

**This book contains the account
of King David reigning over all
of Israel. We call this book
2 Samuel**

David found out about Saul's death

¹ After Saul died, David *and the men who were with him* returned to Ziklag town after defeating the descendants of Amalek. They stayed in Ziklag for two days.

² On the third day, unexpectedly a man arrived there who had come from where Saul's army was camped. He had torn his clothes and put dust on his head *to show that he was grieving*. He came to David, and prostrated himself on the ground *in front of David to show respect for him*.

³ David asked him, "Where have you come from?" The man replied, "I escaped from where the Israeli army had been camped."

⁴ David asked him, "What happened? Tell me *about the battle!*" The man replied, "The Israeli soldiers ran away from the battle. Many of them were killed. And Saul and his son Jonathan ◀are dead/were also killed▶."

⁵ David said to the young man, "How do you know that Saul and his son Jonathan are dead?"

⁶ The young man replied, "It happened that I was on Gilboa Mountain *where the battle occurred*, and I saw Saul, leaning on his spear.

The *enemy* chariots and their drivers had come very close to Saul.

⁷ Saul turned around and saw me, and he called out to me. I answered him and said, 'What do you want me to do?'

⁸ He replied, 'Who are you?' I replied, 'I am a descendant of Amalek.'

⁹ Then he said to me, 'Come over here and kill me. I am still alive, but I am enduring a lot of pain.'

¹⁰ So I went to him and killed him, because I knew that he was wounded very badly and would ◀not continue to live/soon die▶. I took the crown that was on his head and the band/bracelet that was on his arm, and I have brought them to you."

¹¹ Then David and all the men who were with him tore their clothes *to show that they were very sad*.

¹² They mourned for Saul and his son Jonathan, and they cried and ◀fasted/abstained from eating food▶ until it was evening. They also mourned for all the army of Yahweh, and for all the Israeli people, because many of their soldiers had been killed in the battle [MTY].

¹³ Then David asked the young man who had told him *about the battle*, "Where are you from?" He replied, "My father is a descendant of Amalek, but we live in Israel."

¹⁴ David asked him, "◀Why were you not afraid *that you would be punished if you killed Saul, whom Yahweh had appointed [MTY] to be the king?*/You should have been afraid *that you would be punished if you killed Saul, whom*

Yahweh had appointed [MTY] *to be the king*.▶
[RHQ]

¹⁵⁻¹⁶ You yourself said, 'I killed the man whom Yahweh appointed to be the king.' So you have caused yourself to be guilty [MTY] of causing your own death!" Then David summoned one of his soldiers and said to him, "Kill him!" So the soldier killed him by striking him *with a sword*.

David's song about Saul and Jonathan

¹⁷ Then David composed/wrote this sad song about Saul and Jonathan,

¹⁸ and he commanded that it be taught to the people of Judah. *The song is called 'The Bow and Arrow'* and it has been written in the Book of Jashar:

¹⁹ "You Israeli people, your glorious [MTY] leaders have been killed on the mountains!
It is very sad that those mighty men have died!

²⁰ "Do not tell it *to our enemies in the Philistia area*;

do not tell to the people who live in Gath city what happened;

do not proclaim it in the streets of Ashkelon city, because if you tell them, *even the women in that area will be happy*;

do not allow those ◀pagan women/women who do not know God▶ to rejoice.

²¹ I hope/desire that there will be no rain or dew on the mountains of *the Gilboa area* [APO], and that no grain will grow in the fields there,

because there the shield of Saul, the mighty
king, fell on the ground.

No one rubbed *olive* oil on Saul's shield;

²² instead, it was stained with the blood of those
whom he had killed,
and the fat of mighty enemy soldiers was
smeared on it.

Jonathan [PRS] did not retreat carrying his bow
and arrows,
and Saul always *defeated his enemies when*
he fought them with his sword. [PRS, LIT]

²³ "Saul and Jonathan were loved and they
pleased many people.

They were together [LIT] while they lived
and when they died.

In battles they were swifter than eagles and they
were stronger than lions.

²⁴ "You Israeli women, cry about Saul;

He provided beautiful scarlet/red clothes for you
and he gave you gold ornaments/jewelry to
fasten on those clothes.

²⁵ "*It is very sad that* this mighty soldier has died!
Jonathan has been killed on the mountains/
hills.

²⁶ Jonathan, my dear friend, I grieve for you;
you were very dear to me.

You loved me in a wonderful manner;
it was better than the way that a woman
loves *her husband and her children*.

27 “It is very sad that those mighty men have died,
and their weapons are now abandoned!

2

David was appointed to be the king of Judah

¹ Some time after that, David asked Yahweh, “Should I go back to *live in* one of the towns in Judah?” Yahweh replied, “Yes, go up there.” Then David asked, “To which town should I go?” Yahweh replied, “To Hebron.”

² So David went up there, taking his two wives, Ahinoam who was from Jezreel city, and Abigail, the widow of Nabal from Carmel city.

³ He also took the men who had been with him, and their families. They all started to live in villages near Hebron.

⁴ Then the men of Judah came to Hebron, and *one of* them poured olive oil on David’s head *to show they were appointing him to be* [MTY] the king of the tribe [MTY] of Judah.

When David found out that the people of Jabesh town in *the Gilead region* had buried Saul’s body,

⁵ he sent messengers to the men of Jabesh to tell them this: “I desire/hope that Yahweh will bless you for having shown, by burying the body of Saul your king, that you were loyal to him.

⁶ Now I also desire/hope that Yahweh will faithfully love you and be loyal to you. And I will do good things for you because of what you have done *for Saul*.

⁷ Now, although Saul your king is dead, be strong and courageous, like the people of Judah, who have appointed me to be their king.”

Ishbosheth was appointed to be the king of Israel

⁸ While this was happening, Ner’s son Abner, the commander of Saul’s army, took Saul’s son Ishbosheth and went across the Jordan River to Mahanaim town.

⁹ There Abner proclaimed that Ishbosheth was now the king of the Gilead region and of the tribe of Asher and the region of Jezreel and the tribes of Ephraim and Benjamin. That meant that he was the king of all of the people of Israel.

¹⁰ Ishbosheth was 40 years old when he started to rule over the people of Israel. He ruled them for two years. But the tribe of Judah ◀was loyal to David/wanted David to be their king▶,

¹¹ and he ruled them for seven and a half years while he was living in Hebron.

The war between the armies of Judah and Israel

¹² One day Abner and the officials of Ishbosheth went from Mahanaim across the Jordan River to Gibeon city.

¹³ Joab, whose mother was Zeruihah, and some of David’s officials went from Hebron to Gibeon, and met at the pool there. They all sat down, the one group on one side of the pool and the other group on the other side.

¹⁴ Abner said to Joab, "Let's tell some of our young men to fight each other!" Joab replied, "Okay!"

¹⁵ So twelve men from the tribe of Benjamin fought for Ishbosheth, against twelve of David's soldiers.

¹⁶ Each of them grabbed the head of the man against whom he was fighting, and thrust his sword into that man's side. The result was that all 24 of them fell down dead. So that area in Gibeon is now called 'Field of Swords'.

¹⁷ Then *the others started to fight*. It was a very fierce battle. Abner and the men of Israel were defeated by David's soldiers.

Joab's brother Asahel was killed

¹⁸ Zeruiah's three sons were there *on that day*: Joab, Abishai, and Asahel. Asahel was able to run very fast; he could run as fast as a wild gazelle/antelope.

¹⁹ Asahel started to pursue Abner. He ran straight toward Abner, without stopping.

²⁰ Abner looked behind him, and said "Is that you, Asahel?" Asahel replied, "Yes!"

²¹ Abner yelled at him, "Turn to one side or the other, *and pursue someone else!*" But Asahel would not stop pursuing Abner.

²² So Abner yelled at him again, "Stop ◀chasing after/pursuing▶ me! ◀Why should I kill you?/It would not be good for me to kill you!▶ [RHQ] If I did that, ◀how could I <face/be reconciled with> your brother Joab?/it would be very difficult for me to <face/be reconciled with> your brother Joab.▶ [RHQ]"

²³ But Asahel refused to stop pursuing Abner. So Abner *suddenly turned and* thrust the butt end of his spear into Asahel's stomach. Because he thrust it very strongly, that end of the spear *went though Asahel's body and* came out at his back, and he fell to the ground, dead. All the other soldiers who came to the place where his body was lying stopped and stood there, *stunned*.

²⁴ But Joab and Abishai continued to pursue Abner. At sunset they came to Ammah Hill, which is east of Giah, along the road to the desert near Gibeon.

²⁵ The men from the tribe of Benjamin gathered around Abner in one group, and stood at the top of a hill.

²⁶ Then Abner called out to Joab, saying "Are we going to continue to fight forever [RHQ]? Do you not realize that *if we continue fighting*, the result will be very bad [RHQ]? We are all descendants of Jacob. *So we should stop fighting each other* ◀How long will it be until you tell your soldiers to stop pursuing us?/Tell your soldiers to stop pursuing us.▶" [RHQ]

²⁷ Joab replied, "Just as surely as God lives, if you had not said that, my soldiers would have continued pursuing your men until tomorrow morning!"

²⁸ So Joab blew a trumpet *to signal that they should stop fighting*. So all his men did that. They did not pursue the soldiers of Israel any more, and they stopped fighting.

²⁹ That night Abner and his soldiers went through the Jordan River Valley. They crossed

the *Jordan River* and marched all the next morning, and they finally arrived at Mahanaim.

³⁰ *Joab and his soldiers* stopped pursuing Abner. And when he gathered all his soldiers together, he found out that in addition to Asahel, only 19 of them had been killed in the battle.

³¹ But David's soldiers had killed 360 of Abner's men, all from the tribe of Benjamin.

³² *Some of Joab's soldiers* took Asahel's body and buried it in the tomb where his father had been buried, in Bethlehem. Then they marched all during the night, and at dawn they arrived *back home* at Hebron.

3

¹ There was a long war between those who wanted Saul's son to be their king and those who wanted David to be their king. But more and more people began to want David to be the king, while the number of people who wanted Saul's son to be the king continued to become smaller.

David's sons born at Hebron

² David's wives gave birth to six sons at Hebron. The oldest was Amnon, whose mother was Ahinoam, from Jezreel city.

³ The next one was Kileab, whose mother was Abigail, the widow of Nabal, from Carmel city.

The next one was Absalom, whose mother was Maacah, the daughter of Talmi, the king of *the Geshur region*.

⁴ The next one was Adonijah, whose mother was Haggith.

The next one was Shephatiah, whose mother was Abital.

⁵ The youngest one was Ithream, whose mother was Eglah, *another one of David's wives*.

Those sons of David were all born in Hebron.

Abner decided that David would be king of all of them

⁶ While those who wanted Saul's son to rule over them and those who wanted David to rule over them continued to fight against each other, Abner was becoming more influential among those who wanted Saul's son to be the king.

⁷ When Saul was alive, he had as one of his wives a slave woman named Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah. *But one day Abner had sexual relations with her.* So Ishbosheth said to Abner, "Why have you had sexual relations with [EUP] my father's slave wife?"

⁸ Abner became very angry about what Ishbosheth said to him. He said to Ishbosheth, "◀Do you think that I am a *worthless dog* [MET] from Judah?/You are treating me as though I am a *worthless dog* [MET] from Judah.▶ [RHQ] From the beginning, I have been loyal to Saul your father, to his brothers, and to his friends. And I have prevented you from being defeated by David's army. So now ◀why are you criticizing me about *what I have done with some woman?*/you should not be criticizing me about *what I have done with some woman.*▶ [RHQ]

⁹⁻¹⁰ Yahweh solemnly promised that he would not allow Saul and his descendants to continue to rule. He promised that he would cause David

to rule over all the tribes of Israel and Judah, from Dan *city* far in the north to Beersheba *city* far in the south. So I hope/desire that God will punish me severely [HYP] if I do not enable that to happen!”

¹¹ Ishbosheth was very afraid of Abner, so he did not say anything in reply to Abner.

¹² Then Abner sent messengers to David *when he was at Hebron*, to say to him, “*Either you or I* should be [RHQ] the ruler of this entire nation, *but not Isbosheth*. However, if you make an agreement with me, I will help you by encouraging all the people of Israel to ◀be want you to be their king/start to support▶ you.”

¹³ David sent back this reply: “Good! I am willing to make an agreement with you. But before that happens, there is one thing that you must do. When you come to see me, you must bring my wife Michal, Saul’s daughter.”

¹⁴ Then David sent messengers to Ishbosheth, to say to him, “*I had to kill 100 men from Philistia and cut off their foreskins to give to Saul to pay for Michal to be my wife*. So now give her back to me!”

¹⁵ So Ishbosheth sent some men to take Michal from her husband Palti. But *when they took her*, her husband followed them all the way to Bahurim town, crying as he went.

¹⁶ Then Abner *turned and* said to him, “Go back home!”, so he did.

¹⁷ Abner went to the Israeli leaders and talked with them. He said, “For a long time you have wanted David to be your king.

¹⁸ So now you have an opportunity to do that. Keep in mind that Yahweh promised this: ‘With the help of David, who serves me *well*, I will rescue my people from the people of Philistia, and from the power [MTY] of all their other enemies’.”

¹⁹ Abner also spoke to the people of the tribe of Benjamin. Then he went to Hebron, to tell David what all the people of Israel and the people of the tribe of Benjamin had agreed to do.

²⁰ When Abner came with 20 of his soldiers to see David at Hebron, David made a feast for all of them.

²¹ Afterwards, Abner said to David, “Sir/Your majesty, I will now go and encourage all the people of Israel to accept you to be their king, as you have desired.” Then Abner left, peacefully.

Joab murdered Abner

²² Soon after that, Joab and some of David’s other soldiers returned *to Hebron* after raiding *one of their enemies’ villages*, bringing with them a lot of things that they had captured. But Abner was not there at Hebron, because David had sent him safely home.

²³ When Joab and the soldiers who were with him arrived, someone told him that Abner had come there and talked with the king, and that the king allowed to go home safely.

²⁴ So Joab went to the king and said, “Why have you done that? Listen to me! Abner *is your enemy*, but when he came to you, you allowed him [RHQ] to leave!

25 Do you not know that he came to you to deceive you and to find out everything that you are doing, and all the places that you go to?"

26 After Joab left David, he sent some messengers to get Abner. They found him at Sirah Well, and brought him back to Hebron, but David did not know that they had done that.

27 So when Abner returned to Hebron, Joab met him at the city gate, and took him aside as though he wanted to speak with him privately. Then he stabbed Abner in the stomach *with his knife/sword*. In that way he murdered Abner because Abner had killed [MTY] Joab's brother Asahel.

28 Later, after David heard what had happened, he said, "Yahweh knows that I and the people of my kingdom are not at all ◀responsible for/guilty of▶ murdering [MTY] Abner.

29 I hope/desire that Joab and all his family will be punished [MTY] for doing that! I hope/desire that there will always be someone in his family who has sores, or someone who is a leper, or some man who is forced to do women's work, or someone who is killed in a battle, or someone who does not have enough food to eat!"

30 That is how Joab and his brother Abishai murdered Abner, because he had killed their brother Asahel in the battle at Gibeon.

31 Then David said to Joab and to all Joab's soldiers, "Tear your clothes and put on coarse cloth *to show that you are sad*, and mourn for Abner!" And *at the funeral*, King David walked behind *the men who were carrying* the coffin.

³² They buried Abner's body at Hebron. And at the grave, the king cried loudly, and all the other people also cried.

³³ David sang this sad song to lament for Abner:

"It is not right that [RHQ] Abner died like outlaws die!

³⁴ No one tied his hands or put chains on his feet, *like they do to criminals*.

No, he was murdered by wicked men!"

³⁵ Then many [HYP] people came to David to tell him to eat some food before sunset, but David refused. He said, "I hope/desire that God will punish me severely [HYP] if I eat any food before the sun goes down!"

³⁶ All the people saw what David did, and they were pleased. Truly, everything that the king did pleased the people.

³⁷ So all the people realized that the king had not wanted Abner to be killed.

³⁸ The king said to his officials, "◀Do you not realize that a leader and a great man has died today in Israel?/You should realize that a leader and a great man has died today in Israel.▶ [RHQ]

³⁹ Even though Yahweh appointed me to be the king, today I feel weak. These two sons of Zeruiah, *Joab and Abishai*, are very violent; I cannot control them. So I hope/desire that Yahweh will punish them severely in return for this wicked thing that they have done!"

4

Ishbosheth was murdered

¹ When Saul's son Ishbosheth heard that Abner had been killed at Hebron, *he realized that he might also be killed*. He became discouraged, and all the Israeli people ◀trembled/became afraid▶.

² Ishbosheth had two officers who were leaders of groups that raided other villages. *They were brothers*; their names were Baanah and Rechab, sons of Rimmon from Beeroth town in the tribe of Benjamin. Beeroth is in the area that had *been assigned* to the tribe of Benjamin.

³ But the people of Beeroth had fled to Gittaim town, and they still live there.

⁴ Saul's son Jonathan had a son named Mephibosheth. When Mephibosheth was five years old, Saul and Jonathan died in the battle. When people brought that news from Jezreel, Mephibosheth's nursemaid picked him up and ran away. She ran very fast, with the result that she dropped him, and his legs became crippled.

⁵ One day, Rechab and Baanah left *their home* to go to Ishbosheth's house. They arrived there about noontime, when Ishbosheth was taking his midday nap.

⁶ The woman who was the doorkeeper was sifting wheat. While doing that, she became sleepy, and fell asleep. So Rechab and his brother Baanah were able to creep in quietly.

⁷ They entered Ishbosheth's bedroom, where he was sleeping. They killed him *with their swords* and cut off his head. They carried his head and walked all night through the Jordan River Valley.

⁸ They took the head of Ishbosheth to David at Hebron. They said to him, “Here is the head of Ishbosheth, the son of your enemy Saul, who tried to kill you. Your majesty, today Yahweh has allowed you to get revenge on Saul and his descendants!”

⁹ But David replied to them, “Yahweh is the one who has rescued me from all my troubles. And just as surely as Yahweh lives, what I am now saying is also true.

¹⁰ When a messenger came to Ziklag and told me ‘Saul is dead!’ and he thought that the news that he was bringing to me was good news, I seized him and *commanded one of my soldiers* to kill him. That was the reward I gave to him for his news!

¹¹ So because you two evil men murdered a man who is ◀innocent/has done nothing wrong▶ when he was sleeping on his bed in his own house, I will do something worse to you. I will surely [RHQ] get revenge on you two for murdering [MTY] him, and ◀wipe you/cause you to disappear▶ from the earth!”

¹² Then, following David’s orders, his soldiers killed the two men, and cut off their hands and their feet, and hung their bodies (OR, their hands and feet) *on a pole* near the pool at Hebron. But they took the head of Ishbosheth and buried it *respectfully* in the tomb of Abner, there at Hebron.

5

David became the king of all the Israeli tribes

¹ Then *the leaders of* all the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron, and said to him, "Listen, we have the same ancestors [IDM] that you do.

² In the past, when Saul was our king, it was you who led our Israeli soldiers *in our battles*. You are the one to whom Yahweh promised, 'You will be the leader [MET] of my people; you will be their king.' "

³ So while Yahweh was listening, all those leaders of the people of Israel declared there at Hebron *that David would be their king*. And David made a sacred agreement with them. They anointed him *with olive oil to set him apart* to be the king of the Israeli people.

⁴ David was 30 years old when he became their king. He ruled them for 40 years.

⁵ In Hebron he ruled over the tribe of Judah for seven and a half years, and in Jerusalem he ruled over all the people of Judah and Israel for 33 years.

David's army captured Jerusalem

⁶ *One day* King David and his soldiers went to Jerusalem to fight against the Jebus people-group who lived there. The people there thought that David's army would not be able to capture the city, so they sent a message to David, saying "Your army will never be able to get inside our city! Even the blind and crippled people will be able to chase you away!"

⁷ But David's army captured the fortress on *Zion Hill, and later it was known as David's City*.

⁸ On that day, David said *to his soldiers*, “Those who want to get rid of the Jebus people-group should go through the water tunnel *to enter the city*. Then they can attack those people whom I [SYN] detest—and *we will find out if any blind and crippled people will be able to stop them!*” That is why people say, “Blind and crippled people cannot enter Yahweh’s temple.”

⁹ *After David and his soldiers captured* the city with its strong walls around it, he lived there, and they named it ‘David’s City’. David *and his soldiers* built the city around the fortress, starting where the *land was ◀filled in/terraces▶ on the east side of the hill*.

¹⁰ David continued to become more and more powerful/influential, because the Almighty Commander of the armies of angels was with/helping him.

¹¹ *One day* Hiram, the king of Tyre city, sent ambassadors/messengers to David *to talk about making agreements between their countries*. Hiram agreed to provide cedar trees *to make lumber*, and also that he would send carpenters and masons, to build a palace for David.

¹² His doing that caused David to realize that Yahweh truly had appointed him to be the king of Israel, and that Yahweh was going to cause his kingdom to prosper, because Yahweh loved the Israeli people, whom *he had chosen to belong to him*.

¹³ After David moved from Hebron to Jerusalem, he took more slave women to be

his second-class wives, and he also married other women. *All of those women* gave birth to more sons and daughters.

¹⁴ The names of the sons who were born in Jerusalem were Shammua, Shobab, Nathan, Solomon,

¹⁵ Ibhar, Elishua, Nepheg, Japhia,

¹⁶ Elishama, Eliada, and Eliphelet.

David's army defeated the Philistines

¹⁷ When the Philistia people heard that David had been appointed to be the king of Israel, their army went up *toward Jerusalem* to try to capture David. But David heard that they were coming, so he went down to another fortified place.

¹⁸ The *army of Philistia* arrived at Rephaim Valley *southwest of Jerusalem* and spread all over the valley.

¹⁹ David asked Yahweh, "Should *my men and I* attack the Philistia army? Will you enable us to defeat them [IDM]?" Yahweh replied, "Yes, attack them, because I will certainly enable your army to defeat them. [IDM]"

²⁰ So David *and his army* went to *where the Philistia army was*, and there they defeated them. Then David said, "Yahweh has burst through my enemies like a flood." [SIM] So that place is called 'Lord of Bursting-through'.

²¹ The Philistia men left their idols there; so David and his soldiers took them away.

²² Then the Philistia *army* returned to Rephaim Valley and spread all over the valley.

²³ So again David asked Yahweh *if his army should attack them*. But Yahweh replied, “Do not attack them *from here*. Tell your men to go around them and attack them from the other side, near the balsam trees.

²⁴ When you hear something in the tops of the balsam trees that sounds like *an army* marching, attack them, because I will have gone ahead of you *to enable your army* to defeat their army.”

²⁵ So David did what Yahweh told him to do, and his *army* defeated the Philistia army from Geba city all the way west to Gezer city.

6

They moved the sacred chest to Jerusalem

¹ Then David chose 30,000 Israeli men and gathered them together.

² He led them to the place in Judah *formerly* called Baalah, *now called Kiriath-Jearim*. They went in order to bring from there *to Jerusalem* the sacred chest, which had the name of Yahweh, the leader of the armies of *the angels* in heaven, written on it, and which had the *statues of the winged creatures* on top of it. Between those statues was where Yahweh spoke messages about ruling his people [MTY].

³ The sacred chest was in the house of Abinadab, on top of a hill. They went there, and they put the chest on a new cart. Uzzah and Ahio, the two sons of Abinadab, were guiding *the oxen that were pulling the cart*.

⁴ Uzzah walked alongside the cart, and Ahio walked in front of it.

⁵ David and all the Israeli men were celebrating in God's presence, singing with all their strength and *playing* lyres and harps, and beating tambourines, and clashing castanets and cymbals.

⁶ But when they came to the place where Nacon threshed grain, the oxen stumbled. So Uzzah put his hand on the sacred chest to ◀steady it/prevent it from falling off the cart▶.

⁷ Yahweh immediately became very angry with Uzzah, and he killed him right there alongside the sacred chest, because he had touched the chest, *and Yahweh had commanded that only the descendants of Levi who help the priests should touch the sacred chest.*

⁸ David was angry because Yahweh had punished Uzzah. So ever since that time, that place has been called 'The Punishment of Uzzah'.

⁹ David was *also* afraid of *what else* Yahweh would do to punish them, so he said, "◀How can I take the sacred chest with me to Jerusalem?/ I am afraid to take the sacred chest with me to Jerusalem.▶" [RHQ]

¹⁰ So he did not want to take the sacred chest to Jerusalem. Instead, they took it to another place; they took it to the house of Obed-Edom, from Gath city.

¹¹ They left the sacred chest in the house of Obed-Edom for three months, and *during that time* Yahweh blessed Obed-Edom and his family.

¹² Later, people told David, "Yahweh has blessed Obed-Edom and his family because *he is taking care* of the sacred chest!" When David

heard that, he *and some other men* went to Obed-Edom's house, and very joyfully brought the sacred chest from there to Jerusalem.

¹³ *This time, descendants of Levi* were carrying the sacred chest, but when they had walked only six steps, they stopped, and there David killed a bull and a fat calf, and offered them to Yahweh for a sacrifice.

¹⁴ David was wearing *only* a linen cloth wrapped around his waist, and was dancing very energetically to honor Yahweh.

¹⁵ David and the Israeli men took the sacred chest up *to Jerusalem*, shouting *loudly* and blowing trumpets.

¹⁶ While they were carrying the sacred chest into the city, *David's wife* Michal, who was Saul's daughter, looked out the window *of her house*. She saw King David leaping and dancing to honor Yahweh. So she was disgusted with him.

¹⁷ They brought the sacred chest into the tent that David had erected for it. Then David gave to Yahweh offerings to be completely burned *on an altar*, and other offerings to maintain fellowship with Yahweh.

¹⁸ When David had finished offering those sacrifices, he asked Yahweh, the Commander of the armies *of the angels*, to bless the people.

¹⁹ He also distributed food to all the people. To each Israeli man and woman he gave a loaf of bread, some meat, and a raisin cake. Then all the people returned to their homes.

²⁰ When David went home to *ask Yahweh* to bless his family, his wife Michal came out to

meet him. She said to him, “Maybe you, the king of Israel, *think that you* [IRO] were honoring yourself today, but really, you acted like a fool, uncovering yourself while the female servants of your officials were watching!”

²¹ David replied to Michal, “*I was doing that* to honor Yahweh, who chose me instead of your father and other members of his family, to be the king of the Israeli people, the people who belong to Yahweh. And I will *continue* to dance to honor Yahweh!”

²² *Even though you think that what I did was disgraceful, I will continue to do it even more. You may despise me because of what I did, but the women whom you were talking about will honor me!”*

²³ *As a result, Saul’s daughter Michal never gave birth to any children.*

7

What God promised David

¹ After King David began to live in his palace, Yahweh protected him from all his enemies.

² One day he said to the prophet Nathan, “*It is not right that I am here, living in a beautiful house made of cedar wood, but the chest that contains God’s Ten Commandments is kept in a tent!”*

³ Then Nathan said to the king, “Yahweh is helping/directing you, so do *regarding that chest* whatever you are thinking.”

⁴ But that night, Yahweh said to Nathan,

⁵ “Go and tell my servant, David, that this is what *I*, Yahweh, am saying to him: ‘You are not the one [RHQ] who should build a temple for me to live in.

⁶ I have not lived in any building from the day that I brought the Israeli people up from Egypt until now. Instead, I have been living in a tent, moving from one place to another *when the Israelis* moved to other places.

⁷ Wherever I went with all the Israelis *as they traveled*, I never said [RHQ] to any of their leaders whom I appointed to lead them, “Why have you not built me a temple made of cedar wood?” ’

⁸ So this is what you should say to my servant David: ‘The Almighty Commander of the armies of angels says that he took you from a pasture where you were taking care of sheep, *and appointed you* to become the ruler of my Israeli people.

⁹ I have ◀been with/helped▶ you wherever you have gone. I have gotten rid of all your enemies as you advanced. I will enable you to become very famous, as well-known as the names of all the greatest men *who have ever lived* on the earth.

¹⁰⁻¹¹ Formerly, during the time that I appointed leaders for my Israeli people, many violent groups oppressed the Israelis. But this will not happen any more. I have chosen a place where my Israeli people can live *peacefully* and no one will disturb them any more. I will give them rest from *being attacked by* their enemies.

And I will defeat all your enemies.

I declare to you that I, Yahweh, will enable your descendants to rule after you *die*.

¹² When your life ends [EUP] and you go to be with your ancestors, I will appoint one of your sons to be king, and I will enable his kingdom to ◀be strong/resist all their enemies▶.

¹³ He is the one who will arrange for a temple to be built for me [MTY], and I will cause his *descendants* to be kings [MTY] *of Israel* forever.

¹⁴ I will be *like* a father to him, and *it will be as though* he is a son to me [MET]. When he does something that is wrong, I will punish him as fathers punish their sons.

¹⁵ But I will not stop faithfully loving him as I stopped loving Saul, whom I removed from being king before you became king.

¹⁶ Your descendants will rule the kingdom *of Israel* forever. Their rule will never end. [DOU]' "

¹⁷ So Nathan told David everything that Yahweh had told him.

David gave thanks to God

¹⁸ Then David went into *the Sacred Tent* and sat in the presence of Yahweh, and prayed this:

"Yahweh, my God, I am not worthy [RHQ] *for you to have done all these things* for me, and my family is not worthy, either.

¹⁹ "And now, O Yahweh my God, in addition to everything else, you have spoken about what will happen to my descendants in the future for many generations.

20 “Yahweh God, what more can I, David, say to you *for honoring me*? Although you know very well *what I am like*, Yahweh my God, you have done things for me as though I was the most important man *on the earth*!

21 For my sake and because it is what you wanted to do, you have done all these great things for me.

22 “Yahweh my God, you are great. There is no one like you. Only you are God, just as we have always heard.

23 And there is no other nation in the world like Israel. Israel is the only nation on the earth whose people you went out to rescue [RHQ]. By the great and awesome things that you did, you have become famous/well-known throughout the world. As your people advanced *through this land*, you expelled other people-groups *who were here in Canaan*, who worshiped other gods.

24 And you caused us Israeli people to be your people forever, and you, Yahweh, have become our God!

25 “And now, Yahweh my God, *I pray that you will* cause the things that you promised to me about my descendants to be fulfilled forever, and *that you will* do the things that you said *that you would do*.

26 When that happens, you will become famous forever, and people will exclaim, ‘The Almighty Commander of the armies of angels is the God who rules Israel.’ And you will cause that forever there will be descendants of mine

who will rule.

²⁷ “Yahweh Almighty, the God whom we Israeli people *worship*, you have revealed to me that you will make some of my descendants kings. For that reason, I have been brave enough to pray like this to you.

²⁸ So now, O Yahweh Almighty, because you are God, we can trust that you will do what you promise. You have promised these good things to me.

²⁹ So now I ask you that if it pleases you, you will bless my descendants, in order that they may continue *to rule* forever. Yahweh God, you have promised these things, and *so I know that* you will keep blessing my descendants forever.”

8

David's army won many victories

¹ Some time later, David's army attacked the Philistia *army* and defeated them. They took control over the entire Philistia area.

² David's army also defeated the army of the Moab people-group. David forced their soldiers to lie down on the ground *close to each other*. His men killed two out of every three of them. The *other* Moab people *were forced to* accept David as their ruler, and they were forced to give to him *every year the payment/tax that he demanded*.

³ David's army also defeated *the army of* Hadadezer, the son of Rehob, who ruled *the state of* Zobah *in* Syria. That happened when David went to rule again over the area at *the upper part of* the Euphrates River.

⁴ David's army captured 1,700 of Hadadezer's soldiers who rode on horses, and 20,000 of his other soldiers. They also crippled/hamstrung most of the horses that pulled the chariots, but they left/spared enough horses to *pull* 100 chariots.

⁵ When *the army of Syria* came from Damascus city to help King Hadadezer's army, David's soldiers killed 22,000 of them.

⁶ Then David stationed ◀groups of his soldiers/army camps▶ in their area, and the people of Syria were forced to accept David as their ruler, and to give to David's government *every year* the payment/tax that he demanded. And Yahweh enabled David's army to win victories wherever they went.

⁷ David's soldiers took the gold shields that were carried by Hadadezer's officials, and brought them to Jerusalem.

⁸ They also brought *to Jerusalem* a lot of bronze *that they found* in Betah and Berothai, two cities that King Hadadezer *had previously* ruled.

⁹ When Toi, the king of the Hamath city in Syria, heard that David's army had defeated the entire army of King Hadadezer,

¹⁰ he sent his son Joram to greet King David and to ◀congratulate him/say that he was happy▶ about his army defeating Hadadezer's army, which Toi's army had fought many times. Joram brought to David many items/gifts made from gold, silver, and bronze.

¹¹ King David dedicated all those items to Yahweh. He also dedicated the silver and gold

which his army had taken from the nations that they had conquered.

¹² They had taken items from the Edom people-group and the Moab people-group, from the Ammon people-group, from the Philistia people, and from *the descendants of* Amalek, as well as from the people that Hadadezer *previously* ruled.

¹³ When David returned *after defeating the armies of Syria*, he became more famous because his army killed 18,000 soldiers from the Edom people-group in the Salt Valley *near the Dead Sea*.

¹⁴ David stationed ◀groups of his soldiers/army camps▶ throughout the Edom area, and forced the people there to accept him as their king. Yahweh enabled David's *army* to win battles wherever they went.

¹⁵ David ruled over all the Israeli people, and he always did for them what was fair and just.

¹⁶ Joab was the army commander; Jehoshaphat, the son of Ahilud, was the man who reported to the people everything that David decided that they should do;

¹⁷ Zadok the son of Ahitub and Ahimelech the son of Abiathar were the priests; Seraiah was the official secretary;

¹⁸ Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was the commander of ◀David's bodyguards/the men who protected the king▶; and David's sons were priests (OR, his administrators/advisors).

9

David was kind to Mephibosheth

¹ One day David asked, "Is there anyone who is a descendant of Saul to whom I can be kind?" He asked this because he wanted to honor Jonathan.

² *They told him that there was in Jerusalem a man named Ziba who had been a servant of Saul's family. So David sent messengers to summon Ziba. When he arrived, the king asked him, "Are you Ziba?" He replied, "Yes, your majesty, I am."*

³ The king asked him, "Is there anyone in Saul's family to whom I can be kind, *as I promised Jonathan that I would do?*" Ziba replied, "Yes, there is one son of Jonathan who is still *alive*. His feet are crippled."

⁴ The king asked him, "Where is he?" Ziba replied, "He is *living* in the house of Machir, son of Ammiel, in Lo-Debar *city east of the Jordan River.*"

⁵ So King David sent *messengers* to bring Mephibosheth *to Jerusalem.*

⁶ When Mephibosheth came to David, he knelt down with his face on the ground, to show respect. Then David said, "Mephibosheth!" He replied, "Yes, your majesty, how may I serve you?"

⁷ David said to him, "Do not be afraid; I will be kind to you because Jonathan your father *was my loyal friend*. I will give back to you all the land that belonged to your grandfather Saul. And *I want* you to always eat with me at my house [MTY]."

⁸ Mephibosheth bowed *in front of David again* and said, "Sir, I am *as worthless as* [MET] a dead

dog; I do not deserve [RHQ] that you be kind to me!”

⁹ Then the king summoned Saul’s servant Ziba and said to him, “Saul was your master; now I am giving to Mephibosheth everything that belonged to Saul and his family.

¹⁰ You and your 15 sons and your 20 servants must till/plow the land for Mephibosheth’s *family*, and *plant crops* and harvest them, in order that they will have food to eat. But Mephibosheth will eat food with me at my house.”

¹¹ Ziba replied to the king, “Your majesty, I will do everything that you have commanded me to do.” So *after that*, Mephibosheth always ate at the king’s table, as though he were one of the king’s sons.

¹² Mephibosheth had a young son named Mica. All of Ziba’s family became servants of Mephibosheth.

¹³ And Mephibosheth, who was still crippled in both of his feet, started to live in Jerusalem, and he always ate ◀at the king’s table/with the king▶.

10

David’s army defeated the Ammon people-group

¹ Some time later, the king of the Ammon people-group died, and his son Hanun became their king.

² David thought, “Nahash was kind to me, so I will be kind to his son.” So David sent some officials there, to tell Hanun that David was sorry that Hanun’s father *had died*.

When those messengers arrived in the land where the Ammon people-group lived,

³ the leaders of the Ammon people-group said to Hanun, “Do you think that it is to honor your father that King David has sent these men to say that he is sorry that your father died [RHQ]? *We think that* he has sent them here to look around the city to determine how his *army* can conquer us!”

⁴ Hanun *believed what they said; so he commanded some soldiers to seize David’s officials and insult them by shaving off one side of each man’s beard, and by cutting off the lower part of their robes, with the result that their buttocks could be seen, and then they sent them away.*

⁵ The men were very humiliated/ashamed, *so they did not want to return home.* When David found out about what had happened to his officials, he sent someone to tell them, “Stay at Jericho until your beards have grown again, and then return home.”

⁶ Then *the leaders of* the Ammon people-group realized that they had greatly insulted [IDM] David [IDM]. So they sent some men to hire/pay some soldiers *from other nearby areas to help defend them.* They hired 20,000 soldiers from *the Beth-Rehob and Zobah regions northeast of Israel,* and 12,000 soldiers from *the Tob region,* and 1,000 soldiers from *the army of the king of Maacah region.*

⁷ When David heard about that, he sent Joab with all of the army *that Joab commanded,* to fight against them.

⁸ The soldiers of the Ammon people-group marched out and ◀stood in their positions/arranged themselves for battle▶ at the entrance *to their capital city, Rabbah*. The other soldiers from Syria and Tob and Maacah stood by themselves ◀in their positions/arranged themselves for battle▶ in the nearby fields.

⁹ Joab saw that there were groups of enemy soldiers in front of his troops and behind his troops. So he chose some of the best Israeli soldiers, and put them in positions to fight against the soldiers of Syria.

¹⁰ He appointed his *older* brother Abishai to be the commander of all the other soldiers, and he told them to ◀stand in their positions/arrange themselves▶ in front of *the army of* the Ammon people-group.

¹¹ Then Joab said, "If the soldiers from Syria are too strong for us to defeat them, your men must come and help us. But if the soldiers from the Ammon people-group are too strong for you to defeat, we will come and help your men.

¹² We must be strong, and fight hard [IDM] to *defend* our people and the cities ◀that belong to/where we worship▶ our God. I will pray/request that Yahweh do what he considers to be good."

¹³ So Joab and his army *advanced to* attack the army of Syria, and the soldiers from Syria ran away from them.

¹⁴ And when *the soldiers of* the Ammon people-group saw that the soldiers from Syria were running away, they also started to run away from

Abishai and his army, and they retreated back inside the city. So Joab's *army* stopped fighting against *the army* of the Ammon people-group, and Joab *and his army* returned to Jerusalem.

¹⁵ After *the leaders* of the army of Syria saw that the Israeli army had defeated them, they gathered all their troops together.

¹⁶ *Their king*, Hadadezer, summoned the soldiers of Syria who lived on the east side of the *Euphrates* River. They gathered at Helam *city*. Their commander was Shobach.

¹⁷ When David heard about that, he gathered all the Israeli soldiers, and they crossed the *Jordan River* and marched to Helam. There, the army of Syria ◀took their positions/arranged themselves for battle▶, and the battle started.

¹⁸ But the soldiers of Syria ran away from the Israeli soldiers. David *and his army* killed 700 of their chariot-drivers and 40,000 other soldiers. They also wounded Shobach, their commander, and he died there.

¹⁹ When all the kings who had been ruled by Hadadezer realized that they had been defeated by the Israeli *army*, they made peace with the Israelis and agreed to accept David as their king. So *the army* of Syria was afraid to help *the army* of the Ammon people-group any more.

11

David sinned with Bathsheba

¹ In that region, kings usually went with their *armies* to fight their *enemies* in the springtime. But the following year, in the springtime, David

did not do that. Instead, he stayed in Jerusalem, and he sent his commander Joab to lead the army. So Joab went with the other officers and the rest of the Israeli army. They crossed the Jordan River and defeated the army of the Ammon people-group. Then they surrounded their capital city, Rabbah.

² Late one afternoon, after David got up from taking a nap, he walked around on the *flat* roof of his palace. He saw a woman who was bathing *in the courtyard of her house*. The woman was very beautiful.

³ David sent a messenger to find out who she was. *The messenger returned* and said, “She is [RHQ] Bathsheba. She is the daughter of Eliam, and her husband is Uriah, from the Heth people-group.”

⁴ Then David sent more messengers to get her. They brought her to David, and he ◀slept/had sex▶ [EUP] with her. (She had just finished performing the rituals to make herself pure *after her monthly menstrual period*.) Then Bathsheba went back home.

⁵ *After some time*, she realized that she was pregnant. So she sent a messenger to tell David *that she was pregnant*.

⁶ Then David sent a message to Joab. He said, “Send Uriah, from the Heth people-group, to me.” So Joab did that. He sent Uriah to David.

⁷ When he arrived, David asked if Joab was well, and if other soldiers were well, and how the war was progressing.

⁸ Then David, *hoping that Uriah would go home and sleep with his wife*, said to Uriah, “Okay, go home and relax for a while. [IDM]” So Uriah left, and David gave someone a gift *of some food* to take to Uriah’s house.

⁹ But Uriah did not go home. Instead, he slept at the palace entrance with the king’s palace guards.

¹⁰ When someone told David that Uriah did not go to his house *that night*, David *summoned him again* and said to him, “Why didn’t you go home *to be with your wife last night*, after having been away for a long time?” [RHQ]

¹¹ Uriah replied, “The soldiers of Judah and Israel are camping in the open fields, and even our commander Joab is sleeping in a tent, and the sacred chest is with them. ◀How could I/It would not be right for me to▶ go home, eat and drink, and sleep with my wife [RHQ]. I solemnly declare [IDM] that I will never do such a thing!”

¹² Then David said to Uriah, “Stay here today. I will let you return *to the battle* tomorrow.” So Uriah stayed in Jerusalem that day and that night.

¹³ The next day, David invited him *to a meal*. So Uriah had a meal with David, and David made him drink a lot of wine so that he would get drunk, *hoping that if he was drunk, he would sleep with his wife*. But that night, Uriah again did not go home. Instead, he slept on his cot with the king’s servants.

¹⁴ *Someone reported that to* David, so the next morning he wrote a letter to Joab, and gave it to

Uriah to take to Joab.

¹⁵ In the letter, he wrote, “Put Uriah in the front line, where the fighting is the ◀worst/most severe▶. Then command the soldiers to pull back from him, in order that he will be killed *by our enemies*.”

¹⁶ *So after Joab got the letter*, as his army was surrounding the city, he sent Uriah to a place where he knew that their enemies’ strongest and best soldiers would be fighting.

¹⁷ The men from the city came out and fought with Joab’s soldiers. They killed some of David’s officers, including Uriah.

¹⁸ Then Joab sent a messenger to David to tell him about the fighting.

¹⁹ He said to the messenger, “Tell David the news about the battle. After you finish telling that to him,

²⁰ if David is angry *because so many officers were killed*, he may ask you, ‘Why did your soldiers go so close to the city to fight [RHQ]? Did you not know that they would shoot *arrows at you while they were standing on top of the city wall* [RHQ]?’

²¹ Do you not remember how Abimelech, the son of Gideon, was killed? A woman *who lived* in Thebez threw a huge ◀millstone/stone for grinding grain▶ on him from *the top of* a tower, and he died. So why did your troops go near to the city wall?’ If the king asks this, then tell him, ‘Your officer Uriah also was killed.’ ”

²² So the messenger went and told David everything that Joab told him to say.

²³ The messenger said to David, "Our enemies were very brave, and came out of the city to fight us in the fields. *They were defeating us* but we forced them back to the city gate.

²⁴ Then their archers shot arrows at us from *the top of* the city wall. They killed some of your officers. They killed your officer Uriah, too."

²⁵ David said to the messenger, "Go back to Joab and say to him, 'Do not be distressed *about what happened*, because no one ever knows who will be killed in a battle.' Tell him that the next time his troops should attack the city more strongly, and capture it."

²⁶ When Uriah's wife *Bathsheba* heard that her husband had died, she mourned for him.

²⁷ When her time of mourning was ended, David sent messengers to bring her to the palace. Thus, she became David's wife. She later gave birth to a son. But Yahweh was very displeased with what David had done.

12

Nathan rebuked David

¹ Yahweh *told the prophet Nathan what David had done*, and he sent Nathan to tell *this story* to David: "*I heard about two men who were living in a certain city. One was rich and the other was poor.*"

² The rich man owned a lot of cattle and sheep.

³ But the poor man had only one little female lamb, which he had bought. He raised the lamb, and it grew up with his children. He would give the lamb some of his own food and let it drink

from his cup. He let the lamb sleep in his arms. The lamb was like a daughter to him.

⁴ *One day* a visitor came to *visit* the rich man. The rich man did not want to take one of his own animals *and kill it* to prepare a meal for the visitor. So instead, he stole the poor man's lamb *and killed it* and prepared a meal for his visitor."

⁵ *When* David *heard that*, he was very angry about *what* the rich man *had done*. He said to Nathan, "I solemnly declare that the man who did that should be executed!

⁶ But before he is executed, he should pay back to the poor man four lambs for doing this, and for not having pity *on the poor man*."

⁷ Nathan said to David, "You are the man *I have been talking about*! And this is what Yahweh, the God we Israelis *worship*, says to you: 'I appointed you to be king of Israel, after having rescued you from Saul.

⁸ I gave you his palace and his wives. I caused you to become the king to rule Israel and Judah. If you *had told me that* you were not content with what I gave you, I would have given you twice as much!

⁹ So why have you despised my commandment *about not committing adultery*? You have done what I consider to be very evil! You have arranged for Uriah to be killed in a battle by the Ammon people-group's soldiers, and you have taken his wife to be your wife!

¹⁰ You have despised me, and have taken Uriah's wife to be your wife. So for many

generations some of your descendants will die violently. [MTY, PRS]

¹¹ I solemnly declare to you that I will cause someone from your own family to bring trouble to you. I will take your wives and give them to him, and he will have sexual relations with them in the daytime, where everyone can see it, and you will know all about it.

¹² What you did, you did secretly, but what I will cause to happen, everyone in Israel will be able to see it *or know about it*. [IDM]' "

¹³ David replied, "I have sinned against Yahweh." Nathan said to David, "Yahweh has forgiven you for your sin: You will not die *because of this sin*."

¹⁴ But, you have shown contempt for Yahweh by doing this. So, your baby will die."

¹⁵ Then Nathan went home.

David's baby died

Then Yahweh caused the baby to become very sick, the one that Uriah's wife had given birth to.

¹⁶ So David prayed to God that the child *would not die*. He ◀fasted/abstained from food▶, and he went into *the room where he slept* and lay all night on the floor.

¹⁷ *The next morning* his advisors stood around him and urged him to get up. But he would not get up, and he would not eat any food with them.

¹⁸ One week later the baby died. David's servants were afraid to tell that to David. They said *to each other*, "Hey, while the baby was still alive, we talked to him, but he would not answer

us. Now, if we tell him that the baby is dead [RHQ], he may do something to harm himself!"

¹⁹ But when David saw that his servants were whispering something to each other, he realized that the baby must be dead. So he asked them, "Is the baby dead?" They replied, "Yes, he is dead."

²⁰ Then David got up from the floor. He bathed himself, put lotions on his body, and put on other clothes. Then he went into Yahweh's Sacred Tent and worshiped Yahweh. Then he went home. He asked his servants for some food. They gave him some, and he ate it.

²¹ Then his servants said to him, "We do not understand [RHQ] why you have done this! While the baby was still alive, you cried for him and refused to eat anything. But now that the baby has died, *you are not crying any more!* You got up and ate some food!"

²² David replied, "While the baby was still alive, I fasted and cried. I thought, 'Who knows? Yahweh may be merciful to me and not allow the baby to die'.

²³ But now the baby is dead. So ◀there is no reason for me to <fast/abstain from eating food> any more./why should I <fast/abstain from eating food> any more?▶ [RHQ] ◀Can I bring him back to me?/I certainly cannot bring him back to me!▶ [RHQ] *Some day* I will go to where he is, but he will not return to me."

²⁴ Then David comforted his wife, Bathsheba. Then he ◀slept/had sexual relations▶ with her, and she *became pregnant again and gave birth*

to another son. David named that son Solomon. Yahweh loved that little boy.

²⁵ He told the prophet Nathan to tell David to name the baby boy Jedediah *which means 'loved by Yahweh'*, because Yahweh loved him.

David's army captured Rabbah

²⁶ ◀Meanwhile/While all that was happening▶, Joab's *soldiers* attacked Rabbah, *the capital city* of the Ammon people-group; and they captured the king's fortress.

²⁷ Then Joab sent messengers to David, to tell him this: "My troops are attacking Rabbah, and we have captured the city's water supply.

²⁸ Now gather your troops and come and surround the city and capture it. If you do not do that, my troops will capture the city and it will then be named 'the City of Joab'."

²⁹ So David gathered all his troops. They went *with David* to Rabbah and attacked it and captured it.

³⁰ Then David took the crown from the head of the king of Rabbah (OR, from the head of *Milcom* the god of Rabbah) and put it on his own head. It *was very heavy; it weighed* ◀75 pounds/34 kg.▶, and it had many very valuable stones fastened to it. His soldiers also took many other valuable things from the city.

³¹ Then they brought the people of Rabbah out of the city and forced them to *work for them* using saws and iron picks and axes. David's troops also forced them to make bricks. David's soldiers did this in all the towns of the Ammon

people-group. Then David and all of his army returned to Jerusalem.

13

Amnon raped Absalom's sister

¹ David's son Absalom had a beautiful sister named Tamar. Another of David's sons, Amnon, was attracted to Tamar.

² He wanted to *have sex with* [EUP] his half-sister very much, with the result that he made himself sick *thinking about her all the time*. But it was not possible for Amnon to get her, because she was a virgin, *so they kept men away from her*.

³ But Amnon had a friend named Jonadab, who was the son of David's brother Shimeah. Jonadab was a very crafty/shrewd man.

⁴ *One day* Jonadab said to Amnon, "You are the king's son, but every day I see that [RHQ] you seem very depressed/sad. What is your problem?" Amnon replied, "I ◀am in love/want to sleep▶ [EUP] with Tamar, my half-brother Absalom's sister."

⁵ Jonadab said to him, "Lie down on your bed, and pretend that you are sick. When your father comes to see you, say to him, 'Allow my half-sister Tamar to come and give me some food to eat. She can prepare the food while I am watching her. Then she can serve it to me herself.'"

⁶ So Amnon lay down, and pretended that he was sick. When the king came to see him, Amnon said to him, "*I am sick*; please allow my half-sister Tamar to come and make a couple scones/

dumplings for me while I am watching, and then she can serve them to me.”

⁷ So David sent a message to Tamar in the palace, saying “*Amnon is sick and he wants you to go to his house and prepare some food for him.*”

⁸ So Tamar went to Amnon’s house, where he was lying in bed. She took some dough and kneaded it, and formed it into some scones/dumplings while he was watching her. Then she baked them.

⁹ She took them out of the pan and put them *on a plate* in front of him, but he refused to eat them. Then he said to everyone else in the room, “All the rest of you, leave me now!” So all the others left his *room*.

¹⁰ Then Amnon said to Tamar, “Bring the food into my room and serve it to me.” So Tamar took into his room the scones/dumplings that she had made.

¹¹ But when she brought them close for him to eat them, he grabbed her and said to her, “Come to bed with me!”

¹² She replied, “No, do not force me to do such a disgraceful thing! We never do things like that in Israel! That would be awful/terrible!

¹³ As for me, if I did that, I would not be able to [RHQ] endure being disgraced by having done that. And as for you, everyone in Israel would condemn you for having done such a disgraceful deed. So I plead with you, talk to the king. I am sure that he will allow me to marry you.”

¹⁴ But he would not listen to her. He was stronger than she was, so he forced her to have

sex with him.

¹⁵ Then Amnon hated her very much. He hated her much more than he had desired her. He said to her, "Get up and get out of here!"

¹⁶ But she said to him, "No! It would be very wrong for you to send me away. It would be worse than what you just did to me!" But he would not listen to her.

¹⁷ He summoned his personal servant and said to him, "Take this woman outside, away from me, and lock the door *so that she cannot come in again!*"

¹⁸ So the servant put her outside and locked the door.

Tamar was wearing a long robe with long sleeves, which was the clothing that was usually worn by the unmarried daughters of the king at that time.

¹⁹ But Tamar tore the long robe that she was wearing, and put ashes on her head *to show that she was very sad*. Then she put her hands on her head *to show that she was grieving*, and she went away, crying.

²⁰ Her brother Absalom *saw her and* said to her, "Has your half-brother Amnon [DOU] forced you to have sex with him [EUP]? Please, my sister, do not tell anyone, and do not become depressed/sad." So Tamar went to live in Absalom's house, and she was very sad and lonely.

²¹ When King David heard about all that, he became very angry.

²² And Absalom hated Amnon, because he had raped his sister, so he would not speak to Amnon about anything.

²³ Two years later, Absalom's servants were shearing sheep at Baal-Hazor, which is near *a town named Ephraim*. *When they finished shearing the sheep, they celebrated*, and Absalom invited all the king's sons *to come and celebrate*.

²⁴ Absalom went to the king and said to him, "Sir, my servants have been shearing my sheep. Please come with your officials *to celebrate* with us!"

²⁵ But the king replied, "No, my son, it would not be good for all of us to go, because it would cause you to do a lot of work and spend a lot of money for food." Absalom continued urging him, but the king would not go. Instead, he said that he hoped/desired that God would bless them *while they celebrated*.

²⁶ Then Absalom said, "If you will not go, please allow my half-brother Amnon to go with us." But the king replied, "Why *do you want* him to go with you?"

²⁷ But Absalom continued to insist, so finally the king permitted Amnon and all David's other sons to go with Absalom.

²⁸ *So they all went. And at the celebration*, Absalom commanded his servants, "Notice when Amnon has become a bit drunk from the wine. Then when I signal to you, kill him. Do not be afraid; you will be doing this *only* because I told you [RHQ] to do it. So be courageous and do it!"

²⁹ So Absalom's servants did what Absalom told them to do. *They killed Amnon*. All the rest of David's sons *saw what happened and fled*, riding on their mules.

³⁰ While they were on their way home, someone *went quickly and* reported to David, "Absalom has killed all of your other sons; none of them is still alive!"

³¹ The king stood up, tore his clothes *because he was extremely sad*, and then he threw himself down on the ground. All the servants who were there also tore their clothes.

³² But Jonadab, the son of David's brother Shimeah, said, "Your Majesty, *I am sure that* they have not killed all your sons. *I am sure that* only Amnon is dead, because Absalom has determined to do this ever since the day that Amnon raped [EUP] his half-sister Tamar.

³³ So, your majesty, do not believe the report that all your sons are dead. *I am sure that* only Amnon is dead."

³⁴ In the meantime, Absalom ran away.

Just then, the soldier/sentry *who was standing on the city wall* saw a large crowd of people coming down the hill along the road from Horonaim. *He ran and told the king what he had seen.*

³⁵ Jonadab said to the king, "Aha! What I told you is true. Your other sons *are alive and* have come!"

³⁶ And as soon as he said that, David's sons came in. They all started crying, and David and all his officials also cried very much.

³⁷⁻³⁸ But Absalom had fled. He went to stay with the king of *the Geshur region*, who was Talmai the son of Ammihud. Absalom stayed there for three years.

David mourned for his son Amnon for a long time,

³⁹ but after that, he desired very much to see Absalom, because he was no longer grieving about Amnon being dead.

14

Joab cleverly arranged for Absalom to return

¹ Joab realized that the king yearned [IDM] to see Absalom.

² So Joab sent someone to Tekoa *town* to bring back a woman who was very clever. *When she arrived*, Joab said to her, "Pretend that you are grieving because someone has died. Put on clothes that show that you are mourning. Do not put any lotion/ointment on your body. Act as if you are a woman who has been mourning for a long time.

³ And go to the king, and tell him what I tell you to say." Then Joab told her what to say [MTY] *to the king*.

⁴ So the woman from Tekoa went to the king. She prostrated herself in front of him and then bowed down to him, and said, "Your Majesty, help me!"

⁵ The king replied, "What is your problem?" She replied, "Please, sir, I am a widow. My husband died *some time ago*.

⁶ I had two sons. But one day they quarreled with each other out in the fields. There was no one to separate them, and one of them struck the other one and killed him.

⁷ Now, all my family oppose me. They are insisting that I allow them to kill my son who is still alive [MTY], in order that they may get revenge for his killing his brother. But if they do that, I will not have any son to inherit *my husband's possessions*. That would be like [MET] extinguishing the last coals of a fire, and my husband would not have a son to preserve our family's name. [DOU]"

⁸ Then the king said to the woman, "Go back home; I will take care of this matter for you."

⁹ The woman from Tekoa replied to the king, "Your Majesty, if you are criticized *for helping me*, my family and I will accept the blame. You and the royal family will ◀be innocent/not have done what is wrong▶."

¹⁰ The king said to her, "If anyone says anything *to threaten you/cause you trouble* you, bring that person to me, and *I will make sure that he will never cause you trouble again*."

¹¹ Then the woman said, "Your Majesty, please pray that Yahweh your God will not allow my relative, who *wants to get revenge* on my son for killing [MTY] his brother, to be able to do that."

David replied, "As surely as Yahweh lives, your son will not be harmed at all. [IDM]"

¹² Then the woman said, "Your Majesty, please allow me to say one more thing to you." He replied, "Speak!"

¹³ The woman said, "Why have you done this bad thing to God's people? You have not allowed your son Absalom to return home. By saying what you have just said, you have certainly

declared [RHQ] that what you have done is wrong.

¹⁴ We all die; we are like [SIM] water that cannot be picked up after it is spilled on the ground. But God does not just cause us to die; he creates ways to bring us back when we become separated from him.

¹⁵ “Now, Your Majesty, I have come to you because others have threatened me. So I said to myself, ‘I will go and talk to the king, and perhaps he will do what I request him to do.

¹⁶ Perhaps he will listen to me, and save me from the man who is trying to kill my son. If my son is killed, it would result in us disappearing from the land that God gave to us.’

¹⁷ “And I thought, ‘What the king says will comfort/encourage me, because the king is like [SIM] an angel of God. He knows what is good and what is evil.’ I pray/desire that Yahweh our God will ◀be with/direct▶ you.”

¹⁸ Then the king said to the woman, “I will now ask you a question. Answer it, and tell me the truth. [LIT]” The woman replied, “Your majesty, ask your question.”

¹⁹ The king said, “Was Joab the one who told you to do this?” She replied, “Yes, Your Majesty, as surely as you live, I cannot avoid telling you what is true. Yes, indeed, it was Joab who told me to come here, and who told me what to say.

²⁰ He did it in order to cause you to think differently about this matter. Your Majesty, you are as wise as God’s angels, and *it seems that*

you know everything *that happens* on the earth, *so you know why Joab sent me here.*"

²¹ Then the king *summoned* Joab *and* said to him, "Listen! I have decided to do *what you want*. So go and get that young man Absalom and bring him back *to Jerusalem.*"

²² Joab prostrated himself on the ground, and then he bowed down before the king, and *asked God* to bless him. Then Joab said, "Your Majesty, today I know that you are pleased with me, because you have agreed to do what I requested."

²³ Then Joab got up and went to Geshur, and got Absalom and brought him back to Jerusalem.

²⁴ But the king said/commanded that Absalom would not be permitted to live in the palace. He said, "I do not want him to come to see me." So Absalom lived in his own house, and did not go *to talk* to the king.

²⁵ Absalom was very handsome. He looked perfect, from the bottom of his feet to the top of his head. In all of Israel there was no one whom people admired more than Absalom.

²⁶ His hair was very thick, and he cut it only once each year, when it became too heavy for him. Using the standard weights, he would weigh the hair *that he cut off*, and it always weighed about five pounds.

²⁷ Absalom had three sons and one daughter named Tamar. She was a very beautiful woman.

²⁸ *After* Absalom *returned* to Jerusalem, he lived there two years, and during that time he *never was allowed* to see the king.

²⁹ So he sent *a messenger* to Joab to ask him to come *and talk to him*, but Joab refused to come. So Absalom sent *a message to him* a second time, but he still would not come.

³⁰ Then Absalom said to his servants, "You know that Joab's field is next to mine, and that he has barley *growing* there. Go and light a fire there *to burn his barley*." So Absalom's servants *went there and lit a fire, and all his barley burned*.

³¹ Joab *knew who had done it*, so he went to Absalom's house and said to him, "Why have your servants burned *the barley* in my field?"

³² Absalom replied, "Because *you did not come to me when I sent messages to you requesting that you come*. I wanted to request that you go to the king to say to him, 'Absalom ◀wants to know what good it did/says that is was useless▶ [RHQ] for him [RHQ] to leave Geshur and come here. *He thinks that it would have been better for him to have stayed there. He wants you to allow him to talk to you. And if you think that he has done something that is wrong, you can command that he be executed.*' "

³³ So Joab went to the king, and told him *what Absalom had said*. Then the king *summoned Absalom*, and he came to the king and knelt down in front of him with his face touching the ground. Then the king kissed Absalom *to show that he was pleased to see him*.

15

Absalom rebelled against David

¹ Some time later, Absalom acquired a chariot and horses *to pull it*. He *hired* 50 men to run in front of him *to honor him while he was riding around Jerusalem in the chariot*.

² Furthermore, he always rose early *each morning* and stood by the city gate. Whenever someone came there with a dispute/quarrel that he wanted the king to decide, Absalom would call out to him, asking "What city are you from?" When the person told him what *city and* tribe he was from,

³ Absalom would say to him, "Listen, *I am sure that* what you are saying/claiming is right. But there is no one whom the king has appointed/authorized to listen to *people like you*."

⁴ Absalom would then add, "I wish that I were a judge in this land. If I were a judge, anyone who had a dispute could come to me, and I would decide it fairly/justly."

⁵ And whenever anyone came near to Absalom to bow respectfully in front of him, Absalom would reach out and embrace him and kiss him.

⁶ Absalom did this to everyone in Israel who came to the king because of having a dispute with someone. In that way, Absalom persuaded all the Israeli people to be more pleased with him [IDM] *than they were pleased with David*.

⁷ Four years later, Absalom *went to* the king and said, "Please allow me to go to Hebron *city*, in order that I can do what I promised Yahweh that I would do.

⁸ When I was living in Geshur, in Syria, I promised Yahweh that if he brought me back to

Jerusalem, I would worship him *in Hebron*.”

⁹ The king replied, “You may go.” So Absalom went to Hebron.

¹⁰ But *while he was there*, he secretly sent messengers to all the tribes in Israel, to tell them, “When you hear the sound of the trumpets *being blown*, shout ‘Absalom has become the king at Hebron!’ ”

¹¹ Absalom had taken with him to Hebron 200 men from Jerusalem, but they did not know *what Absalom was planning to do*.

¹² While Absalom was offering sacrifices *at Hebron*, he sent a message to Ahithophel, from Giloh town, requesting him to come. Ahithophel was one of the king’s advisors. So the number of people who joined Absalom and who were ready to rebel *against David* became larger.

David escaped from Jerusalem

¹³ Soon a messenger came to David and said to him, “All [HYP] the Israeli people [SYN] are joining Absalom to rebel against you!”

¹⁴ So David said to all his officials, “We must leave immediately if we want to escape from Absalom! We must go quickly, before he *and his men* arrive. If we do not do that, they will kill us and everyone else in the city!”

¹⁵ The king’s officials said, “Okay, your majesty, we are ready to do whatever you decide.”

¹⁶ So the king left ten of his slave wives there to take care of the palace, but all the other people in his palace went with him.

¹⁷ When they all were leaving *the city*, they stopped at the last house.

¹⁸ The king and his officials stood there while his bodyguards went by in front of him. 600 soldiers from Gath city also walked by in front of him.

¹⁹ Then David said to Ittai, *the leader of the soldiers* from Gath, “◀Why are you going with us?/You should not be going with us.▶ [RHQ] Go back and stay with *Absalom* the *new* king. You are not an Israeli; you are living away from your own land.

²⁰ You have lived here *in Israel* for only a short time [HYP]. And we do not even know where we will be going. So it is not right [RHQ] for me to force you to wander around with us. And take your troops with you. And I hope/wish that Yahweh will faithfully love and be loyal to you.”

²¹ But Ittai replied, “Your Majesty, as surely as you live, wherever you go, I will go; I will stay with you, whether they kill me or allow me to live.”

²² David replied to Ittai, “Okay, march with us!” So Ittai and all his troops and their families went *with David*.

²³ All the people *along the road* cried when they saw them walking by. The king and all the others crossed the Kidron Valley and then they all went *up the hill* toward the desert.

²⁴ Abiathar and Zadok, *the priests*, were walking with them. The descendants of Levi *who helped the priests* also went with them, carrying the sacred chest that contained the Ten Commandments. But they set it on the ground until all the others had left the city.

25 Then the king said to Zadok, "You and Abiathar take the sacred chest back into the city. If Yahweh is pleased with me, he will some day allow me to return to see it and the place where it is kept.

26 But if he says that he is not pleased with me, then I am willing for him to do to me whatever he thinks is good."

27 He also said to Zadok, "Listen to *what I suggest*. You and Abiathar return to the city peacefully/safely, and take your son Ahimaaz and Abiathar's son Jonathan with you.

28 I will wait in the desert at the place where people can walk across the river, until you send a message to me."

29 So Zadok and Abiathar carried the sacred chest back to Jerusalem, and they stayed there.

30 David *and those with him* went up Olive Tree Hill. David was crying while he walked. He was walking barefoot and had something covering his head *to show that he was sorrowful*. All those who were going with him also covered their heads and were crying while they walked.

31 Someone told David that Ahithophel had joined with those who were rebelling against David. So David prayed, "Yahweh, cause whatever Ahithophel suggests to Absalom *that he should do to be considered* to be foolish!"

32 When they arrived at the top of the hill, where there was a place where the people worshiped *God*, suddenly Hushai, from the Arki people-group, met David. He had torn his clothes

and put dirt on his head *to show that he was very sad*.

³³ David said to him, “If you go with me, you will not be able to help me.

³⁴ But if you return to the city, *you can help me* by saying to Absalom, ‘Your Majesty, I will serve you as faithfully as I served your father.’ If you do that *and stay near Absalom*, you will be able to oppose any advice that Ahithophel gives to Absalom.

³⁵ Zadok and Abiathar the priests are already there [RHQ]. Whatever you hear people say in the king’s palace, tell it to Zadok and Abiathar.

³⁶ Keep in mind that Zadok’s son Ahimaaz and Abiathar’s son Jonathan are also there. You can tell them whatever you find out, and send them to report it to me.”

³⁷ So David’s friend Hushai returned to the city, at the same time that Absalom was entering Jerusalem.

16

Ziba gave food to David and the others

¹ When David *and the others* had gone a little way past the top of the hill, Mephibosheth’s servant Ziba met him. He had with him two donkeys that were carrying 200 loaves of bread, 100 bunches/clusters of raisins, 100 bunches of fresh fruit, and a leather bag full of wine.

² The king said to Ziba, “What are these for?” Ziba replied, “The donkeys are for your family to ride on, the bread and the fruit are for your

soldiers to eat, and the wine is for them to drink when they become exhausted in the desert.”

³ The king said, “Where is Mephibosheth, the grandson of your *former* master Saul?” Ziba *deceived David* by saying, “He stayed in Jerusalem, because he thinks that now the Israeli people will allow him to rule the kingdom that his grandfather Saul ruled.”

⁴ The king said to Ziba, “Okay, everything that belonged to Mephibosheth is now yours.” Ziba replied, “Your Majesty, I will humbly serve you; and I desire/hope that you will always be pleased with me.”

Shimei cursed David

⁵ When King David *and those with him* arrived at Bahurim town, a man named Shimei met him. Shimei, whose father was Gera, was one of Saul’s relatives. Shimei was cursing David as he approached.

⁶ Then he threw stones at David and his officials, even though the officials and David’s bodyguards surrounded David.

⁷ Shimei cursed David and said to him, “Get out of here, you murderer, you scoundrel!”

⁸ Yahweh is ◀getting revenge on/punishing▶ you all for murdering [MTY] many people in Saul’s family. And now he is giving Saul’s kingdom to your son Absalom. You murderer, you are being paid back for the many people that you have killed/murdered [MTY]!”

⁹ Then Abishai said to the king, “Your Majesty, this man is *as worthless as* [MET] a dead dog! ◀Why should he be allowed to curse you?/He

should not be allowed to curse you.► [RHQ] Allow me to go over there and cut off his head!"

¹⁰ But the king replied, "You two sons of Zeruiah, ◀do not tell me what to do/this does not concern you► [RHQ]. If he is cursing me because Yahweh told him to do that, certainly no one should say '◀Why are you doing that?/ You should not be doing that.► [RHQ]' "

¹¹ Then David said to Abishai and to all his officials, "You know that my own son is trying to kill me. So *it is not surprising that* this man from the tribe of Benjamin is also trying to kill me. So ignore him, and allow him to curse me, because *perhaps he thinks that* Yahweh told him to do that.

¹² Perhaps Yahweh will see that I am having all this trouble, and *some day he will repay me by* ◀blessing/doing good things for► me in return for this man cursing me today."

¹³ Then David and those who were with him walked along the road, and Shimei continued walking along the hillside near him. While he walked along, he cursed David and threw stones and dirt at him.

¹⁴ When David and those who were with him arrived at the *Jordan River*, they were very tired. So they rested there.

Ahithophel gave advice to Absalom

¹⁵ While that was happening, Absalom and all the Israeli people who were with him had arrived in Jerusalem. Ahithophel had also arrived there.

¹⁶ When David's friend Hushai came to Absalom, he said to Absalom, "I desire/hope that the king will live a long time! May you live for many years!"

¹⁷ Absalom said to Hushai, "You have been loyal [RHQ] to your friend *David for a long time*. So why did you not go with him *instead of coming to me?*"

¹⁸ Hushai replied, "I will serve the one whom Yahweh and these people and all the other people of Israel have chosen *to be their king*. So I will stay with you.

¹⁹ You are my master *King David's* son; if I do not serve you, what other man should I serve [RHQ]? I will serve you as I served your father."

²⁰ Then Absalom said to Ahithophel, "What do you advise that we should do?"

²¹ Ahithophel replied, "Your father left some of his slave wives in the palace to take care of it. Have sex [EUP] with them. When everyone in Israel hears that you have done that, they will realize that you are acting very contemptuously toward your father. Then all those who are with you will be very encouraged."

²² So they set up a tent for Absalom on the roof *of the palace*. And Absalom went into the tent and had sex [EUP] with his father's slave wives, *one by one*, and everyone [HYP] could see *him going into the tent*.

²³ In those days, people accepted what Ahithophel recommended as though he were speaking the words of God. So just as David

had always accepted what Ahithophel said, now Absalom did also.

17

¹ Then Ahithophel said to Absalom, “Allow me to choose 12,000 men, and I will leave *with them* tonight to pursue David.

² We will attack him while he is tired and discouraged, and cause him to be very frightened. All the soldiers who are with him will run away. We will kill only the king.

³ Then we will bring back all his soldiers to you, like [SIM] a ◀bride/woman comes to her husband when she is married▶. You are wanting to kill only one man; so the other people will not be harmed.”

⁴ Absalom and all the Israeli leaders *who were with him* thought that what Ahithophel said would be good to do.

⁵ But Absalom said, “Summon Hushai also, and we will hear what he suggests.”

⁶ So when Hushai arrived, Absalom told him what Ahithophel had suggested. Then he asked Hushai, “What do you think we should do? If you do not think that we should do what Ahithophel suggests, tell us *what you think that we should do.*”

⁷ Hushai replied, “This time what Ahithophel has suggested is not good advice.

⁸ You know that your father and the men who are with him are strong soldiers, and that now they are very angry, like [SIM] a mother bear whose cubs have been stolen from her. Furthermore, your father knows how to fight

because he has fought in many battles. He will not stay with his troops during the night.

⁹ Right now he is probably already hiding in one of the pits, or in some other place. *If his soldiers start to attack your soldiers, and if they kill some of them, whoever hears about that will say 'Many of the soldiers with Absalom have been killed!'*

¹⁰ Then your other soldiers, even if they are as fearless [SIM, IDM] as lions, they will become very afraid. Do not forget that everyone in Israel knows that your father is a great/strong soldier, and that the soldiers who are with him are also very brave/courageous.

¹¹ "So what I suggest is that you summon all the Israeli soldiers, from Dan *in the far north* to Beersheba *in the far south*. They will be as many as the grains of sand on the seashore [HYP]. And then you yourself lead us into the battle.

¹² We will find *your father*, wherever he is, and we will attack him *from all sides*, like [SIM] dew covers all the ground. And neither he nor any of the soldiers who are with him will survive.

¹³ If he escapes into some city, all our soldiers will bring ropes and pull that city down into the valley. As a result, not one stone will be left there *on top of the hill where that city was!*"

¹⁴ Absalom and all the other Israeli men *who were with him* said, "What Hushai suggests is better than what Ahithophel suggested." The reason that happened was that Yahweh had determined that if they would accept the good advice that Ahithophel had given them, *they*

would have been able to defeat/kill David. But as a result of their doing what Hushai suggested, Yahweh would cause a disaster to happen to Absalom.

Hushai arranged for a report to be sent to David

¹⁵ Then Hushai told the two priests, Zadok and Abiathar, what both he and Ahithophel had suggested to Absalom and the Israeli leaders.

¹⁶ Then he said to them, "Send a message quickly to David. Tell him to not stay at the place where people walk across the river, near the desert. Instead, he and his soldiers must cross the Jordan River immediately, in order that they will not be killed/wiped out."

¹⁷ The priest's two sons, Jonathan and Ahimaaz, were waiting at En-Rogel Spring, outside Jerusalem. They did not dare to enter the city, because if someone saw them, he would report it to Absalom. While they were at En-Rogel, a female servant of the two priests would frequently go to them and report to them what was happening, and then they would go and report it to King David.

¹⁸ But a young man saw them, and went and reported it to Absalom. They found out what the young man had done, so both of them left quickly and went to stay in the house of a man in Bahurim. That man had a well in his courtyard; so the two men went down into the well to hide.

¹⁹ The man's wife took a cloth/mat and covered the well, and scattered grain on top of it in

order that no one would know *that two men were hiding inside it.*

²⁰ Some of Absalom's soldiers *found out where the two men had gone.* So they went to the house, and asked the woman, "Where are Ahimaaz and Jonathan?"

She replied, "They crossed the river."

So the soldiers *crossed the river and* searched for them. But they could not find them, so they returned to Jerusalem.

²¹ After they had gone, the two men came out of the well and went and reported to King David *what had happened and* what Ahithophel had suggested. Then they said to him, "Cross the river quickly!"

²² So David and all his soldiers quickly started to cross the Jordan River, and by dawn they had all crossed to the other side.

²³ When Ahithophel realized that Absalom was not going to do what he suggested, he put a saddle on his donkey and returned to his own town. He gave *to his family* instructions about his possessions, and then he hanged himself *because he knew that Absalom would be defeated and that he would be considered a traitor and be killed.* His body was buried in the tomb where his ancestors *had been buried.*

²⁴ David *and his soldiers* arrived at Mahanaim. And Absalom *and all his Israeli soldiers* also crossed the Jordan River.

²⁵ Absalom had appointed *his cousin* Amasa to be the commander of his army, instead of Joab. Amasa was the son of a man named Jether, a descendant of Ishmael. Amasa's mother was

Abigail, the daughter of Nahash and the sister of Joab's mother Zeruiah.

²⁶ Absalom and his Israeli soldiers set up their tents in *the Gilead region*.

²⁷ When David *and his soldiers* arrived at Mahanaim, Shobi the son of Nahash from Rabbah city in the Ammon area, and Machir the son of Ammiel from Lo-Debar city, and Barzillai from Rogelim town in *the Gilead region*

²⁸ brought sleeping mats, bowls, clay pots, barley, wheat flour, parched grain, beans, and lentils to them.

²⁹ They brought honey and curds, sheep, and some cream/cheese for David and his soldiers to eat. They knew that David and his soldiers would be hungry and tired and thirsty *from marching* in the desert.

18

David's men prepared for the battle

¹ David arranged his soldiers for the battle. He divided them into groups, and appointed a commander for each 100 soldiers and a commander for each 1,000 soldiers.

² He sent them out in three groups. Joab commanded one group, Joab's brother Abishai commanded a second group, and Ittai from Gath commanded the third group. David said to them, "I myself will go with you *to the battle*."

³ But his soldiers said, "No, we will not allow you to go with us. If they force us all to run away, they will not be concerned about that happening. Or if they kill half of us, that will also not be

what they want. To them, *killing* you is more important than *killing* 10,000 of us. So it will be better that you *stay here* in the city and send help to us.”

⁴ The king replied, “Okay, I will do whatever seems best to you.” So he stood at the gate *and watched* while his soldiers marched out, group by group.

⁵ *While they were leaving*, the king commanded Joab, Abishai, and Ittai, “For my sake, do not harm my son Absalom!” And all the troops heard it when David gave that order about Absalom to those three commanders.

Joab killed Absalom

⁶ So the army went out to fight against the Israeli soldiers *who were with Absalom*. They fought the battle in the forest *where people from the tribe of Ephraim lived*.

⁷ David’s soldiers defeated Absalom’s soldiers. They killed 20,000 of them!

⁸ The battle was fought {They fought the battle} all over that area, and the number of men who died because of *dangerous things in the forest* [PRS] was greater than the number of men who were killed ◀in the battle/by swords▶.

⁹ During the battle, Absalom suddenly came near *some of* David’s soldiers. Absalom was riding on his mule; and when the mule went under the thick branches of a large oak tree, Absalom’s head/hair was caught in the branches. The mule kept going, but Absalom was left dangling in the air.

¹⁰ One of David's soldiers saw what happened, and went and told Joab, "I saw Absalom hanging in an oak tree!"

¹¹ Joab said to the man, "What? You say that you saw him hanging there, so why did you not kill him immediately [RHQ]? *If you had killed him*, I would have given you ten pieces of silver and a belt!"

¹² The man replied to Joab, "Even if you gave me 1,000 pieces of silver, I would not have done anything to harm [IDM] the king's son. We all heard the king command you and Abishai and Ittai, 'For my sake, do not harm my son Absalom!'

¹³ If I had disobeyed the king and killed Absalom, the king would have heard about it, because the king hears about everything, and even you would not have defended me!"

¹⁴ Joab said, "I am not going to waste time talking to you!" Then he took three spears *and went to where Absalom was*, and thrust them into Absalom's chest/heart while he was still alive, dangling from the oak tree.

¹⁵ Then ten young men who carried weapons for Joab surrounded Absalom and *finished* killing him.

¹⁶ Then Joab blew his trumpet *to signal that they should not fight any more*, and his soldiers returned from pursuing those Israeli soldiers.

¹⁷ They took Absalom's body and threw it into a huge pit in the forest, and covered it with a huge pile of stones. Then all the remaining Israeli soldiers *who had been with Absalom* fled to their own towns.

¹⁸ Absalom had no sons to preserve his *family* name. So, while Absalom was alive, he built a monument to himself in the King's Valley *near Jerusalem, in order that people would remember him*. He put his name on the monument, and people still call it Absalom's monument.

The report of Absalom's death reached David

¹⁹ After Absalom had been killed, Zadok's son Ahimaaz said to Joab, "Allow me to run to the king to tell him the good news that Yahweh has rescued him from the power of his enemies!"

²⁰ But Joab said to him, "No, I will not allow you to take news to the king today. Some other day I will allow you to take some news, but not today. *If you took news today it would not be good news for the king, because his son is dead.*"

²¹ Then Joab said to David's servant who was from Ethiopia, "You go and tell the king what you have seen." So the man from Ethiopia bowed in front of Joab, and started to run.

²² Then Ahimaaz said again to Joab, "Even though *that man from Ethiopia is running*, allow me to run behind him." Joab replied, "My boy/son, why do you want to do that? You will not receive any reward for your news!"

²³ But Ahimaaz replied, "That does not matter, I want to go." So Joab said, "Okay, go." So Ahimaaz ran along *another* road through the Jordan Valley and arrived *where David was* before the man from Ethiopia arrived.

²⁴ David was sitting between the outer gate and the inner gate *of the city*. The watchman/lookout

went up on top of the city wall and stood on the roof over the gates. He looked out and saw one man running alone.

²⁵ The watchman called down and reported it to the king. The king said, "If he is alone, *that indicates/means that* he is bringing good news." The man who was running continued to come closer.

²⁶ Then the watchman saw another man running. So he called down to the gatekeeper, "Look! There is another man running!" And the king said, "He also is bringing *some good news.*"

²⁷ The watchman said, "I think the first man *must be Ahimaaz, because he* is running like Ahimaaz runs." The king said, "He is a good man, and *I am sure* he is coming with good news."

²⁸ *When Ahimaaz reached the king, he* called out "I hope/desire that things will go well with you!" Then he prostrated himself on the ground in front of the king and said, "Your Majesty, praise Yahweh our God, who has rescued you from the men who were rebelling against you!"

²⁹ The king said, "Is the young man Absalom safe/all right?" Ahimaaz *did not want to answer that question, so he* replied, "When Joab sent me, I saw that there was a lot of confusion, but I do not know what it was about."

³⁰ Then the king said, "Stand aside." So Ahimaaz stepped aside and stood there.

³¹ Suddenly the man from Ethiopia arrived, and said, "Your Majesty, I have good news for

you! Yahweh has enabled your soldiers to defeat all those who rebelled against you!"

³² The king said to him, "Is the young man Absalom safe/all right?" And the man from Ethiopia replied, "Sir, I wish/desire that what happened to him would happen to all of your enemies and to all those who rebel against you!"

³³ The king *realized that he meant that Absalom was dead*, so he became ◀extremely distressed/overcome with grief▶, and he went up to the room above the gateway and cried. While he was going up, he kept crying out, "O, my son Absalom! My son! O, my son Absalom, I desire/wish that I had died instead of you!"

19

Joab rebuked the king

¹ Someone told Joab that the king was crying and mourning because Absalom had died.

² All of David's soldiers became sad. Instead of rejoicing about defeating *the soldiers who had fought with Absalom*, they were sad because they heard that the king was mourning because Absalom *was dead*.

³ The soldiers returned to the city quietly, like [SIM] soldiers do when they are ashamed because they ran away from battle.

⁴ The king covered his face *with his hands* and kept crying loudly, "O, my son Absalom! O, Absalom, my son! My son!"

⁵ Then Joab entered the room where the king was, and said to the king, "Today you have caused your soldiers to be ashamed! You have

humiliated the men who saved your life and the lives of your sons and daughters and your ordinary wives and your slave wives!

⁶ *It seems that* you love those who hate you and *that* you hate those who love you. You have caused it to be clear today that your commanders and your officers are not at all important to you. I think that if Absalom were still alive and we were all dead today, you would be happy.

⁷ So, now go and thank your soldiers *for what they did*. Because I solemnly declare that if you do not do that, none of them will still be with you by tomorrow morning and that would be worse *for you* than all the disasters/troubles that you have experienced since you were a boy.”

⁸ So the king got up and went and sat near the city gate. And all the people were told, “Hey, the king is sitting at the gate!” So they all came and gathered around him.

The people of Israel and Judah wanted David to be their king again

Meanwhile, all the Israeli troops *who had been with Absalom* had returned to their homes.

⁹ Then all the people throughout the tribes of Israel started to quarrel among themselves. They said to each other, “King David rescued us from the people of Philistia and from our other enemies. But now he has fled from Absalom and left Israel!

¹⁰ We appointed [MTY] Absalom to be our king, but he died in the battle *against David’s soldiers*. So ◀why does someone not try to bring King

David back?/surely someone should try to bring King David back.►” [RHQ]

¹¹ King David *found out what the people were saying*. So he sent the two priests, Zadok and Abiathar, to say to the leaders of Judah, “The king says that he has heard that all the Israeli people *want him to be king again*. And he says, ‘◄Why should you be the last ones to bring me back to my palace?/It is not right that you be the last ones to bring me back to my palace.► [RHQ]

¹² You are my relatives; we have the same ancestor [IDM]. So ◄why should you be the last ones to bring me back?/you should certainly not be the last ones to bring me back.► [RHQ]’ ”

¹³ And say to Amasa, “You are one of my relatives. I hope/desire that God strike me dead [IDM] if I do not appoint you to be, from now on, the commander of my army instead of Joab.”

¹⁴ *By sending that message to them*, David convinced all the people of Judah [IDM] *that they should ◄be loyal to him/accept him as their king►*. So they sent a message to the king, saying “We want you and all your officials to return here.”

¹⁵ So the king *and his officials started back toward Jerusalem*. When they reached the Jordan River, the people of Judah came there to Gilgal to meet the king, and to bring him across the river.

¹⁶ Shimei, the man from the tribe of Benjamin, also came down quickly *to the river* with the people of Judah to meet King David.

¹⁷ There were 1,000 men from the tribe of Benjamin who came with him. And Ziba, who

had been the servant of Saul, also hurried down to the *Jordan River*, bringing 20 of his servants with him. They all came to the king,

¹⁸ and then they all *prepared to* take the king and all his family across the river, at the place where they could walk across it. They wanted to do whatever the king wanted them to do. As the king was about to cross the river, Shimei came to him and prostrated himself in front of the king.

¹⁹ He said to the king, “Your Majesty, please forgive me. Please do not keep thinking about the terrible thing that I did on the day that you left Jerusalem. Do not think about it any more.

²⁰ Because I know that I have sinned. Look, I have come today, the first one from the northern tribes to come here to greet you today, Your Majesty.”

²¹ But Abishai, the son of Zeruiah, said, “He cursed the one that Yahweh appointed [MTY] to be the king! So ◀should he not be executed for doing that?/he certainly should be executed for doing that.▶” [RHQ]

²² But David said, “You sons of Zeruiah, what am I going to do with you? (OR, you are not the ones who should decide *what to do to him*). *It is as though* you have become my enemies today. I know that I am the one who has now become the king of Israel, so *I say that* certainly no one [RHQ] in Israel should be executed today.”

²³ Then the king said to Shimei, “I solemnly promise that I will not execute you.”

²⁴ Then Miphibosheth, Saul’s grandson, came down *to the river* to greet the king. He had

not washed his feet or trimmed his beard or washed his clothes, from the time that the king left Jerusalem until the day that he returned.

²⁵ When he arrived from Jerusalem to greet the king, the king said to him, "Mephibosheth, why did you not go with me?"

²⁶ He replied, "Your Majesty, *you know that* I am crippled. *When I heard that you were leaving Jerusalem,* I said to my servant Ziba, 'Put a saddle on my donkey in order that I can ride on it and go with the king.' But he deceived me *and left without me.*

²⁷ And he lied to you about me. But, Your Majesty, you are *as wise* as God's angel. So do whatever seems right to you.

²⁸ All of my grandfather's family expected/deserved that we would be executed. But *you did not execute me*; you allowed me to eat food with you at your table! So I certainly do not have [RHQ] the right to request you for anything more."

²⁹ The king replied, "You certainly do not need to say any more. I have decided that you and Ziba will divide *equally* the land *that belonged to your grandfather Saul.*"

³⁰ Mephibosheth replied to the king, "Your Majesty, *I am content that* you have returned safely. So allow him to take all the land."

³¹ Barzillai, the man from *the Gilead region*, had come down to the Jordan River from *his town of Rogelim*, to escort the king across the river.

³² Barzillai was a very old man, 80 years old. He was a very wealthy man, and he had provided

food for the king *and his soldiers* while they were at Mahanaim.

³³ The king said to Barzillai, “Come with me to Jerusalem, and I will take care of you.”

³⁴ But Barzillai replied, “I certainly do not have [RHQ] many more years to live. So ◀why should I go with you to Jerusalem?/there is certainly no reason for me to go with you to Jerusalem.▶ [RHQ]

³⁵ I am now 80 years old. I do not [RHQ] know what is enjoyable and what is not enjoyable. I cannot [RHQ] enjoy what I eat and what I drink. I cannot [RHQ] hear the voices of men and women as they sing. So ◀why should I be another burden to you?/I do not want to be another burden to you.▶ [RHQ]

³⁶ I will cross the Jordan *River* with you and go a little further, and that will be all the reward that I need *for helping you*.

³⁷ Then please allow me to return to my home, because that is where I want to die, near my parents’ grave. But here is *my son* Chimham. Your Majesty, allow him to go with you *and serve you*, and do for him whatever seems good to you!”

³⁸ The king replied, “Okay, he will cross *the river* with me, and I will do for him whatever seems good to you. And I will do for you whatever you want me to do.”

³⁹ Then King David and all the others crossed the Jordan *River*. He kissed Barzillai and *asked God to bless him*. Then Barzillai returned to his home.

⁴⁰ *After they crossed the river, Chimham went with the king, and all the army of Judah and half the army of the other Israeli tribes escorted/accompanied the king to Gilgal.*

The troops from Judah and Israel argued

⁴¹ Then all the soldiers from the other Israeli tribes came to the king and said, “◀Why is it that our relatives, the men from Judah, took you away from us and wanted to be the only ones to escort you and your family across the river, along with all your men?/It is not right that our relatives, the men from Judah, took you away from us and wanted to be the only ones to escort you and your family across the river, along with all your men.▶ [RHQ] *Why did you not request us to do that?*” [RHQ]

⁴² The soldiers from Judah replied, “We did it because the king is from Judah. So ◀why are you angry about that?/you should not be angry about that.▶ [RHQ] The king has never paid for our food, and he has never given us any gifts.”

⁴³ The men of the other Israeli tribes replied, “*There are ten tribes in Israel, and only one in Judah. So it is ten times more right for us to say that David is our king than it is for you to say that. So why are you despising us [RHQ]? We were certainly [RHQ] the first ones to talk about bringing David back to Jerusalem to be our king again.*”

But the men of Judah spoke more harshly than the men from the other tribes of Israel did.

20

Sheba rebelled against David

¹ There was a man there *at Gilgal* named Sheba. He was a man who always caused trouble. He was from the tribe of Benjamin and was the son of Bichri. He blew a trumpet and called out, "We have nothing to do with [DOU] David, that son of Jesse! So, men of Israel, let's go to our homes!"

² So all the men from the other Israeli tribes deserted David and went with Sheba, but the men of Judah stayed with David. They wanted him to be their king, and went with him from near the *Jordan River* up to Jerusalem.

³ When David arrived at the palace in Jerusalem, he took the ten slave wives whom he had left there to take care of the palace and put them in another house. He put a guard at that house, and he provided for them what they needed, but he never had sexual relations [EUP] with them again. So they remained shut up in their house until they died. It was as though they were widows.

⁴ *One day* the king said to Amasa, "Summon the soldiers of Judah to come here within three days, and you be here also."

⁵ So Amasa went to summon them, but he did not return within the time that David told him to.

⁶ So David said to Abishai, "Now Sheba will harm us more than Absalom did. So you take my soldiers and pursue him. If you do not do that, he and his soldiers may occupy/capture some of the

◀fortified towns/towns that have walls around them▶, and escape from us. [IDM]"

⁷ So Abishai *and Joab* and the king's bodyguards and the other soldiers left Jerusalem, to pursue Sheba.

⁸ When they arrived at the huge rock in *the Gibeah region*, Amasa met them. Joab was wearing a soldier's uniform. He had a dagger/long knife fastened to his belt. When he came close *to Amasa*, *he allowed* the dagger to fall on the ground.

⁹ Joab said to Amasa, "Are things going well with you, my friend?" Then Joab grabbed Amasa's beard with his right hand, in order to kiss him.

¹⁰ But Amasa did not see that Joab was holding *another* dagger in his *other* hand. And Joab stabbed it into Amasa's belly, and his insides spilled out onto the ground. Amasa died *immediately*; Joab did not need to stab him again. Then Joab and his brother Abishai continued to pursue Sheba.

¹¹ One of Joab's soldiers stood alongside Amasa's body and called out, "Everyone who wants Joab *to be our commander* and who wants David *to be our king*, go with Joab!"

¹² Amasa's body was lying on the road. It was covered with blood. The soldier of Joab *who had called out* saw that many others of Joab's soldiers were stopping *to see it*, so he dragged Amasa's body off the road into a field, and threw a cloth/blanket over the body.

¹³ After the body had been taken off the road, all the soldiers went with Joab to pursue Sheba.

¹⁴ Sheba went through all the tribes of Israel, and arrived at Abel-Beth-Maakah *town in the northern part of Israel*. There, all the members of *his father* Bichri's clan gathered, and went with Sheba into the town.

¹⁵ The soldiers who were with Joab *found out that Sheba had gone there, so they* went there and surrounded the town. They built a dirt ramp up against the town wall. They also pounded against the wall *with heavy poles*, to cause it to collapse.

¹⁶ Then a wise woman who was in that town *stood on the top of the wall and* shouted down, "Listen to me! Tell Joab to come here, because I want to talk to him!"

¹⁷ So *after they told Joab*, he came there, and the woman said, "Are you Joab?"

He replied, "Yes, I am." She said to him, "Listen to what I say." He replied, "I am listening."

¹⁸ She said, "Long ago people used to say, 'Go to Abel town to get good advice about your problems.' And that is what people did.

¹⁹ We are peaceful and loyal Israelites. Our people here are important and respected [IDM]. So ◀why are you trying to destroy a town that belongs to Yahweh?/you should not be trying to destroy a town that belongs to Yahweh.▶" [RHQ]

²⁰ Job replied, "I would certainly never want to ruin or destroy your town!

²¹ That is not what we want to do. But Bichri's son Sheba, a man from the hilly area in the tribe of Ephraim, is rebelling against King David. Put this man into our hands, and then we will ◀go away from/not attack▶ this town."

The woman replied to Joab, "Okay, what we will do is, we will *cut off* his head *and* throw it over the wall to you."

²² Then this wise woman went to the elders of the town and told them what she had said to Joab. So they cut off Sheba's head and threw it over the wall to Joab. Then Joab blew his trumpet *to signal that the battle was ended*, and all his soldiers left the town and returned to their homes. And Joab returned to Jerusalem and told the king *what had happened*.

²³ Joab was the commander of the entire Israeli army. Jehoiada's son Benaiah was the commander of David's bodyguards;

²⁴ Adoram supervised the men who were forced to work *for the king*; Ahilud's son Jehoshaphat was the man who reported *to the people everything that David decided*;

²⁵ Sheva was the official secretary; Zadok and Abiathar were the priests;

²⁶ and Ira from Jair town was also one of David's priests.

21

The people of Gibeon got revenge for what Saul did

¹ During the time that David *ruled*, there was a famine *in Israel* for three years. David prayed

to Yahweh about it. And Yahweh said, "*In order for the famine to end*, Saul's family needs to be punished [MTY] because Saul killed many people from Gibeon city."

² The people of Gibeon were not Israelis; they were a small group of the Amor people-group whom the Israelis had solemnly promised to protect. But Saul had tried to kill all of them because he ◀was very zealous/wanted very much▶ to enable the people of Judah and Israel *to be the only ones living in that land*. So the king summoned the leaders of Gibeon

³ and said to them, "What shall I do for you? How can I make amends/up for what was done to your people, in order that you will bless us who belong to Yahweh?"

⁴ They replied, "You cannot settle our quarrel with Saul and his family by giving us silver or gold. And we do not have the right to kill any Israelis."

So David asked, "Then/So what do you say that I should do for you?"

⁵ They replied, "Saul *wanted to* get rid of us. He wanted to annihilate/kill all of us, in order that none of us would live anywhere in Israel.

⁶ Hand over to us seven of Saul's descendants. We will hang them where Yahweh is worshiped in Gibeon, our town, the town where Saul, whom Yahweh previously chose to be king, lived."

The king replied, "Okay, I will hand them over to you."

⁷ The king did not hand over to them Saul's grandson Mephibosheth, because of what he and

Mephibosheth's father Jonathan had solemnly promised to each other.

⁸ Instead, he took Armoni and another man named Mephibosheth, the two sons that Saul's slave wife Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah, had given birth to, and the five sons that Saul's daughter Merab had given birth to. Merab's husband was Adriel, the son of a man named Barzillai from Meholah *town*.

⁹ David handed those men over to the men from Gibeon. Then they hanged those seven men on a hill where they worshiped Yahweh. They were all killed during the time of the year that the people started to harvest the barley.

¹⁰ Then Rizpah took coarse cloth made from goats' hair, and spread it on the rock *where the corpses lay*. She stayed there from the time that people started to harvest the barley until the rains started. She did not allow any birds to come near the corpses during the day, and she did not allow any animals to come near during the night.

¹¹ When someone told David what Rizpah had done,

¹² he went with some of his servants to Jabesh in *the Gilead region* and got the bones of Saul and his son Jonathan. The people of Jabesh had stolen their bones from the ◀plaza/public square▶ in Beth-Shan *city*, where the men from Philistia had hanged them previously, on the day that they had killed Saul and Jonathan on Gilboa *Mountain*.

¹³ David and his men took the bones of Saul

and Jonathan, and they also took the bones of the seven men *from Gibeon* whom the men from Philistia had hanged.

¹⁴ They buried the bones of Saul and Jonathan in Zela *town* in the land of *the tribe of Benjamin*. Doing all that the king commanded, they buried their bones in the tomb where Saul's father Kish *was buried*. After that, *because God saw that Saul's family had been punished to pay for Saul's murder of many people from Gibeon*, he answered the Israelis' prayers for their land, and caused the famine to end.

The battles against the giants of Philistia

¹⁵ The army of Philistia again started to fight against the army of Israel. And David and his soldiers went to fight the Philistines. During the battle, David became weary.

¹⁶ One of the Philistia men thought that he could kill David. His name was Ishbi-Benob. He was a descendant of *a group of giants*. He carried a bronze spear that weighed about ◀7-1/2 pounds/3-1/2 kg.▶, and he also had a new sword.

¹⁷ But Abishai came to help David, and attacked the giant and killed him. Then David's soldiers forced him to promise that he would not go with them into a battle again. They said to him, "*If you die, and none of your descendants become king, that would be like [MET] extinguishing the last light in Israel.*"

¹⁸ Some time after that, there was a battle with the army of Philistia near Gob *village*. During the battle, Sibbecai, from *the Hushah clan*, killed Saph, one of the descendants of the Rapha giants.

¹⁹ *Later* there was another battle with the army of Philistia at Gob. During that battle, Elhanan, the son of Jaare-Oregim from Bethlehem, killed *the brother of Goliath* from Gath city; Goliath's spear shaft/handle was ◀very thick, like the bar on a weaver's loom/over two inches thick▶.

²⁰ Later there was another battle near Gath. There was a ◀huge man/giant▶ there who liked to fight *in battles*. He had six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot. He was descended from *the Rapha giants*.

²¹ But when he ◀made fun of/ridiculed▶ the men in the Israeli *army*, Jonathan, the son of David's *older* brother Shimeah, killed him.

²² Those four men were some of the descendants of the Rapha giants who had lived in Gath, who were killed [MTY] by David and his soldiers.

22

David's song to praise Yahweh

¹ After Yahweh had rescued David from Saul and his other enemies, David sang a song to Yahweh.

² *This is what* he sang:
Yahweh, you are like a *huge overhanging* rock
under which I can hide [MET];
you are like my fortress, and you rescue me.
³ Yahweh, you protect me; you are like a shield;
you are the powerful one [MET] who saves
me;
you are like a place where I ◀find refuge/am
safe▶.
You save me from those who act violently
toward me.

- ⁴ I call out to you, Yahweh;
you deserve to be praised,
and you rescue me from my enemies.
- ⁵ “ almost died [PRS]; it was like [MET] a huge
wave had crashed over me,
and almost destroyed me like a flood.
- ⁶ I thought that I would die; it was as though
death wrapped ropes around me;
it was as though I was in a trap where I
would surely die. [PRS, MET]
- ⁷ But when I was ◀very distressed/in great
trouble▶, I called out to you, Yahweh;
I cried out to you, my God.
And from your temple you heard me;
you listened when I called to you to help me.
- ⁸ “Then *it was as though* the earth quaked and
shook;
it was as though the foundations that ◀held
up/supported▶ the sky trembled,
because you were angry.
- ⁹ *It was as though* smoke poured out of your
nostrils
and burning coals and fire that burns every-
thing came out of your mouth.
- ¹⁰ You tore open the sky and came down;
there was a thick dark *cloud* under your feet.
- ¹¹ You rode *through the sky* on a winged creature;
the wind enabled you to travel *swiftly* [MET],
like a bird.
- ¹² The darkness surrounded you, like a blanket;

- thick clouds that were full of water also surrounded you.
- 13 Out of the lightning in front of you
fire from burning coals flamed.
- 14 Then, Yahweh, you spoke like thunder from
the sky;
it was your voice, God, you who are greater
than all other gods, that was heard.
- 15 When you sent flashes of lightning,
it was as though [MET] you shot your arrows
and scattered your enemies.
- 16 Then the bottom of the ocean was uncovered;
the foundations of the world could be seen
when you rebuked *your enemies*
with a snort from your nostrils.
- 17 “Yahweh, you reached down from heaven and
lifted me up;
you pulled me up from the deep water.
- 18 You rescued me from my strong enemies,
from those who hated me;
I could not defeat them because they were very
strong.
- 19 They attacked me when I was experiencing
troubles/difficulties,
but Yahweh, you protected me.
- 20 You brought me to a place where I was safe;
you rescued me because you were pleased
with me.
- 21 “Yahweh, you rewarded me because I do what
is right;

you did good things for me because I ◀was innocent/had not done things that are wrong▶.

- 22 Yahweh, I have obeyed your laws;
I have not turned away from you, my God.
- 23 All of your regulations were in my mind,
and I did not turn away from *obeying* all
your statutes.
- 24 You know that I have not done anything that
is evil;
I have kept myself from doing things for
which I should be punished.
- 25 So you have rewarded me in return for my
doing what is right,
because *you know that* I ◀am innocent of
doing/have not done▶ wrong things.
- 26 “Yahweh, you are faithful/loyal to those who
always trust in you;
you always do what is good to those whose
behavior is always good.
- 27 You act sincerely toward those whose inner
beings are pure,
but you are hostile to those who are per-
verse/wicked.
- 28 You rescue those who are humble,
but you watch [MTY] those who are proud
and humiliate them.
- 29 Yahweh, you are *like* [MET] a lamp
that causes it to become light when I am in
the dark.
- 30 With your strength/help I can run through a
line of enemy soldiers

and I can climb over the wall *that surrounds their city*.

- 31 “My God whom I worship, everything that you do is perfect;
you always do what you promise that you will do.
You are like a shield [MET] to all those who request you to protect them.
- 32 Yahweh, you are [RHQ] the only one who is God;
only you are like a huge rock [MET] *under which we are protected/safe*.
- 33 God, you *whom I worship* are a strong refuge for me;
you keep me safe on the roads that I *walk on*.
- 34 *When I walk* in the mountains,
you enable me to walk safely, without stumbling [MET]
like a deer runs.
- 35 You teach me *how to fight* in a battle
in order that I can shoot arrows well from a very strong bow.
- 36 *It is as though* [MET] you have given me a shield
by which you have saved/rescued me,
and you have answered my prayers and caused me to become famous/great.
- 37 You have not allowed *my enemies* to capture me [IDM],
and I have not fallen down *during battles*.
- 38 “ pursued my enemies and defeated them;

- I did not stop *fighting them* until they were all killed.
- 39 I struck them down; I stabbed them with my sword;
they fell down at my feet and did not stand up again.
- 40 You have given me strength for fighting battles and caused those who were attacking me to fall down, and I trampled on them.
- 41 You caused my enemies to turn and run away from me;
I destroyed those who hated me.
- 42 They ◀looked for/wanted▶ someone to rescue them, but no one did.
They cried out to you, Yahweh, *for help*, but you did not answer them.
- 43 I crushed them, and as a result they became like [SIM] tiny particles of dust.
I trampled them, and they became like [SIM] mud in the streets.
- 44 “You rescued me from those who tried to rebel *against me*,
and you appointed me to rule many nations; people whom I did not know previously are now ◀under my authority/my slaves▶.
- 45 Foreigners humbly bowed down in front of me;
as soon as they heard about me, they obeyed me.
- 46 They became afraid,
and they came to me, trembling, from the places where they were hiding.

- 47 “Yahweh, you are alive! I praise you! You are like [MET] a *huge overhanging* rock under which I am safe/protected!
You are the one who rescues me [MET].
Everyone should exalt/honor/praise you.
- 48 You enable me to conquer my enemies;
you cause people of *other* nations to be
◀under my authority/my slaves▶.
- 49 You delivered me from my enemies;
you caused me to be honored more than they were;
you rescued me from men who *always* acted violently.
- 50 Because of all that, I exalt you among many people-groups
and I sing to praise you.
- 51 You enable me, whom you appointed to be king, to powerfully conquer *my enemies*;
you faithfully love me, David, and you will love my descendants forever.

23

David's final message

¹ David, the son of Jesse, was a man whom *God caused to* become great.
He was appointed to become king by the God whom Jacob *worshiped*.
He wrote beautiful songs for the Israeli people.
This is the last song that he wrote:

² “The Spirit of Yahweh tells me what to say;
the message that I speak [MTY] comes from him.

³ God, the one whom we Israeli *people worship*,
has spoken;
the one who protects us Israeli people said
to me,

'Kings who rule people justly
have an awesome respect for me, God.

⁴ They are like the sun that shines at dawn
and causes the grass to *sprout/sparkle* after
the rain ends.'

⁵ And truly, that is how God will surely bless my
family [RHQ]
because he made an agreement with me that
will endure forever,
an agreement in which he promises that no
part of it will ever be changed.

He will surely cause me to prosper [RHQ],
and he will always help me,
and that is all that I desire.

⁶ But *he will get rid of* godless/evil people like
[SIM] people throw away thorns
that *injure people if they try to* pick them up
with their hands.

⁷ Someone *who wants to get rid of thornbushes*
does not grab them;
he uses an iron *shovel* or a spear *to dig them*
out
and then he burns them completely.

David's three greatest warriors

⁸ These are the names of David's three greatest
warriors.

The first was Esh-Baal, *whose other name was*
Jashobeam, from the Hachmon clan (OR, the son
of Hachmon). He was the leader of the three

men. One time he fought against 800 enemies and killed them all with his spear.

⁹ The second/next one of the three greatest warriors was Eleazar, who was the son of Dodo from the clan of Ahoh. One day he was with David when they defied/challenged the soldiers of Philistia who had gathered for the battle. The *other* Israeli soldiers retreated,

¹⁰ but Eleazar stood there and fought the soldiers of Philistia until his arm became very tired, with the result that *his hand cramped and* he could not stop gripping his sword. Yahweh won a great victory on that day. And afterwards the *other* Israeli soldiers returned to *where Eleazar was*, and stripped off the *armor from the men whom he had killed*.

¹¹ The third one of the greatest warriors was Shammah, the son of Agee from *the clan/town of Harar*. One time the Philistia soldiers gathered at *Lehi town*, where there was a field full of lentils/peas *that they wanted to steal*. The other Israeli soldiers ran away from the Philistia troops,

¹² but Shammah stood there in the field and did not let the Philistia soldiers *steal the crops*, and killed them. Yahweh won a great victory on that day.

The 30 great warriors

¹³ Altogether there were 30 special warriors among David's soldiers. Once, when it was almost time to harvest *the crops*, three of those 30 men went down to Adullam Cave, where David was *staying*. A group of men from the Philistia

army had set up their tents in Rephaim Valley *near Jerusalem*.

¹⁴ David *and his soldiers* were in the cave *because it was safe there*, and *another* group of Philistia soldiers was occupying Bethlehem.

¹⁵ *One day* David very much wanted *some water* to drink, and said "I wish that someone would bring me some water from the well near the gate at Bethlehem!"

¹⁶ So his three greatest warriors forced their way through the camp of Philistia soldiers and drew some water from the well, and brought it to David. But he would not drink it. Instead, he poured it out *on the ground* as an offering to Yahweh.

¹⁷ He said, "Yahweh, it would certainly not be right for me to drink this water! That would be like [RHQ] drinking the blood of these men who were willing/ready to die for me!" So he refused to drink it.

That was one of the things that those three great warriors did.

The list of the great warriors

¹⁸ Abishai, Joab's *younger* brother, was the leader of the 30 *greatest warriors*. *One day* he fought against 300 men and killed them all with his spear. As a result, he also became famous.

¹⁹ He was the most famous of the thirty greatest warriors, and he became their leader/commander, but he was not one of the three greatest warriors.

²⁰ Jehoiada's son Benaiah, from Kabzeel *town*, also did great deeds. He killed two of the best

warriors from the Moab people-group. Also, he went down into a pit on a day when snow was falling, and killed a lion there.

²¹ He also killed a huge soldier from Egypt who carried a spear. Benaiah *had only* his club, but he attacked the giant with it. Then he snatched the spear from the man's hand and killed him with his own spear.

²² Those are *some of* the things that Benaiah did. As a result, he became famous, like the three greatest warriors were.

²³ He was more honored than the other members of the group of thirty great warriors, but not as famous as the three greatest warriors. David appointed him to be the commander of his bodyguards.

²⁴ *These are the names of the great warriors:*

Asahel, the brother of Joab;

Elhanan, the son of Dodo, from Bethlehem;

²⁵ Shammah and Elikah, from *the Harod clan*;

²⁶ Helez, from Pelet city;

Ira, the son of Ikkesh, from Tekoa town;

²⁷ Abiezer, from Anathoth city;

Mebunnai *whose other name was Sibbecai*, from Hushah's clan;

²⁸ Zalmon *whose other name was Ilai*, from Ahoh's clan;

Maharai, from Netophah town;

²⁹ Heleb, the son of Baanah, also from Netophah town;

Ittai, the son of Ribai, from Gibeah town

in the land that belonged to the tribe of Benjamin;

³⁰ Benaiah, from Pirathon *town*;
Hiddai, from the valleys near Gaash *Mountain*;

³¹ Abi-Albon, from the clan of Arabah;
Azmaveth, from Bahurim *town*;

³² Eliahba, from Shaalbon *town*;
The sons of Jashen;

Jonathan;

³³ Shammah, from Harar *town/clan*;
Ahiam the son of Sharar, from Harar *town/clan*;

³⁴ Eliphelet, the son of Ahasbai, from Maacah *town*;

Eliam, the son of Ahithophel, from Gilo *town*;

³⁵ Hezro, from Carmel *city*;

Paarai, from Arba *city*;

³⁶ Igal, the son of Nathan, from Zobah *city*;
Bani, from the tribe of Gad;

³⁷ Zelek, from the Ammon people-group;
Naharai, the man who carried Joab's weapons, from Beeroth *town*;

³⁸ Ira and Gareb, from Jattir *town*;

³⁹ Uriah, *Bathsheba's husband*, from the Heth people-group.

Altogether, there were 37 famous soldiers,
but some of them had died and their names were not included.

24

David ordered a census to be taken

¹ Yahweh was angry with the Israeli people again, so he incited David to cause trouble for them. He said to David, “Send *some men* to count the people of Israel and Judah.”

² So the king said to Joab, the commander of his army, “Go *with your officers* through all the tribes of Israel, from Dan *city in the far north* to Beersheba *town in the far south*, and count the people, in order that I may know how many people *there are who are able to be soldiers in the army*.”

³ But Joab replied to the king, “Your Majesty, I wish/desire that Yahweh our God will cause there to be 100 times as many people *in Israel* as there are now, and I wish/desire that you would see that happen *before you die*. But why do you want us to do this?”

⁴ But the king commanded Joab and his officers to do it. So they left the king and went out to count the people of Israel.

⁵ They crossed the Jordan *River* and set up their tents south of Aroer *town*, in the middle of the valley, in the territory *that was given to the tribe* of Gad. From there they went *north* to Jazer *city*

⁶ Then they went *north* to the Gilead *region* and to Kadesh *city*, in the land where the Heth people-group lived. Then they went to Dan *city in the far north of Israel*, and then further west, to Sidon *city near the Mediterranean Sea*.

⁷ Then they went *south* to Tyre, a city with high walls around it, and to all the cities where the Hiv and Canaan people-groups live. Then they

went *east* to Beersheba, in the southern part of Judah.

⁸ After nine months and 20 days, when they had finished going throughout the land *and counting the people*, they returned to Jerusalem.

⁹ They reported to the king the number of people that they had counted. There were 800,000 men in Israel and 500,000 men in Judah who were able to become soldiers in the army [MTY].

¹⁰ But after David's men had counted the people, David regretted [IDM] that he had told them to do that. *One night* he said to Yahweh, "I have committed a very big sin. Please forgive me, because what I have done is very foolish."

¹¹ When David got up the next morning, Yahweh gave a message to the prophet Gad. He said to him,

¹² "Go and tell this to David: 'I am allowing you to choose one of three things *to punish you*. I will do whichever one you choose.'"

¹³ So Gad went to David and told him *what Yahweh had said*. He said to David, "You can choose whether there will be three years of famine in your land, or three months of your *army* running away from your enemies, or three days when there will be a ◀plague/very severe illness▶ in your land. You think about it and choose *which one you want, and tell me*, and I will return to Yahweh and tell him what your answer is."

¹⁴ David said to Gad, "All those are very terrible things for me to choose between! But

allow Yahweh to punish [MTY] me, because he is very merciful. Do not allow humans to punish me, *because they will not be merciful.*"

¹⁵ So Yahweh sent a plague on the Israeli people. It started that morning and did not stop until the time that he had chosen/set. All over the land, from Dan to Beersheba, there were 70,000 Israelis who died *because of the plague.*

¹⁶ When Yahweh's angel stretched out his hand toward Jerusalem to destroy *the people by this plague*, Yahweh changed his mind about punishing *any more* people. He said to the angel who was killing them *with the plague*, "Stop what you are doing [IDM]! That is enough!" *When he said that*, the angel was standing at the ground where Araunah, from the Jebus people-group, threshed grain.

¹⁷ When David saw the angel who was causing the people to become sick and die, he said to Yahweh, "Truly, I am the one who has committed the sin. I have done a very wicked thing, but these people are *as innocent as* sheep [MET]. They have certainly not [RHQ] done anything *that is wrong*. So you should punish [IDM] me and my family, *not these people!*"

¹⁸ That day Gad came to David and said to him, "Go up to the place where Araunah threshes grain, and build an altar to *worship* Yahweh there."

¹⁹ So David did what Gad told him to do, which was what Yahweh had commanded, *and he went up there.*

²⁰ When Araunah looked down and saw the king and his officials coming toward him, he prostrated himself on the ground in front of the king, with his face touching the ground.

²¹ Araunah said, "Your Majesty, why have you come to me?" David replied, "*I have come to buy this ground where you thresh grain, in order to build an altar to Yahweh and offer sacrifices on it, in order that he will stop the plague.*"

²² Araunah replied to David, "Your Majesty, offer to Yahweh whatever you wish/want. Here, take my oxen to use for the offering that will be completely burned on the altar. And here, take their yokes and the boards *that I use* for the threshing, *and use them* for the wood that you will burn.

²³ I, Araunah, am giving all this to you, the king." Then he said, "I desire/hope that Yahweh our God will accept your offering."

²⁴ But the king said to Araunah, "No, *I will not take these things as a gift.* I will pay you for it. I will not take sacrifices that have cost me nothing, and offer them to Yahweh to be completely burned on the altar." So he paid 50 pieces of silver to Araunah for the oxen and the ground.

²⁵ Then David built an altar to Yahweh, and he offered *the oxen* to be completely burned on the altar, and he also offered sacrifices to maintain fellowship with Yahweh. Then, Yahweh answered David's prayers, and he caused the plague in Israel to end.

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