horses? _____
7. To what northernmost point did David extend his border? _____
8. Who was David's captain? _____
9. Who were David's priests? _____
10. Who was David's recorder? _____