2 Samuel

1 After the death of Saul, David returned from
the slaughter of the Amalekites and stayed in
Ziklag two days.
2 On the third day a man with torn clothes and
dust on his head arrived from Saul's camp.
When he came to David, he fell to the ground to
pay him homage.
3 "Where have you come from?" David asked.
"I have escaped from the Israelite camp," he
replied.
4 "What was the outcome?" David asked.
"Please tell me."
"The troops fled from the battle," he replied.
"Many of them fell and died. And Saul and his
son Jonathan are also dead."
5 Then David asked the young man who had
brought him the report, "How do you know that
Saul and his son Jonathan are dead?"
6 "I happened to be on Mount Gilboa," he
replied, "and there was Saul, leaning on his
spear, with the chariots and the cavalry closing
in on him.
7 When he turned around and saw me, he
called out to me, and I answered, 'Here I am!'
8 'Who are you?' he asked.
So I told him, 'I am an Amalekite.'
9 Then he begged me, 'Stand over me and kill
me, for agony has seized me, but my life still
lingers.'

10 So I stood over him and killed him, because
I knew that after he had fallen he could not
survive. And I took the crown that was on his
head and the band that was on his arm, and I
have brought them here to my lord."
11 Then David took hold of his own clothes and
tore them, and all the men who were with him
did the same.
12 They mourned and wept and fasted until
evening for Saul and his son Jonathan, and for
the people of the LORD and the house of Israel,
because they had fallen by the sword.
13 And David inquired of the young man who
had brought him the report, "Where are you
from?"
"I am the son of a foreigner," he answered. "I
am an Amalekite."
14 So David asked him, "Why were you not
afraid to lift your hand to destroy the LORD's
anointed?"
15 Then David summoned one of the young
men and said, "Go, execute him!" So the young
man struck him down, and he died.
16 For David had said to the Amalekite, "Your
blood be on your own head because your own
mouth has testified against you, saying, 'I killed
the LORD's anointed.' "
17 Then David took up this lament for Saul and
his son Jonathan,
18 and he ordered that the sons of Judah be
taught the Song of the Bow.* It is written in the
Book of Jashar:†

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* **1:18 1:18** Or *be taught the use of the bow*; literally *be taught the bow* † **1:18 1:18** Or *the Book of the Upright One*

19 “Your glory, O Israel, lies slain on your heights.
How the mighty have fallen!

20 Tell it not in Gath;
proclaim it not in the streets of Ashkelon,
lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice,
and the daughters of the uncircumcised exult.
21 O mountains of Gilboa,
may you have no dew or rain,
no fields yielding offerings of grain.‡
For there the shield of the mighty was defiled,
the shield of Saul, no longer anointed with oil.

22 From the blood of the slain,
from the fat of the mighty,
the bow of Jonathan did not retreat,
and the sword of Saul did not return empty.
23 Saul and Jonathan, beloved and delightful in life,
were not divided in death.
They were swifter than eagles;
they were stronger than lions.

24 O daughters of Israel,
weep for Saul,
who clothed you in scarlet and luxury,
who decked your garments with ornaments of gold.

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‡ **1:21 1:21** Or *no showers falling on your terraced fields*; LXX *no fields of firstfruits*; Hebrew *no fields of offerings*

25 How the mighty have fallen in the thick of
battle!
Jonathan lies slain on your heights.

26 I grieve for you, Jonathan, my brother.
You were delightful to me;
your love to me was extraordinary,
surpassing the love of women.
27 How the mighty have fallen,
and the weapons of war have perished!”

2

1 Some time later, David inquired of the LORD, “Should I go up to one of the towns of Judah?”

“Go up,” the LORD answered.

Then David asked, “Where should I go?”

“To Hebron,” replied the LORD.

2 So David went there with his two wives, Ahinoam of Jezreel and Abigail the widow of Nabal of Carmel.
3 David also took the men who were with him, each with his household, and they settled in the towns near Hebron.
4 Then the men of Judah came to Hebron, and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah. And they told David, “It was the men of Jabesh-gilead who buried Saul.”

5 So David sent messengers to the men of Jabesh-gilead to tell them, “The LORD bless you, because you showed this kindness to Saul your lord when you buried him.

6 Now may the LORD show you loving
devotion* and faithfulness, and I will also show
you the same favor because you have done this.
7 Now then, be strong and courageous, for
though Saul your lord is dead, the house of
Judah has anointed me as their king."
8 Meanwhile, Abner son of Ner, the
commander of Saul's army, took Saul's son
Ish-bosheth,† moved him to Mahanaim,
9 and made him king over Gilead, the
Ashurites,‡ Jezreel, Ephraim, and
Benjamin—over all Israel.
10 Saul's son Ish-bosheth was forty years old
when he began to reign over Israel, and he
reigned for two years.
The house of Judah, however, followed David.
11 And the length of time that David was king
in Hebron over the house of Judah was seven
years and six months.
12 One day Abner son of Ner and the servants
of Ish-bosheth son of Saul marched out from
Mahanaim to Gibeon.
13 So Joab son of Zeruiah and the servants of
David marched out and met them by the pool of
Gibeon. And the two groups took up positions
on opposite sides of the pool.

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* **2:6 2:6** Forms of the Hebrew *chesed* are translated here and in most cases throughout the Scriptures as *loving devotion*; the range of meaning includes *love*, *goodness*, *kindness*, *faithfulness*, and *mercy*, as well as *loyalty to a covenant*. † **2:8 2:8** *Ish-bosheth* is also called *Esh-baal*; see 1 Chronicles 8:33. ‡ **2:9 2:9** Targum *Asher*; Syriac and Vulgate *Geshur*

14 Then Abner said to Joab, “Let us have the
young men get up and compete before us.”
“Let them get up,” Joab replied.
15 So they got up and were counted
off—twelve for Benjamin and Ish-bosheth son of
Saul, and twelve from the servants of David.
16 Then each man grabbed his opponent by the
head and thrust his sword into his opponent's
side, and they all fell together. So this place,
which is in Gibeon, is called Helkath-hazzurim.§
17 The battle that day was intense, and Abner
and the men of Israel were defeated by the
servants of David.
18 The three sons of Zeruiah were there: Joab,
Abishai, and Asahel. Now Asahel was fleet of
foot like a wild gazelle,
19 and he chased Abner, not turning to the
right or to the left in his pursuit.
20 And Abner glanced back and said, “Is that
you, Asahel?”
“It is,” Asahel replied.
21 So Abner told him, “Turn to your right or to
your left, seize one of the young men, and take
his equipment for yourself.”
But Asahel would not stop chasing him.
22 Once again, Abner warned Asahel, “Stop
chasing me. Why should I strike you to the
ground? How could I show my face to your
brother Joab?”
23 But Asahel refused to turn away. So Abner
thrust the butt of his spear into his stomach, and

§ **2:16 2:16** *Helkath-hazzurim* means *the Field of Swords.*

it came out his back, and he fell dead on the spot. And every man paused when he came to the place where Asahel had fallen and died.

24 But Joab and Abishai pursued Abner. By sunset, they had gone as far as the hill of Ammah opposite Giah on the way to the wilderness of Gibeon.

25 The Benjamites rallied to Abner, formed a single unit, and took their stand atop a hill.

26 Then Abner called out to Joab: “Must the sword devour forever? Do you not realize that this will only end in bitterness? How long before you tell the troops to stop pursuing their brothers?”

27 “As surely as God lives,” Joab replied, “if you had not spoken up, the troops would have continued pursuing their brothers until morning.”

28 So Joab blew the ram’s horn, and all the troops stopped; they no longer pursued Israel or continued to fight.

29 And all that night Abner and his men marched through the Arabah. They crossed the Jordan, marched through the whole Bithron,* and arrived at Mahanaim.

30 When Joab returned from pursuing Abner, he gathered all the troops.

In addition to Asahel, nineteen of David’s servants were missing,

31 but they had struck down 360 Benjamites who were with Abner.

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* **2:29 2:29** LXX *marched all morning*

32 And they took Asahel and buried him in his
father's tomb in Bethlehem. Then Joab and his
men marched all night and reached Hebron at
daybreak.

3

1 Now the war between the house of Saul and
the house of David was protracted. And David
grew stronger and stronger, while the house of
Saul grew weaker and weaker.
2 And sons were born to David in Hebron:

His firstborn was Amnon, by Ahinoam of
Jezreel;
3 his second was Chileab,* by Abigail the
widow of Nabal of Carmel;
his third was Absalom, the son of Maacah
daughter of King Talmai of Geshur;
4 his fourth was Adonijah, the son of Haggith;
his fifth was Shephatiah, the son of Abital;
5 and his sixth was Ithream, by David's wife
Eglah.
These sons were born to David in Hebron.
6 During the war between the house of Saul
and the house of David, Abner had continued to
strengthen his position in the house of Saul.
7 Now Saul had a concubine named Rizpah,
the daughter of Aiah. So Ish-bosheth questioned
Abner, "Why did you sleep with my father's
concubine?"
8 Abner was furious over Ish-bosheth's
accusation. "Am I the head of a dog that belongs

* **3:3 3:3** LXX *Daluia*; some translators *Daniel*; see 1 Chronicles 3:1.

to Judah?" he asked. "All this time I have been
loyal to the house of your father Saul, to his
brothers, and to his friends. I have not delivered
you into the hand of David, but now you accuse
me of wrongdoing with this woman!
9 May God punish Abner, and ever so severely,
if I do not do for David what the LORD has
sworn to him:
10 to transfer the kingdom from the house of
Saul and to establish the throne of David over
Israel and Judah, from Dan to Beersheba."
11 And for fear of Abner, Ish-bosheth did not
dare to say another word to him.
12 Then Abner sent messengers on his behalf
to say to David, "To whom does the land belong?
Make your covenant with me, and surely my
hand will be with you to bring all Israel over to
you."
13 "Good," replied David, "I will make a
covenant with you. But there is one thing I
require of you: Do not appear before me unless
you bring Saul's daughter Michal when you
come to see me."
14 Then David sent messengers to say to
Ish-bosheth son of Saul, "Give me back my wife,
Michal, whom I betrothed to myself for a
hundred Philistine foreskins."
15 So Ish-bosheth sent and took Michal from
her husband Paltiel† son of Laish.
16 Her husband followed her, weeping all the
way to Bahurim. Then Abner said to him, "Go
back." So he returned home.

† **3:15 3:15** *Paltiel* is a variant of *Palti*; see 1 Samuel 25:44.

17 Now Abner conferred with the elders of
Israel and said, “In the past you sought David as
your king.
18 Now take action, because the LORD has said
to David, ‘Through my servant David I will save
my people Israel from the hands of the
Philistines and of all their enemies.’ ”
19 Abner also spoke to the Benjamites. Then he
went to Hebron to tell David all that seemed
good to Israel and to the whole house of
Benjamin.
20 When Abner and twenty of his men came to
David at Hebron, David held a feast for them.
21 Then Abner said to David, “Let me go at
once, and I will gather all Israel to my lord the
king, that they may make a covenant with you,
and that you may rule over all that your heart
desires.”
So David dismissed Abner, and he went in
peace.
22 Just then David’s soldiers and Joab returned
from a raid, bringing with them a great plunder.
But Abner was not with David in Hebron,
because David had sent him on his way in peace.
23 When Joab and all his troops arrived, he
was informed, “Abner son of Ner came to see the
king, who sent him on his way in peace.”
24 So Joab went to the king and said, “What
have you done? Look, Abner came to you. Why
did you dismiss him? Now he is getting away!
25 Surely you realize that Abner son of Ner
came to deceive you and to track your
movements and all that you are doing.”

26 As soon as Joab had left David, he sent
messengers after Abner, who brought him back
from the well of Sirah. But David was unaware
of it.
27 When Abner returned to Hebron, Joab
pulled him aside into the gateway, as if to speak
to him privately, and there Joab stabbed him in
the stomach. So Abner died on account of the
blood of Joab's brother Asahel.
28 Afterward, David heard about this and said,
"I and my kingdom are forever guiltless before
the LORD concerning the blood of Abner son of
Ner.
29 May it whirl over the head of Joab and over
the entire house of his father, and may the house
of Joab never be without one having a discharge
or skin disease, or one who leans on a staff or
falls by the sword or lacks food."
30 (Joab and his brother Abishai murdered
Abner because he had killed their brother
Asahel in the battle at Gibeon.)
31 Then David ordered Joab and all the people
with him, "Tear your clothes, put on sackcloth,
and mourn before Abner." And King David
himself walked behind the funeral bier.
32 When they buried Abner in Hebron, the
king wept aloud at Abner's tomb, and all the
people wept.
33 And the king sang this lament for Abner:

"Should Abner die
the death of a fool?
34 Your hands were not bound,
your feet were not fettered.

As a man falls before the wicked,
so also you fell."
And all the people wept over him even more.
35 Then all the people came and urged David
to eat something while it was still day, but David
took an oath, saying, "May God punish me, and
ever so severely, if I taste bread or anything else
before the sun sets!"
36 All the people took note and were pleased.
In fact, everything the king did pleased them.
37 So on that day all the troops and all Israel
were convinced that the king had no part in the
murder of Abner son of Ner.
38 Then the king said to his servants, "Do you
not realize that a great prince has fallen today in
Israel?
39 And I am weak this day, though anointed as
king, and these men, the sons of Zeruiah, are too
fierce for me. May the LORD repay the evildoer
according to his evil!"

4

1 Now when Ish-bosheth son of Saul heard
that Abner had died in Hebron, he lost courage,
and all Israel was dismayed.
2 Saul's son had two men who were leaders of
raiding parties. One was named Baanah and the
other Rechab; they were sons of Rimmon the
Beerothite of the tribe of Benjamin—Beeroth is
considered part of Benjamin,
3 because the Beerothites fled to Gittaim and
have lived there as foreigners to this day.
4 And Jonathan son of Saul had a son who was
lame in his feet. He was five years old when the

report about Saul and Jonathan came from Jezreel. His nurse picked him up and fled, but as she was hurrying to escape, he fell and became lame. His name was Mephibosheth.

5 Now Rechab and Baanah, the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, set out and arrived at the house of Ish-bosheth in the heat of the day, while the king was taking his midday nap.
6 They entered the interior of the house as if to get some wheat, and they stabbed him in the stomach. Then Rechab and his brother Baanah slipped away.

7 They had entered the house while Ish-bosheth was lying on his bed, and having stabbed and killed him, they beheaded him, took his head, and traveled all night by way of the Arabah.
8 They brought the head of Ish-bosheth to David at Hebron and said to the king, “Here is the head of Ish-bosheth son of Saul, your enemy who sought your life. Today the LORD has granted vengeance to my lord the king against Saul and his offspring.”

9 But David answered Rechab and his brother Baanah, the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, “As surely as the LORD lives, who has redeemed my life from all distress,
10 when someone told me, ‘Look, Saul is dead,’ and thought he was a bearer of good news, I seized him and put him to death at Ziklag. That was his reward for his news!
11 How much more, when wicked men kill a righteous man in his own house and on his own

bed, shall I not now require his blood from your
hands and remove you from the earth!"
12 So David commanded his young men, and
they killed Rechab and Baanah. They cut off
their hands and feet and hung their bodies by
the pool in Hebron, but they took the head of
Ish-bosheth and buried it in Abner's tomb in
Hebron.

5

1 Then all the tribes of Israel came to David at
Hebron and said, "Here we are, your own flesh
and blood.
2 Even in times past, while Saul was king over
us, you were the one who led Israel out and
brought them back. And to you the LORD said,
'You will shepherd my people Israel, and you
will be ruler over them.' "
3 So all the elders of Israel came to the king at
Hebron, where King David made with them a
covenant before the LORD. And they anointed
him king over Israel.
4 David was thirty years old when he became
king, and he reigned forty years.
5 In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years
and six months, and in Jerusalem he reigned
thirty-three years over all Israel and Judah.
6 Now the king and his men marched to
Jerusalem against the Jebusites who inhabited
the land. The Jebusites said to David: "You will
never get in here. Even the blind and lame can
repel you." For they thought, "David cannot get
in here."

7 Nevertheless, David captured the fortress of
Zion (that is, the City of David).
8 On that day he said, “Whoever attacks the
Jebusites must use the water shaft to reach the
lame and blind who are despised by David.*”
That is why it is said, “The blind and the lame
will never enter the palace.”
9 So David took up residence in the fortress
and called it the City of David. He built it up all
the way around, from the supporting terraces†
inward.
10 And David became greater and greater, for
the LORD God of Hosts was with him.
11 Now Hiram king of Tyre sent envoys to
David, along with cedar logs, carpenters, and
stonemasons, and they built a palace for David.
12 And David realized that the LORD had
established him as king over Israel and had
exalted his kingdom for the sake of his people
Israel.
13 After he had arrived from Hebron, David
took more concubines and wives from
Jerusalem, and more sons and daughters were
born to him.
14 These are the names of the children born to
him in Jerusalem: Shammua,‡ Shobab, Nathan,
Solomon,
15 Ibhar, Elishua, Nepheg, Japhia,
16 Elishama, Eliada, and Eliphelet.
17 When the Philistines heard that David had
been anointed king over Israel, they all went in

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* **5:8 5:8** Qere; Ketiv *who hate David* † **5:9 5:9** Hebrew *the Millo*
‡ **5:14 5:14** *Shammua* is a variant of *Shimea*; see 1 Chronicles 3:5.

search of him; but David learned of this and
went down to the stronghold.
18 Now the Philistines had come and spread
out in the Valley of Rephaim.
19 So David inquired of the LORD, “Should I go
up against the Philistines? Will you deliver them
into my hand?”
“Go up,” replied the LORD, “for I will surely
deliver the Philistines into your hand.”
20 So David went to Baal-perazim, where he
defeated the Philistines and said, “Like a
bursting flood, the LORD has burst out against
my enemies before me.” So he called that place
Baal-perazim.§
21 There the Philistines abandoned their idols,
and David and his men carried them away.
22 Once again the Philistines came up and
spread out in the Valley of Rephaim.
23 So David inquired of the LORD, who
answered, “Do not march straight up, but circle
around behind them and attack them in front of
the balsam trees.*
24 As soon as you hear the sound of marching
in the tops of the balsam trees, move quickly,
because this will mean that the LORD has gone
out before you to strike the camp of the
Philistines.”
25 So David did as the LORD had commanded
him, and he struck down the Philistines all the
way from Geba† to Gezer.

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§ **5:20 5:20** *Baal-perazim* means *The Lord Bursts Out*. * **5:23 5:23** Or *aspen trees* or *poplar trees*; also in verse 24 † **5:25 5:25** LXX (see also 1 Chronicles 14:16) *Gibeon*

6

1 David again assembled the chosen men of
Israel, thirty thousand in all.
2 And he and all his troops set out from Baale
of Judah* to bring up from there the ark of God,
which is called by the Name—† the name of the
LORD of Hosts, who is enthroned between the
cherubim that are on it.
3 They set the ark of God on a new cart and
brought it from the house of Abinadab, which
was on the hill. Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of
Abinadab, were guiding the new cart,
4 bringing it from the house of Abinadab,
which was on the hill, with the ark of God.‡ And
Ahio was walking in front of the ark.
5 David and all the house of Israel were
celebrating before the LORD with all kinds of
wood instruments,§ harps, stringed instruments,
tambourines, sistrums, and cymbals.
6 When they came to the threshing floor of
Nacon,* Uzzah reached out and took hold of the
ark of God, because the oxen had stumbled.
7 And the anger of the LORD burned against
Uzzah, and God struck him down on the spot for

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* **6:2 6:2** That is, Kiriath-jearim; 1 Chronicles 13:6 *went up to Baalah* † **6:2 6:2** LXX and Vulgate do not include *the Name—* ‡ **6:4 6:4** DSS and some LXX manuscripts omit *from the house of Abinadab, which was on the hill* § **6:5 6:5** Literally *before the LORD with all woods of cypress*; LXX *playing before the Lord on well-tuned instruments mightily, and with songs*; some of the instruments in this verse are uncertain; see 1 Chronicles 13:8.
* **6:6 6:6** *Nacon* is a variant of *Chidon*; see 1 Chronicles 13:9.

his irreverence,† and he died there beside the ark of God.
8 Then David became angry because the LORD had burst forth against Uzzah. So he named that place Perez-uzzah,‡ as it is called to this day.
9 That day David feared the LORD and asked, "How can the ark of the LORD ever come to me?"
10 So he was unwilling to move the ark of the LORD to the City of David; instead, he took it aside to the house of Obed-edom the Gittite.
11 Thus the ark of the LORD remained in the house of Obed-edom the Gittite for three months, and the LORD blessed him and all his household.
12 Now it was reported to King David, "The LORD has blessed the house of Obed-edom and all that belongs to him, because of the ark of God."
So David went and had the ark of God brought up from the house of Obed-edom into the City of David with rejoicing.
13 When those carrying the ark of the LORD had advanced six paces, he sacrificed an ox and a fattened calf.
14 And David, wearing a linen ephod, danced with all his might before the LORD,
15 while he and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the LORD with shouting and the sounding of the ram's horn.
16 As the ark of the LORD was entering the City of David, Saul's daughter Michal looked down from a window and saw King David leaping and

† **6:7 6:7** DSS *for this* ‡ **6:8 6:8** *Perez-uzzah* means *outbreak against Uzzah.*

dancing before the LORD, and she despised him
in her heart.
17 So they brought the ark of the LORD and set
it in its place inside the tent that David had
pitched for it. Then David offered burnt
offerings and peace offerings before the LORD.
18 When David had finished sacrificing the
burnt offerings and peace offerings, he blessed
the people in the name of the LORD of Hosts.
19 Then he distributed to every man and
woman among the multitude of Israel a loaf of
bread, a date cake,§ and a raisin cake. And all
the people departed, each to his own home.
20 When David returned home to bless his
own household, Saul's daughter Michal came
out to meet him. "How the king of Israel has
distinguished himself today!" she said. "He has
uncovered himself today in the sight of the
maidservants of his subjects, like a vulgar
person would do."
21 But David said to Michal, "I was dancing
before the LORD, who chose me over your
father and all his house when he appointed me
ruler over the LORD's people Israel. I will
celebrate before the LORD,
22 and I will humiliate and humble myself
even more than this. Yet I will be honored by
the maidservants of whom you have spoken."
23 And Michal the daughter of Saul had no
children to the day of her death.

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§ **6:19 6:19** Or *a portion of meat*

7

1 After the king had settled into his palace and
the LORD had given him rest from all his
enemies around him,
2 he said to Nathan the prophet, “Here I am,
living in a house of cedar, while the ark of God
remains in a tent.”
3 And Nathan replied to the king, “Go and do
all that is in your heart, for the LORD is with
you.”
4 But that night the word of the LORD came to
Nathan, saying,
5 “Go and tell my servant David that this is
what the LORD says: Are you the one to build
for me a house to dwell in?
6 For I have not dwelt in a house from the day
I brought the Israelites up out of Egypt until this
day, but I have moved about with a tent as my
dwelling.
7 In all my journeys with all the Israelites,
have I ever asked any of the tribes of Israel* I
appointed to shepherd my people Israel, ‘Why
haven’t you built me a house of cedar?’
8 Now then, you are to tell my servant David
that this is what the LORD of Hosts says: I took
you from the pasture, from following the flock,
to be the ruler over my people Israel.
9 I have been with you wherever you have
gone, and I have cut off all your enemies from
before you. Now I will make for you a name like
that of the greatest in the land.

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* **7:7 7:7** 1 Chronicles 17:6 *judges*

10 And I will provide a place for my people
Israel and will plant them so that they may
dwell in a place of their own and be disturbed
no more. No longer will the sons of wickedness
oppress them as they did at the beginning
11 and have done since the day I appointed
judges over my people Israel. I will give you rest
from all your enemies.

The LORD declares to you that he himself will
establish a house for you.
12 And when your days are fulfilled and you
rest with your fathers, I will raise up your
descendant after you, who will come from your
own body, and I will establish his kingdom.
13 He will build a house for my Name, and I
will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.
14 I will be his Father, and he will be my son.
When he does wrong, I will discipline him with
the rod of men and with the blows of the sons of
men.
15 But my loving devotion will never be
removed from him as I removed it from Saul,
whom I removed from before you.
16 Your house and kingdom will endure
forever before you,† and your throne will be
established forever."
17 So Nathan relayed to David all the words of
this entire revelation.
18 Then King David went in, sat before the
LORD, and said, "Who am I, O Lord GOD, and

† **7:16 7:16** Leningrad Codex and most Hebrew manuscripts; some Hebrew manuscripts and LXX *me*

what is my house, that you have brought me this
far?
19 And as if this was a small thing in your eyes,
O Lord GOD, you have also spoken about the
future of the house of your servant. And this is
your instruction for mankind, O Lord GOD.‡
20 What more can David say to you? For you
know your servant, O Lord GOD.
21 For the sake of your word and according to
your own heart, you have accomplished this
great thing and revealed it to your servant.
22 How great you are, O Lord GOD!§ For there
is none like you, and there is no God but you,
according to everything we have heard with our
own ears.
23 And who is like your people Israel—the one
nation on earth whom God went out to redeem
as a people for himself and to make a name for
himself, and to perform for you* great and
awesome wonders for your land, before your
people, whom you redeemed for yourself from
Egypt, from nations and their gods?†
24 For you have established your people Israel
as your very own forever, and you, O LORD,
have become their God.
25 And now, O LORD God, confirm forever the
word you have spoken concerning your servant

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‡ **7:19 7:19** Or *Is this your custom with man, O Lord GOD?* § **7:22 7:22** Leningrad Codex; Aleppo Codex *O LORD God* * **7:23 7:23** Hebrew *you* is plural, apparently referring to Israel † **7:23 7:23** LXX (see also 1 Chronicles 17:21) *you performed great and awesome wonders by driving out nations and their gods from before your people, whom you redeemed for yourself from Egypt*

and his house. Do as you have promised,
26 so that your name will be magnified forever
when it is said, 'The LORD of Hosts is God over
Israel.' And the house of your servant David will
be established before you.
27 For you, O LORD of Hosts, the God of Israel,
have revealed this to your servant‡ when you
said, 'I will build a house for you.' Therefore
your servant has found the courage to offer this
prayer to you.
28 And now, O Lord GOD, you are God! Your
words are true, and you have promised this
goodness to your servant.
29 Now therefore, may it please you to bless
the house of your servant, that it may continue
forever before you. For you, O Lord GOD, have
spoken, and with your blessing the house of
your servant will be blessed forever."

8

1 Some time later, David defeated the
Philistines, subdued them, and took
Metheg-ammah* from the hand of the
Philistines.
2 David also defeated the Moabites, made them
lie down on the ground, and measured them off
with a cord. He measured off with two lengths
those to be put to death, and with one length
those to be spared. So the Moabites became
subject to David and brought him tribute.

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‡ **7:27 7:27** Literally *have uncovered the ear of your servant* * **8:1 8:1** *Metheg-ammah* means *bridle of the mother city*.

3 David also defeated Hadadezer son of Rehob,
king of Zobah, who had marched out to restore
his dominion along the Euphrates River.†
4 David captured from him seventeen hundred
charioteers,‡ and twenty thousand foot soldiers,
and he hamstrung all the horses except a
hundred he kept for the chariots.
5 When the Arameans of Damascus came to
help King Hadadezer of Zobah, David struck
down twenty-two thousand of their men.
6 Then he placed garrisons in Aram of
Damascus, and the Arameans became subject to
David and brought him tribute. So the LORD
made David victorious wherever he went.
7 And David took the gold shields that
belonged to the officers of Hadadezer and
brought them to Jerusalem.
8 And from Betah§ and Berothai, cities of
Hadadezer, King David took a large amount of
bronze.
9 When King Toi* of Hamath heard that David
had defeated the entire army of Hadadezer,
10 he sent his son Joram† to greet King David
and bless him for fighting and defeating
Hadadezer, who had been at war with Toi.

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† **8:3 8:3** Qere (see also LXX, Syriac, Vulgate, and 1 Chronicles 18:3); Ketiv *along the River* ‡ **8:4 8:4** LXX (see also DSS and 1 Chronicles 18:4) *captured from him a thousand chariots, seven thousand charioteers* § **8:8 8:8** Some LXX manuscripts *Tebah*; see 1 Chronicles 18:8. * **8:9 8:9** *Toi* is a variant of *Tou*; also in verse 10; see 1 Chronicles 18:9. † **8:10 8:10** *Joram* is a variant of *Hadoram*; see 1 Chronicles 18:10.

Joram brought with him articles of silver and
gold and bronze,
11 and King David dedicated these to the
LORD, along with the silver and gold he had
dedicated from all the nations he had subdued—
12 from Aram‡ and Moab, from the Ammonites
and Philistines and Amalekites, and from the
spoil of Hadadezer son of Rehob, king of Zobah.

13 And David made a name for himself when
he returned from striking down eighteen
thousand Arameans§ in the Valley of Salt.
14 He placed garrisons throughout Edom, and
all the Edomites were subject to David. So the
LORD made David victorious wherever he went.

15 Thus David reigned over all Israel and
administered justice and righteousness for all
his people:

16 Joab son of Zeruiah was over the army;
Jehoshaphat son of Ahilud was the recorder;
17 Zadok son of Ahitub and Ahimelech son of
Abiathar were priests;
Seraiah* was the scribe;
18 Benaiah son of Jehoiada and the Cherethites

‡ **8:12** **8:12** Leningrad Codex and most Hebrew manuscripts; some Hebrew manuscripts, LXX, and Syriac (see also verse 14 and 1 Chronicles 18:11) *Edom* § **8:13** **8:13** Leningrad Codex and most Hebrew manuscripts; a few Hebrew manuscripts, LXX, and Syriac (see also verse 14 and 1 Chronicles 18:12) *Edomites* * **8:17** **8:17** *Seraiah* is also called *Sheva*, *Shisha*, and *Shavsha*; see 2 Samuel 20:25, 1 Kings 4:3, and 1 Chronicles 18:16.

and Pelethites;†
and David's sons were priests.‡

9

1 Then David asked, "Is there anyone left from
the house of Saul to whom I can show kindness
for the sake of Jonathan?"
2 And there was a servant of the house of Saul
named Ziba. They summoned him to David, and
the king inquired, "Are you Ziba?"
"I am your servant," he replied.
3 So the king asked, "Is there anyone left of the
house of Saul to whom I can show the kindness
of God?"
Ziba answered, "There is still Jonathan's son,
who is lame in both feet."
4 "Where is he?" replied the king.
And Ziba said, "Indeed, he is in Lo-debar at the
house of Machir son of Ammiel."
5 So King David had him brought from the
house of Machir son of Ammiel in Lo-debar.
6 And when Mephibosheth* son of Jonathan,
the son of Saul, came to David, he fell facedown
in reverence.
Then David said, "Mephibosheth!"
"I am your servant," he replied.
7 "Do not be afraid," said David, "for surely I
will show you kindness for the sake of your
father Jonathan. I will restore to you all the land

† **8:18** **8:18** Probably meaning that Benaiah was over the Cherethites and Pelethites; compare 2 Samuel 20:23 and 1 Chronicles 18:17. ‡ **8:18** **8:18** Or *priestly leaders*, or possibly *chief officials*; see LXX, Targum Yonaton, and 1 Chronicles 18:17. * **9:6** **9:6** *Mephibosheth* is also called *Merib-baal*; see 1 Chronicles 8:34.

of your grandfather Saul, and you will always
eat at my table."
8 Mephibosheth bowed down and said, "What
is your servant, that you should show regard for
a dead dog like me?"
9 Then the king summoned Saul's servant Ziba
and said to him, "I have given to your master's
grandson all that belonged to Saul and to all his
house.
10 You and your sons and servants are to work
the ground for him and bring in the harvest, so
that your master's grandson may have food to
eat. But Mephibosheth, your master's grandson,
is always to eat at my table."
Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty
servants.
11 And Ziba said to the king, "Your servant will
do all that my lord the king has commanded."
"So Mephibosheth will eat at my table like one
of the king's own sons."†
12 And Mephibosheth had a young son named
Mica,‡ and all who dwelt in the house of Ziba
were servants of Mephibosheth.
13 So Mephibosheth lived in Jerusalem,
because he always ate at the king's table, and he
was lame in both feet.

10

1 Some time later, the king of the Ammonites
died and was succeeded by his son Hanun.

† **9:11 9:11** Continuing the king's words; LXX *So Mephibosheth ate at David's table* ‡ **9:12 9:12** *Mica* is a variant of *Micah*; see 1 Chronicles 8:34.

2 And David said, “I will show kindness to
Hanun son of Nahash, just as his father showed
kindness to me.”
So David sent some of his servants to console
Hanun concerning his father. But when they
arrived in the land of the Ammonites,
3 the princes of the Ammonites said to Hanun
their lord, “Just because David has sent you
comforters, do you really believe he is showing
respect for your father? Has not David instead
sent his servants to explore the city, spy it out,
and overthrow it?”
4 So Hanun took David’s servants, shaved off
half of each man’s beard, cut off their garments
at the hips, and sent them away.
5 When this was reported to David, he sent
messengers to meet the men, since they had
been thoroughly humiliated. The king told them,
“Stay in Jericho until your beards have grown
back, and then return.”
6 When the Ammonites realized that they had
become a stench to David, they hired twenty
thousand Aramean foot soldiers from
Beth-rehob and Zoba, as well as a thousand men
from the king of Maacah and twelve thousand
men from Tob.
7 On hearing this, David sent Joab and the
entire army of mighty men.
8 The Ammonites marched out and arrayed
themselves for battle at the entrance of the city
gate, while the Arameans of Zobah and Rehob
and the men of Tob and Maacah were by
themselves in the open country.

9 When Joab saw the battle lines before him
and behind him, he selected some of the best
men of Israel and arrayed them against the
Arameans.
10 And he placed the rest of the troops under
the command of his brother Abishai, who
arrayed them against the Ammonites.
11 "If the Arameans are too strong for me," said
Joab, "then you will come to my rescue. And if
the Ammonites are too strong for you, then I
will come to your rescue.
12 Be strong and let us fight bravely for our
people and for the cities of our God. May the
LORD do what is good in his sight."
13 So Joab and his troops advanced to fight the
Arameans, who fled before him.
14 When the Ammonites saw that the
Arameans had fled, they too fled before Abishai,
and they entered the city. So Joab returned from
fighting against the Ammonites and came to
Jerusalem.
15 When the Arameans saw that they had been
defeated by Israel, they regrouped.
16 Hadadezer sent messengers to bring more
Arameans from beyond the Euphrates,* and
they came to Helam with Shobach† the
commander of Hadadezer's army leading them.
17 When this was reported to David, he
gathered all Israel, crossed the Jordan, and went
to Helam. Then the Arameans arrayed

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* **10:16 10:16** Hebrew *the River* † **10:16 10:16** *Shobach* is a variant of *Shophach*; see 1 Chronicles 19:16.

themselves against David and fought against
him.
18 But the Arameans fled before Israel, and
David killed seven hundred charioteers and
forty thousand horsemen.‡ He also struck down
Shobach the commander of their army, who
died there.
19 When all the kings who were subject to
Hadadezer saw that they had been defeated by
Israel, they made peace with Israel and became
subject to them. So the Arameans were afraid to
help the Ammonites anymore.

11

1 At the turn of the year,* at the time when
kings march out to war, David sent out Joab and
his servants with the whole army of Israel. They
destroyed the Ammonites and besieged Rabbah,
but David remained in Jerusalem.
2 One evening David got up from his bed and
strolled around on the roof of the palace. And
from the roof he saw a woman bathing—a very
beautiful woman.
3 So David sent and inquired about the
woman, and he was told, “This is Bathsheba, the
daughter of Eliam† and the wife of Uriah the
Hittite.”
4 Then David sent messengers to get her, and
when she came to him, he slept with her. (Now

‡ **10:18 10:18** Some LXX manuscripts (see also 1 Chronicles 19:18) *foot soldiers* * **11:1 11:1** Or *In the spring* † **11:3 11:3** *Eliam* is a variant of *Ammiel*; see 1 Chronicles 3:5.

she had just purified herself from her
uncleanness.) Then she returned home.
5 And the woman conceived and sent word to
David, saying, “I am pregnant.”
6 At this, David sent orders to Joab: “Send me
Uriah the Hittite.” So Joab sent him to David.
7 When Uriah came to him, David asked how
Joab and the troops were doing and how the
war was going.
8 Then he said to Uriah, “Go down to your
house and wash your feet.”
So Uriah left the palace, and a gift from the
king followed him.
9 But Uriah slept at the door of the palace with
all his master's servants; he did not go down to
his house.
10 And David was told, “Uriah did not go
home.”
“Haven't you just arrived from a journey?”
David asked Uriah. “Why didn't you go home?”
11 Uriah answered, “The ark and Israel and
Judah are staying at Sukkoth,‡ and my master
Joab and his soldiers are camped in the open
field. How can I go to my house to eat and drink
and sleep with my wife? As surely as you live,
and by your life, I will not do such a thing!”
12 “Stay here one more day,” David said to
Uriah, “and tomorrow I will send you back.” So
Uriah stayed in Jerusalem that day and the next.
13 Then David invited Uriah to eat and drink
with him, and he got Uriah drunk. And in the
evening Uriah went out to lie down on his cot

‡ **11:11 11:11** Or *dwelling in tents*

with his master's servants, but he did not go
home.
14 The next morning David wrote a letter to
Joab and sent it with Uriah.
15 In the letter he wrote: "Put Uriah at the
front of the fiercest battle; then withdraw from
him, so that he may be struck down and killed."
16 So as Joab besieged the city, he assigned
Uriah to a place where he knew the strongest
enemy soldiers were.
17 And when the men of the city came out and
fought against Joab, some of David's servants
fell, and Uriah the Hittite also died.
18 Joab sent to David a full account of the battle
19 and instructed the messenger, "When you
have finished giving the king a full account of
the battle,
20 if the king's anger flares, he may ask you,
'Why did you get so close to the city to fight? Did
you not realize they would shoot from atop the
wall?
21 Who struck Abimelech son of
Jerubbesheth§? Was it not a woman who
dropped an upper millstone on him from the
wall, so that he died in Thebez? Why did you get
so close to the wall?'
If he asks you this, then you are to say, 'Your
servant Uriah the Hittite is dead as well.' "
22 So the messenger set out and reported to
David all that Joab had sent him to say.
23 The messenger said to David, "The men
overpowered us and came out against us in the

§ **11:21 11:21** *Jerubbesheth* is also known as *Jerubbaal*, that is, Gideon.

field, but we drove them back to the entrance of the gate.
24 Then the archers shot at your servants from the wall, and some of the king's servants were killed. And your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead as well."
25 Then David told the messenger, "Say this to Joab: 'Do not let this matter upset you, for the sword devours one as well as another. Strengthen your attack against the city and demolish it.' Encourage him with these words."
26 When Uriah's wife heard that her husband was dead, she mourned for him.
27 And when the time of mourning was over, David had her brought to his house, and she became his wife and bore him a son.
But the thing that David had done was evil in the sight of the LORD.

12

1 Then the LORD sent Nathan to David, and when he arrived, he said, "There were two men in a certain city, one rich and the other poor.
2 The rich man had a great number of sheep and cattle,
3 but the poor man had nothing except one small ewe lamb that he had bought. He raised it, and it grew up with him and his children. It shared his food and drank from his cup; it slept in his arms* and was like a daughter to him.
4 Now a traveler came to the rich man, who refrained from taking one of his own sheep or

* **12:3 12:3** Hebrew *in his bosom*; also in verse 8

cattle to prepare for the traveler who had come
to him. Instead, he took the poor man's lamb
and prepared it for his guest."

5 David burned with anger against the man
and said to Nathan: "As surely as the LORD lives,
the man who did this deserves to die!
6 Because he has done this thing and has
shown no pity, he must pay for the lamb four
times over."

7 Then Nathan said to David, "You are that
man! This is what the LORD, the God of Israel,
says: 'I anointed you king over Israel, and I
delivered you from the hand of Saul.
8 I gave your master's house to you and your
master's wives into your arms. I gave you the
house of Israel and Judah, and if that was not
enough, I would have given you even more.

9 Why then have you despised the command
of the LORD by doing evil in his sight?† You put
Uriah the Hittite to the sword and took his wife
as your own. You have slain him with the sword
of the Ammonites.
10 Now, therefore, the sword will never depart
from your house, because you have despised me
and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to
be your own.'

11 This is what the LORD says: 'I will raise up
adversity against you from your own house.
Before your very eyes I will take your wives and
give them to another, and he will lie with them
in broad daylight.

† **12:9 12:9** Ketiv; Qere *in my sight*

12 You have acted in secret, but I will do this
thing in broad daylight before all Israel.' "

13 Then David said to Nathan, "I have sinned
against the LORD."

"The LORD has taken away your sin," Nathan
replied. "You will not die.

14 Nevertheless, because by this deed you have
brought utter contempt from the enemies of the
LORD,‡ the son born to you will surely die."

15 After Nathan had gone home, the LORD
struck the child that Uriah's wife had borne to
David, and he became ill.

16 David pleaded with God for the boy. He
fasted and went into his house and spent the
night lying on the ground.§

17 The elders of his household stood beside
him to help him up from the ground, but he was
unwilling and would not eat anything with
them.

18 On the seventh day the child died. But
David's servants were afraid to tell him that the
child was dead, for they said, "Look, while the
child was alive, we spoke to him, and he would
not listen to us. So how can we tell him the child
is dead? He may even harm himself."

19 When David saw that his servants were
whispering to one another, he perceived that the
child was dead. So he asked his servants, "Is the
child dead?"

"He is dead," they replied.

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‡ **12:14 12:14** DSS *you have shown utter contempt for the word of the LORD* § **12:16 12:16** DSS and LXX add *in sackcloth*

20 Then David got up from the ground, washed
and anointed himself, changed his clothes,* and
went into the house of the LORD and worshiped.
Then he went to his own house, and at his
request they set food before him, and he ate.
21 "What is this you have done?" his servants
asked. "While the child was alive, you fasted and
wept, but when he died, you got up and ate."
22 David answered, "While the child was alive,
I fasted and wept, for I said, 'Who knows? The
LORD may be gracious to me and let him live.'
23 But now that he is dead, why should I fast?
Can I bring him back again? I will go to him, but
he will not return to me."
24 Then David comforted his wife Bathsheba,
and he went to her and lay with her. So she gave
birth to a son, and she† named him Solomon.
Now the LORD loved the child
25 and sent word through Nathan the prophet
to name him Jedidiah because of the LORD.‡
26 Meanwhile, Joab fought against Rabbah of
the Ammonites and captured the royal fortress.
27 Then Joab sent messengers to David to say,
"I have fought against Rabbah and have
captured the city of waters.§
28 Now, therefore, assemble the rest of the
troops, lay siege to the city, and capture it.
Otherwise I will capture the city, and it will be
named after me."

* **12:20 12:20** Qere; Ketiv *his garment* † **12:24 12:24** Qere; Ketiv *he*; or *they* ‡ **12:25 12:25** Or *because the LORD loved him*; *Jedidiah* means *beloved of the LORD* § **12:27 12:27** Or *and have captured the water supply of the city*

29 So David assembled all the troops and went
to Rabbah; and he fought against it and
captured it.
30 Then he took the crown from the head of
their king.* It weighed a talent of gold† and was
set with precious stones, and it was placed on
David's head. And David took a great amount of
plunder from the city.
31 David brought out the people who were
there and put them to work with saws,‡ iron
picks, and axes, and he made them work at the
brick kilns.§* He did the same to all the
Ammonite cities. Then David and all his troops
returned to Jerusalem.

13

1 After some time, David's son Amnon fell in
love with Tamar, the beautiful sister of David's
son Absalom.
2 Amnon was sick with frustration over his
sister Tamar, for she was a virgin, and it seemed
implausible for him to do anything to her.
3 Now Amnon had a friend named Jonadab,
the son of David's brother Shimeah.* Jonadab
was a very shrewd man,

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* **12:30 12:30** Or *from the head of Milcom.* Milcom, also called Molech, was god of the Ammonites; see Leviticus 18:21 and 1 Kings 11:7. † **12:30 12:30** *A talent* is approximately 75.4 pounds or 34.2 kilograms of gold. ‡ **12:31 12:31** Literally *put them under saws* § **12:31 12:31** Qere; Ketiv *Malken*, perhaps *their king* or *Molech* * **12:31 12:31** Literally *and he made them pass through the brick kilns.* * **13:3 13:3** *Shimeah* is a variant of *Shammah*, *Shimea*, and *Shimei*; see 1 Samuel 16:9, 2 Samuel 21:21, and 1 Chronicles 2:13.

4 and he asked Amnon, “Why are you, the son
of the king, so depressed morning after
morning? Won’t you tell me?”
Amnon replied, “I am in love with Tamar, my
brother Absalom’s sister.”
5 Jonadab told him, “Lie down on your bed and
pretend you are ill. When your father comes to
see you, say to him, ‘Please let my sister Tamar
come and give me something to eat. Let her
prepare it in my sight so I may watch her and
eat it from her hand.’ ”
6 So Amnon lay down and feigned illness.
When the king came to see him, Amnon said,
“Please let my sister Tamar come and make a
couple of cakes in my sight, so that I may eat
from her hand.”
7 Then David sent word to Tamar at the
palace: “Please go to the house of Amnon your
brother and prepare a meal for him.”
8 So Tamar went to the house of her brother
Amnon, who was lying down. She took some
dough, kneaded it, made cakes in his sight, and
baked them.
9 Then she brought the pan and set it down
before him, but he refused to eat. “Send
everyone away!” said Amnon. And everyone
went out.
10 Then Amnon said to Tamar, “Bring the food
into the bedroom, so that I may eat it from your
hand.”
Tamar took the cakes she had made and went
to her brother Amnon’s bedroom.
11 And when she had brought them to him to
eat, he took hold of her and said, “Come lie with
me, my sister!”

12 “No, my brother!” she cried. “Do not violate
me, for such a thing should never be done in
Israel. Do not do this disgraceful thing!
13 Where could I ever take my shame? And
you would be like one of the fools in Israel!
Please speak to the king, for he will not withhold
me from you.”
14 But Amnon refused to listen to her, and
being stronger, he violated her and lay with her.
15 Then Amnon hated Tamar with such
intensity that his hatred was greater than the
love he previously had. “Get up!” he said to her.
“Be gone!”
16 “No,” she replied, “sending me away is worse
than this great wrong you have already done to
me!”
But he refused to listen to her.
17 Instead, he called to his attendant and said,
“Throw this woman out and bolt the door
behind her!”
18 So Amnon’s attendant threw her out and
bolted the door behind her. Now Tamar was
wearing a robe of many colors,† because this is
what the king’s virgin daughters wore.
19 And Tamar put ashes on her head and tore
the robe of many colors she was wearing. And
putting her hand on her head, she went away
crying aloud.
20 Her brother Absalom said to her, “Has your
brother Amnon been with you? Be quiet for
now, my sister. He is your brother. Do not take
this thing to heart.”

† **13:18 13:18** Or *a robe with long sleeves*; see also Genesis 37:3.

So Tamar lived as a desolate woman in the house of her brother Absalom.

21 When King David heard all this, he was furious.‡

22 And Absalom never said a word to Amnon, either good or bad, because he hated Amnon for violating his sister Tamar.

23 Two years later, when Absalom's sheepshearers were at Baal-hazor near Ephraim, he invited all the sons of the king.

24 And he went to the king and said, "Your servant has just hired shearers. Will the king and his servants please come with me?"

25 "No, my son," the king replied, "we should not all go, or we would be a burden to you." Although Absalom urged him, he was not willing to go, but gave him his blessing.

26 "If not," said Absalom, "please let my brother Amnon go with us."

"Why should he go with you?" the king asked.

27 But Absalom urged him, so the king sent Amnon and the rest of his sons.§

28 Now Absalom had ordered his young men, "Watch Amnon until his heart is merry with wine, and when I order you to strike Amnon down, you are to kill him. Do not be afraid. Have I not commanded you? Be courageous and valiant!"

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‡ **13:21 13:21** DSS and LXX include *But he would not punish his son Amnon, because he loved him, since he was his firstborn.* § **13:27 13:27** LXX and Vulgate include *And Absalom prepared a feast fit for a king.*

29 So Absalom's young men did to Amnon just
as Absalom had ordered. Then all the other sons
of the king got up, and each one fled on his mule.
30 While they were on the way, a report
reached David: "Absalom has struck down all
the sons of the king; not one of them is left!"
31 Then the king stood up, tore his clothes, and
lay down on the ground. And all his servants
stood by with their clothes torn.
32 But Jonadab, the son of David's brother
Shimeah, spoke up: "My lord must not think
they have killed all the sons of the king, for only
Amnon is dead. In fact, Absalom has planned
this since the day Amnon violated his sister
Tamar.
33 So now, my lord the king, do not take to
heart the report that all the sons of the king are
dead. Only Amnon is dead."
34 Meanwhile, Absalom had fled. When the
young man standing watch looked up, he saw
many people coming down the road behind
him,* along the side of the hill.†
35 So Jonadab said to the king, "Look, the sons
of the king have arrived! It is just as your
servant said."
36 And as he finished speaking, the sons of the
king came in, wailing loudly. Then the king and
all his servants also wept very bitterly.
37 Now Absalom fled and went to Talmai son
of Ammihud,‡ the king of Geshur. But David

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* **13:34 13:34** Or *west of him* † **13:34 13:34** LXX adds *And the watchman went and reported to the king, "I see men coming from the direction of Horonaim, along the side of the hill."* ‡ **13:37 13:37** Qere; Ketiv *Ammihur*

mourned for his son every day.
38 After Absalom had fled and gone to Geshur,
he stayed there three years.
39 And King David§ longed to go to Absalom,*
for he had been consoled over Amnon's death.

14

1 Now Joab son of Zeruiah perceived that the
king's heart longed for Absalom.
2 So Joab sent to Tekoa to bring a wise woman
from there. He told her, "Please pretend to be a
mourner; put on clothes for mourning and do
not anoint yourself with oil. Act like a woman
who has mourned for the dead a long time.
3 Then go to the king and speak these words to
him." And Joab put the words in her mouth.
4 When the woman from Tekoa spoke to the
king,* she fell facedown in homage and said,
"Help me, O king!"
5 "What troubles you?" the king asked her.
"Indeed," she said, "I am a widow, for my
husband is dead.
6 And your maidservant had two sons who
were fighting in the field with no one to separate
them, and one struck the other and killed him.
7 Now the whole clan has risen up against
your maidservant and said, 'Hand over the one
who struck down his brother, that we may put
him to death for the life of the brother whom he

§ **13:39 13:39** DSS and LXX *And the spirit of the king* * **13:39 13:39** Or *ceased to go out after Absalom* * **14:4 14:4** Leningrad Codex and most Hebrew manuscripts; many manuscripts and editions *came*

killed. Then we will cut off the heir as well!' So they would extinguish my one remaining ember by not preserving my husband's name or posterity on the earth."

8 "Go home," the king said to the woman, "and I will give orders on your behalf."

9 But the woman of Tekoa said to the king, "My lord the king, may any blame be on me and on my father's house, and may the king and his throne be guiltless."

10 "If anyone speaks to you," said the king, "bring him to me, and he will not trouble you again!"

11 "Please," she replied, "may the king invoke the LORD your God to prevent the avenger of blood from increasing the devastation, so that my son may not be destroyed!"

"As surely as the LORD lives," he vowed, "not a hair of your son's head will fall to the ground."

12 Then the woman said, "Please, may your servant speak a word to my lord the king?"

"Speak," he replied.

13 The woman asked, "Why have you devised a thing like this against the people of God? When the king says this, does he not convict himself, since he has not brought back his own banished son?

14 For we will surely die and be like water poured out on the ground, which cannot be recovered. Yet God does not take away a life, but he devises ways that the banished one may not be cast out from him.

15 Now therefore, I have come to present this
matter to my lord the king because the people
have made me afraid. Your servant thought, 'I
will speak to the king. Perhaps he will grant the
request of his maidservant.
16 For the king will hear and deliver his
maidservant from the hand of the man who
would cut off both me and my son from God's
inheritance.'
17 And now your servant says, 'May the word
of my lord the king bring me rest, for my lord
the king is able to discern good and evil, just like
the angel of God. May the LORD your God be
with you.' "
18 Then the king said to the woman, "I am
going to ask you something; do not conceal it
from me!"
"Let my lord the king speak," she replied.
19 So the king asked, "Is the hand of Joab
behind all this?"
The woman answered, "As surely as you live,
my lord the king, no one can turn to the right or
to the left from anything that my lord the king
says. Yes, your servant Joab is the one who gave
me orders; he told your maidservant exactly
what to say.
20 Joab your servant has done this to bring
about this change of affairs, but my lord has
wisdom like the wisdom of the angel of God, to
know everything that happens in the land."
21 Then the king said to Joab, "I hereby grant
this request. Go, bring back the young man
Absalom."

22 Joab fell facedown in homage and blessed
the king. “Today,” said Joab, “your servant knows
that he has found favor in your eyes, my lord the
king, because the king has granted his request.”†
23 So Joab got up, went to Geshur, and brought
Absalom to Jerusalem.
24 But the king added, “He may return to his
house, but he must not see my face.” So Absalom
returned to his own house, but he did not see
the face of the king.
25 Now there was not a man in all Israel as
handsome and highly praised as Absalom. From
the sole of his foot to the top of his head, he did
not have a single flaw.
26 And when he cut the hair of his head—he
shaved it every year because his hair got so
heavy—he would weigh it out to be two hundred
shekels,‡ according to the royal standard.
27 Three sons were born to Absalom, and a
daughter named Tamar, who was a beautiful
woman.
28 Now Absalom lived in Jerusalem two years
without seeing the face of the king.
29 Then he sent for Joab to send him to the
king, but Joab refused to come to him.
So Absalom sent a second time, but Joab still
would not come.
30 Then Absalom said to his servants, “Look,
Joab’s field is next to mine, and he has barley
there. Go and set it on fire!§”

† **14:22 14:22** Ketiv; Qere *the request of your servant* ‡ **14:26 14:26** *200 shekels* is approximately 5 pounds or 2.3 kilograms of hair. § **14:30 14:30** Qere; Ketiv possibly *I will set it on fire*

And Absalom's servants set the field on fire.*
31 Then Joab came to Absalom's house and
demanded, "Why did your servants set my field
on fire?"
32 "Look," said Absalom, "I sent for you and
said, 'Come here. I want to send you to the king
to ask: Why have I come back from Geshur? It
would be better for me if I were still there.' So
now, let me see the king's face, and if there is
iniquity in me, let him kill me."
33 So Joab went and told the king, and David
summoned Absalom, who came to him and
bowed facedown before him. Then the king
kissed Absalom.

15

1 Some time later, Absalom provided for
himself a chariot with horses and fifty men to
run ahead of him.
2 He would get up early and stand beside the
road leading to the city gate.
Whenever anyone had a grievance to bring
before the king for a decision, Absalom would
call out and ask, "What city are you from?" And
if he replied, "Your servant is from one of the
tribes of Israel,"
3 Absalom would say, "Look, your claims are
good and right, but the king has no deputy to
hear you."
4 And he would add, "If only someone would
appoint me judge in the land, then everyone

* **14:30 14:30** LXX includes *So the servants of Joab came to him with their clothes torn and said to him, "The servants of Absalom have set your field on fire."*

with a grievance or dispute could come to me,
and I would give him justice."
5 Also, when anyone approached to bow down
to him, Absalom would reach out his hand, take
hold of him, and kiss him.
6 Absalom did this to all the Israelites who
came to the king for justice. In this way he stole
the hearts of the men of Israel.
7 After forty* years had passed, Absalom said
to the king, "Please let me go to Hebron to fulfill
a vow I have made to the LORD.
8 For your servant made a vow while dwelling
in Geshur of Aram, saying: 'If indeed the LORD
brings me back to Jerusalem, I will worship the
LORD.'†"
9 "Go in peace," said the king. So Absalom got
up and went to Hebron.
10 Then Absalom sent spies throughout the
tribes of Israel with this message: "When you
hear the sound of the horn, you are to say,
'Absalom reigns in Hebron!' "
11 Two hundred men from Jerusalem
accompanied Absalom. They had been invited
as guests and they went along innocently, for
they knew nothing about the matter.
12 While Absalom was offering the sacrifices,
he sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, David's
counselor, to come from his hometown of Giloh.
So the conspiracy gained strength, and
Absalom's following kept increasing.

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* **15:7 15:7** Syriac and some LXX manuscripts *four* † **15:8 15:8** Some LXX manuscripts add *in Hebron*

13 Then a messenger came to David and
reported, “The hearts of the men of Israel are
with Absalom.”
14 And David said to all the servants with him
in Jerusalem, “Arise and let us flee, or we will
not escape from Absalom! We must leave
quickly, or he will soon overtake us, heap
disaster on us, and put the city to the sword.”
15 The king’s servants replied, “Whatever our
lord the king decides, we are your servants.”
16 Then the king set out, and his entire
household followed him. But he left behind ten
concubines to take care of the palace.
17 So the king set out with all the people
following him. He stopped at the last house,
18 and all his servants marched past him—all
the Cherethites and Pelethites, and six hundred
Gittites who had followed him from Gath.
19 Then the king said to Ittai the Gittite, “Why
should you also go with us? Go back and stay
with the new king, since you are both a
foreigner and an exile from your homeland.
20 In fact, you arrived only yesterday; should I
make you wander around with us today while I
do not know where I am going? Go back and
take your brothers with you. May loving
devotion and faithfulness be with you.‡”
21 But Ittai answered the king, “As surely as
the LORD lives, and as my lord the king lives,
wherever my lord the king may be, whether it
means life or death, there will your servant be!”

‡ **15:20 15:20** LXX *May the LORD show you loving devotion and faithfulness*

22 “March on then,” said David to Ittai. So Ittai
the Gittite marched past with all his men and all
the little ones who were with him.
23 Everyone in the countryside was weeping
loudly as all the people passed by. And as the
king crossed the Kidron Valley, all the people
also passed toward the way of the wilderness.
24 Zadok was also there, and all the Levites
with him were carrying the ark of the covenant
of God. And they set down the ark of God, and
Abiathar went up§ until all the people had
passed out of the city.
25 Then the king said to Zadok, “Return the ark
of God to the city. If I find favor in the eyes of
the LORD, he will bring me back and let me see
both it and his dwelling place again.
26 But if he should say, ‘I do not delight in you,’
then here I am; let him do to me whatever
seems good to him.”
27 The king also said to Zadok the priest, “Are
you not a seer?* Return to the city in
peace—you with your son Ahimaaz, and
Abiathar with his son Jonathan.†
28 See, I will wait in the plains of the
wilderness‡ until word comes from you to
inform me.”
29 So Zadok and Abiathar returned the ark of
God to Jerusalem and stayed there.

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§ **15:24 15:24** Or *Abiathar offered sacrifices* * **15:27 15:27** LXX *Behold,* † **15:27 15:27** Literally *your son Ahimaaz and Jonathan son of Abiathar, your two sons with you* ‡ **15:28 15:28** Qere; Ketiv *at the fords*

30 But David continued up the Mount of Olives,
weeping as he went up. His head was covered,
and he was walking barefoot. And all the people
with him covered their heads and went up,
weeping as they went.
31 Now someone told David: “Ahithophel is
among the conspirators with Absalom.”
So David pleaded, “O LORD, please turn the
counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness!”
32 When David came to the summit, where he
used to worship God, Hushai the Archite was
there to meet him with his robe torn and dust
on his head.
33 David said to him, “If you go on with me,
you will be a burden to me.
34 But you can thwart the counsel of
Ahithophel for me if you return to the city and
say to Absalom: ‘I will be your servant, my king;
in the past I was your father’s servant, but now I
will be your servant.’
35 Will not Zadok and Abiathar the priests be
there with you? Report to them everything you
hear from the king’s palace.
36 Indeed, their two sons, Ahimaaz son of
Zadok and Jonathan son of Abiathar, are there
with them. Send them to me with everything
you hear.”
37 So David’s friend Hushai arrived in
Jerusalem just as Absalom was entering the city.

16

1 When David had gone a little beyond the
summit, Ziba the servant of Mephibosheth was

there to meet him. He had a pair of saddled donkeys loaded with two hundred loaves of bread, a hundred clusters of raisins, a hundred summer fruits, and a skin of wine.

2 “Why do you have these?” asked the king.

Ziba replied, “The donkeys are for the king’s household to ride, the bread and summer fruit are for the young men to eat, and the wine is to refresh those who become exhausted in the wilderness.”

3 “Where is your master’s grandson?” asked the king.

And Ziba answered, “Indeed, he is staying in Jerusalem, for he has said, ‘Today, the house of Israel will restore to me the kingdom of my grandfather.’ ”

4 So the king said to Ziba, “All that belongs to Mephibosheth is now yours!”

“I humbly bow before you,” said Ziba. “May I find favor in your eyes, my lord the king!”

5 As King David approached Bahurim, a man from the family of the house of Saul was just coming out. His name was Shimei son of Gera, and as he approached, he kept yelling out curses.

6 He threw stones at David and at all the servants of the king, though the troops and all the mighty men were on David’s right and left.

7 And as he yelled curses, Shimei said, “Get out, get out, you worthless man of bloodshed!

8 The LORD has paid you back for all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose place you have reigned, and the LORD has delivered the kingdom into the hand of your son Absalom.

See, you have come to ruin because you are a
man of bloodshed!"
9 Then Abishai son of Zeruiah said to the king,
"Why should this dead dog curse my lord the
king? Let me go over and cut off his head!"
10 But the king replied, "What have I to do with
you, O sons of Zeruiah? Let him curse,* for† the
LORD told him, 'Curse David,' and who can ask,
'Why did you do this?' "
11 Then David said to Abishai and to all his
servants, "Behold, my own son, my own flesh
and blood, seeks my life. How much more, then,
this Benjamite! Leave him alone and let him
curse me, for the LORD has told him so.
12 Perhaps the LORD will see my affliction and
repay me with good for the cursing I receive
today."
13 So David and his men proceeded along the
road as Shimei went along the ridge of the hill
opposite him. As Shimei went, he yelled curses,
threw stones, and flung dust at David.
14 Finally, the king and all the people with him
arrived,‡ exhausted. And there he refreshed
himself.
15 Then Absalom and all the men of Israel
came to Jerusalem, and Ahithophel was with
him.
16 And David's friend Hushai the Archite went
to Absalom and said to him, "Long live the king!
Long live the king!"

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* **16:10 16:10** Qere; Ketiv *If he curses* † **16:10 16:10** Qere; Ketiv *and if* ‡ **16:14 16:14** Some LXX manuscripts *arrived at the Jordan*

17 “Is this the loyalty you show your friend?”
Absalom replied. “Why did you not go with your
friend?”
18 “Not at all,” Hushai answered. “For the one
chosen by the LORD, by this people, and by all
the men of Israel—his§ I will be, and with him I
will remain.
19 Furthermore, whom should I serve if not his
son? As I served in your father’s presence, so
also I will serve in yours.”
20 Then Absalom said to Ahithophel, “Give me
counsel. What should we do?”
21 Ahithophel replied, “Sleep with your father’s
concubines, whom he has left to take care of the
palace. When all Israel hears that you have
become a stench to your father, then the hands
of all who are with you will be strengthened.”
22 So they pitched a tent for Absalom on the
roof, and he slept with his father’s concubines in
the sight of all Israel.
23 Now in those days the advice of Ahithophel
was like the consultation of the word of God.
Such was the regard that both David and
Absalom had for Ahithophel’s advice.

17

1 Furthermore, Ahithophel said to Absalom,
“Let me choose twelve thousand men and set out
tonight in pursuit of David.
2 I will attack him while he is weak and weary;
I will throw him into a panic, and all the people

§ **16:18 16:18** Qere; Ketiv *not*

with him will flee; I will strike down only the king
3 and bring all the people back to you. When
everyone returns except the man you seek,*
then all the people will be at peace."
4 This proposal seemed good to Absalom and
all the elders of Israel.
5 Then Absalom said, "Summon Hushai the
Archite as well, and let us hear what he too has
to say."
6 So Hushai came to Absalom, who told him,
"Ahithophel has spoken this proposal. Should
we carry it out? If not, what do you say?"
7 Hushai replied, "This time the advice of
Ahithophel is not sound."
8 He continued, "You know your father and his
men. They are mighty men, and as fierce as a
wild bear robbed of her cubs. Moreover, your
father is a man of war who will not spend the
night with the troops.
9 Surely by now he is hiding in a cave or some
other location. If some of your troops fall first,†
whoever hears of it will say, 'There has been a
slaughter among the troops who follow
Absalom.'
10 Then even the most valiant soldier with the
heart of a lion will melt with fear, because all
Israel knows that your father is a mighty man
who has valiant men with him.

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* **17:3 17:3** LXX (see also DSS) *and bring all the people back to you as a bride returning to her husband. You seek the life of only one man;* † **17:9 17:9** Or *If he should attack your troops first*

11 Instead, I advise that all Israel from Dan to
Beersheba—a multitude like the sand on the
seashore—be gathered to you, and that you
yourself lead them into battle.
12 Then we will attack David wherever we find
him, and we will descend on him like dew on
the ground. And of all the men with him, not
even one will remain.
13 If he retreats to a city, all Israel will bring
ropes to that city, and we will drag it down to
the valley until not even a pebble can be found
there."
14 Then Absalom and all the men of Israel said,
"The advice of Hushai the Archite is better than
that of Ahithophel." For the LORD had purposed
to thwart the good counsel of Ahithophel in
order to bring disaster on Absalom.
15 So Hushai told Zadok and Abiathar, the
priests, "This is what Ahithophel has advised
Absalom and the elders of Israel, and this is
what I have advised.
16 Now send quickly and tell David, 'Do not
spend the night at the fords of the wilderness,
but be sure to cross over. Otherwise the king and
all the people with him will be swallowed up.' "
17 Now Jonathan and Ahimaaz were staying at
En-rogel, where a servant girl would come and
pass along information to them. They in turn
would go and inform King David, for they dared
not be seen entering the city.
18 But a young man did see them and told
Absalom. So the two left quickly and came to the
house of a man in Bahurim. He had a well in his
courtyard, and they climbed down into it.

19 Then the man's wife took a covering, spread
it over the mouth of the well, and scattered
grain over it so nobody would know a thing.
20 When Absalom's servants came to the
woman at the house, they asked, "Where are
Ahimaaz and Jonathan?"
"They have crossed over the brook," she
replied. The men searched but did not find
them, so they returned to Jerusalem.
21 After the men had gone, Ahimaaz and
Jonathan climbed up out of the well and went to
inform King David, saying, "Get up and cross
over the river at once, for Ahithophel has given
this advice against you."
22 So David and all the people with him got up
and crossed the Jordan. By daybreak, there was
no one left who had not crossed the Jordan.
23 When Ahithophel saw that his advice had
not been followed, he saddled his donkey and
set out for his house in his hometown. He put
his affairs in order and hanged himself. So he
died and was buried in his father's tomb.
24 Then David went to Mahanaim, and
Absalom crossed the Jordan with all the men of
Israel.
25 Absalom had appointed Amasa over the
army in place of Joab. Amasa was the son of a
man named Ithra,‡ the Israelite§ who had

‡ **17:25 17:25** *Ithra* is a variant of *Jether*; see 1 Kings 2:5. § **17:25 17:25** MT and other LXX manuscripts; some LXX manuscripts (see also 1 Chronicles 2:17) *Ishmaelite*

married Abigal,* the daughter of Nahash† and
sister of Zeruiah the mother of Joab.
26 So the Israelites and Absalom camped in the
land of Gilead.
27 When David came to Mahanaim, he was
met by Shobi son of Nahash from Rabbah of the
Ammonites, Machir son of Ammiel from
Lo-debar, and Barzillai the Gileadite from
Rogelim.
28 They brought beds, basins, and earthen
vessels, as well as wheat, barley, flour, roasted
grain, beans, lentils, roasted seeds,‡
29 honey, curds, sheep, and cheese from the
herd for David and his people to eat. For they
said, "The people have become hungry,
exhausted, and thirsty in the wilderness."

18

1 Then David reviewed his troops and
appointed over them commanders of thousands
and of hundreds.
2 He sent out the troops, a third under Joab, a
third under Joab's brother Abishai son of
Zeruiah, and a third under Ittai the Gittite. And
the king said to the troops, "I will surely march
out with you as well."
3 But the people pleaded, "You must not go out!
For if we have to flee, they will not care about
us. Even if half of us die, they will not care. For

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* **17:25 17:25** *Abigal* is a variant of *Abigail* † **17:25 17:25** DSS (see also 1 Chronicles 2:13–16) *of Jesse* ‡ **17:28 17:28** Most LXX manuscripts and Syriac omit *roasted seeds*

now there are ten thousand like us.* It is better
now if you support us from the city."
4 "I will do whatever seems best to you," the
king replied. So he stood beside the gate, while
all the troops marched out by hundreds and by
thousands.
5 Now the king had commanded Joab, Abishai,
and Ittai, "Treat the young man Absalom gently
for my sake." And all the people heard the king's
orders to each of the commanders regarding
Absalom.
6 So David's army marched into the field to
engage Israel, and the battle took place in the
forest of Ephraim.
7 There the people of Israel were defeated by
David's servants, and the slaughter was great
that day—twenty thousand men.
8 The battle spread over the whole
countryside, and that day the forest devoured
more people than the sword.
9 Now Absalom was riding on his mule when
he met the servants of David, and as the mule
went under the thick branches of a large
terebinth,† Absalom's head was caught fast in
the tree. The mule under him kept going, so that
he was suspended in midair.
10 When one of the men saw this, he told Joab,
"I just saw Absalom hanging in a terebinth!"

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* **18:3 18:3** Leningrad Codex and most Hebrew manuscripts; two Hebrew manuscripts, some LXX manuscripts, and Vulgate *But you are worth ten thousand of us* † **18:9 18:9** Or *large oak* or *very great tree*; similarly in verses 10 and 14

11 “You just saw him!” Joab exclaimed. “Why
did you not strike him to the ground right there?
I would have given you ten shekels of silver‡
and a warrior’s belt!”
12 The man replied, “Even if a thousand
shekels of silver§ were weighed out into my
hands, I would not raise my hand against the
son of the king. For we heard the king command
you and Abishai and Ittai, ‘Whoever you may be,
protect the young man Absalom.’*
13 If I had jeopardized my own life†—and
nothing is hidden from the king—you would
have abandoned me.”
14 But Joab declared, “I am not going to wait
like this with you!” And he took three spears in
his hand and thrust them through the heart of
Absalom while he was still alive in the terebinth
tree.
15 And ten young men who carried Joab’s
armor surrounded Absalom, struck him, and
killed him.
16 Then Joab blew the ram’s horn, and the
troops broke off their pursuit of Israel because
Joab had restrained them.
17 They took Absalom, cast him into a large pit
in the forest, and piled a huge mound of stones

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‡ **18:11 18:11** *10 shekels* is approximately 4 ounces or 114 grams of silver. § **18:12 18:12** *1,000 shekels* is approximately 25.1 pounds or 11.4 kilograms of silver. * **18:12 18:12** Leningrad Codex and most Hebrew manuscripts (or *Let no one touch the young man Absalom*); a few Hebrew manuscripts, LXX, Vulgate, and Syriac *Protect the young man Absalom for my sake* † **18:13 18:13** Qere; Ketiv *If I had dealt treacherously against his life*

over him. Meanwhile, all the Israelites fled, each
to his home.
18 During his lifetime, Absalom had set up for
himself a pillar in the King's Valley, for he had
said, "I have no son to preserve the memory of
my name." So he gave the pillar his name, and to
this day it is called Absalom's Monument.
19 Then Ahimaaz son of Zadok said, "Please let
me run and tell the king the good news that the
LORD has avenged him of his enemies."
20 But Joab replied, "You are not the man to
take good news today. You may do it another
day, but you must not do so today, because the
king's son is dead."
21 So Joab said to a Cushite, "Go, tell the king
what you have seen." The Cushite bowed to Joab
and took off running.
22 Ahimaaz son of Zadok, however, persisted
and said to Joab, "No matter what, please let me
also run behind the Cushite!"
"My son," Joab replied, "why do you want to
run, since you will not receive a reward?"
23 "No matter what, I want to run!" he replied.
"Then run!" Joab told him.
So Ahimaaz ran by way of the plain‡ and
outran the Cushite.
24 Now David was sitting between the two
gates when the watchman went up to the roof of
the gateway by the wall, looked out, and saw a
man running alone.
25 So he called out and told the king.

‡ **18:23 18:23** That is, the plain of the Jordan

"If he is alone," the king replied, "he bears
good news."
As the first runner drew near,
26 the watchman saw another man running,
and he called out to the gatekeeper, "Look!
Another man is running alone!"
"This one also brings good news," said the king.
27 The watchman said, "The first man appears
to me to be running like Ahimaaz son of Zadok."
"This is a good man," said the king. "He comes
with good news."
28 Then Ahimaaz called out to the king, "All is
well!" And he bowed facedown before the king.
He continued, "Blessed be the LORD your God!
He has delivered up the men who raised their
hands against my lord the king."
29 The king asked, "Is the young man Absalom
all right?"
And Ahimaaz replied, "When Joab sent the
king's servant and your servant, I saw a great
tumult, but I do not know what it was."
30 "Move aside," said the king, "and stand here."
So he stepped aside.
31 Just then the Cushite came and said, "May
my lord the king hear the good news: Today the
LORD has avenged you of all who rose up
against you!"
32 The king asked the Cushite, "Is the young
man Absalom all right?"
And the Cushite replied, "May the enemies of
my lord the king and all who rise up against you
to harm you be like that young man."

19

1 The king was shaken and went up to the
chamber over the gate and wept. And as he
walked, he cried out, “O my son Absalom! My
son, my son Absalom! If only I had died instead
of you, O Absalom, my son, my son!”
2 Then it was reported to Joab, “The king is
weeping and mourning over Absalom.”
3 And that day’s victory was turned into
mourning for all the people, because on that day
they were told, “The king is grieving over his
son.”
4 So they returned to the city quietly that day,
as people steal away in humiliation after fleeing
a battle.
5 But the king covered his face and cried out at
the top of his voice, “O my son Absalom! O
Absalom, my son, my son!”
6 Then Joab went into the house and said to
the king, “Today you have disgraced all your
servants who have saved your life and the lives
of your sons and daughters, of your wives, and
of your concubines.
7 You love those who hate you and hate those
who love you! For you have made it clear today
that the commanders and soldiers mean nothing
to you. I know today that if* Absalom were alive
and all of us were dead, it would have pleased
you!
8 Now therefore get up! Go out and speak
comfort to your servants, for I swear by the
LORD that if you do not go out, not a man will

* **19:7 19:7** Qere; Ketiv *not*

remain with you tonight. This will be worse for
you than all the adversity that has befallen you
from your youth until now!"

9 So the king got up and sat in the gate, and all
the people were told: "Behold, the king is sitting
in the gate." So they all came before the king.

Meanwhile, the Israelites had fled, each man
to his home.
10 And all the people throughout the tribes of
Israel were arguing, "The king rescued us from
the hand of our enemies and delivered us from
the hand of the Philistines, but now he has fled
the land because of Absalom.
11 But Absalom, the man we anointed over us,
has died in battle. So why do you say nothing
about restoring the king?"

12 Then King David sent this message to Zadok
and Abiathar, the priests: "Say to the elders of
Judah, 'Why should you be the last to restore the
king to his palace, since the talk of all Israel has
reached the king at his quarters?
13 You are my brothers, my own flesh and
blood. So why should you be the last to restore
the king?'
14 And say to Amasa, 'Aren't you my flesh and
blood? May God punish me, and ever so
severely, if from now on you are not the
commander of my army in place of Joab!' "

15 So he swayed the hearts of all the men of
Judah as though they were one man, and they
sent word to the king: "Return, you and all your
servants."

16 So the king returned, and when he arrived
at the Jordan, the men of Judah came to Gilgal to
meet him and escort him across the Jordan.
17 Then Shimei son of Gera, a Benjamite from
Bahurim, hurried down with the men of Judah
to meet King David,
18 along with a thousand men of Benjamin, as
well as Ziba the steward of the house of Saul and
his fifteen sons and twenty servants.
They rushed down to the Jordan before the
king
19 and crossed at the ford to carry over the
king's household and to do what was good in his
sight.
When Shimei son of Gera crossed the Jordan,
he fell down before the king
20 and said, "My lord, do not hold me guilty,
and do not remember your servant's
wrongdoing on the day my lord the king left
Jerusalem. May the king not take it to heart.
21 For your servant knows that I have sinned,
so here I am today as the first of all the house of
Joseph to come down to meet my lord the king."
22 But Abishai son of Zeruiah said, "Shouldn't
Shimei be put to death for this, because he
cursed the LORD's anointed?"
23 And David replied, "Sons of Zeruiah, what
have I to do with you, that you should be my
adversaries today? Should any man be put to
death in Israel today? Am I not indeed aware
that today I am king over Israel?"
24 So the king said to Shimei, "You shall not
die." And the king swore an oath to him.

25 Then Mephibosheth, Saul's grandson, went
down to meet the king. He had not cared for his
feet or trimmed his mustache or washed his
clothes from the day the king had left until the
day he returned safely.
26 When he came to Jerusalem† to meet the
king, the king asked him, "Mephibosheth, why
did you not go with me?"
27 "My lord the king," he replied, "because I am
lame, I said, 'I will saddle a donkey for myself‡
so that I may ride on it and go with the king.'
But my servant Ziba deceived me,
28 and he has slandered your servant to my
lord the king.
Yet my lord the king is like the angel of God, so
do what is good in your eyes.
29 For all the house of my grandfather
deserves death from my lord the king, yet you
have set your servant among those who eat at
your table. What further right, then, do I have to
keep appealing to the king?"
30 The king replied, "Why say any more? I
hereby declare that you and Ziba are to divide
the land."
31 And Mephibosheth said to the king,
"Instead, since my lord the king has safely come
to his own house, let Ziba take it all!"
32 Now Barzillai the Gileadite had come down
from Rogelim to cross the Jordan with the king
and send him on his way from there.

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† **19:26 19:26** Hebrew *came Jerusalem*; often understood as *came from Jerusalem* ‡ **19:27 19:27** LXX, Syriac, and Vulgate *Saddle a donkey for me*

33 Barzillai was quite old, eighty years of age,
and since he was a very wealthy man, he had
provided for the king while he stayed in
Mahanaim.
34 The king said to Barzillai, “Cross over with
me, and I will provide for you at my side in
Jerusalem.”
35 But Barzillai replied, “How many years of
my life remain, that I should go up to Jerusalem
with the king?
36 I am now eighty years old. Can I discern
what is good and what is not? Can your servant
taste what he eats or drinks? Can I still hear the
voice of singing men and women? Why should
your servant be an added burden to my lord the
king?
37 Your servant will go with the king only a
short distance past the Jordan; why should the
king repay me with such a reward?
38 Please let your servant return, that I may
die in my own city near the tomb of my father
and mother. But here is your servant Chimham.
Let him cross over with my lord the king, and do
for him what is good in your sight.”
39 The king replied, “Chimham will cross over
with me, and I will do for him what is good in
your sight, and I will do for you whatever you
desire of me.”
40 So all the people crossed the Jordan, and
then the king crossed over. The king kissed
Barzillai and blessed him, and Barzillai returned
home.

41 Then the king crossed over to Gilgal, and
Chimham crossed over with him. All the troops
of Judah and half the troops of Israel escorted
the king.§
42 Soon all the men of Israel came to the king
and asked, “Why did our brothers, the men of
Judah, take you away secretly and bring the king
and his household across the Jordan, together
with all of David’s men?”
43 And all the men of Judah replied to the men
of Israel, “We did this because the king is our
relative. Why does this anger you? Have we
ever eaten at the king’s expense or received
anything for ourselves?”
44 “We have ten shares in the king,” answered
the men of Israel, “so we have more claim to
David than you. Why then do you despise us?
Were we not the first to speak of restoring our
king?”

But the men of Judah spoke more fiercely than
the men of Israel.

20

1 Now a worthless man named Sheba son of
Bichri, a Benjamite, happened to be there, and
he blew the ram’s horn and shouted:

“We have no share in David,
no inheritance in Jesse’s son.
Every man to his tent,
O Israel!”

§ **19:41 19:41** Qere; Ketiv *crossed over with the king*

2 So all the men of Israel deserted David to
follow Sheba son of Bichri. But the men of Judah
stayed by their king all the way from the Jordan
to Jerusalem.

3 When David returned to his palace in
Jerusalem, he took the ten concubines he had
left to take care of the palace, and he placed
them in a house under guard. He provided for
them, but he no longer slept with them. They
were confined until the day of their death, living
as widows.

4 Then the king said to Amasa, "Summon the
men of Judah to come to me within three days,
and be here yourself."

5 So Amasa went to summon Judah, but he
took longer than the time allotted him.

6 And David said to Abishai, "Now Sheba the
son of Bichri will do us more harm than
Absalom. Take your lord's servants and pursue
him, or he will find fortified cities and elude
us.*"

7 So Joab's men, along with the Cherethites, the
Pelethites, and all the mighty men, marched out
of Jerusalem in pursuit of Sheba son of Bichri.
8 And while they were at the great stone in
Gibeon, Amasa joined them.

Now Joab was dressed in military attire, and
over it was a belt around his waist with a dagger

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* **20:6 20:6** Or *and snatch away our eyes* or *and do us serious harm*

in its sheath. And as he stepped forward, it fell
out.†
9 "Are you well, my brother?" Joab asked
Amasa. And with his right hand Joab grabbed
Amasa by the beard to kiss him.
10 Amasa was not on guard against the dagger
in Joab's hand, and Joab stabbed him in the
stomach and spilled out his intestines on the
ground. And Joab did not need to strike him
again, for Amasa was dead. Then Joab and his
brother Abishai pursued Sheba son of Bichri.
11 One of Joab's young men stood near Amasa
and said, "Whoever favors Joab, and whoever is
for David, let him follow Joab!"
12 But Amasa wallowed in his blood in the
middle of the road, and when the man saw that
all the troops were stopping there, he dragged
the body off the road into a field and threw a
garment over it.
13 As soon as Amasa's body was removed from
the road, all the men went on with Joab to
pursue Sheba son of Bichri.
14 Sheba passed through all the tribes of Israel
to Abel and Beth-maacah‡ and through the
entire region of the Berites,§ who gathered
together and followed him.
15 And Joab's troops came and besieged Sheba
in Abel-beth-maacah and built a siege ramp
against the outer rampart of the city.

† **20:8 20:8** Or *Now Joab was dressed in military attire, with a dagger strapped to his belt. And as he stepped forward, he slipped the dagger from its sheath.* ‡ **20:14 20:14** Or *Abel-beth-maacah,* as in verse 15 § **20:14 20:14** LXX and Vulgate *Bicrites*

As all the troops with Joab were battering the wall to topple it,

16 a wise woman called out from the city,
“Listen! Listen! Please tell Joab to come here so that I may speak with him.”

17 When he had come near to her, the woman asked, “Are you Joab?”

“I am,” he replied.

“Listen to the words of your servant,” she said.

“I am listening,” he answered.

18 Then the woman said, “Long ago they used to say, ‘Seek counsel at Abel,’ and that is how disputes were settled.

19 I am among the peaceable and faithful in Israel, but you are trying to destroy a city that is a mother in Israel. Why would you swallow up the LORD’s inheritance?”

20 “Far be it!” Joab declared. “Far be it from me to swallow up or destroy!

21 That is not the case. But a man named Sheba son of Bichri, from the hill country of Ephraim, has lifted up his hand against the king, against David. Deliver him alone, and I will depart from the city.”

“Look,” the woman replied, “his head will be thrown to you over the wall.”

22 Then the woman went to all the people with her wise counsel, and they cut off the head of Sheba son of Bichri and threw it to Joab. So he blew the ram’s horn and his men dispersed from the city, each to his own home. And Joab returned to the king in Jerusalem.

23 Now Joab was over the whole army of
Israel; Benaiah son of Jehoiada was over the
Cherethites* and Pelethites;
24 Adoram† was in charge of the forced labor;
Jehoshaphat son of Ahilud was the recorder;
25 Sheva‡ was the scribe; Zadok and Abiathar
were priests;
26 and Ira the Jairite§ was David's priest.

21

1 During the reign of David there was a famine
for three successive years, and David sought the
face of the LORD.
And the LORD said, "It is because of the blood
shed by Saul and his family, because he killed
the Gibeonites."
2 At this, David summoned the Gibeonites and
spoke to them. (Now the Gibeonites were not
Israelites, but a remnant of the Amorites. The
Israelites had taken an oath concerning them,
but in his zeal for Israel and Judah, Saul had
sought to kill them.)
3 So David asked the Gibeonites, "What shall I
do for you? How can I make amends so that you
may bless the inheritance of the LORD?"

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* **20:23 20:23** Qere; Ketiv *Carites* † **20:24 20:24** *Adoram* is a variant of *Adoniram* and *Hadoram*; see 1 Kings 4:6 and 2 Chronicles 10:18. ‡ **20:25 20:25** *Sheva* is also called *Seraiah*, *Shisha*, and *Shavsha*; see 2 Samuel 8:17, 1 Kings 4:3, and 1 Chronicles 18:16. § **20:26 20:26** Some LXX manuscripts and Syriac *Ithrite*; see 2 Samuel 23:38.

4 The Gibeonites said to him, “We need* no
silver or gold from Saul or his house, nor should
you put to death anyone in Israel for us.”

“Whatever you ask, I will do for you,” he
replied.

5 And they answered the king, “As for the man
who consumed us and plotted against us to
exterminate us from existing within any border
of Israel,
6 let seven of his male descendants be
delivered to us so that we may impale them†
before the LORD at Gibeah of Saul, the chosen of
the LORD.”

“I will give them to you,” said the king.

7 Now the king spared Mephibosheth son of
Jonathan, the son of Saul, because of the oath
before the LORD between David and Jonathan
son of Saul.
8 But the king took Armoni and Mephibosheth,
the two sons whom Rizpah daughter of Aiah had
borne to Saul, as well as the five sons whom
Michal‡ daughter of Saul had borne to Adriel
son of Barzillai the Meholathite.
9 And he delivered them into the hands of the
Gibeonites, and they impaled them on the hill
before the LORD. So all seven of them§ fell
together; they were put to death in the first days

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* **21:4 21:4** Qere; Ketiv *I need* † **21:6 21:6** Or *expose them* or *execute them* or *hang them*; similarly in verse 9 ‡ **21:8 21:8** Leningrad Codex and most Hebrew and LXX manuscripts; two Hebrew manuscripts, some LXX manuscripts, and Syriac (see also 1 Samuel 18:19) *Merab* § **21:9 21:9** Qere; Ketiv *sevenfold*

of the harvest, at the beginning of the barley harvest.
10 And Rizpah the daughter of Aiah took sackcloth and spread it out for herself on a rock. From the beginning of the harvest until the rain from heaven poured down on the bodies, she did not allow the birds of the air to rest on them by day, nor the beasts of the field by night.
11 When David was told what Saul's concubine Rizpah, daughter of Aiah, had done,
12 he went and took the bones of Saul and his son Jonathan from the men of Jabesh-gilead, who had stolen them from the public square of Beth-shan where the Philistines had hung the bodies after they had struck down Saul at Gilboa.
13 So David had the bones of Saul and his son Jonathan brought from there, and they also gathered the bones of those who had been impaled.
14 And they buried the bones of Saul and his son Jonathan in Zela in the land of Benjamin, in the tomb of Saul's father Kish.
After they had done everything the king had commanded, God answered their prayers for the land.
15 Once again the Philistines waged war against Israel, and David and his servants went down and fought against the Philistines. But David became exhausted.
16 Then Ishbi-benob,* a descendant of Rapha,† whose bronze spear weighed three hundred

* **21:16 21:16** Qere; Ketiv *they stayed in Nob* † **21:16 21:16** Or *the giant*; also in verses 18, 20, and 22

shekels‡ and who was bearing a new sword,
resolved to kill David.
17 But Abishai son of Zeruiah came to his aid,
struck the Philistine, and killed him.

Then David's men swore to him, "You must
never again go out with us to battle, so that the
lamp of Israel may not be extinguished."

18 Some time later at Gob, there was another
battle with the Philistines. At that time Sibbecai
the Hushathite killed Saph,§ a descendant of
Rapha.

19 Once again there was a battle with the
Philistines at Gob, and Elhanan son of
Jaare-oregim* the Bethlehemite killed Goliath†
the Gittite, the shaft of whose spear was like a
weaver's beam.

20 And there was also a battle at Gath, where
there was a man of great stature with six fingers
on each hand and six toes on each
foot—twenty-four in all. He too was descended
from Rapha,
21 and when he taunted Israel, Jonathan the
son of David's brother Shimei‡ killed him.

22 So these four descendants of Rapha in Gath
fell at the hands of David and his servants.

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‡ **21:16 21:16** *300 shekels* is approximately 7.5 pounds or 3.4 kilograms. § **21:18 21:18** *Saph* is a variant of *Sippai*; see 1 Chronicles 20:4. * **21:19 21:19** See 1 Chronicles 20:5 *Jair* † **21:19 21:19** 1 Chronicles 20:5 *the brother of Goliath* ‡ **21:21 21:21** Ketiv; Qere *Shimeah*; *Shimei* is a variant of *Shammah* and *Shimea*; see 1 Samuel 16:9, 2 Samuel 13:3, and 1 Chronicles 2:13.

22

1 And David sang this song to the LORD on the
day the LORD had delivered him from the hand
of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul.
2 He said:

"The LORD is my rock,
my fortress, and my deliverer.
3 My God is my rock, in whom I take refuge,
my shield, and the horn of my deliverance.
My stronghold, my refuge, and my Savior,
you save me from violence.
4 I will call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be
praised;
so shall I be saved from my enemies.

5 For the waves of death engulfed me;
the torrents of chaos overwhelmed me.
6 The cords of Sheol entangled me;
the snares of death confronted me.
7 In my distress I called upon the LORD;
I cried out to my God.
And from his temple he heard my voice,
and my cry for help reached his ears.

8 Then the earth shook and quaked;
the foundations of the heavens* trembled;
they were shaken because he burned with
anger.
9 Smoke rose from his nostrils,
and consuming fire came from his mouth;

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* **22:8** **22:8** Most Hebrew sources; Vulgate, Syriac, and two Hebrew manuscripts (see also Psalm 18:8) *mountains*

glowing coals blazed forth.

10 He parted the heavens and came down
with dark clouds beneath his feet.
11 He mounted a cherub and flew;
he was seen† on the wings of the wind.
12 He made darkness a canopy around him,
a gathering of water and thick clouds of the sky.
13 From the brightness of his presence
coals of fire‡ blazed forth.

14 The LORD thundered from heaven;
the voice of the Most High resounded.
15 He shot his arrows and scattered the foes;
he hurled lightning and routed them.
16 The channels of the sea appeared,
and the foundations of the world were exposed
at the rebuke of the LORD,
at the blast of the breath of his nostrils.

17 He reached down from on high and took hold of me;
he drew me out of deep waters.
18 He rescued me from my powerful enemy,
from foes too mighty for me.
19 They confronted me in my day of calamity,
but the LORD was my support.
20 He brought me out into the open;
he rescued me because he delighted in me.

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† **22:11 22:11** Many Hebrew manuscripts (see also Psalm 18:11) *he soared* ‡ **22:13 22:13** Or *bolts of lightning*

21 The LORD has rewarded me according to my
righteousness;
he has repaid me according to the cleanness
of my hands.
22 For I have kept the ways of the LORD
and have not wickedly departed from my
God.
23 For all his ordinances§ are before me;
I have not disregarded his statutes.
24 And I have been blameless before him
and kept myself from iniquity.
25 So the LORD has repaid me according to my
righteousness,
according to my cleanness in his sight.*

26 To the faithful you show yourself faithful,
to the blameless you show yourself
blameless;
27 to the pure you show yourself pure,
but to the crooked you show yourself
shrewd.
28 You save an afflicted people,
but your eyes are on the haughty to bring
them down.

29 For you, O LORD, are my lamp;
the LORD lights up my darkness.
30 For in you I can charge an army;
with my God I can scale a wall.
31 As for God, his way is perfect;

§ **22:23 22:23** Qere; Ketiv *his ordinance* * **22:25 22:25** LXX and Vulgate (see also Psalm 18:25) *according to the cleanness of my hands*

the word of the LORD is flawless.
He is a shield to all
who take refuge in him.

32 For who is God besides the LORD?
And who is the Rock except our God?
33 God is my strong fortress,
and he makes my way† clear.
34 He makes my feet‡ like those of a deer
and stations me upon the heights.
35 He trains my hands for battle;
my arms can bend a bow of bronze.

36 You have given me your shield of deliverance,
and your help exalts me.§
37 You broaden the path beneath me
so that my ankles do not give way.
38 I pursued my enemies and destroyed them;
I did not turn back until they were
consumed.
39 I devoured and crushed them so they could
not rise;
they have fallen under my feet.

40 You have armed me with strength for battle;
you have subdued my foes beneath me.
41 You have made my enemies retreat before me;
I destroyed those who hated me.
42 They looked, but there was no one to save
them—

† **22:33 22:33** Qere; Ketiv *his way* ‡ **22:34 22:34** Qere; Ketiv *his feet* § **22:36 22:36** Or *and your gentleness exalts me* or *and you stoop down to make me great*

to the LORD, but he did not answer.
43 I ground them as the dust of the earth;
I crushed and trampled them like mud in the streets.

44 You have delivered me from the strife of my people;
you have preserved me as the head of nations;
a people I had not known shall serve me.
45 Foreigners cower before me;
when they hear me, they obey me.
46 Foreigners lose heart
and arm themselves* from their strongholds.

47 The LORD lives, and blessed be my Rock!
And may God, the Rock of my deliverance, be exalted—
48 the God who avenges me
and brings down nations beneath me,
49 who frees me from my enemies.
You exalt me above my foes;
you rescue me from violent men.
50 Therefore I will praise you, O LORD, among the nations;
I will sing praises to your name.

51 Great victories he brings to his king.
He shows loving devotion to his anointed,
to David and his descendants forever."

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* **22:46 22:46** Some LXX manuscripts and Vulgate (see also Psalm 18:46) *and come trembling*

23

1 These are the last words of David:

“The oracle of David son of Jesse,
the oracle of the man raised on high,
the one anointed by the God of Jacob,
and the hero of the songs of Israel:*

2 The spirit of the LORD spoke through me;
his word was on my tongue.
3 The God of Israel spoke;
the Rock of Israel said to me,
‘He who rules the people with justice,
who rules in the fear of God,
4 is like the light of the morning
at sunrise of a cloudless dawn,
the glistening after the rain
on the sprouting grass of the earth.’

5 Is not my house right with God?
For he has established with me
an everlasting covenant,
ordered and secured in every part.
Will he not bring about my full deliverance
and my every desire?

6 But the worthless are all like thorns raked
aside,
for they can never be gathered by hand.
7 The man who touches them must be armed
with iron
or with the shaft of a spear.

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* **23:1 23:1** Or *the sweet psalmist of Israel* or *the favorite of the Strong One of Israel*

The fire burns them to ashes
in the place where they lie."

8 These are the names of David's mighty men:

Josheb-basshebeth the Tahchemonite† was
chief among the captains.‡ He was Adino
the Eznite,§ who went against eight
hundred men, whom he killed at one time.*
9 Next in command was Eleazar son of Dodo†
the Ahohite. As one of the three mighty
men, he went with David to taunt the
Philistines who had gathered there for
battle.‡ The men of Israel retreated,
10 but Eleazar stood his ground and struck the
Philistines until his hand grew weary and stuck
to his sword. The LORD brought about a great
victory that day. Then the troops returned to
him, but only to plunder the dead.
11 And after him was Shammah son of Agee
the Hararite. When the Philistines had
banded together near a field full of lentils,
Israel's troops fled from them.
12 But Shammah took his stand in the middle
of the field, defended it, and struck down the
Philistines. So the LORD brought about a great
victory.

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† **23:8 23:8** *Tahchemonite* is probably a variant of *Hachmonite*; see 1 Chronicles 11:11. ‡ **23:8 23:8** Or *chief of the Three* § **23:8 23:8** Qere; Ketiv *ha-Etsno* * **23:8 23:8** Some LXX manuscripts (see also 1 Chronicles 11:11) *he wielded his spear against eight hundred men* † **23:9 23:9** Qere; Ketiv *Dodai*; see 1 Chronicles 27:4. ‡ **23:9 23:9** Compare 1 Chronicles 11:13, *at Pas-dammim*

13 At harvest time, three§ of the thirty chief
men went down to David at the cave of Adullam,
while a company of Philistines was encamped in
the Valley of Rephaim.
14 At that time David was in the stronghold,
and the garrison of the Philistines was at
Bethlehem.
15 David longed for water and said, “Oh, that
someone would get me a drink of water from
the well near the gate of Bethlehem!”
16 So the three mighty men broke through the
Philistine camp, drew water from the well near
the gate of Bethlehem, and brought it back to
David. But he refused to drink it; instead, he
poured it out to the LORD,
17 saying, “Far be it from me, O LORD, to do
this! Is this not the blood of the men who risked
their lives?” So he refused to drink it.

Such were the exploits of the three mighty
men.
18 Now Abishai, the brother of Joab and son of
Zeruiah, was chief of the Three,*† and he
wielded his spear against three hundred men,
killed them, and won a name along with the
Three.
19 Was he not more honored than the Three?‡
And he became their commander, even though
he was not included among the Three.

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§ **23:13 23:13** Qere; Ketiv *thirty* * **23:18 23:18** Qere; Ketiv *the officer* † **23:18 23:18** Most Hebrew manuscripts (see also 1 Chronicles 11:20); two Hebrew manuscripts and Syriac *the Thirty* ‡ **23:19 23:19** Syriac *the Thirty*

20 And Benaiah son of Jehoiada was a man of
valor§ from Kabzeel, a man of many exploits.
He struck down two Ariels* of Moab, and on a
snowy day he went down into a pit and killed a
lion.
21 He also struck down an Egyptian, a huge
man. Although the Egyptian had a spear in his
hand, Benaiah went against him with a club,
snatched the spear from his hand, and killed the
Egyptian with his own spear.
22 These were the exploits of Benaiah son of
Jehoiada, who won a name along with the three
mighty men.
23 He was most honored among the Thirty, but
he did not become one of the Three. And David
appointed him over his guard.
24 Now these were members of the Thirty:†

Asahel the brother of Joab,
Elhanan son of Dodo of Bethlehem,
25 Shammah the Harodite,
Elika the Harodite,
26 Helez the Paltite,
Ira son of Ikkesh the Tekoite,
27 Abiezer the Anathothite,
Mebunnai‡ the Hushathite,
28 Zalmon the Ahohite,
Maharai the Netophathite,

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§ **23:20 23:20** Qere; Ketiv *Benaiah son of Jehoiada was the son of Ishhai* (or *of a living man*) * **23:20 23:20** Or *two champions*; LXX *the two sons of Ariel* † **23:24 23:24** Literally *In the Thirty (were):* ‡ **23:27 23:27** Some LXX manuscripts *Sibbecai*; see 2 Samuel 21:18 and 1 Chronicles 11:29.

29 Heleb§ son of Baanah the Netophathite,
Ittai* son of Ribai from Gibeah of the
Benjamites,
30 Benaiah the Pirathonite,
Hiddai† from the brooks‡ of Gaash,
31 Abi-albon the Arbathite,
Azmaveth the Barhumite,
32 Eliahba the Shaalbonite,
the sons of Jashen,§
Jonathan,
33 Shammah* the Hararite,
Ahiam son of Sharar† the Hararite,
34 Eliphelet son of Ahasbai the Maacathite,
Eliam son of Ahithophel the Gilonite,
35 Hezrai the Carmelite,‡
Paarai the Arbite,
36 Igal son of Nathan of Zobah,
Bani the Gadite,
37 Zelek the Ammonite,
Naharai the Beerothite, the armor-bearer§ of
Joab son of Zeruiah,
38 Ira the Ithrite,
Gareb the Ithrite,
39 and Uriah the Hittite.

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§ **23:29 23:29** Leningrad Codex and most MT manuscripts; some Hebrew manuscripts and Vulgate (see also 1 Chronicles 11:30) *Heled* * **23:29 23:29** *Ittai* is a variant of *Ithai*; see 1 Chronicles 11:31. † **23:30 23:30** *Hiddai* is a variant of *Hurai*; see 1 Chronicles 11:32. ‡ **23:30 23:30** Or *from the ravines* § **23:32 23:32** *Jashen* is a variant of *Hashem*; see 1 Chronicles 11:34. * **23:33 23:33** Some LXX manuscripts (see also 1 Chronicles 11:34) *Jonathan son of Shammah* † **23:33 23:33** Some LXX manuscripts *Sachar*; see 1 Chronicles 11:35. ‡ **23:35 23:35** Qere; Ketiv *Hezro* § **23:37 23:37** Qere; Ketiv *armor-bearers*

There were thirty-seven in all.

24

1 Again the anger of the LORD burned against
Israel, and he stirred up David against them,
saying, “Go and take a census of Israel and
Judah.”
2 So the king said to Joab the commander of
his army, who was with him,* “Go now
throughout the tribes of Israel from Dan to
Beersheba and register the troops, so that I may
know their number.”
3 But Joab replied to the king, “May the LORD
your God multiply the troops a hundred times
over, and may the eyes of my lord the king see it.
But why does my lord the king want to do such a
thing?”
4 Nevertheless, the king’s word prevailed
against Joab and against the commanders of the
army. So Joab and the commanders of the army
departed from the presence of the king to
register the troops of Israel.
5 They crossed the Jordan and camped near
Aroer, south of the town in the middle of the
valley, and proceeded toward Gad and Jazer.
6 Then they went to Gilead and the land of
Tahtim-hodshi,† and on to Dan-jaan and around
to Sidon.
7 They went toward the fortress of Tyre and all
the cities of the Hivites and Canaanites. Finally,

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* **24:2 24:2** LXX *to Joab and the army commanders with him*
† **24:6 24:6** Some LXX manuscripts *to Gilead and to the land of the Hittites*

they went on to the Negev of Judah,‡ to
Beersheba.
8 At the end of nine months and twenty days,
having gone through the whole land, they
returned to Jerusalem.
9 And Joab reported to the king the total
number of the troops. In Israel there were
800,000 men of valor who drew the sword, and
in Judah there were 500,000.
10 After David had numbered the troops, his
conscience was stricken and he said to the LORD,
"I have sinned greatly in what I have done. Now,
O LORD, I beg you to take away the iniquity of
your servant, for I have acted very foolishly."
11 When David got up in the morning, the
word of the LORD had come to Gad the prophet,
David's seer:
12 "Go and tell David that this is what the LORD
says: 'I am offering you three options. Choose
one of them, and I will carry it out against you.' "
13 So Gad went and said to David, "Do you
choose to endure seven§ years of famine in your
land, three months of fleeing the pursuit of your
enemies, or three days of plague upon your
land? Now then, think it over and decide how I
should reply to him who sent me."
14 David answered Gad, "I am deeply
distressed. Please, let us fall into the hand of the
LORD, for his mercies are great; but do not let
me fall into the hands of men."

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‡ **24:7 24:7** Or *to the south of Judah* § **24:13 24:13** LXX (see also 1 Chronicles 21:12) *three*

15 So the LORD sent a plague upon Israel from
that morning until the appointed time, and
seventy thousand of the people from Dan to
Beersheba died.*
16 But when the angel stretched out his hand
to destroy Jerusalem, the LORD relented from
the calamity and said to the angel who was
destroying the people, “Enough! Withdraw your
hand now!” At that time the angel of the LORD
was by the threshing floor of Araunah† the
Jebusite.
17 When David saw the angel striking down
the people, he said to the LORD, “Surely I‡ have
sinned and acted wickedly. But these sheep,
what have they done? Please, let your hand fall
upon me and my father’s house.”
18 And that day Gad came to David and said to
him, “Go up and build an altar to the LORD on
the threshing floor of Araunah§ the Jebusite.”
19 So David went up at the word of Gad, just as
the LORD had commanded.
20 When Araunah looked out and saw the king
and his servants coming toward him, he went
out and bowed facedown before the king.
21 “Why has my lord the king come to his
servant?” Araunah said.

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* **24:15 24:15** Literally *and of the people from Dan to Beersheba, seventy thousand men died* † **24:16 24:16** *Araunah* is a variant of *Ornan*; see 1 Chronicles 21:15 and 2 Chronicles 3:1. ‡ **24:17 24:17** DSS and LXX add *the shepherd* § **24:18 24:18** Qere; Ketiv *Araniah*

"To buy your threshing floor," David replied,
"that I may build an altar to the LORD, so that
the plague upon the people may be halted."
22 Araunah said to David, "May my lord the
king take whatever seems good to him and offer
it up. Here are the oxen for a burnt offering and
the threshing sledges and ox yokes for the wood.
23 O king, Araunah gives all these to the king."
He also said to the king, "May the LORD your
God accept you."
24 "No," replied the king, "I insist on paying a
price, for I will not offer to the LORD my God
burnt offerings that cost me nothing."
So David bought the threshing floor and the
oxen for fifty shekels of silver.*
25 And there he built an altar to the LORD and
offered burnt offerings and peace offerings.
Then the LORD answered the prayers on
behalf of the land, and the plague upon Israel
was halted.

* **24:24 24:24** *50 shekels* is approximately 1.26 pounds or 569.8 grams of silver.

Masoretic English Tanakh

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