

David and His Wars

2 Samuel 8

Lesson Outline

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David's Conquests

2 Samuel 8:1-8

David Secured the Borders: 2 Samuel 8:1-2

David Defeated the Philistines

Under David's leadership the nation was blessed immediately. The land was cleared of the Philistines and an alliance was made with Hiram, King of Tyre. Jerusalem was established as the capital of the nation and became home to the Ark of the Covenant along with a palace for the king. Years earlier, Saul also enjoyed success in his reign as king, defeating the enemies around Israel (1 Samuel 14:47). Evidently much was lost later due to his disobedience, neglect, and consuming desire to capture David. It is easy to chase after selfish desires and lose ground spiritually. The results may be devastating.

David actively worked to regain what had been lost, beginning with the Philistines who inhabited a strip of land southwest of Israel along the Mediterranean Sea. The Philistines were beaten back twice in their attempt to exert authority over David and Israel (2 Samuel 5:17-25). In the Valley of Rephaim the Philistines were the aggressors. In this situation, David took the fight to their land successfully defeating them at Methegammah, which was also known Gath, a principle city of the Philistines (1 Chronicles 18:1). The Bible does not provide details of the battle but apparently it was a decisive victory for Israel. In defeating and submitting the Philistines, David finished the work started years earlier.

1. *Samson* – he began the work but failed to finish (Judges 13:5).
2. *Samuel* – he ended the dominion of the Philistines.
3. *Saul* – he waged war against the Philistines and in the end lost much, including his life.

With the LORD'S power, David was able to completely deliver the Israelites out of the hands of the Philistines. With the victory over the Philistines, David was able to deal with other nations. He walked with the LORD and won one battle at a time (Psalm 116:9; Colossians 2:6).

David Defeated the Moabites

David turned his attention to Moab, which was located on the other side of the Jordan River (Numbers 22:1, 31:12). The Moabites, descendants of Lot, often troubled the Israelites (Genesis 19:36-37; Numbers 22:4-5, 25:1; Judges 3:12-14). Apparently, they continued to harass Israel after David became king. Once again the Bible offers not details but the result was the same, David defeated the enemy.

After the battle, David dealt with the captors. He divided the soldiers into three categories and spared one. This appears to be severe, but fighting was fierce and in many cases if the enemy was not eliminated they would continue to resist. David is at the present day often charged with great cruelty for slaying so many of the Moabites; but to most of his contemporaries, friend and foe, it probably seemed a hazardous leniency to spare a full third.¹ David eliminated Israel's enemies so the nation could continue in peace. Those that were spared became servants and brought gifts to the king, which were probably given yearly as a tribute (2 Kings 3:4). The Moabites would continue in servitude to Israel until they rebelled after Ahab's death (2 Kings 3:5).

David Extended the Borders: 2 Samuel 8:3-8

David Defeated Zobah of Syria

David went north and encountered Hadadezer the king of Zobah (1 Chronicles 18:3). Zobah was located northeast of Damascus, it bordered Hamath on the north, and was between the Orontes and Euphrates River. The capital, also called Zobah, was believed to be the city of Sabe, which is east of Damascus. Either David looked to regain what had been lost or Hadadezer hoped to reclaim what Saul had taken. The two armies met in battle eager to secure a victory for their king and nation.

Again, the details are limited and the success belonged to David. It was a great victory with David taking much spoil and hindering the horses to prevent them from being used again in battle (Joshua 11:6). This was done with the cutting of the sinews of their hind feet.² David set aside 100 chariots for his own use (Psalm 20:7). The LORD again blessed David (Psalm 34:8, 40:4).

David Defeated Damascus of Syria

The Syrians in Damascus sent aid to Hadadezer, hoping to help them overcome David and the Israelites. David, with his army, met the challenge, defeating the new forces while slaying 22,000 men in battle. Afterwards David established garrisons to occupy the city. He not only defeated the Syrians but also placed them under his rule. The unsuccessful Syrians submitted to David and gave him gifts.

¹ John Lange, "Lange's Commentary on the Holy Scriptures: Samuel," (Michigan: Zondervan, 1951) p. 452.

² Ibid, p. 446.

David was extremely successful in his campaigns. The nation was blessed in many areas due to their king following the LORD.

1. *The LORD preserved David* – he was protected in battle and returned safely. The LORD is able to protect His own while they serve Him (Psalm 3:3, 5:12, 28:7, 115:11)
2. *The LORD enriched David* – he took the shields of gold from Hadadezer's men and a large amount of brass from the cities of Betah and Berotha. These riches were not taken for personal gain but to fund the building of the temple.
3. *The LORD enlarged David's authority* – in defeating Damascus, David took control of the trade route to the east, which placed David in a position of control amongst the nations (Psalm 37:34).

David was not a warmonger, seeking land, wealth or power, but an obedient king that claimed what the LORD had already promised the nation of Israel (Genesis 13:14-17, 15:18). David went by faith and the LORD blessed.

David's Command

2 Samuel 8:9-18

David's Great Reputation: 2 Samuel 8:9-14

David Regarded

David's achievements on the battlefield became known. Toi, the King of Hamath heard of David's success against the Syrians and looked to congratulate him. Hamath was also located north of Israel in Syria (Numbers 34:7-8). It was the gateway to the nations that lied around the Caspian Sea. Evidently, Toi and Hamath were enemies of Hadadezer, so were thrilled to hear of David's victories. Toi sent his son Joram to meet with David (1 Chronicles 18:10).

1. *This was an act of peace* – he was sent to salute or congratulate David.
2. *This was an act of thanksgiving* – he took great gifts to present to David.

The messenger, Joram, was treated kindly and the gifts were received. This apparent alliance provided David access to the northern nations, which extended his authority and influence. The gifts David received from Toi, along with all of the silver and gold taken from the nations, were dedicated unto the LORD. David was more interested in pleasing the LORD than becoming wealthy. What one does with wealth often displays character. Remember that money is an object that leads to many problems when coveted (1 Timothy 6:10). If blessed with wealth, thank the LORD and look to use it for His glory (1 Corinthians 10:31; 1 Timothy 6:17-19).

David Respected

David became known for his exploits in battle. More than likely, his conduct and courage were spoken of throughout the region. David did not seek this but found it as he served the LORD. His desire was to please the LORD not become popular, so he remained faithful to God and His ways. Many mistakenly compromise to achieve popularity, so they please people but fail to follow the LORD. It is always best to live for God and allow Him to exalt if He chooses to (1 Peter 5:6; James 4:10). The king of Israel was both respected and feared due to the LORD blessing David.

It is also mentioned that David defeated the Edomites, who were descendants of Esau (Genesis 36:9). Evidently the Edomites aligned with the Syrians, in what appears to be a separate engagement than the previous ones mentioned in this chapter. David overcame them and placed them under subjection, with Abishai playing a large role in the battle (Psalm 60; 1 Chronicles 18:12). David established garrisons in Edom, perhaps several were required since it is a mountainous region filled with caves, and the Edomites remained under Israel's authority for many years (2 Chronicles 21:8).

David's Great Reign: 2 Samuel 8:15-18**David's Authority**

David reigned over all Israel, including the land they conquered and controlled. David was an active king leading the people with care.

1. *He executed judgment* – David had authority over the land.
2. *He executed justice* – David ensured peace throughout the land.

The Scriptures indicate David was an honest leader who judged fairly. He did not take bribes or payoffs but judged according to the law, not personal feelings or opinion. His fair conduct as judge is rare in a world of sinners. Tyranny was the model for ancient eastern kings. Because of this there was often corruption, oppression, assassinations etc. Under David, Israel enjoyed a time of judgment and justice. Be grateful for honest leaders who seek to serve correctly.

David's Administration

David, like all kings, surrounded himself with other leaders. Little is known concerning these men but evidently David trusted them with authority. The nation benefited from the leadership David put in place.

1. *Joab the Son of Zeruiah* – commanding General of the Army. A proven leader that oversaw the forces in the field (2 Samuel 20:23).
2. *Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud* – recorder. It may have been a position similar to that of Prime Minister (1 Kings 4:3).
3. *Zadok the son of Ahitub* – the priest (1 Chronicles 24:3).

4. *Ahimelech the son of Abiathar* – the priest (1 Chronicles 24:3).
5. *Seraiah* – the scribe. It may have been a position similar to Secretary of State.
6. *Benaiah the son of Jehoiada* – ruler over both the Cherethites and the Pelethites. It is believed they were the royal guard and maybe the police force (2 Samuel 23:22-23; 1 Kings 1:38).
7. *David's sons* – chief rulers (1 Chronicles 18:17). They were given positions with responsibility.

The borders of the nation were secured and extended in each direction. Some believe the land was increased tenfold. David not only beat many of these nations but also placed them under his authority. Israel became a world power.