

2 Samuel

David Learns of the Deaths of Saul and Jonathan

1:1 After the death of Saul,¹ when David had returned from defeating the Amalekites,² he stayed at Ziklag³ for two days. **1:2** On the third day a man arrived from the camp of Saul with his clothes torn and dirt on his head.⁴ When he approached David, the man⁵ threw himself to the ground.⁶

1:3 David asked him, “Where are you coming from?” He replied, “I have escaped from the camp of Israel.” **1:4** David inquired, “How were things going?” Tell me!” He replied, “The people fled from the battle and many of them⁸ fell dead.⁹ Even Saul and his son Jonathan are dead!” **1:5** David said to the young man¹⁰ who was telling him this, “How do you know that

Saul and his son Jonathan are dead?”¹¹ **1:6** The young man who was telling him this¹² said, “I just happened to be on Mount Gilboa and came across Saul leaning on his spear for support. The chariots and leaders of the horsemen were in hot pursuit of him. **1:7** When he turned around and saw me, he called out to me. I answered, ‘Here I am!’ **1:8** He asked me, ‘Who are you?’ I told him, ‘I’m¹³ an Amalekite.’ **1:9** He said to me, ‘Stand over me and finish me off!’¹⁴ I’m very dizzy,¹⁵ even though I’m still alive.”¹⁶ **1:10** So I stood over him and put him to death, since I knew that he couldn’t live in such a condition.¹⁷ Then I took the crown which was on his head and the¹⁸ bracelet which was on his arm. I have brought them here to my lord.”¹⁹

¹sn This chapter is closely linked to 1 Sam 31. It should be kept in mind that 1 and 2 Samuel were originally a single book, not separate volumes. Whereas in English Bible tradition the books of Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, and Ezra-Nehemiah are each regarded as two separate books, this was not the practice in ancient Hebrew tradition. Early canonical records, for example, counted them as single books respectively. The division into two books goes back to the Greek translation of the OT and was probably initiated because of the cumbersome length of copies due to the Greek practice (unlike that of Hebrew) of writing vowels. The present division into two books can be a little misleading in terms of perceiving the progression of the argument of the book; in some ways it is preferable to treat the books of 1-2 Samuel in a unified fashion.

²sn The Amalekites were a nomadic people who inhabited Judah and the Transjordan. They are mentioned in Gen 36:15-16 as descendants of Amalek who in turn descended from Esau. In Exod 17:8-16 they are described as having acted in a hostile fashion toward Israel as the Israelites traveled to Canaan from Egypt. In David’s time the Amalekites were viewed as dangerous enemies who raided, looted, and burned Israelite cities (see 1 Sam 30).

³sn Ziklag was a city in the Negev which had been given to David by Achish king of Gath. For more than a year David used it as a base from which he conducted military expeditions (see 1 Sam 27:5-12). According to 1 Sam 30:1-19, Ziklag was destroyed by the Amalekites while Saul fought the Philistines.

⁴sn Tearing one’s clothing and throwing dirt on one’s head were outward expressions of grief in the ancient Near East, where such demonstrable reactions were a common response to tragic news.

⁵tn Heb “he”; the referent (the man mentioned at the beginning of v. 2) has been specified in the translation to avoid confusion as to who fell to the ground.

⁶tn Heb “he fell to the ground and did obeisance.”

⁷tn Heb “What was the word?”

⁸tn Heb “from the people.”

⁹tn Heb “fell and died.”

¹⁰tn In v. 2 he is called simply a “man.” The word used here in v. 5 (so also in vv. 6, 13, 15), though usually referring to a young man or servant, may in this context designate a “fighting” man, i.e., a soldier.

¹¹tc Instead of the MT “who was recounting this to him, ‘How do you know that Saul and his son Jonathan are dead?’” the Syriac Peshitta reads “declare to me how Saul and his son Jonathan died.”

¹²tc The Syriac Peshitta and one ms of the LXX lack the words “who was telling him this” of the MT.

¹³tc The present translation reads with the Qere and many medieval Hebrew mss “and I said,” rather than the Kethib which has “and he said.” See the LXX, Syriac Peshitta, and Vulgate, all of which have the first person.

¹⁴tn As P. K. McCarter (*II Samuel* [AB], 59) points out, the Polel of the verb מוֹת (mut, “to die”) “refers to dispatching or ‘finishing off’ someone already wounded and near death.” Cf. NLT “put me out of my misery.”

¹⁵tn Heb “the dizziness has seized me.” On the meaning of the Hebrew noun translated “dizziness,” see P. K. McCarter, *II Samuel* (AB), 59-60. The point seems to be that he is unable to kill himself because he is weak and disoriented.

¹⁶tn The Hebrew text here is grammatically very awkward (Heb “because all still my life in me”). Whether the broken construct phrase is due to the fact that the alleged speaker is in a confused state of mind as he is on the verge of dying, or whether the MT has sustained corruption in the transmission process, is not entirely clear. The former seems likely, although P. K. McCarter understands the MT to be the result of conflation of two shorter forms of text (P. K. McCarter, *II Samuel* [AB], 57, n. 9). Early translators also struggled with the verse, apparently choosing to leave part of the Hebrew text untranslated. For example, the Lucianic recension of the LXX lacks “all,” while other witnesses (namely, one medieval Hebrew ms, codices A and B of the LXX, and the Syriac Peshitta) lack “still.”

¹⁷tn Heb “after his falling”; NAB “could not survive his wound”; CEV “was too badly wounded to live much longer.”

¹⁸tc The MT lacks the definite article, but this is likely due to textual corruption. It is preferable to read the alef (א) אֶת־הַבְּרָשָׁתִים (ets’adah) as a ה (he) הַבְּרָשָׁתִים (hats’adah). There is no reason to think that the soldier confiscated from Saul’s dead body only one of two or more bracelets that he was wearing (cf. NLT “one of his bracelets”).

¹⁹sn The claims that the soldier is making here seem to contradict the story of Saul’s death as presented in 1 Sam 31:3-5. In that passage it appears that Saul took his own life, not that he was slain by a passerby who happened on the scene. Some scholars account for the discrepancy by supposing that conflicting accounts have been brought together in the MT. However, it is likely that the young man is here fabricating the account in a self-serving way so as to gain favor with David, or so he supposes. He probably had come across

1:11 David then grabbed his own clothes⁴ and tore them, as did all the men who were with him. **1:12** They lamented and wept and fasted until evening because Saul, his son Jonathan, the LORD's people, and the house of Israel had fallen by the sword.

1:13 David said to the young man who told this to him, "Where are you from?" He replied, "I am an Amalekite, the son of a resident foreigner."² **1:14** David replied to him, "How is it that you were not afraid to reach out your hand to destroy the LORD's anointed?" **1:15** Then David called one of the soldiers³ and said, "Come here and strike him down!" So he struck him down, and he died. **1:16** David said to him, "Your blood be on your own head! Your own mouth has testified against you, saying 'I have put the LORD's anointed to death.'"

David's Tribute to Saul and Jonathan

1:17 Then David chanted this lament over Saul and his son Jonathan. **1:18** (He gave instructions that the people of Judah should be taught "The Bow."⁴ Indeed, it is written down in the Scroll of the Upright One.)⁵

1:19 The beauty⁶ of Israel lies slain on
your high places!
How the mighty have fallen!
1:20 Don't report it in Gath,
don't spread the news in the streets of
Ashkelon.⁷

Saul's corpse, stolen the crown and bracelet from the body, and now hopes to curry favor with David by handing over to him these emblems of Saul's royalty. But in so doing the Amalekite greatly miscalculated David's response to this alleged participation in Saul's death. The consequence of his lies will instead be his own death.

¹ **tc** The present translation follows the *Qere* and many medieval Hebrew *mss* in reading "his garments," rather than "his garment," the reading of the *Kethib*.

² **tn** The Hebrew word used here refers to a foreigner whose social standing was something less than that of native residents of the land, but something more than that of a nonresident foreigner who was merely passing through.

³ **tn** *Heb* "young men."

⁴ **tn** *Heb* "be taught the bow." The reference to "the bow" is very difficult here. Some interpreters (e.g., S. R. Driver, P. K. McCarter, Jr.) suggest deleting the word from the text (cf. NAB, TEV), but there does not seem to be sufficient evidence for doing so. Others (cf. KJV) understand the reference to be elliptical, meaning "the use of the bow." The verse would then imply that with the deaths of Saul and Jonathan having occurred, a period of trying warfare is about to begin, requiring adequate preparation for war on the part of the younger generation. Various other views may also be found in the secondary literature. However, it seems best to understand the word here to be a reference to the name of a song (i.e., "The Bow"), most likely the poem that follows in vv. 19-27 (cf. ASV, NASB, NRSV, CEV, NLT); NIV "this lament of the bow."

⁵ **sn** *The Scroll of the Upright One* is a noncanonical writing no longer in existence. It is referred to here and in Josh 10:12-13. It apparently was "a collection of ancient national poetry" (so BDB 449 s.v. *יְשִׁיר*).

⁶ **sn** The word *beauty* is used figuratively here to refer to Saul and Jonathan.

⁷ **sn** The cities of *Gath* and *Ashkelon* are mentioned here by synecdoche of part for the whole. As major Philistine cities they in fact represent all of Philistia. The point is that when

or the daughters of the Philistines will rejoice, the daughters of the uncircumcised will celebrate!

1:21 O mountains of Gilboa, may there be no dew or rain on you, nor fields of grain offerings!⁸ For it was there that the shield of warriors was defiled;⁹ the shield of Saul lies neglected without oil.¹⁰

1:22 From the blood of the slain, from the fat of warriors, the bow of Jonathan was not turned away. The sword of Saul never returned¹¹ empty.

1:23 Saul and Jonathan were greatly loved¹² during their lives, and not even in their deaths were they separated.

They were swifter than eagles, stronger than lions.

1:24 O daughters of Israel, weep over Saul, who clothed you in scarlet¹³ as well as jewelry,

who put gold jewelry on your clothes.

1:25 How the warriors have fallen in the midst of battle!

Jonathan lies slain on your high places!

1:26 I grieve over you, my brother Jonathan!

You were very dear to me.

Your love was more special to me than the love of women.

the sad news of fallen Israelite leadership reaches the Philistines, it will be for these enemies of Israel the occasion of great joy rather than grief.

⁸ **tc** Instead of the MT's "fields of grain offerings" the Lucianic recension of the LXX reads "your high places are mountains of death." Cf. the Old Latin *montes mortis* ("mountains of death").

⁹ **tn** This is the only biblical occurrence of the Niphal of the verb *גָּעַל* (*ga'al*). This verb usually has the sense of "to abhor" or "loathe." But here it seems to refer to the now dirty and unprotected condition of a previously well-maintained instrument of battle.

¹⁰ **tc** It is preferable to read here Hebrew *מַשְׁאוּאָה* (*mashuakh*) with many Hebrew *mss*, rather than *מַשְׁיָאָה* (*mashiakh*) of the MT. Although the Syriac Peshitta understands the statement to pertain to Saul, the point here is not that Saul is not anointed. Rather, it is *the shield* of Saul that lies discarded and is no longer anointed. In ancient Near Eastern practice a warrior's shield that was in normal use would have to be anointed regularly in order to ensure that the leather did not become dry and brittle. Like other warriors of his day Saul would have carefully maintained his tools of trade. But now that he is dead, the once-cared-for shield of the mighty warrior lies sadly discarded and woefully neglected, a silent but eloquent commentary on how different things are now compared to the way they were during Saul's lifetime.

¹¹ **tn** The Hebrew imperfect verbal form is used here to indicate repeated past action.

¹² **tn** *Heb* "beloved and dear."

¹³ **sn** Clothing of *scarlet* was expensive and beyond the financial reach of most people.

1:27 How the warriors have fallen!
The weapons of war¹ are destroyed!

David is Anointed King

2:1 Afterward David inquired of the LORD, “Should I go up to one of the cities of Judah?” The LORD told him, “Go up.” David asked, “Where should I go?” The LORD replied,² “To Hebron.” 2:2 So David went up, along with his two wives, Ahinoam the Jezreelite and Abigail, formerly the wife of Nabal the Carmelite. 2:3 David also brought along the men who were with him, each with his family. They settled in the cities³ of Hebron. 2:4 The men of Judah came and there they anointed David as king over the people⁴ of Judah.

David was told,⁵ “The people⁶ of Jabesh Gilead are the ones who buried Saul.” 2:5 So David sent messengers to the people of Jabesh Gilead and told them, “May you be blessed by the LORD because you have shown this kindness⁷ to your lord Saul by burying him. 2:6 Now may the LORD show you true kindness!⁸ I also will reward you,⁹ because you have done this deed. 2:7 Now be courageous¹⁰ and prove to be valiant warriors, for your lord Saul is dead. The people of Judah have anointed me as king over them.”

David’s Army Clashes with the Army of Saul

2:8 Now Abner son of Ner, the general in command of Saul’s army, had taken Saul’s son Ish-bosheth¹¹ and had brought him to Mahanaim. 2:9 He appointed him king over Gilead, the Geshurites,¹² Jezreel, Ephraim, Benjamin,

and all Israel. 2:10 Ish-bosheth son of Saul was forty years old when he began to rule over Israel. He ruled two years. However, the people¹³ of Judah followed David. 2:11 David was king in Hebron over the people of Judah for seven and a half years.¹⁴

2:12 Then Abner son of Ner and the servants of Ish-bosheth son of Saul went out from Mahanaim to Gibeon. 2:13 Joab son of Zeruiah and the servants of David also went out and confronted them at the pool of Gibeon. One group stationed themselves on one side of the pool, and the other group on the other side of the pool. 2:14 Abner said to Joab, “Let the soldiers get up and fight¹⁵ before us.” Joab said, “So be it!”¹⁶

2:15 So they got up and crossed over by number: twelve belonging to Benjamin and to Ish-bosheth son of Saul, and twelve from the servants of David. 2:16 As they grappled with one another, each one stabbed his opponent with his sword and they fell dead together.¹⁷ So that place is called the Field of Flints;¹⁸ it is in Gibeon.

2:17 Now the battle was very severe that day; Abner and the men of Israel were overcome by David’s soldiers.¹⁹ 2:18 The three sons of Zeruiah were there – Joab, Abishai, and Asahel. (Now Asahel was as quick on his feet as one of the gazelles in the field.) 2:19 Asahel chased Abner, without turning to the right or to the left as he followed Abner.

2:20 Then Abner turned and asked, “Is that you, Asahel?” He replied, “Yes it is!” 2:21 Abner said to him, “Turn aside to your right or to your left. Capture one of the soldiers²⁰ and take his equipment for yourself!” But Asahel was not willing to turn aside from following him. 2:22 So Abner spoke again to Asahel, “Turn aside from following me! I do not want to strike you to the ground.²¹ How then could I show²² my face in the presence of Joab your brother?”

¹ sn The expression *weapons of war* may here be a figurative way of referring to Saul and Jonathan.

² tn Heb “he said.” The referent (the LORD) has been specified in the translation for clarity and for stylistic reasons.

³ tc The expression “the cities of Hebron” is odd; we would expect the noun to be in the singular, if used at all. Although the Syriac Peshitta has the expected reading “in Hebron,” the MT is clearly the more difficult reading and should probably be retained here.

⁴ tn Heb “house.”

⁵ tn Heb “and they told David.” The subject appears to be indefinite, allowing one to translate the verb as passive with David as subject.

⁶ tn Heb “men.”

⁷ tn Or “loyalty.”

⁸ tn Or “loyalty and devotion.”

⁹ tn Heb “will do with you this good.”

¹⁰ tn Heb “let your hands be strong.”

¹¹ sn The name *Ish-bosheth* means in Hebrew “man of shame.” It presupposes an earlier form such as *Ish-baal* (“man of the Lord”), with the word “baal” being used of Israel’s God. But because the Canaanite storm god was named “Baal,” that part of the name was later replaced with the word “shame.”

¹² tc The MT here reads “the Ashurite,” but this is problematic if it is taken to mean “the Assyrian.” *Ish-bosheth*’s kingdom obviously was not of such proportions as to extend to Assyria. The Syriac Peshitta and the Vulgate render the word as “the Geshurite,” while the Targum has “of the house of Ashur.” We should probably emend the Hebrew text to read “the Geshurite.” The Geshurites lived in the northeastern part of the land of Palestine.

¹³ tn Heb “house.”

¹⁴ tn Heb “And the number of the days in which David was king in Hebron over the house of Judah was seven years and six months.”

¹⁵ tn Heb “play.” What is in view here is a gladiatorial contest in which representative groups of soldiers engage in mortal combat before the watching armies. Cf. NAB “perform for us”; NASB “hold (have NRSV) a contest before us”; NLT “put on an exhibition of hand-to-hand combat.”

¹⁶ tn Heb “let them arise.”

¹⁷ tn Heb “and they grabbed each one the head of his neighbor with his sword in the side of his neighbor and they fell together.”

¹⁸ tn The meaning of the name “Helkath Hazzurim” (so NIV; KJV, NASB, NRSV similar) is not clear. *BHK* relates the name to the Hebrew term for “side,” and this is reflected in NAB “the Field of the Sides”; the Greek OT revocalizes the Hebrew to mean something like “Field of Adversaries.” Cf. also TEV, NLT “Field of Swords”; CEV “Field of Daggers.”

¹⁹ tn Heb “servants.” So also elsewhere.

²⁰ tn Heb “young men.” So also elsewhere.

²¹ tn Heb “Why should I strike you to the ground?”

²² tn Heb “lift.”

2:23 But Asahel⁴ refused to turn aside. So Abner struck him in the abdomen with the back end of his² spear. The spear came out his back; Asahel³ collapsed on the spot and died there right before Abner.⁴ Everyone who now comes to the place where Asahel fell dead pauses in respect.⁵

2:24 So Joab and Abishai chased Abner. At sunset they came to the hill of Ammah near Giah on the way to the wilderness of Gibeon. 2:25 The Benjaminites formed their ranks⁶ behind Abner and were like a single army, standing at the top of a certain hill.

2:26 Then Abner called out to Joab, “Must the sword devour forever? Don’t you realize that this will turn bitter in the end? When will you tell the people to turn aside from pursuing their brothers?”

2:27 Joab replied, “As surely as God lives, if you had not said this, it would have been morning before the people would have abandoned pursuit⁷ of their brothers!” 2:28 Then Joab blew the ram’s horn and all the people stopped in their tracks.⁸ They stopped chasing Israel and ceased fighting.⁹ 2:29 Abner and his men went through the Arabah all that night. They crossed the Jordan River¹⁰ and went through the whole region of Bitron¹¹ and came to Mahanaim.

2:30 Now Joab returned from chasing Abner and assembled all the people. Nineteen of David’s soldiers were missing, in addition to Asahel. 2:31 But David’s soldiers had slaughtered the Benjaminites and Abner’s men – in all, 360 men had died! 2:32 They took Asahel’s body and buried him in his father’s tomb at Bethlehem.¹² Joab and his men then traveled all

that night and reached Hebron by dawn. 3:1 However, the war was prolonged between the house of Saul and the house of David. David was becoming steadily stronger, while the house of Saul was becoming increasingly weaker.

3:2 Now sons were born to David in Hebron. His firstborn was Amnon, born to Ahinoam the Jezreelite. 3:3 His second son¹³ was Kileab, born to Abigail the widow¹⁴ of Nabal the Carmelite. His third son was Absalom, the son of Maacah daughter of King Talmai of Geshur. 3:4 His fourth son was Adonijah, the son of Haggith. His fifth son was Shephatiah, the son of Abital. 3:5 His sixth son was Ithream, born to David’s wife Eglah. These sons¹⁵ were all born to David in Hebron.

Abner Defects to David’s Camp

3:6 As the war continued between the house of Saul and the house of David, Abner was becoming more influential¹⁶ in the house of Saul. 3:7 Now Saul had a concubine named Rizpah daughter of Aiah. Ish-bosheth¹⁷ said to Abner, “Why did you have sexual relations with¹⁸ my father’s concubine?”¹⁹

3:8 These words of Ish-bosheth really angered Abner and he said, “Am I the head of a dog that belongs to Judah? This very day I am demonstrating²⁰ loyalty to the house of Saul your father and to his relatives²¹ and his friends! I have not betrayed you into the hand of David. Yet you have accused me of sinning with this woman today!²² 3:9 God will severely judge Abner²³ if I do not do for David exactly what the

¹ *tn* Heb “he”; the referent (Asahel) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

² *tn* Heb “the.” The article functions here as a possessive pronoun.

³ *tn* Heb “he”; the referent (Asahel) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

⁴ *tn* Heb “him”; the referent (Abner) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

⁵ *tn* Heb “and they stand.”

⁶ *tn* Heb “were gathered together.”

⁷ *tn* The Hebrew verb נָגַדָה (*na’alah*) used here is the Niphal perfect 3rd person masculine singular of נָגַדָה (*alah*, “to go up”). In the Niphal this verb “is used idiomatically, of getting away from so as to abandon...especially of an army raising a siege...” (see S. R. Driver, *Notes on the Hebrew Text and the Topography of the Books of Samuel*, 244).

⁸ *tn* Heb “stood.”

⁹ *tn* Heb “they no longer chased after Israel and they no longer fought.”

¹⁰ *tn* The word “River” is not in the Hebrew text, but is supplied in the translation for clarity.

¹¹ *tn* Heb “and they went, all the Bitron.” The meaning of the Hebrew word “Bitron,” which is used only here in the OT, is disputed. The translation above follows BDB 144 s.v. בִּתְרוֹן in taking the word to be a proper name of an area east of the Jordan. A different understanding was advocated by W. R. Arnold, who took the word to refer to the forenoon or morning; a number of modern scholars and translations have adopted this view (cf. NAB, NASB, NRSV, CEV, NLT). See W. R. Arnold, “The Meaning of בִּתְרוֹן,” *AJS* 28 (1911-1912): 274-83. In this case one could translate “and they traveled all morning long.”

¹² *tn* *map* For location see Map5-B1; Map7-E2; Map8-E2; Map10-B4.

¹³ *tn* The Hebrew text does not have the word “son.” So also in vv. 3-5.

¹⁴ *tn* Heb “wife.”

¹⁵ *tn* The Hebrew text does not have “sons.”

¹⁶ *tn* Heb “was strengthening himself.” The statement may have a negative sense here, perhaps suggesting that Abner was overstepping the bounds of political propriety in a self-serving way.

¹⁷ *tc* The Hebrew of the MT reads simply “and he said,” with no expressed subject for the verb. It is not likely that the text originally had no expressed subject for this verb, since the antecedent is not immediately clear from the context. We should probably restore to the Hebrew text the name “Ish-bosheth.” See a few medieval Hebrew mss, Aquila, Symmachus, Theodotion, and Vulgate. Perhaps the name was accidentally omitted by homoiocorction. Note that both the name Ishbosheth and the following preposition אֶל (*el*) begin with the letter *alef*.

¹⁸ *tn* Heb “come to”; KJV, NRSV “gone in to”; NAB “been intimate with”; NIV “sleep with.”

¹⁹ *sn* This accusation against Abner is a very serious one, since an act of sexual infringement on the king’s harem would probably have been understood as a blatant declaration of aspirations to kingship. As such it was not merely a matter of ethical impropriety but an act of grave political significance as well.

²⁰ *tn* Heb “I do.”

²¹ *tn* Heb “brothers.”

²² *tn* Heb “and you have laid upon me the guilt of the woman today.”

²³ *tn* Heb “So will God do to Abner and so he will add to him.”

LORD has promised him,¹ 3:10 namely, to transfer the kingdom from the house of Saul and to establish the throne of David over Israel and over Judah all the way from Dan to Beer Sheba!" 3:11 Ish-bosheth² was unable to answer Abner with even a single word because he was afraid of him.

3:12 Then Abner sent messengers³ to David saying, "To whom does the land belong? Make an agreement⁴ with me, and I will do whatever I can⁵ to cause all Israel to turn to you." 3:13 So David said, "Good! I will make an agreement with you. I ask only one thing from you. You will not see my face unless you bring Saul's daughter Michal when you come to visit me."⁶

3:14 David sent messengers to Ish-bosheth son of Saul with this demand:⁷ "Give me my wife Michal whom I acquired⁸ for a hundred Philistine foreskins." 3:15 So Ish-bosheth took her⁹ from her husband Paltiel¹⁰ son of Laish. 3:16 Her husband went along behind her, weeping all the way to Bahurim. Finally Abner said to him, "Go back!"¹¹ So he returned home.

3:17 Abner advised¹² the elders of Israel, "Previously you were wanting David to be your king.¹³ 3:18 Act now! For the LORD has said to David, 'By the hand of my servant David I will save¹⁴ my people Israel from¹⁵ the Philistines and from all their enemies.'"

3:19 Then Abner spoke privately¹⁶ with the Benjaminites. Abner also went to Hebron to inform David privately¹⁷ of all that Israel and the entire house of Benjamin had agreed to.¹⁸ 3:20 When Abner, accompanied by twenty men, came to David in Hebron, David prepared a banquet for Abner and the men who were with

him. 3:21 Abner said to David, "Let me leave so that I may go and gather all Israel to my lord the king so that they may make an agreement¹⁹ with you. Then you will rule over all that you desire." So David sent Abner away, and he left in peace.

Abner Is Killed

3:22 Now David's soldiers²⁰ and Joab were coming back from a raid, bringing a great deal of plunder with them. Abner was no longer with David in Hebron, for David²¹ had sent him away and he had left in peace. 3:23 When Joab and all the army that was with him arrived, Joab was told: "Abner the son of Ner came to the king; he sent him away, and he left in peace!"

3:24 So Joab went to the king and said, "What have you done? Abner²² has come to you! Why would you send him away? Now he's gone on his way!²³ 3:25 You know Abner the son of Ner! Surely he came here to spy on you and to determine when you leave and when you return²⁴ and to discover everything that you are doing!"

3:26 Then Joab left David and sent messengers after Abner. They brought him back from the well of Sirah. (But David was not aware of it.) 3:27 When Abner returned to Hebron, Joab took him aside at the gate as if to speak privately with him. Joab then stabbed him²⁵ in the abdomen and killed him, avenging the shed blood of his brother Asahel.²⁶

3:28 When David later heard about this, he said, "I and my kingdom are forever innocent before the LORD of the shed blood of Abner son of Ner! 3:29 May his blood whirl over²⁷ the head of Joab and the entire house of his father!²⁸ May

¹ **tc** *Heb* "has sworn to David." The LXX, with the exception of the recension of Origen, adds "in this day."

² **tn** *Heb* "he"; the referent (Ish-bosheth) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

³ **tn** The Hebrew text adds here, "on his behalf."

⁴ **tn** *Heb* "cut a covenant." So also in vv. 13, 21.

⁵ **tn** *Heb* "and behold, my hand is with you."

⁶ **tn** The words "when you come to see my face," though found in the Hebrew text, are somewhat redundant given the similar expression in the earlier part of the verse. The words are absent from the Syriac Peshitta.

⁷ **tn** *Heb* "to Ish-bosheth son of Saul saying." To avoid excessive sibilance (especially when read aloud) the translation renders "saying" as "with this demand."

⁸ **tn** *Heb* "whom I betrothed to myself."

⁹ **tn** *Heb* "sent and took her."

¹⁰ **tn** In 1 Sam 25:44 this name appears as "Palti."

¹¹ **tn** *Heb* "Go, return."

¹² **tn** *Heb* "the word of Abner was with."

¹³ **tn** *Heb* "you were seeking David to be king over you."

¹⁴ **tc** The present translation follows the LXX, the Syriac Peshitta, and Vulgate in reading "I will save," rather than the MT "he saved." The context calls for the 1st person common singular imperfect of the verb rather than the 3rd person masculine singular perfect.

¹⁵ **tn** *Heb* "from the hand of."

¹⁶ **tn** *Heb* "into the ears of."

¹⁷ **tn** *Heb* "also Abner went to speak into the ears of David in Hebron."

¹⁸ **tn** *Heb* "all which was good in the eyes of Israel and in the eyes of all the house of Benjamin."

¹⁹ **tn** After the cohortatives, the prefixed verbal form with the prefixed conjunction indicates purpose or result.

²⁰ **tn** *Heb* "And look, the servants of David."

²¹ **tn** *Heb* "he"; the referent (David) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

²² **tn** *Heb* "Look, Abner."

²³ **tc** The LXX adds "in peace."

²⁴ **tn** *Heb* "your going out and your coming in." The expression is a merism. It specifically mentions the polar extremities of the actions but includes all activity in between the extremities as well, thus encompassing the entirety of one's activities.

²⁵ **tn** *Heb* "and he struck him down there [in] the stomach."

²⁶ **tn** *Heb* "and he [i.e., Abner] died on account of the blood of Asahel his [i.e., Joab's] brother."

²⁷ **tn** *Heb* "and may they whirl over." In the Hebrew text the subject of the plural verb is unexpressed. The most likely subject is Abner's "shed blood" (v. 28), which is a masculine plural form in Hebrew. The verb *khul* ("whirl") is used with the preposition *al* ("over") only here and in Jer 23:19; 30:23.

²⁸ **tc** 4QSam^a has "of Joab" rather than "of his father" read by the MT.

the males of Joab's house⁴ never cease to have² someone with a running sore or a skin disease or one who works at the spindle³ or one who falls by the sword or one who lacks food!"

3:30 So Joab and his brother Abishai killed Abner, because he had killed their brother Asahel in Gibeon during the battle.

3:31 David instructed Joab and all the people who were with him, "Tear your clothes! Put on sackcloth! Lament before Abner!" Now King David followed⁴ behind the funeral bier. **3:32** So they buried Abner in Hebron. The king cried loudly⁵ over Abner's grave and all the people wept too. **3:33** The king chanted the following lament for Abner:

"Should Abner have died like a fool?

3:34 Your hands⁶ were not bound,
and your feet were not put into irons.
You fell the way one falls before criminals."

All the people⁷ wept over him again. **3:35** Then all the people came and encouraged David to eat food while it was still day. But David took an oath saying, "God will punish me severely⁸ if I taste bread or anything whatsoever before the sun sets!"

3:36 All the people noticed this and it pleased them.⁹ In fact, everything the king did pleased all the people. **3:37** All the people and all Israel realized on that day that the killing of Abner son of Ner was not done at the king's instigation.¹⁰

3:38 Then the king said to his servants, "Do you not realize that a great leader¹¹ has fallen this day in Israel? **3:39** Today I am weak, even though I am anointed as king. These men, the sons of Zeruah, are too much for me to bear!¹² May the LORD punish appropriately the one who has done this evil thing!"¹³

Ish-bosheth is killed

4:1 When Ish-bosheth¹⁴ the son of Saul heard that Abner had died in Hebron, he was very disheartened,¹⁵ and all Israel was afraid. **4:2** Now Saul's son¹⁶ had two men who were in charge of raiding units; one was named Baanah and the other Recab. They were sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, who was a Benjaminite. (Beeroth is regarded as belonging to Benjamin, **4:3** for the Beerothites fled to Gittaim and have remained there as resident foreigners until the present time.)¹⁷

4:4 Now Saul's son Jonathan had a son who was crippled in both feet. He was five years old when the news about Saul and Jonathan arrived from Jezreel. His nurse picked him up and fled, but in her haste to get away, he fell and was injured.¹⁸ Mephibosheth was his name.

4:5 Now the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite – Recab and Baanah – went at the hottest part of the day to the home of Ish-bosheth, as he was enjoying his midday rest. **4:6** They¹⁹ entered the house under the pretense of getting wheat and mortally wounded him²⁰ in the stomach. Then Recab and his brother Baanah escaped.

4:7 They had entered²¹ the house while Ish-bosheth²² was resting on his bed in his bedroom. They mortally wounded him²³ and then cut off

¹ **tn** *Heb* "the house of Joab." However, it is necessary to specify that David's curse is aimed at Joab's male descendants; otherwise it would not be clear that "one who works at the spindle" refers to a man doing woman's work rather than a woman.

² **tn** *Heb* "and may there not be cut off from the house of Joab."

³ **tn** The expression used here is difficult. The translation "one who works at the spindle" follows a suggestion of S. R. Driver that the expression pejoratively describes an effeminate man who, rather than being a mighty warrior, is occupied with tasks that are normally fulfilled by women (S. R. Driver, *Notes on the Hebrew Text and the Topography of the Books of Samuel*, 250-51; cf. NAB "one unmanly"; TEV "fit only to do a woman's work"; CEV "cowards"). But P. K. McCarter, following an alleged Phoenician usage of the noun to refer to "crutches," adopts a different view. He translates the phrase "clings to a crutch," seeing here a further description of physical lameness (*Il Samuel* [AB], 118). Such an idea fits the present context well and is followed by NIV, NCV, and NLT, although the evidence for this meaning is questionable. According to *DNWSI* 2:915-16, the noun consistently refers to a spindle in Phoenician, as it does in Ugaritic (see *UT* 468).

⁴ **tn** *Heb* "was walking."

⁵ **tn** *Heb* "lifted up his voice and wept." The expression is a verbal hendiadys.

⁶ **tc** The translation follows many medieval Hebrew manuscripts and several ancient versions in reading "your hands," rather than "your hand."

⁷ **tc** 4QSam^a lacks the words "all the people."

⁸ **tn** *Heb* "Thus God will do to me and thus he will add."

⁹ **tn** *Heb* "it was good in their eyes."

¹⁰ **tn** *Heb* "from the king."

¹¹ **tn** *Heb* "a leader and a great one." The expression is a hendiadys.

¹² **tn** *Heb* "are hard from me."

¹³ **tn** *Heb* "May the LORD repay the doer of the evil according to his evil" (NASB similar).

¹⁴ **tn** The MT does not specify the subject of the verb here, but the reference is to Ish-bosheth, so the name has been supplied in the translation for clarity. 4QSam^a and the LXX mistakenly read "Mephibosheth."

¹⁵ **tn** *Heb* "his hands went slack."

¹⁶ **tc** The present translation, "Saul's son had two men," is based on the reading "to the son of Saul," rather than the MT's "the son of Saul." The context requires the preposition to indicate the family relationship.

¹⁷ **tn** *Heb* "until this day."

¹⁸ **tn** *Heb* "and was lame."

¹⁹ **tc** For the MT's הָיָה (ʿ*hennah*, "and they," feminine) read הָיָה (ʿ*hinneh*, "and behold"). See the LXX, Syriac Peshitta, and Targum.

²⁰ **tn** *Heb* "and they struck him down."

²¹ **tn** After the concluding disjunctive clause at the end of v. 6, the author now begins a more detailed account of the murder and its aftermath.

²² **tn** *Heb* "he"; the referent (Ish-bosheth) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

²³ **tn** *Heb* "they struck him down and killed him." The expression is a verbal hendiadys.

his head.¹ Taking his head,² they traveled on the way of the Arabah all that night. **4:8** They brought the head of Ish-bosheth to David in Hebron, saying to the king, “Look! The head of Ish-bosheth son of Saul, your enemy who sought your life! The LORD has granted vengeance to my lord the king this day against³ Saul and his descendants!”

4:9 David replied to Recab and his brother Baanah, the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, “As surely as the LORD lives, who has delivered my life from all adversity, **4:10** when someone told me that Saul was dead – even though he thought he was bringing good news⁴ – I seized him and killed him in Ziklag. That was the good news I gave to him! **4:11** Surely when wicked men have killed an innocent man as he slept⁵ in his own house, should I not now require his blood from your hands and remove⁶ you from the earth?”

4:12 So David issued orders to the soldiers and they put them to death. Then they cut off their hands and feet and hung them⁷ near the pool in Hebron. But they took the head of Ish-bosheth⁸ and buried it in the tomb of Abner⁹ in Hebron.¹⁰

David Is Anointed King Over Israel

5:1 All the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron saying, “Look, we are your very flesh and blood!¹¹ **5:2** In the past, when Saul was our king, you were the real leader in Israel.¹² The LORD said to you, ‘You will shepherd my people Israel; you will rule over Israel.’”

5:3 When all the leaders¹³ of Israel came to the king at Hebron, King David made an agreement with them¹⁴ in Hebron before the LORD. They designated¹⁵ David as king over Israel. **5:4** David was thirty years old when he began to reign and he reigned for forty years. **5:5** In Hebron he reigned over Judah for seven years and

six months, and in Jerusalem¹⁶ he reigned for thirty-three years over all Israel and Judah.

David Occupies Jerusalem

5:6 Then the king and his men advanced to Jerusalem¹⁷ against the Jebusites who lived in the land. The Jebusites¹⁸ said to David, “You cannot invade this place! Even the blind and the lame will turn you back, saying, ‘David cannot invade this place!’”

5:7 But David captured the fortress of Zion (that is, the City of David). **5:8** David said on that day, “Whoever attacks the Jebusites must approach the ‘lame’ and the ‘blind’ who are David’s enemies¹⁹ by going through the water tunnel.”²⁰ For this reason it is said, “The blind and the lame cannot enter the palace.”²¹

5:9 So David lived in the fortress and called it the City of David. David built all around it, from the terrace inwards. **5:10** David’s power grew steadily, for the LORD God²² who commands armies²³ was with him.²⁴

5:11 King Hiram of Tyre²⁵ sent messengers to David, along with cedar logs, carpenters, and stonemasons. They built a palace²⁶ for David. **5:12** David realized that the LORD had established him as king over Israel and that he had elevated his kingdom for the sake of his people

¹⁶ **map** For location see Map5-B1; Map6-F3; Map7-E2; Map8-F2; Map10-B3; JP1-F4; JP2-F4; JP3-F4; JP4-F4.

¹⁷ **map** For location see Map5-B1; Map6-F3; Map7-E2; Map8-F2; Map10-B3; JP1-F4; JP2-F4; JP3-F4; JP4-F4.

¹⁸ **tn** The Hebrew text has “he” rather than “the Jebusites.” The referent has been specified in the translation for clarity. In the Syriac Peshitta and some mss of the Targum the verb is plural rather than singular.

¹⁹ **tc** There is some confusion among the witnesses concerning this word. The *Kethib* is the Qal perfect 3cp שָׂנְאוּ (*san^eu*, “they hated”), referring to the Jebusites’ attitude toward David. The *Qere* is the Qal passive participle construct plural שֹׂנְאֵי (*s^enu^e*, “hated”), referring to David’s attitude toward the Jebusites. 4QSam^a has the Qal perfect 3rd person feminine singular שָׂנְאָה (*san^eah*, “hated”), the subject of which would be “the soul of David.” The difference is minor and the translation adopted above works for either the *Kethib* or the *Qere*.

²⁰ **tn** The meaning of the Hebrew term has been debated. For a survey of various views, see P. K. McCarter, *II Samuel* (AB), 139-40.

²¹ **sn** If a *water tunnel* is in view here, it is probably the so-called Warren’s Shaft that extends up from Hezekiah’s tunnel. It would have provided a means for surprise attack against the occupants of the City of David. The LXX seems not to understand the reference here, translating “by the water shaft” as “with a small knife.”

²² **tn** *Heb* “the house.” TEV takes this as a reference to the temple (“the Lord’s house”).

²³ **tc** 4QSam^a and the LXX lack the word “God,” probably due to harmonization with the more common biblical phrase “the LORD of hosts.”

²⁴ **tn** Traditionally, “the LORD God of hosts” (KJV, NASB); NIV, NLT “the Lord God Almighty”; CEV “the Lord (+ God NCV) All-Powerful.”

²⁵ **tn** The translation assumes that the disjunctive clause is circumstantial-causal, giving the reason for David’s success.

²⁶ **map** For location see Map1-A2; Map2-G2; Map4-A1; JP3-F3; JP4-F3.

²⁶ **tn** *Heb* “a house.”

¹ **tn** *Heb* “and they removed his head.” The Syriac Peshitta and Vulgate lack these words.

² **tc** The Lucianic Greek recension lacks the words “his head.”

³ **tn** *Heb* “from.”

⁴ **tn** *Heb* “and he was like a bearer of good news in his eyes.”

⁵ **tn** *Heb* “on his bed.”

⁶ **tn** See HALOT 146 s.v. בָּקַעַ. Some derive the verb from a homonym meaning “to burn; to consume.”

⁷ **tn** The antecedent of the pronoun “them” (which is not present in the Hebrew text, but implied) is not entirely clear. Presumably it is the corpses that were hung and not merely the detached hands and feet; cf. NIV “hung the (their NRSV, NLT) bodies”; the alternative is represented by TEV “cut off their hands and feet, which they hung up.”

⁸ **tc** 4QSam^a mistakenly reads “Mephibosheth” here.

⁹ **tc** The LXX adds “the son of Ner” by conformity with common phraseology elsewhere.

¹⁰ **tc** Some mss of the LXX lack the phrase “in Hebron.”

¹¹ **tn** *Heb* “look we are your bone and your flesh.”

¹² **tn** *Heb* “you were the one leading out and the one leading in Israel.”

¹³ **tn** *Heb* “elders.”

¹⁴ **tn** *Heb* “and the king, David, cut for them a covenant.”

¹⁵ **tn** *Heb* “anointed.”

Israel. **5:13** David married more concubines and wives from Jerusalem after he arrived from Hebron. Even more sons and daughters were born to David. **5:14** These are the names of children born to him in Jerusalem: Shammua, Shobab, Nathan, Solomon, **5:15** Ibhaz, Elishua, Nepheg, Japhia, **5:16** Elishama, Eliada, and Eliphelet.

Conflict with the Philistines

5:17 When the Philistines heard that David had been designated¹ king over Israel, they all² went up to search for David. When David heard about it, he went down to the fortress. **5:18** Now the Philistines had arrived and spread out in the valley of Rephaim. **5:19** So David asked the LORD, “Should I march up against the Philistines? Will you hand them over to me?” The LORD said to David, “March up, for I will indeed³ hand the Philistines over to you.”

5:20 So David marched against Baal Perazim and defeated them there. Then he said, “The LORD has burst out against my enemies like water bursts out.” So he called the name of that place Baal Perazim. **4** **5:21** The Philistines⁵ abandoned their idols⁶ there, and David and his men picked them up.

5:22 The Philistines again came up and spread out in the valley of Rephaim. **5:23** So David asked the LORD what he should do.⁷ This time⁸ the LORD⁹ said to him, “Don’t march straight up. Instead, circle around behind them and come against them opposite the trees.¹⁰ **5:24** When you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the trees, act decisively. For at that moment the LORD is going before you to strike down the army¹¹ of the Philistines.” **5:25** David did just as the LORD commanded him, and he struck down the Philistines from Gibeon all the way to Gezer.¹²

David Brings the Ark to Jerusalem

6:1 David again assembled¹³ all the best¹⁴ men in Israel, thirty thousand in number. **6:2** David and all the men who were with him traveled¹⁵ to¹⁶ Baalah¹⁷ in Judah to bring up from there the ark of God which is called by the name¹⁸ of the LORD of hosts, who sits enthroned between the cherubim that are on it. **6:3** They loaded the ark of God on a new cart and carried it from the house of Abinadab, which was on the hill. Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, were guiding the new cart. **6:4** They brought¹⁹ it with the ark of God up from the house of Abinadab on the hill. Ahio was walking in front of the ark, **6:5** while David and all Israel²⁰ were energetically celebrating before the LORD, singing²¹ and playing various stringed instruments,²² tambourines, rattles,²³ and cymbals.

6:6 When they arrived at the threshing floor of Nacon,²⁴ Uzzah reached out and grabbed hold of²⁵ the ark of God,²⁶ because the oxen stumbled. **6:7** The LORD was so furious with Uzzah,²⁷ he²⁸ killed him on the spot²⁹ for his negligence.³⁰ He died right there beside the ark of God.

6:8 David was angry because the LORD attacked³¹ Uzzah; so he called that place Perez Uz-

13 tn The translation understands the verb to be a defective spelling of *וַיִּסְעֹף* (*vayy'esof*) due to quiescence of the letter *ס* (*alef*). The root therefore is *סָפַף* (*'sf*, “to gather”). The Masoretes, however, pointed the verb as *וַיַּסֹּף* (*vayyosef*), understanding it to be a form of *סָפַף* (*yasaf*, “to add”). This does not fit the context, which calls for a verb of gathering.

14 tn Or “chosen.”

15 tn *Heb* “arose and went.”

16 tn *Heb* “from,” but the following context indicates they traveled to this location.

17 tn This is another name for Kiriath-jearim (see 1 Chr 13:6).

18 tc The MT has here a double reference to the name *שָׁם* (*shem shem*). Many medieval Hebrew MSS in the first occurrence point the word differently and read the adverb *שָׁם* (*sham*, “there”). This is also the understanding of the Syriac Peshitta (Syr., *taman*). While this yields an acceptable understanding to the text, it is more likely dittographic here. The present translation therefore reads *שָׁם* only once.

19 tn *Heb* “lifted.”

20 tn *Heb* “all the house of Israel.”

21 tc *Heb* “were celebrating before the LORD with all woods of fir” (cf. KJV, ASV, NASB). If the text is retained, the last expression must be elliptical, referring to musical instruments made from fir wood. But it is preferable to emend the text in light of 1 Chr 13:8, which reads “were celebrating before the LORD with all strength and with songs.”

22 tn *Heb* “with zithers [?] and with harps.”

23 tn That is, “sistrums” (so NAB, NIV); ASV, NASB, NRSV, CEV, NLT “castanets.”

24 tn 1 Chr 13:9 has “Kidon.”

25 tn Or “steadied.”

26 tn *Heb* “and Uzzah reached out toward the ark of God and grabbed it.”

27 tn *Heb* “and the anger of the LORD burned against Uzzah.”

28 tn *Heb* “God.”

29 tc *Heb* “there.” Since this same term occurs later in the verse it is translated “on the spot” here for stylistic reasons.

30 tc The phrase “his negligence” is absent from the LXX.

31 tn *Heb* “because the LORD broke out [with] a breaking out [i.e., an outburst] against Uzzah.”

1 tn *Heb* “anointed.”

2 tn *Heb* “all the Philistines.”

3 tn The infinitive absolute lends emphasis to the following verb.

4 tn The name means “Lord of the outbursts.”

5 tn *Heb* “they”; the referent (the Philistines) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

6 tc For “idols” the LXX and Vulgate have “gods.”

7 tn The words “what to do” are not in the Hebrew text.

8 tn The words “this time” are not in the Hebrew text.

9 tn *Heb* “he”; the referent (the LORD) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

10 tn Some translate as “balsam trees” (cf. NASB, NIV, NRSV, NJB, NLT); cf. KJV, NKJV, ASV “mulberry trees”; NAB “mastic trees”; NEB, REB “aspens.” The exact identification of the type of tree or plant is uncertain.

11 tn *Heb* “camp” (so NAB).

12 tn *Heb* “from Gibeon until you enter Gezer.”

zah,¹ which remains its name to this very day. **6:9** David was afraid of the LORD that day and said, “How will the ark of the LORD ever come to me?” **6:10** So David was no longer willing to bring the ark of the LORD to be with him in the City of David. David left it in the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite. **6:11** The ark of the LORD remained in the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite for three months. The LORD blessed Obed-Edom and all his family.² **6:12** David was told,³ “The LORD has blessed the family of Obed-Edom and everything he owns because of the ark of God.” So David went and joyfully brought the ark of God from the house of Obed-Edom to the City of David. **6:13** Those who carried the ark of the LORD took six steps and then David⁴ sacrificed an ox and a fattening calf. **6:14** Now David, wearing a linen ephod, was dancing with all his strength before the LORD.⁵ **6:15** David and all Israel⁶ were bringing up the ark of the LORD, shouting and blowing trumpets.⁷

6:16 As the ark of the LORD entered the City of David, Saul’s daughter Michal looked out the window. When she saw King David leaping and dancing before the LORD, she despised him.⁸ **6:17** They brought the ark of the LORD and put it in its place⁹ in the middle of the tent that David had pitched for it. Then David offered burnt sacrifices and peace offerings before the LORD. **6:18** When David finished offering the burnt sacrifices and peace offerings, he pronounced a blessing over the people in the name of the LORD of hosts. **6:19** He then handed out to each member of the entire assembly of Israel,¹⁰ both men and women, a portion of bread, a date cake,¹¹ and a raisin cake. Then all the people went home.¹² **6:20** When David went home to pronounce a blessing on his own house,¹³

Michal, Saul’s daughter, came out to meet him.¹⁴ She said, “How the king of Israel has distinguished¹⁵ himself this day! He has exposed himself today before his servants’ slave girls the way a vulgar fool¹⁶ might do!”

6:21 David replied to Michal, “It was before the LORD! I was celebrating before the LORD, who chose me over your father and his entire family¹⁷ and appointed me as leader over the LORD’s people Israel. **6:22** I am willing to shame and humiliate myself even more than this!¹⁸ But with the slave girls whom you mentioned let me be distinguished!” **6:23** Now Michal, Saul’s daughter, had no children to the day of her death.

The Lord Establishes a Covenant with David

7:1 The king settled into his palace,¹⁹ for the LORD gave him relief²⁰ from all his enemies on all sides.²¹ **7:2** The king said to Nathan the prophet, “Look! I am living in a palace made from cedar, while the ark of God sits in the middle of a tent.” **7:3** Nathan replied to the king, “You should go²² and do whatever you have in mind,²³ for the LORD is with you.” **7:4** That night the LORD told Nathan,²⁴ **7:5** “Go, tell my servant David: ‘This is what the LORD says: Do you really intend to build a house for me to live in? **7:6** I have not lived in a house from the time I brought the Israelites up from Egypt to the present day. Instead, I was traveling with them and living in a tent.²⁵ **7:7** Wherever I moved among all the Israelites, I did not say²⁶ to any of the leaders²⁷ whom I appointed to care for²⁸ my people Israel, ‘Why have you not built me a house made from cedar?’”

7:8 “So now, say this to my servant David: ‘This is what the LORD of hosts says: I took you from the pasture and from your work as a shepherd²⁹ to make you leader of my people Israel.

¹ **sn** The name *Perez Uzzah* means in Hebrew “the outburst [against] Uzzah.”

² **tn** *Heb* “house,” both here and in v. 12.

³ **tn** *Heb* “and it was told to David, saying.”

⁴ **tn** *Heb* “he”; the referent (David) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

⁵ **tn** *Heb* “and David was dancing with all his strength before the LORD, and David was girded with a linen ephod.”

⁶ **tc** *Heb* “all the house of Israel.” A few medieval Hebrew mss and the Syriac Peshitta lack the words “the house.”

⁷ **tn** *Heb* “the shofar” (the ram’s horn trumpet).

⁸ **tn** The Hebrew text adds “in her heart.” Cf. CEV “she was disgusted (+ with him TEV);” NLT “was filled with contempt for him”; NCV “she hated him.”

⁹ **tc** The Syriac Peshitta lacks “in its place.”

¹⁰ **tn** *Heb* “to all the people, to all the throng of Israel.”

¹¹ **tn** The Hebrew word used here עֶסַר (*espar*) is found in the OT only here and in the parallel passage found in 1 Chr 16:3. Its exact meaning is uncertain, although the context indicates that it was a food of some sort (cf. KJV “a good piece of flesh”; NRSV “a portion of meat”). The translation adopted here (“date cake”) follows the lead of the Greek translations of the LXX, Aquila, and Symmachus (cf. NASB, NIV, NLT).

¹² **tn** *Heb* “and all the people went, each to his house.”

¹³ **tn** *Heb* “and David returned to bless his house.”

¹⁴ **tn** *Heb* “David.” The name has been replaced by the pronoun (“him”) in the translation for stylistic reasons.

¹⁵ **tn** *Heb* “honored.”

¹⁶ **tn** *Heb* “one of the foolish ones.”

¹⁷ **tn** *Heb* “all his house”; CEV “anyone else in your family.”

¹⁸ **tn** *Heb* “and I will shame myself still more than this and I will be lowly in my eyes.”

¹⁹ **tn** *Heb* “house” (also in the following verse).

²⁰ **tn** Or “rest.”

²¹ **tn** The translation understands the disjunctive clause in v. 1b as circumstantial-causal.

²² **tc** Several medieval Hebrew mss and the Syriac Peshitta lack this word.

²³ **tn** *Heb* “all that is in your heart.”

²⁴ **tn** *Heb* “the word of the LORD was [i.e., came] to Nathan.”

²⁵ **tn** *Heb* “in a tent and in a dwelling.” The expression is a hendiadys, using two terms to express one idea.

²⁶ **tn** *Heb* “Did I speak a word?” In the Hebrew text the statement is phrased as a rhetorical question.

²⁷ **tn** *Heb* “tribes” (so KJV, NASB, NCV), but the parallel passage in 1 Chr 17:6 has “judges.”

²⁸ **tn** *Heb* “whom I commanded to shepherd” (so NIV, NRSV).

²⁹ **tn** *Heb* “and from after the sheep.”

7:9 I was with you wherever you went, and I defeated¹ all your enemies before you. Now I will make you as famous as the great men of the earth.² 7:10 I will establish a place for my people Israel and settle³ them there; they will live there and not be disturbed⁴ any more. Violent men⁵ will not oppress them again, as they did in the beginning 7:11 and during the time when I appointed judges to lead my people Israel. Instead, I will give you relief⁶ from all your enemies. The LORD declares⁷ to you that he himself⁸ will build a dynastic house⁹ for you. 7:12 When the time comes for you to die,¹⁰ I will raise up your descendant, one of your own sons, to succeed you,¹¹ and I will establish his kingdom. 7:13 He will build a house for my name, and I will make his dynasty permanent.¹² 7:14 I will become his father and he will become my son. When he sins, I will correct him with the rod of men and with wounds inflicted by human beings. 7:15 But my loyal love will not be removed from him as I removed it from Saul, whom I removed from before you. 7:16 Your house and your kingdom will stand before me¹³ permanently; your dynasty¹⁴ will be permanent.” 7:17 Nathan told David all these words that were revealed to him.¹⁵

David Offers a Prayer to God

7:18 King David went in, sat before the LORD, and said, “Who am I, O LORD God, and

what is my family,¹⁶ that you should have brought me to this point? 7:19 And you didn’t stop there, O LORD God! You have also spoken about the future of your servant’s family.¹⁷ Is this your usual way of dealing with men,¹⁸ O LORD God? 7:20 What more can David say to you? You have given your servant special recognition,¹⁹ O LORD God! 7:21 For the sake of your promise and according to your purpose²⁰ you have done this great thing in order to reveal it to your servant.²¹ 7:22 Therefore you are great, O LORD God, for there is none like you! There is no God besides you! What we have heard is true!²² 7:23 Who is like your people, Israel, a unique nation²³ on the earth? Their God²⁴ went²⁵ to claim²⁶ a nation for himself and to make a name for himself! You did great and awesome acts for your land,²⁷ before your people whom you delivered for yourself from the Egyptian empire and its gods.²⁸ 7:24 You made Israel your very own people for all time.²⁹ You, O LORD, became their God. 7:25 So now, O LORD God, make this promise you have made about your servant and his family a permanent reality.³⁰ Do

¹ tn Heb “cut off.”

² tn Heb “and I will make for you a great name like the name of the great ones who are in the earth.”

³ tn Heb “plant.”

⁴ tn Heb “shaken.”

⁵ tn Heb “the sons of violence.”

⁶ tn Or “rest.”

⁷ tn In the Hebrew text the verb is apparently perfect with *vav* consecutive, which would normally suggest a future sense (“he will declare”; so the LXX, ἀπαγγελεῖ [*apangelei*]). But the context seems instead to call for a present or past nuance (“he declares” or “he has declared”). The synoptic passage in 1 Chr 17:10 has דָּבַרְתִּי (*va’aggid*, “and I declared”). The construction used in 2 Sam 7:11 highlights this important statement.

⁸ tn Heb “the LORD.”

⁹ tn Heb “house,” but used here in a metaphorical sense, referring to a royal dynasty. Here the LORD’s use of the word plays off the literal sense that David had in mind as he contemplated building a temple for the LORD. To reflect this in the English translation the adjective “dynastic” has been supplied.

¹⁰ tn Heb, “when your days are full and you lie down with your ancestors.”

¹¹ tn Heb “your seed after you who comes out from your insides.”

¹² tn Heb “and I will establish the throne of his kingdom permanently.”

¹³ tc Heb “before you.” A few medieval Hebrew mss read instead “before me,” which makes better sense contextually. (See also the LXX and the Syriac Peshitta.) The MT reading is probably the result of dittography (note the כ [kaf] at the beginning of the next form), with the extra כ then being interpreted as a pronominal suffix.

¹⁴ tn Heb “throne.”

¹⁵ tn Heb “according to all these words and according to all this revelation, so Nathan said to David.”

¹⁶ tn Heb “house.”

¹⁷ tn Heb “and this was small in your eyes, O LORD God, so you spoke concerning the house of your servant for a distance.”

¹⁸ tn Heb “and this [is] the law of man”; KJV “is this the manner of man, O Lord God?”; NAB “this too you have shown to man”; NRSV “May this be instruction for the people, O Lord God!” This part of the verse is very enigmatic; no completely satisfying solution has yet been suggested. The present translation tries to make sense of the MT by understanding the phrase as a question that underscores the uniqueness of God’s dealings with David as described here. The parallel passage in 1 Chr 17:17 reads differently (see the note there).

¹⁹ tn Heb “and you know your servant.” The verb here refers to recognizing another in a special way and giving them special treatment (see 1 Chr 17:18). Some English versions take this to refer to the Lord’s knowledge of David himself: CEV “you know my thoughts”; NLT “know what I am really like.”

²⁰ tn Heb “for the sake of your word and according to your heart.”

²¹ tn Heb “to make known, your servant.”

²² tn Heb “in all which we hear with our ears.” The phrase translated “in all” כִּבְלֵי (*b²khol*) should probably be emended to “according to all” כִּכְלֵי (*k²khol*).

²³ tn Heb “a nation, one.”

²⁴ tn Heb “whose God” or “because God.” In the Hebrew text this clause is subordinated to what precedes. The clauses are separated in the translation for stylistic reasons.

²⁵ tn The verb is plural in Hebrew, agreeing grammatically with the divine name, which is a plural of degree.

²⁶ tn Heb “redeem.”

²⁷ tn Heb “and to do for you [plural form] the great [thing] and awesome [things] for your land.”

²⁸ tn Heb “from Egypt, nations and their gods.” The LXX has “nations and tents,” which reflects a mistaken metathesis of letters in אֱלֹהֵי (*e’lohav*, “its gods”) and אֱלֹהֵי (*’ohalav*, “its tents”).

²⁹ tn Heb “and you established for yourself your people Israel for yourself for a people permanently.”

³⁰ tn Heb “and now, O LORD God, the word which you spoke concerning your servant and concerning his house, establish permanently.”

as you promised,¹ 7:26 so you may gain lasting fame,² as people say,³ ‘The LORD of hosts is God over Israel!’ The dynasty⁴ of your servant David will be established before you, 7:27 for you, O LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, have told⁵ your servant, ‘I will build you a dynastic house.’⁶ That is why your servant has had the courage⁷ to pray this prayer to you. 7:28 Now, O sovereign LORD, you are the true God!⁸ May your words prove to be true!⁹ You have made this good promise to your servant!¹⁰ 7:29 Now be willing to bless your servant’s dynasty¹¹ so that it may stand permanently before you, for you, O sovereign LORD, have spoken. By your blessing may your servant’s dynasty be blessed on into the future!”¹²

David Subjugates Nearby Nations

8:1 Later David defeated the Philistines and subdued them. David took Metheg Ammah¹³ from the Philistines.¹⁴ 8:2 He defeated the Moabites. He made them lie on the ground and then used a rope to measure them off. He put two-thirds of them to death and spared the other third.¹⁵ The Moabites became David’s subjects and brought tribute.¹⁶ 8:3 David defeated King Hadadezer son of Rehob of Zobah when he came to reestablish¹⁷ his authority¹⁸ over the Euphrates¹⁹ River. 8:4 David seized from him

1,700 charioteers²⁰ and 20,000 infantrymen. David cut the hamstrings of all but a hundred of the chariot horses.²¹ 8:5 The Arameans of Damascus came to help King Hadadezer of Zobah, but David killed 22,000 of the Arameans. 8:6 David placed garrisons in the territory of the Arameans of Damascus; the Arameans became David’s subjects and brought tribute. The LORD protected²² David wherever he campaigned.²³ 8:7 David took the golden shields that belonged to Hadadezer’s servants and brought them to Jerusalem.²⁴ 8:8 From Tebah²⁵ and Berothai, Hadadezer’s cities, King David took a great deal of bronze.

8:9 When King Toi²⁶ of Hamath heard that David had defeated the entire army of Hadadezer, 8:10 he²⁷ sent his son Joram²⁸ to King David to extend his best wishes²⁹ and to pronounce a blessing on him for his victory over Hadadezer, for Toi had been at war with Hadadezer.³⁰ He brought with him various items made of silver, gold, and bronze.³¹ 8:11 King David dedicated these things to the LORD,³² along with the dedicated silver and gold that he had taken from³³ all the nations that he had subdued, 8:12 including³⁴ Aram,³⁵ Moab, the Am-

¹ **tn** Heb “as you have spoken.”

² **tn** Heb “and your name might be great permanently.” Following the imperative in v. 23b, the prefixed verbal form with *vav* conjunctive indicates purpose/result.

³ **tn** Heb “saying.” The words “as people” are supplied in the translation for clarification and stylistic reasons.

⁴ **tn** Heb “the house.” See the note on “dynastic house” in the following verse.

⁵ **tn** Heb “has uncovered the ear of.”

⁶ **tn** Heb “a house.” This maintains the wordplay from v. 11 (see the note on the word “house” there) and is continued in v. 29.

⁷ **tn** Heb “has found his heart.”

⁸ **tn** Heb “the God.” The article indicates uniqueness here.

⁹ **tn** The translation understands the prefixed verb form as a jussive, indicating David’s wish/prayer. Another option is to take the form as an imperfect and translate “your words are true.”

¹⁰ **tn** Heb “and you have spoken to your servant this good thing.”

¹¹ **tn** Heb “house” (again later in this verse). See the note on “dynastic house” in v. 27.

¹² **tn** Or “permanently”; cf. NLT “it is an eternal blessing.”

¹³ **tn** Heb “the bridle of one cubit.” Many English versions treat this as a place name because the parallel text in 1 Chr 18:1 reads “Gath” (which is used by NLT here). It is possible that “the bridle of one cubit” is to be understood as “the token of surrender,” referring to the Philistine’s defeat rather than a specific place (cf. TEV, CEV).

¹⁴ **tn** Heb “from the hand [i.e., control] of the Philistines.”

¹⁵ **tn** Heb “and he measured [with] two [lengths] of rope to put to death and [with] the fullness of the rope to keep alive.”

¹⁶ **tn** Heb “and the Moabites were servants of David, carriers of tribute.”

¹⁷ **tc** The LXX has ἐπιστήσαι (*epistēsai*, “cause to stand”). See the parallel text in 1 Chr 18:3.

¹⁸ **tn** Heb “hand.”

¹⁹ **tn** The MT does not have the name “Euphrates” in the text. It is supplied in the margin (*Qere*) as one of ten places where the Masoretes believed that something was “to be read although it was not written” in the text as they had received it. The ancient versions (LXX, Syriac Peshitta, Vulgate)

include the word. See also the parallel text in 1 Chr 18:3.

²⁰ **tc** The LXX has “one thousand chariots and seven thousand charioteers,” a reading adopted in the text of the NIV. See the parallel text in 1 Chr 18:4.

²¹ **tn** Heb “and David cut the hamstrings of all the chariot horses, and he left from them a hundred chariot horses.”

²² **tn** Or “delivered.”

²³ **tn** Or “wherever he went.”

²⁴ **tc** The LXX includes seventeen words (in Greek) at the end of v. 7 that are not found in the MT. The LXX addition is as follows: “And Sousekim king of Egypt took them when he came up to Jerusalem in the days of Rehoboam the son of Solomon.” This Greek reading now finds Hebrew support in 4QSam^a. For a reconstruction of this poorly preserved Qumran text see E. C. Ulrich, Jr., *The Qumran Text of Samuel and Josephus* (HSM), 45-48.

map For location see Map5-B1; Map6-F3; Map7-E2; Map8-F2; Map10-B3; JP1-F4; JP2-F4; JP3-F4; JP4-F4.

²⁵ **tn** Heb “Betah” (so KJV, NASB, NRSV), but the name should probably be corrected to “Tebah.” See the parallel text in 1 Chr 18:8.

²⁶ **tn** The name is spelled “Tou” in the parallel text in 1 Chr 18:9. NIV adopts the spelling “Tou” here.

²⁷ **tn** Heb “Toi.” The proper name has been replaced by the pronoun in the translation for stylistic reasons.

²⁸ **tn** The name appears as “Hadoram” in the parallel text in 1 Chr 18:10.

²⁹ **tn** Heb “to ask concerning him for peace.”

³⁰ **tn** Heb “and to bless him because he fought with Hadadezer and defeated him, for Hadadezer was a man of battles with Toi.”

³¹ **tn** Heb “and in his hand were items of silver and items of gold and items of bronze.”

³² **tn** Heb “also them King David made holy to the LORD.”

³³ **tn** Heb “with the silver and the gold that he had dedicated from.”

³⁴ **tn** Heb “from.”

³⁵ **tc** The present translation follows the MT; a few Hebrew mss along with the LXX and Syriac read “Edom” (cf. 2 Sam 8:14 and 1 Chr 18:11). Many modern English versions read “Edom” here (e.g., NAB, NIV, NRSV, NLT).

monites, the Philistines, and Amalek. This also included some of the plunder taken from¹ King Hadadezer son of Rehob of Zobah.

8:13 David became famous² when he returned from defeating the Arameans³ in the Valley of Salt, he defeated⁴ 18,000 in all. **8:14** He placed garrisons throughout Edom,⁵ and all the Edomites became David's subjects. The LORD protected David wherever he campaigned. **8:15** David reigned over all Israel; he guaranteed justice for all his people.⁶

David's Cabinet

8:16 Joab son of Zeruiah was general in command of⁷ the army; Jehoshaphat son of Ahilud was secretary; **8:17** Zadok son of Ahitub and Ahimelech son of Abiathar⁸ were priests; Seraiah was scribe; **8:18** Benaiah son of Jehoida supervised⁹ the Kerithites and Pelethites; and David's sons were priests.¹⁰

David Finds Mephibosheth

9:1¹¹ Then David asked, "Is anyone still left from the family¹² of Saul, so that I may extend kindness to him for the sake of Jonathan?"

9:2 Now there was a servant from Saul's house named Ziba, so he was summoned to David. The king asked him, "Are you Ziba?" He replied, "At your service."¹³ **9:3** The king asked, "Is there not someone left from Saul's family,¹⁴ that I may extend God's kindness to him?" Ziba said to the king, "One of Jonathan's sons is left; both of his feet are crippled."¹⁵ **9:4** The king asked him, "Where is he?" Ziba told the king, "He is at the house of Makir son of Ammiel in Lo Debar.

9:5 So King David had him brought¹⁶ from the house of Makir son of Ammiel in¹⁷ Lo Debar. **9:6** When Mephibosheth son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, came to David, he bowed low with his face toward the ground.¹⁷ David said, "Mephibosheth?" He replied, "Yes, at your service."¹⁸

9:7 David said to him, "Don't be afraid, because I will certainly extend kindness to you for the sake of Jonathan your father. I will give back to you all the land that belonged to your grandfather Saul, and you will be a regular guest at my table."¹⁹ **9:8** Then Mephibosheth²⁰ bowed and said, "Of what importance am I, your servant, that you show regard for a dead dog like me?"²¹

9:9 Then the king summoned Ziba, Saul's attendant, and said to him, "Everything that belonged to Saul and to his entire house I hereby give to your master's grandson. **9:10** You will cultivate²² the land for him – you and your sons and your servants. You will bring its produce²³ and it will be²⁴ food for your master's grandson to eat.²⁵ But Mephibosheth, your master's grandson, will be a regular guest at my table." (Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants.)

9:11 Ziba said to the king, "Your servant will do everything that my lord the king has instructed his servant to do." So Mephibosheth was a regular guest²⁶ at David's table,²⁷ just as though he were one of the king's sons.

¹ *tn* *Heb* "and from the plunder of."

² *tn* *Heb* "made a name."

³ *tn* So NASB, NCV; NAB, NIV, NRSV, NLT "Edomites" (see the note on "Aram" in v. 12).

⁴ *tn* The words "he defeated" are supplied in the translation for stylistic reasons.

⁵ *tc* The MT is repetitious here: "He placed in Edom garrisons; in all Edom he placed garrisons." The Vulgate lacks "in all Edom"; most of the Greek tradition (with the exception of the Lucianic recension and the recension of Origen) and the Syriac Peshitta lack "he placed garrisons." The MT reading appears here to be the result of a conflation of variant readings.

⁶ *tn* *Heb* "and David was doing what is just and fair for all his people."

⁷ *tn* *Heb* "was over."

⁸ *tc* Here Ahimelech is called "the son of Abiathar," but NCV, CEV, and REB reverse this to conform with 1 Sam 22:20. Most recent English versions (e.g., NAB, NASB, NIV, NRSV, NLT) retain the order found in the MT.

⁹ *tc* The translation follows the Syriac Peshitta, Targum, and Vulgate in reading "over," rather than the simple conjunction that appears in MT. See also the parallel passage in 1 Chr 18:17.

¹⁰ *sn* That David's sons could have been priests, in light of the fact that they were not of the priestly lineage, is strange. One must assume either (1) that the word "priest" (כֹּהֵן, *kohen*) during this period of time could be used in a broader sense of "chief ruler" (KJV); "chief minister" (ASV, NASB), or "royal adviser" (NIV), perhaps based on the parallel passage in 1 Chr 18:17 which has "the king's leading officials", or (2) that in David's day members of the king's family could function as a special category of "priests" (cf. NLT "priestly leaders"). The latter option seems to be the more straightforward way of understanding the word in 2 Sam 8:18.

¹¹ *sn* 2 Samuel 9–20 is known as the Succession Narrative. It is a literary unit that describes David's efforts at consolidating his own kingdom following the demise of King Saul; it also provides the transition to subsequent leadership on the part of David's successor Solomon.

¹² *tn* *Heb* "house."

¹³ *tn* *Heb* "your servant."

¹⁴ *tn* *Heb* "house."

¹⁵ *tn* *Heb* "sent and took him."

¹⁶ *tn* *Heb* "from."

¹⁷ *tn* *Heb* "he fell on his face and bowed down."

¹⁸ *tn* *Heb* "Look, your servant."

¹⁹ *tn* *Heb* "and you will eat food over my table continually."

²⁰ *tn* *Heb* "he"; the referent (Mephibosheth) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

²¹ *tn* *Heb* "What is your servant, that you turn to a dead dog which is like me?"

²² *tn* *Heb* "work."

²³ *tn* The Hebrew text implies, but does not actually contain, the words "its produce" here.

²⁴ *tc* The words "it will be," though present in the MT, are absent from the LXX, the Syriac Peshitta, and Vulgate.

²⁵ *tn* *Heb* "and he will eat it."

²⁶ *tn* *Heb* "eating."

²⁷ *tc* *Heb* "my table." But the first person reference to David is awkward here since the quotation of David's words has already been concluded in v. 10; nor does the "my" refer to Ziba, since the latter part of v. 11 does not seem to be part of Ziba's response to the king. The ancient versions are not unanimous in the way that they render the phrase. The LXX has "the table of David" (τῆς τραπέζης Δαυὶδ, *tēs trapezēs David*); the Syriac Peshitta has "the table of

9:12 Now Mephibosheth had a young son whose name was Mica. All the members of Ziba's household were Mephibosheth's servants. **9:13** Mephibosheth was living in Jerusalem,¹ for he was a regular guest at the king's table. But both his feet were crippled.

David and the Ammonites

10:1 Later the king of the Ammonites died and his son Hanun succeeded him.² **10:2** David said, "I will express my loyalty³ to Hanun son of Nahash just as his father was loyal⁴ to me." So David sent his servants with a message expressing sympathy over his father's death.⁵ When David's servants entered the land of the Ammonites, **10:3** the Ammonite officials said to their lord Hanun, "Do you really think David is trying to honor your father by sending these messengers to express his sympathy?⁶ No, David has sent his servants to you to get information about the city and spy on it so they can overthrow it!"⁷

10:4 So Hanun seized David's servants and shaved off half of each one's beard. He cut the lower part of their robes off so that their buttocks were exposed,⁸ and then sent them away. **10:5** Messengers⁹ told David what had happened,¹⁰ so he summoned them, for the men were thoroughly humiliated. The king said, "Stay in Jericho¹¹ until your beards have grown again; then you may come back."

10:6 When the Ammonites realized that David was disgusted with them,¹² they¹³ sent and hired 20,000 foot soldiers from Aram Beth Rehob and Aram Zobah,¹⁴ in addition to 1,000 men from the king of Maacah and 12,000 men from Ish-tob.¹⁵

the king" (*patureh demalka*); the Vulgate has "your table" (*mensam tuam*). The present translation follows the LXX.

¹ **map** For location see Map5-B1; Map6-F3; Map7-E2; Map8-F2; Map10-B3; JP1-F4; JP2-F4; JP3-F4; JP4-F4.

² **tn** *Heb* "reigned in his place."

³ **tn** *Heb* "do loyalty."

⁴ **tn** *Heb* "did loyalty."

⁵ **tn** *Heb* "and David sent to console him by the hand of his servants concerning his father."

⁶ **tn** *Heb* "Is David honoring your father in your eyes when he sends to you ones consoling?"

⁷ **tn** *Heb* "Is it not to explore the city and to spy on it and to overthrow it [that] David has sent his servants to you?"

⁸ **tn** *Heb* "and he cut their robes in the middle unto their buttocks."

⁹ **tn** *Heb* "they"; the referent (the messengers) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

¹⁰ **tn** The words "what had happened" are supplied in the translation for stylistic reasons.

¹¹ **map** For location see Map5-B2; Map6-E1; Map7-E1; Map8-E3; Map10-A2; Map11-A1.

¹² **tn** *Heb* "that they were a stench [i.e., disgusting] with David."

¹³ **tn** *Heb* "the Ammonites."

¹⁴ **tn** Or "Arameans of Beth Rehob and Arameans of Zobah."

¹⁵ **tn** Or perhaps "the men of Tob." The ancient versions (the LXX, the Syriac Peshitta, and Vulgate) understand the name to be "Ish-tob." It is possible that "Ish" is dittographic and that we should read simply "Tob," a reading adopted by a number of recent English versions.

10:7 When David heard the news, he sent Joab and the entire army to meet them.¹⁶ **10:8** The Ammonites marched out and were deployed for battle at the entrance of the city gate, while the men from Aram Zobah, Rehob, Ish-tob, and Maacah were by themselves in the field.

10:9 When Joab saw that the battle would be fought on two fronts, he chose some of Israel's best men and deployed them against the Arameans.¹⁷ **10:10** He put his brother Abishai in charge of the rest of the army¹⁸ and they were deployed¹⁹ against the Ammonites. **10:11** Joab²⁰ said, "If the Arameans start to overpower me,²¹ you come to my rescue. If the Ammonites start to overpower you,²² I will come to your rescue. **10:12** Be strong! Let's fight bravely for the sake of our people and the cities of our God! The LORD will do what he decides is best!"²³

10:13 So Joab and his men²⁴ marched out to do battle with the Arameans, and they fled before him. **10:14** When the Ammonites saw the Arameans flee, they fled before his brother Abishai and went into the city. Joab withdrew from fighting the Ammonites and returned to²⁵ Jerusalem.²⁶

10:15 When the Arameans realized that they had been defeated by Israel, they consolidated their forces.²⁷ **10:16** Then Hadadezer sent for Arameans from²⁸ beyond the Euphrates River,²⁹ and they came to Helam. Shobach, the general in command of Hadadezer's army, led them.³⁰

10:17 When David was informed, he gathered all Israel, crossed the Jordan River,³¹ and came to Helam. The Arameans deployed their forces against David and fought with him. **10:18** The Arameans fled before Israel. David killed 700 Aramean charioteers and 40,000 foot sol-

¹⁶ **tn** The words "the news" and "to meet them" are supplied in the translation for stylistic reasons and for clarification.

¹⁷ **tn** *Heb* "and Joab saw that the face of the battle was to him before and behind and he chose from all the best in Israel and arranged to meet Aram."

¹⁸ **tn** *Heb* "people."

¹⁹ **tn** *Heb* "he arranged."

²⁰ **tn** *Heb* "he"; the referent (Joab) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

²¹ **tn** *Heb* "if Aram is stronger than me."

²² **tn** *Heb* "if the sons of Ammon are stronger than you."

²³ **tn** *Heb* "and the LORD will do what is good in his eyes."

²⁴ **tn** *Heb* "and the army which was with him."

²⁵ **tn** *Heb* "and Joab returned from against the sons of Ammon and entered."

²⁶ **map** For location see Map5-B1; Map6-F3; Map7-E2; Map8-F2; Map10-B3; JP1-F4; JP2-F4; JP3-F4; JP4-F4.

²⁷ **tn** *Heb* "were gathered together."

²⁸ **tn** *Heb* "and Hadadezer sent and brought out Aram which is."

²⁹ **tn** *Heb* "from beyond the River." The name "Euphrates" has been supplied in the translation for clarity.

³⁰ **tn** *Heb* "was before them."

³¹ **tn** The word "River" is not in the Hebrew text, but has been supplied in the translation for clarity.

diers.¹ He also struck down Shobach, the general in command of the army, who died there. **10:19** When all the kings who were subject to Hadadezer² saw they were defeated by Israel, they made peace with Israel and became subjects of Israel.³ The Arameans were no longer willing to help the Ammonites.

David Commits Adultery with Bathsheba

11:1 In the spring of the year, at the time when kings⁴ normally conduct wars,⁵ David sent out Joab with his officers⁶ and the entire Israelite army.⁷ They defeated the Ammonites and besieged Rabbah. But David stayed behind in Jerusalem.⁸ **11:2** One evening David got up from his bed and walked around on the roof of his palace.⁹ From the roof he saw a woman bathing. Now this woman was very attractive.¹⁰ **11:3** So David sent someone to inquire about the woman. The messenger¹¹ said, "Isn't this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?"

11:4 David sent some messengers to get her.¹² She came to him and he had sexual relations with her.¹³ (Now at that time she was in the process of purifying herself from her menstrual uncleanness.)¹⁴ Then she returned to her home. **11:5** The woman conceived and then sent word to David saying, "I'm pregnant."

11:6 So David sent a message to Joab that said, "Send me Uriah the Hittite." So Joab sent Uriah to David. **11:7** When Uriah came to him, David asked about how Joab and the army were

doing and how the campaign was going.¹⁵ **11:8** Then David said to Uriah, "Go down to your home and relax."¹⁶ When Uriah left the palace, the king sent a gift to him.¹⁷ **11:9** But Uriah stayed at the door of the palace with all¹⁸ the servants of his lord. He did not go down to his house.

11:10 So they informed David, "Uriah has not gone down to his house." So David said to Uriah, "Haven't you just arrived from a journey? Why haven't you gone down to your house?" **11:11** Uriah replied to David, "The ark and Israel and Judah reside in temporary shelters, and my lord Joab and my lord's soldiers are camping in the open field. Should I go to my house to eat and drink and have marital relations¹⁹ with my wife? As surely as you are alive,²⁰ I will not do this thing!" **11:12** So David said to Uriah, "Stay here another day. Tomorrow I will send you back." So Uriah stayed in Jerusalem both that day and the following one.²¹ **11:13** Then David summoned him. He ate and drank with him, and got him drunk. But in the evening he went out to sleep on his bed with the servants of his lord; he did not go down to his own house.

11:14 In the morning David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it with Uriah. **11:15** In the letter he wrote: "Station Uriah in the thick of the battle and then withdraw from him so he will be cut down and killed."

11:16 So as Joab kept watch on the city, he stationed Uriah at the place where he knew the best enemy soldiers²² were. **11:17** When the men of the city came out and fought with Joab, some of David's soldiers²³ fell in battle. Uriah the Hittite also died.

11:18 Then Joab sent a full battle report to David.²⁴ **11:19** He instructed the messenger as follows: "When you finish giving the battle report to the king, **11:20** if the king becomes angry and asks you, 'Why did you go so close to the city to fight? Didn't you realize they would shoot from the wall?' **11:21** Who struck down Abimelech the son of Jerub-Besheth? Didn't a

¹ **tn** Heb "horsemen" (so KJV, NASB, NCV, NRSV, NLT) but the Lucianic recension of the LXX reads "foot soldiers," as does the parallel text in 1 Chr 19:18. Cf. NAB, NIV.

² **tn** Heb "the servants of Hadadezer."

³ **tn** Heb "and they served them."

⁴ **tc** Codex Leningrad (B19A), on which BHS is based, has here "messengers" (הַמְלָאִים, *hammal'khim*), probably as the result of contamination from the occurrence of that word in v. 4. The present translation follows most Hebrew MSS and the ancient versions, which read "kings" (הַמְלָכִים, *hammela'kim*).

⁵ **tn** Heb "go out."

⁶ **tn** Heb "and his servants with him."

⁷ **tn** Heb "all Israel."

⁸ **tn** The disjunctive clause contrasts David's inactivity with the army's activity.

map For location see Map5-B1; Map6-F3; Map7-E2; Map8-F2; Map10-B3; JP1-F4; JP2-F4; JP3-F4; JP4-F4.

⁹ **tn** Heb "on the roof of the house of the king." So also in vv. 8, 9.

¹⁰ **tn** The disjunctive clause highlights this observation and builds the tension of the story.

¹¹ **tn** Heb "he"; the referent (the messenger) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

¹² **tn** Heb "and David sent messengers and he took her."

¹³ **tn** Heb "he lay with her" (so NASB, NRSV); TEV "he made love to her"; NIV, CEV, NLT "he slept with her."

¹⁴ **tn** The parenthetical disjunctive clause further heightens the tension by letting the reader know that Bathsheba, having just completed her menstrual cycle, is ripe for conception. See P. K. McCarter, *II Samuel* (AB), 286. Since she just had her period, it will also be obvious to those close to the scene that Uriah, who has been away fighting, cannot be the father of the child.

¹⁵ **tn** Heb "concerning the peace of Joab and concerning the peace of the people and concerning the peace of the battle."

¹⁶ **tn** Heb "and wash your feet."

¹⁷ **tn** Heb "and there went out after him the gift of the king."

¹⁸ **tc** The Lucianic recension of the Old Greek translation lacks the word "all."

¹⁹ **tn** Heb "and lay."

²⁰ **tn** Heb "as you live and as your soul lives."

²¹ **tn** On the chronology involved here see P. K. McCarter, *II Samuel* (AB), 287.

²² **tn** Heb "the valiant men." This refers in context to the strongest or most valiant defenders of the city Joab and the Israelite army were besieging, so the present translation uses "the best enemy soldiers" for clarity.

²³ **tn** Heb "some of the people from the servants of David."

²⁴ **tn** Heb "Joab sent and related to David all the matters of the battle."

woman throw an upper millstone⁴ down on him from the wall so that he died in Thebez? Why did you go so close to the wall?" just say to him, "Your servant Uriah the Hittite is also dead."

11:22 So the messenger departed. When he arrived, he informed David of all the news that Joab had sent with him. **11:23** The messenger said to David, "The men overpowered us and attacked us² in the field. But we forced them to retreat all the way³ to the door of the city gate. **11:24** Then the archers shot at your servants from the wall and some of the king's soldiers⁴ died. Your servant Uriah the Hittite is also dead." **11:25** David said to the messenger, "Tell Joab, 'Don't let this thing upset you.⁵ There is no way to anticipate whom the sword will cut down.⁶ Press the battle against the city and conquer⁷ it.' Encourage him with these words."⁸

11:26 When Uriah's wife heard that her husband Uriah was dead, she mourned for him.⁹ **11:27** When the time of mourning passed, David had her brought to his palace.¹⁰ She became his wife and she bore him a son. But what David had done upset the LORD.¹¹

Nathan the Prophet Confronts David

12:1 So the LORD sent Nathan¹² to David. When he came to David,¹³ Nathan¹⁴ said,¹⁵ "There were two men in a certain city, one rich and the other poor. **12:2** The rich man had a great many flocks and herds. **12:3** But the poor man had nothing except for a little lamb he had acquired. He raised it, and it grew up alongside him and his children.¹⁶ It used to¹⁷ eat his food,¹⁸

drink from his cup, and sleep in his arms.¹⁹ It was just like a daughter to him.

12:4 "When a traveler arrived at the rich man's home,²⁰ he did not want to use one of his own sheep or cattle to feed²¹ the traveler who had come to visit him.²² Instead, he took the poor man's lamb and cooked²³ it for the man who had come to visit him."

12:5 Then David became very angry at this man. He said to Nathan, "As surely as the LORD lives, the man who did this deserves to die!²⁴ **12:6** Because he committed this cold-hearted crime, he must pay for the lamb four times over!"²⁵

12:7 Nathan said to David, "You are that man! This is what the LORD God of Israel says: 'I chose²⁶ you to be king over Israel and I rescued you from the hand of Saul. **12:8** I gave you your master's house, and put your master's wives into your arms.²⁷ I also gave you the house of Israel and Judah. And if all that somehow seems insignificant, I would have given you so much more as well! **12:9** Why have you shown contempt for the word of the LORD by doing evil in my²⁸ sight? You have struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword and you have taken his wife as your own!²⁹ You have killed him with the sword of the Ammonites. **12:10** So now the sword will never depart from your house. For you have despised me by taking the wife of Uriah the Hittite as your own!' **12:11** This is what the LORD says: 'I am about to bring disaster on you³⁰ from inside your own house-

¹ **sn** The *upper millstone* (Heb "millstone of riding") refers to the heavy circular stone that was commonly rolled over a circular base in order to crush and grind such things as olives.

² **tn** Heb "and came out to us."

³ **tn** Heb "but we were on them."

⁴ **tc** The translation follows the *Qere* ("your servants") rather than the *Kethib* ("your servant").

⁵ **tn** Heb "let not this matter be evil in your eyes."

⁶ **tn** Heb "according to this and according to this the sword devours."

⁷ **tn** Heb "overthrow."

⁸ **tn** The Hebrew text does not have "with these words." They are supplied in the translation for clarity and for stylistic reasons.

⁹ **tn** Heb "for her lord."

¹⁰ **tn** Heb "David sent and gathered her to his house."

¹¹ **tn** Heb "and the thing which David had done was evil in the eyes of the LORD." Note the verbal connection with v. 25. Though David did not regard the matter as evil, the LORD certainly did.

¹² **tc** A few medieval Hebrew mss, the LXX, and the Syriac Peshitta add "the prophet." The words are included in a few modern English versions (e.g., TEV, CEV, NLT).

¹³ **tn** Heb "him"; the referent (David) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

¹⁴ **tn** Heb "he"; the referent (Nathan) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

¹⁵ **tn** The Hebrew text repeats "to him."

¹⁶ **tn** Heb "his sons."

¹⁷ **tn** The three Hebrew imperfect verbal forms in this sentence have a customary nuance; they describe past actions that were repeated or typical.

¹⁸ **tn** Heb "from his morsel."

¹⁹ **tn** Heb "and on his chest [or perhaps, "lap"] it would lie."

²⁰ **tn** Heb "came to the rich man." In the translation "arrived at the rich man's home" has been used for stylistic reasons.

²¹ **tn** Heb "and he refused to take from his flock and from his herd to prepare [a meal] for."

²² **tn** Heb "who had come to him" (also a second time later in this verse). The word "visit" has been supplied in the translation for stylistic reasons and for clarity.

²³ **tn** Heb "and prepared."

²⁴ **tn** Heb "the man doing this [is] a son of death." See 1 Sam 20:31 for another use of this expression, which must mean "he is as good as dead" or "he deserves to die," as 1 Sam 20:32 makes clear.

²⁵ **tc** With the exception of the Lucianic recension, the Old Greek translation has here "sevenfold" rather than "fourfold," a reading that S. R. Driver thought probably to be the original reading (S. R. Driver, *Notes on the Hebrew Text and the Topography of the Books of Samuel*, 291). However, Exod 22:1 [21:37 HT] specifies fourfold repayment for a stolen sheep, which is consistent with 2 Sam 12:6. Some mss of the Targum and the Syriac Peshitta exaggerate the idea to "fortyfold."

²⁶ **tn** Heb "the lamb he must repay fourfold because he did this thing and because he did not have compassion."

²⁷ **tn** Heb "anointed."

²⁸ **tn** Heb "and the wives of your lord into your chest [or "lap"]." The words "I put" are supplied in the translation for stylistic reasons and for clarification.

²⁹ **tc** So the *Qere*; the *Kethib* has "his."

³⁰ **tn** Heb "to you for a wife." This expression also occurs at the end of v. 10.

³¹ **tn** Heb "raise up against you disaster."

hold!¹ Right before your eyes I will take your wives and hand them over to your companion.² He will have sexual relations with³ your wives in broad daylight!⁴ **12:12** Although you have acted in secret, I will do this thing before all Israel, and in broad daylight.”⁵

12:13 Then David exclaimed to Nathan, “I have sinned against the LORD!” Nathan replied to David, “Yes, and the LORD has forgiven⁶ your sin. You are not going to die. **12:14** Nonetheless, because you have treated the LORD with such contempt⁷ in this matter, the son who has been born to you will certainly die.”

12:15 Then Nathan went to his home. The LORD struck the child that Uriah’s wife had borne to David, and the child became very ill.⁸ **12:16** Then David prayed to⁹ God for the child and fasted.¹⁰ He would even¹¹ go and spend the night lying on the ground. **12:17** The elders of his house stood over him and tried to lift him from the ground, but he was unwilling, and refused to eat food with them.

12:18 On the seventh day the child died. But the servants of David were afraid to inform him that the child had died, for they said, “While the child was still alive he would not listen to us¹² when we spoke to him. How can we tell him that the child is dead? He will do himself harm!”¹³

12:19 When David saw that his servants were whispering to one another, he¹⁴ realized that the child was dead. So David asked his servants, “Is the child dead?” They replied, “Yes, he’s dead.” **12:20** So David got up from the ground, bathed, put on oil, and changed his

clothes. He went to the house of the LORD and worshiped. Then, when he entered his palace, he requested that food be brought to him, and he ate.

12:21 His servants said to him, “What is this that you have done? While¹⁵ the child was still alive, you fasted and wept. Once the child was dead you got up and ate food!” **12:22** He replied, “While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept because I thought,¹⁶ ‘Perhaps¹⁷ the LORD will show pity and the child will live. **12:23** But now he is dead. Why should I fast? Am I able to bring him back? I will go to him, but he cannot return to me!’”

12:24 So David comforted his wife Bathsheba. He went to her and had marital relations with her.¹⁸ She gave birth to a son, and David¹⁹ named him Solomon. Now the LORD loved the child²⁰ **12:25** and sent word through Nathan the prophet that he should be named Jedidiah²¹ for the LORD’s sake.

David’s Forces Defeat the Ammonites

12:26²² So Joab fought against Rabbah of the Ammonites and captured the royal city. **12:27** Joab then sent messengers to David, saying, “I have fought against Rabbah and have captured the water supply of the city.²³ **12:28** So now assemble the rest of the army²⁴ and besiege the city and capture it. Otherwise I will capture the city and it will be named for me.”

12:29 So David assembled all the army and went to Rabbah and fought against it and

¹ **tn** *Heb* “house” (so NAB, NRSV); NCV, TEV, CEV “family.”

² **tn** Or “friend.”

³ **tn** *Heb* “will lie with” (so NIV, NRSV); TEV “will have intercourse with”; CEV, NLT “will go to bed with.”

⁴ **tn** *Heb* “in the eyes of this sun.”

⁵ **tn** *Heb* “and before the sun.”

⁶ **tn** *Heb* “removed.”

⁷ **tc** The MT has here “because you have caused the enemies of the LORD to treat the LORD with such contempt.” This is one of the so-called *tiquqne sopherim*, or “emendations of the scribes.” According to this ancient tradition, the scribes changed the text in order to soften somewhat the negative light in which David was presented. If that is the case, the MT reflects the altered text. The present translation departs from the MT here. Elsewhere the Piel stem of this verb means “treat with contempt,” but never “cause someone to treat with contempt.”

⁸ **tn** *Heb* “and the LORD struck the child...and he was ill.” It is necessary to repeat “the child” in the translation to make clear who became ill, since “the LORD struck the child that Uriah’s wife had borne to David, and he became very ill” could be understood to mean that David himself became ill.

⁹ **tn** *Heb* “sought” or “searched for.”

¹⁰ **tn** *Heb* “and David fasted.”

¹¹ **tn** The three Hebrew verbs that follow in this verse are perfects with prefixed *vav*. They may describe repeated past actions or actions which accompanied David’s praying and fasting.

¹² **tn** *Heb* “to our voice.”

¹³ **tn** *Heb* “he will do harm.” The object is not stated in the Hebrew text. The statement may be intentionally vague, meaning that he might harm himself or them!

¹⁴ **tn** *Heb* “David.” The name has been replaced in the translation by the pronoun (“he”) for stylistic reasons.

¹⁵ **tc** For the MT *בְּעוֹדוֹ* (*ba’avur*, “for the sake of”) we should probably read *בְּעוֹדוֹ* (*b’e’od*, “while”). See the Lucianic Greek recension, the Syriac Peshitta, and the Targum.

¹⁶ **tn** *Heb* “said.”

¹⁷ **tn** *Heb* “Who knows?”

¹⁸ **tn** *Heb* “and he lay with her.”

¹⁹ **tn** *Heb* “he”; the referent (David) has been specified in the translation for clarity. While some translations render the pronoun as third person plural (“they”), implying that both David and Bathsheba together named the child, it is likely that the name “Solomon,” which is related to the Hebrew word for “peace” (and may be derived from it) had special significance for David, who would have regarded the birth of a second child to Bathsheba as a confirming sign that God had forgiven his sin and was at peace with him.

²⁰ **tn** *Heb* “him,” referring to the child.

²¹ **sn** The name *Jedidiah* means “loved by the LORD.”

²² **sn** Here the narrative resumes the battle story that began in 11:1 (see 11:25). The author has interrupted that story to give the related account of David’s sin with Bathsheba and the murder of Uriah. He now returns to the earlier story and brings it to a conclusion.

²³ **sn** The expression translated the *water supply of the city* (*Heb* “the city of the waters”) apparently refers to that part of the fortified city that guarded the water supply of the entire city. Joab had already captured this part of the city, but he now defers to King David for the capture of the rest of the city. In this way the king will receive the credit for this achievement.

²⁴ **tn** *Heb* “people.” So also in vv. 29, 31.

captured it. **12:30** He took the crown of their king¹ from his head – it was gold, weighed about seventy-five pounds,² and held a precious stone – and it was placed on David’s head. He also took from the city a great deal of plunder. **12:31** He removed³ the people who were in it and made them do hard labor with saws, iron picks, and iron axes, putting them to work at the brick kiln. This was his policy⁴ with all the Ammonite cities. Then David and all the army returned to Jerusalem.⁵

The Rape of Tamar

13:1 Now David’s son Absalom had a beautiful sister named Tamar. In the course of time David’s son Amnon fell madly in love with her.⁶ **13:2** But Amnon became frustrated because he was so love-sick⁷ over his sister Tamar. For she was a virgin, and to Amnon it seemed out of the question to do anything to her.

13:3 Now Amnon had a friend named Jonadab, the son of David’s brother Shimeah. Jonadab was a very crafty man. **13:4** He asked Amnon,⁸ “Why are you, the king’s son,⁹ so depressed every morning? Can’t you tell me?” So Amnon said to him, “I’m in love with Tamar the sister of my brother Absalom.” **13:5** Jonadab replied to him, “Lie down on your bed and pretend to be sick.¹⁰ When your father comes in to see you, say to him, ‘Please let my sister Tamar come in so she can fix some food for me. Let her prepare the food in my sight so I can watch. Then I will eat from her hand.’”

13:6 So Amnon lay down and pretended to be sick. When the king came in to see him, Amnon said to the king, “Please let my sister Tamar

come in so she can make a couple of cakes in my sight. Then I will eat from her hand.”

13:7 So David sent Tamar to the house saying, “Please go to the house of Amnon your brother and prepare some food for him.” **13:8** So Tamar went to the house of Amnon her brother, who was lying down. She took the dough, kneaded it, made some cakes while he watched,¹¹ and baked them.¹² **13:9** But when she took the pan and set it before him, he refused to eat. Instead Amnon said, “Get everyone out of here!”¹³ So everyone left.¹⁴

13:10 Then Amnon said to Tamar, “Bring the cakes into the bedroom; then I will eat from your hand.” So Tamar took the cakes that she had prepared and brought them to her brother Amnon in the bedroom. **13:11** As she brought them to him to eat, he grabbed her and said to her, “Come on! Get in bed with me,¹⁵ my sister!”

13:12 But she said to him, “No, my brother! Don’t humiliate me! This just isn’t done in Israel! Don’t do this foolish thing! **13:13** How could I ever be rid of my humiliation? And you would be considered one of the fools¹⁶ in Israel! Just¹⁷ speak to the king, for he will not withhold me from you.” **13:14** But he refused to listen to her.¹⁸ He overpowered her and humiliated her by raping her.¹⁹ **13:15** Then Amnon greatly despised her.²⁰ His disdain toward her surpassed the love he had previously felt toward her.²¹ Amnon said to her, “Get up and leave!”

13:16 But she said to him, “No I won’t, for sending me away now would be worse than what you did to me earlier!”²² But he refused to listen to her. **13:17** He called his personal attendant and said to him, “Take this woman out of my sight²³ and lock the door behind her!” **13:18** (Now she was wearing a long robe,²⁴ for this is

¹ **tn** Part of the Greek tradition wrongly understands Hebrew מלכתם (*malakatam*, “their king”) as a proper name (“Milcom”). Some English versions follow the Greek here, rendering the phrase “the crown of Milcom” (so NRSV; cf. also NAB, CEV). TEV takes this as a reference not to the Ammonite king but to “the idol of the Ammonite god Molech.”

² **tn** *Heb* “and its weight [was] a talent of gold.” The weight of this ornamental crown was approximately 75 lbs (34 kg). See P. K. McCarter, *II Samuel* (AB), 313.

³ **tn** *Heb* “brought out.”

⁴ **tn** *Heb* “and so he would do.”

⁵ **map** For location see Map5-B1; Map6-F3; Map7-E2; Map8-F2; Map10-B3; JP1-F4; JP2-F4; JP3-F4; JP4-F4.

⁶ **tn** *Heb* “Amnon the son of David loved her.” The following verse indicates the extreme nature of his infatuation, so the translation uses “madly in love” here.

⁷ **sn** Amnon was the half-brother of Tamar; Absalom was her full blood-brother.

⁸ **tn** *Heb* “and there was distress to Amnon so that he made himself sick.”

⁹ **tn** *Heb* “and he said to him.”

¹⁰ **tn** An more idiomatic translation might be “Why are you of all people...?”

¹¹ **tn** This verb is used in the Hitpael stem only in this chapter of the Hebrew Bible. With the exception of v. 2 it describes not a real sickness but one pretended in order to entrap Tamar. The Hitpael sometimes, as here, describes the subject making oneself appear to be of a certain character. On this use of the stem, see GKC 149-50 §54.e.

¹¹ **tn** *Heb* “in his sight.”

¹² **tn** *Heb* “the cakes.”

¹³ **tn** *Heb* “from upon me.”

¹⁴ **tc** A few medieval Hebrew mss have “and they removed everyone” (Hiphil preterite with *vav* consecutive 3cp, rather than Qal preterite with *vav* consecutive 3cp).

¹⁵ **tn** *Heb* “lie with me” (so NAB, NASB, NRSV); NCV “come and have sexual relations with me.”

¹⁶ **tn** *Heb* “and you will be like one of the fools.”

¹⁷ **tn** *Heb* “Now.”

¹⁸ **tn** *Heb* “to her voice.”

¹⁹ **tn** *Heb* “and he humiliated her and lay with her.”

²⁰ **tn** *Heb* “and Amnon hated her with very great hatred.”

²¹ **tn** *Heb* “for greater was the hatred with which he hated her than the love with which he loved her.”

²² **tn** *Heb* “No, because this great evil is [worse] than the other which you did with me, by sending me away.” Perhaps the broken syntax reflects her hysteria and outrage.

²³ **tn** *Heb* “send this [one] from upon me to the outside.”

²⁴ **tn** The Hebrew expression used here (בגנת פסים, *k²tonet passim*) is found only here and in Gen 37:3, 23, 32. Hebrew פס (*pas*) can refer to the palm of the hand or the sole of the foot; here the idea is probably that of a long robe reaching to the feet and having sleeves reaching to the wrists. The notion of a “coat of many colors” (KJV, ASV “garment of divers colors”), a familiar translation for the phrase in Genesis, is based primarily on the translation adopted in the LXX χιτώνα ποικίλου (*chitona poikilion*) and does not have a great deal of support.

what the king's virgin daughters used to wear.) So Amnon's⁴ attendant removed her and bolted the door² behind her. **13:19** Then Tamar put ashes on her head and tore the long robe she was wearing. She put her hands on her head and went on her way, wailing as she went.

13:20 Her brother Absalom said to her, "Was Amnon your brother with you? Now be quiet, my sister. He is your brother. Don't take it so seriously!"³ Tamar, devastated, lived in the house of her brother Absalom.

13:21 Now King David heard about all these things and was very angry.⁴ **13:22** But Absalom said nothing to Amnon, either bad or good, yet Absalom hated Amnon because he had humiliated his sister Tamar.

Absalom Has Amnon Put to Death

13:23 Two years later Absalom's sheepshearers were in Baal Hazor,⁵ near Ephraim. Absalom invited all the king's sons. **13:24** Then Absalom went to the king and said, "My shearers have begun their work.⁶ Let the king and his servants go with me."

13:25 But the king said to Absalom, "No, my son. We shouldn't all go. We shouldn't burden you in that way." Though Absalom⁷ pressed⁸ him, the king⁹ was not willing to go. Instead, David¹⁰ blessed him.

13:26 Then Absalom said, "If you will not go,¹¹ then let my brother Amnon go with us." The king replied to him, "Why should he go with you?" **13:27** But when Absalom pressed him, he sent Amnon and all the king's sons along with him.

13:28 Absalom instructed his servants, "Look! When Amnon is drunk¹² and I say to

you, 'Strike Amnon down,' kill him then and there. Don't fear! Is it not I who have given you these instructions? Be strong and courageous!"¹³ **13:29** So Absalom's servants did to Amnon exactly what Absalom had instructed. Then all the king's sons got up; each one rode away on his mule and fled.

13:30 While they were still on their way, the following report reached David: "Absalom has killed all the king's sons; not one of them is left!" **13:31** Then the king stood up and tore his garments and lay down on the ground. All his servants were standing there with torn garments as well.

13:32 Jonadab, the son of David's brother Shimeah, said, "My lord should not say, 'They have killed all the young men who are the king's sons.' For only Amnon is dead. This is what Absalom has talked about¹⁴ from the day that Amnon¹⁵ humiliated his sister Tamar. **13:33** Now don't let my lord the king be concerned about the report that has come saying, 'All the king's sons are dead.' It is only Amnon who is dead."

13:34 In the meantime Absalom fled. When the servant who was the watchman looked up, he saw many people coming from the west¹⁶ on a road beside the hill. **13:35** Jonadab said to the king, "Look! The king's sons have come! It's just as I said!"

13:36 Just as he finished speaking, the king's sons arrived, wailing and weeping.¹⁷ The king and all his servants wept loudly¹⁸ as well. **13:37** But Absalom fled and went to King Talmi son of Ammihud of Geshur. And David¹⁹ grieved over his son every day.

13:38 After Absalom fled and went to Geshur, he remained there for three years. **13:39** The king longed²⁰ to go to Absalom, for he had since been consoled over the death of Amnon.²¹

¹ **tn** Heb "his"; the referent (Amnon) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

² **tn** The Hebrew verb is a perfect with nonconsecutive *vav*, probably indicating an action (locking the door) that complements the preceding one (pushing her out the door).

³ **tn** Heb "Don't set your heart to this thing!"

⁴ **tc** The LXX and part of the Old Latin tradition include the following addition to v. 21, also included in some English versions (e.g., NAB, NRSV, CEV): "But he did not grieve the spirit of Amnon his son, because he loved him, since he was his firstborn." Note David's attitude toward his son Adonijah in 1 Kgs 1:6.

⁵ **map** For location see Map1-D2; Map2-D3; Map3-A2; Map4-C1.

⁶ **tn** Heb "your servant has sheepshearers." The phrase "your servant" also occurs at the end of the verse.

⁷ **tn** Heb "he"; the referent (Absalom) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

⁸ **tc** Here and in v. 27 the translation follows 4QSam^a **יִצְרַח** (*vayyitspar*, "and he pressed") rather than the MT **יָצַח** (*vayyiprats*, "and he broke through"). This emended reading seems also to underlie the translations of the LXX (**καὶ ἐβίβασατο**, *kai ebiasato*), the Syriac Peshitta (*we'alseh*), and Vulgate (*cogetur eum*).

⁹ **tn** Heb "he"; the referent (the king) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

¹⁰ **tn** Heb "he"; the referent (David) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

¹¹ **tn** Heb "and not."

¹² **tn** Heb "when good is the heart of Amnon with wine."

¹³ **tn** Heb "and become sons of valor."

¹⁴ **tn** Heb "it was placed on the mouth of Absalom."

¹⁵ **tn** Heb "he"; the referent (Amnon) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

¹⁶ **tn** Heb "behind him."

¹⁷ **tn** Heb "and they lifted their voice and wept."

¹⁸ **tn** Heb "with a great weeping."

¹⁹ **tc** The Hebrew text leaves the word "David" to be inferred. The Syriac Peshitta and Vulgate add the word "David." Most of the Greek tradition includes the words "King David" here.

²⁰ **tc** The translation follows 4QSam^a in reading **דָּוִד הַמֶּלֶךְ** (*ruakh hammelekh*, "the spirit of the king") rather than the MT **דָּוִד הַמִּלְכָּה** (*david hammelekh*, "David the king"). The understanding reflected in the translation above is that David, though alienated during this time from his son Absalom, still had an abiding love and concern for him. He longed for reconciliation with him. A rather different interpretation of the verse supposes that David's interest in taking military action against Absalom grew slack with the passing of time, and this in turn enabled David's advisers to encourage him toward reconciliation with Absalom. For the latter view, see P. K. McCarter, *II Samuel* (AB), 344, and cf. CEV.

²¹ **tn** Heb "was consoled over Amnon, because he was dead."

David Permits Absalom to Return to Jerusalem

14:1 Now Joab son of Zeruiah realized that the king longed to see¹ Absalom. **14:2** So Joab sent to Tekoa and brought from there a wise woman. He told her, “Pretend to be in mourning² and put on garments for mourning. Don’t anoint yourself with oil. Instead, act like a woman who has been mourning for the dead for some time.³ **14:3** Go to the king and speak to him in the following fashion.” Then Joab told her what to say.⁴

14:4 So the Tekoan woman went⁵ to the king. She bowed down with her face to the ground in deference to him and said, “Please help me,⁶ O king!” **14:5** The king replied to her, “What do you want?”⁷ She answered, “I am a widow; my husband is dead. **14:6** Your servant⁸ has two sons. When the two of them got into a fight in the field, there was no one present who could intervene. One of them struck the other and killed him. **14:7** Now the entire family has risen up against your servant, saying, ‘Turn over the one who struck down his brother, so that we can execute him and avenge the death⁹ of his brother whom he killed. In so doing we will also destroy the heir.’ They want to extinguish my remaining coal,¹⁰ leaving no one on the face of the earth to carry on the name of my husband.”

14:8 Then the king told the woman, “Go to your home. I will give instructions concerning your situation.”¹¹ **14:9** The Tekoan woman said to the king, “My lord the king, let any blame fall on me and on the house of my father. But let the king and his throne be innocent!”

14:10 The king said, “Bring to me whoever speaks to you, and he won’t bother you again!”

14:11 She replied, “In that case,¹² let the king invoke the name of¹³ the LORD your God so that the avenger of blood may not kill! Then they will not destroy my son!” He replied, “As surely as the LORD lives, not a single hair of your son’s head¹⁴ will fall to the ground.”

14:12 Then the woman said, “Please permit your servant to speak to my lord the king about another matter.” He replied, “Tell me.” **14:13** The woman said, “Why have you devised something like this against God’s people? When the king speaks in this fashion, he makes himself guilty, for the king has not brought back the one he has banished. **14:14** Certainly we must die, and are like water spilled on the ground that cannot be gathered up again. But God does not take away life; instead he devises ways for the banished to be restored.¹⁵ **14:15** I have now come to speak with my lord the king about this matter, because the people have made me fearful.¹⁶ But your servant said, ‘I will speak to the king! Perhaps the king will do what his female servant¹⁷ asks. **14:16** Yes!¹⁸ The king may¹⁹ listen and deliver his female servant²⁰ from the hand of the man who seeks to remove²¹ both me and my son from the inheritance God has given us!’²² **14:17** So your servant said, ‘May the word of my lord the king be my security, for my lord the king is like the angel of God when it comes to deciding between right and wrong! May the LORD your God be with you!’”

14:18 Then the king replied to the woman, “Don’t hide any information from me when I question you.” The woman said, “Let my lord the king speak!” **14:19** The king said, “Did Joab put you up to all of this?”²³ The woman an-

¹ **tn** *Heb* “the heart of the king was upon.” The Syriac Peshitta adds the verb *’ethre’i* (“was reconciled”).

² **tn** The Hebrew Hitpael verbal form here indicates pretend-
ed rather than genuine action.

³ **tn** *Heb* “these many days.”

⁴ **tn** *Heb* “put the words in her mouth” (so NASB, NIV).

⁵ **tc** The translation follows many medieval Hebrew MSS in reading וַתֵּבֵא (vattavo, “and she went”) rather than the MT וַתֵּבֵא (vatto’mer, “and she said”). The MT reading shows confusion with וַתֵּבֵא later in the verse. The emendation suggested here is supported by the LXX, the Syriac Peshitta, some MSS of the Targum, and Vulgate.

⁶ **tn** The word “me” is left to be inferred in the Hebrew text; it is present in the Syriac Peshitta and Vulgate.

⁷ **tn** *Heb* “What to you?”

⁸ **tn** Here and elsewhere (vv. 7, 12, 15a, 17, 19) the woman uses a term which suggests a lower level female servant. She uses the term to express her humility before the king. However, she uses a different term in v. 15b-16. See the note at v. 15 for a discussion of the rhetorical purpose of this switch in terminology.

⁹ **tn** *Heb* “in exchange for the life.” The Hebrew preposition ב (b, “in”) here is the so-called *bet pretii*, or *bet* (ב) of price, defining the value attached to someone or something.

¹⁰ **sn** *My remaining coal* is here metaphorical language, describing the one remaining son as her only source of lingering hope for continuing the family line.

¹¹ **tn** *Heb* “concerning you.”

¹² **tn** The words “in that case” are not in the Hebrew text, but may be inferred from the context. They are supplied in the translation for the sake of clarification.

¹³ **tn** *Heb* “let the king remember.”

¹⁴ **tn** *Heb* “of your son.”

¹⁵ **tn** *Heb* “he devises plans for the one banished from him not to be banished.”

¹⁶ **tc** The LXX (ὀψεταιί με, *opsetai me*) has misunderstood the Hebrew יִרְאוּ (yer’uni, Piel perfect, “they have made me fearful”), taking the verb to be a form of the verb רָאָה (*ra’ah*, “to see”) rather than the verb יָרָא (*yare’*, “to fear”). The fact that the Greek translators were working with an unvocalized Hebrew text (i.e., consonants only) made them very susceptible to this type of error.

¹⁷ **tn** Here and in v. 16 the woman refers to herself as the king’s אַמָּה (*amah*), a term that refers to a higher level female servant toward whom the master might have some obligation. Like the other term, this word expresses her humility, but it also suggests that the king might have some obligation to treat her in accordance with the principles of justice.

¹⁸ **tn** Or “for.”

¹⁹ **tn** Or “will.” The imperfect verbal form can have either an indicative or modal nuance. The use of “perhaps” in v. 15b suggests the latter here.

²⁰ **tn** *Heb* “in order to deliver his maid.”

²¹ **tn** *Heb* “destroy.”

²² **tn** *Heb* “from the inheritance of God.” The expression refers to the property that was granted to her family line in the division of the land authorized by God.

²³ **tn** *Heb* “Is the hand of Joab with you in all this?”

swered, “As surely as you live, my lord the king, there is no deviation to the right or to the left from all that my lord the king has said. For your servant Joab gave me instructions. He has put all these words in your servant’s mouth. **14:20** Your servant Joab did this so as to change this situation. But my lord has wisdom like that of the angel of God, and knows everything that is happening in the land.”¹

14:21 Then the king said to Joab, “All right! I² will do this thing! Go and bring back the young man Absalom! **14:22** Then Joab bowed down with his face toward the ground and thanked³ the king. Joab said, “Today your servant knows that I have found favor in your sight, my lord the king, because the king has granted the request of your⁴ servant!”

14:23 So Joab got up and went to Geshur and brought Absalom back to Jerusalem.⁵ **14:24** But the king said, “Let him go over⁶ to his own house. He may not see my face.” So Absalom went over⁷ to his own house; he did not see the king’s face.

14:25 Now in all Israel everyone acknowledged that there was no man as handsome as Absalom.⁸ From the sole of his feet to the top of his head he was perfect in appearance.⁹ **14:26** When he would shave his head – at the end of every year he used to shave his head, for it grew too long¹⁰ and he would shave it – he used to weigh the hair of his head at three pounds¹¹ according to the king’s weight. **14:27** Absalom had¹² three sons and one daughter, whose name was Tamar. She was a very attractive woman.¹³

14:28 Absalom lived in Jerusalem for two years without seeing the king’s face. **14:29** Then Absalom sent a message to Joab asking him to send him to the king, but Joab was not willing to come to him. So he sent a second message to him, but he still was not willing to come. **14:30** So he said to his servants, “Look, Joab has a portion of field adjacent to mine and he has

some barley there. Go and set it on fire.”¹⁴ So Absalom’s servants set Joab’s¹⁵ portion of the field on fire.

14:31 Then Joab got up and came to Absalom’s house. He said to him, “Why did your servants set my portion of field on fire?” **14:32** Absalom said to Joab, “Look, I sent a message to you saying, ‘Come here so that I can send you to the king with this message.’¹⁶ ‘Why have I come from Geshur? It would be better for me if I were still there.’” Let me now see the face of the king. If I am at fault, let him put me to death!”

14:33 So Joab went to the king and informed him. The king¹⁷ summoned Absalom, and he came to the king. Absalom¹⁸ bowed down before the king with his face toward the ground and the king kissed him.¹⁹

Absalom Leads an Insurrection against David

15:1 Some time later Absalom managed to acquire²⁰ a chariot and horses, as well as fifty men to serve as his royal guard.²¹ **15:2** Now Absalom used to get up early and stand beside the road that led to the city gate. Whenever anyone came by who had a complaint to bring to the king for arbitration, Absalom would call out to him, “What city are you from?” The person would answer, “I, your servant,²² am from one of the tribes of Israel.” **15:3** Absalom would then say to him, “Look, your claims are legitimate and appropriate.²³ But there is no representative of the king who will listen to you.” **15:4** Absalom would then say, “If only they would make me²⁴ a judge in the land! Then everyone who had a judicial complaint²⁵ could come to me and I would make sure he receives a just settlement.”

15:5 When someone approached to bow before him, Absalom²⁶ would extend his hand and embrace him and kiss him. **15:6** Absalom acted this way toward everyone in Israel who came to the king for justice. In this way Absalom won the loyalty²⁷ of the citizens²⁸ of Israel.

¹⁴ **tc** The LXX adds here the following words: “And the servants of Absalom burned them up. And the servants of Joab came to him, rendering their garments. They said....”

¹⁵ **tn** The word “Joab’s” is not in the Hebrew text, but has been supplied in the translation for stylistic reasons.

¹⁶ **tn** Heb “saying.”

¹⁷ **tn** Heb “he.” Joab, acting on behalf of the king, may be the implied subject.

¹⁸ **tn** Heb “he”; the referent (Absalom) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

¹⁹ **tn** Heb “Absalom.” For stylistic reasons the name has been replaced by the pronoun (“him”) in the translation.

²⁰ **tn** Heb “acquired for himself.”

²¹ **tn** Heb “to run ahead of him.”

²² **tn** Heb “your servant.” So also in vv. 8, 15, 21.

²³ **tn** Heb “good and straight.”

²⁴ **tn** Heb “Who will make me?”

²⁵ **tn** Heb “a complaint and a judgment.” The expression is a hendiadys.

²⁶ **tn** Heb “he”; the referent (Absalom) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

²⁷ **tn** Heb “stole the heart.”

²⁸ **tn** Heb “the men.”

¹ **tn** Heb “to know all that is in the land.”

² **tc** Many medieval Hebrew mss have “you” rather than “I.”

³ **tn** Heb “blessed.”

⁴ **tc** The present translation reads with the *Qere* “your” rather than the *MT* “his.”

⁵ **map** For location see Map5-B1; Map6-F3; Map7-E2; Map8-F2; Map10-B3; JP1-F4; JP2-F4; JP3-F4; JP4-F4.

⁶ **tn** Heb “turn aside.”

⁷ **tn** Heb “turned aside.”

⁸ **tn** Heb “Like Absalom there was not a handsome man in all Israel to boast exceedingly.”

⁹ **tn** Heb “there was not in him a blemish.”

¹⁰ **tn** Heb “for it was heavy upon him.”

¹¹ **tn** Heb “two hundred shekels.” The modern equivalent would be about three pounds (1.4 kg).

¹² **tn** Heb “and there were born.”

¹³ **tc** The LXX adds here the following words: “And she became a wife to Rehoboam the son of Solomon and bore to him Abia.”

15:7 After four¹ years Absalom said to the king, “Let me go and repay my vow that I made to the LORD while I was in Hebron. **15:8** For I made this vow² when I was living in Geshur in Aram: ‘If the LORD really does allow me to return to Jerusalem,³ I will serve the LORD.’” **15:9** The king replied to him, “Go in peace.” So Absalom⁴ got up and went to Hebron.

15:10 Then Absalom sent spies through all the tribes of Israel who said, “When you hear the sound of the horn, you may assume⁵ that Absalom rules in Hebron.” **15:11** Now two hundred men had gone with Absalom from Jerusalem. Since they were invited, they went naively and were unaware of what Absalom was planning.⁶ **15:12** While he was offering sacrifices, Absalom sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, David’s adviser,⁷ to come from his city, Giloh.⁸ The conspiracy was gaining momentum, and the people were starting to side with Absalom.

David Flees from Jerusalem

15:13 Then a messenger came to David and reported, “The men of Israel are loyal to Absalom!”⁹ **15:14** So David said to all his servants who were with him in Jerusalem,¹⁰ “Come on!¹¹ Let’s escape!¹² Otherwise no one will be delivered from Absalom! Go immediately, or else he will quickly overtake us and bring¹³ disaster on us and kill the city’s residents with the sword.”¹⁴ **15:15** The king’s servants replied to the king, “We will do whatever our lord the king decides.”¹⁵

15:16 So the king and all the members of his

royal court¹⁶ set out on foot, though the king left behind ten concubines¹⁷ to attend to the palace. **15:17** The king and all the people set out on foot, pausing¹⁸ at a spot¹⁹ some distance away. **15:18** All his servants were leaving with him,²⁰ along with all the Kerethites, all the Pelethites, and all the Gittites – some six hundred men who had come on foot from Gath. They were leaving with²¹ the king.

15:19 Then the king said to Ittai the Gittite, “Why should you come with us? Go back and stay with the new²² king, for you are a foreigner and an exile from your own country.²³ **15:20** It seems like you arrived just yesterday. Today should I make you wander around by going with us? I go where I must go. But as for you, go back and take your men²⁴ with you. May genuine loyal love²⁵ protect²⁶ you!”

15:21 But Ittai replied to the king, “As surely as the LORD lives and as my lord the king lives, wherever my lord the king is, whether dead or alive,²⁷ there I²⁸ will be as well!” **15:22** So David said to Ittai, “Come along then.”²⁹ So Ittai the Gittite went along,³⁰ accompanied by all his men and all the dependents³¹ who were with him.

15:23 All the land was weeping loudly³² as all these people were leaving.³³ As the king was crossing over the Kidron Valley, all the people were leaving³⁴ on the road that leads to the desert. **15:24** Zadok and all the Levites who were with him were carrying the ark of the covenant of God. When they positioned the ark of God, Abiathar offered sacrifices until all the people had finished leaving³⁵ the city.

15:25 Then the king said to Zadok, “Take the ark of God back to the city. If I find favor in the LORD’s sight he will bring me back and enable me to see both it and his dwelling place again. **15:26** However, if he should say, ‘I do not take pleasure in you,’ then he will deal with me in a way that he considers appropriate.”³⁶

15:27 The king said to Zadok the priest, “Are

¹ **tc** The MT has here “forty,” but this is presumably a scribal error for “four.” The context will not tolerate a period of forty years prior to the rebellion of Absalom. The Lucianic Greek recension (τέσσαρα ἔτη, *tessara ete*), the Syriac Peshitta (*arba’ sanin*), and Vulgate (*post quattuor autem annos*) in fact have the expected reading “four years.” Most English translations follow the versions in reading “four” here, although some (e.g. KJV, ASV, NASB, NKJV), following the MT, read “forty.”

² **tn** *Heb* “for your servant vowed a vow.” The formal court style of referring to one’s self in third person (“your servant”) has been translated here as first person for clarity.

³ **map** For location see Map5-B1; Map6-F3; Map7-E2; Map8-F2; Map10-B3; JP1-F4; JP2-F4; JP3-F4; JP4-F4.

⁴ **tn** *Heb* “he”; the referent (Absalom) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

⁵ **tn** *Heb* “say.”

⁶ **tn** *Heb* “being invited and going naively and they did not know anything.”

⁷ **tn** Traditionally, “counselor,” but this term is more often associated with psychological counseling today, so “adviser” was used in the translation instead.

⁸ **tn** *Heb* “Absalom sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, the adviser of David, from his city, from Giloh, while he was sacrificing.” It is not entirely clear who (Absalom or Ahithophel) was offering the sacrifices.

⁹ **tn** *Heb* “the heart of the men of Israel is with Absalom.”

¹⁰ **map** For location see Map5-B1; Map6-F3; Map7-E2; Map8-F2; Map10-B3; JP1-F4; JP2-F4; JP3-F4; JP4-F4.

¹¹ **tn** *Heb* “Arise!”

¹² **tn** *Heb* “let’s flee.”

¹³ **tn** *Heb* “thrust.”

¹⁴ **tn** *Heb* “and strike the city with the edge of the sword.”

¹⁵ **tn** *Heb* “according to all that my lord the king will choose, behold your servants!”

¹⁶ **tn** *Heb* “and all his house.”

¹⁷ **tn** *Heb* “women, concubines.”

¹⁸ **tn** *Heb* “and they stood.”

¹⁹ **tn** *Heb* “house.”

²⁰ **tn** *Heb* “crossing over near his hand.”

²¹ **tn** *Heb* “crossing over near the face of.”

²² **tn** The word “new” is not in the Hebrew text, but is supplied in the translation to make it clear that David refers to Absalom, not himself.

²³ **tn** *Heb* “place.”

²⁴ **tn** *Heb* “brothers,” but see v. 22.

²⁵ **tn** *Heb* “loyal love and truth.” The expression is a hendiadys.

²⁶ **tn** *Heb* “be with.”

²⁷ **tn** *Heb* “whether for death or for life.”

²⁸ **tn** *Heb* “your servant.”

²⁹ **tn** *Heb* “Come and cross over.”

³⁰ **tn** *Heb* “crossed over.”

³¹ **tn** *Heb* “all the little ones.”

³² **tn** *Heb* “with a great voice.”

³³ **tn** *Heb* “crossing over.”

³⁴ **tn** *Heb* “crossing near the face of.”

³⁵ **tn** *Heb* “crossing from.”

³⁶ **tn** *Heb* “as [is] good in his eyes.”

you a seer?¹ Go back to the city in peace! Your son Ahimaaz and Abiathar's son Jonathan may go with you and Abiathar.² **15:28** Look, I will be waiting at the fords of the desert until word from you³ reaches me." **15:29** So Zadok and Abiathar took the ark of God back to Jerusalem and remained there.

15:30 As David was going up the Mount of Olives, he was weeping as he went; his head was covered and his feet were bare. All the people who were with him also had their heads covered and were weeping as they went up. **15:31** Now David⁴ had been told, "Ahithophel has sided with the conspirators who are with Absalom. So David prayed,⁵ "Make the advice of Ahithophel foolish, O LORD!"

15:32 When David reached the summit, where he used to worship God, Hushai the Arkite met him with his clothes torn and dirt on his head. **15:33** David said to him, "If you leave⁶ with me you will be a burden to me. **15:34** But you will be able to counter the advice of Ahithophel if you go back to the city and say to Absalom, 'I will be your servant, O king! Previously I was your father's servant, and now I will be your servant.' **15:35** Zadok and Abiathar the priests will be there with you.⁷ Everything you hear in the king's palace⁸ you must tell Zadok and Abiathar the priests. **15:36** Furthermore, their two sons are there with them, Zadok's son Ahimaaz and Abiathar's son Jonathan. You must send them to me with any information you hear."⁹

15:37 So David's friend Hushai arrived in the city, just as Absalom was entering Jerusalem.

David Receives Gifts from Ziba

16:1 When David had gone a short way beyond the summit, Ziba the servant of Mephibosheth was there to meet him. He had a couple of donkeys that were saddled, and on them were two hundred loaves of bread, a hundred raisin cakes, a hundred baskets of summer fruit,¹⁰ and a container of wine.

16:2 The king asked Ziba, "Why did you bring these things?"¹¹ Ziba replied, "The donkeys are for the king's family to ride on, the loaves of bread¹² and the summer fruit are for the attendants to eat, and the wine is for those who get exhausted in the desert."¹³ **16:3** The king asked, "Where is your master's grandson?"¹⁴ Ziba replied to the king, "He remains in Jerusalem,¹⁵ for he said, 'Today the house of Israel will give back to me my grandfather's¹⁶ kingdom.'" **16:4** The king said to Ziba, "Everything that was Mephibosheth's now belongs to you." Ziba replied, "I bow before you. May I find favor in your sight, my lord the king."

Shimei Curses David and His Men

16:5 Then King David reached¹⁷ Bahurim. There a man from Saul's extended family named Shimei son of Gera came out, yelling curses as he approached.¹⁸ **16:6** He threw stones at David and all of King David's servants, as well as all the people and the soldiers who were on his right and on his left. **16:7** As he yelled curses, Shimei said, "Leave! Leave! You man of bloodshed, you wicked man!¹⁹ **16:8** The LORD has punished you for²⁰ all the spilled blood of the house of Saul, in whose place you rule. Now the LORD has given the kingdom into the hand of your son Absalom. Disaster has overtaken you, for you are a man of bloodshed!"

16:9 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!"

¹ **tn** The Greek tradition understands the Hebrew word as an imperative ("see"). Most Greek mss have ἴδετε (*idete*); the Lucianic recension has βλέπε (*blepe*). It could just as well be taken as a question: "Don't you see what is happening?" The present translation takes the word as a question, with the implication that Zadok is a priest and not a prophet (i.e., "seer") and therefore unable to know what the future holds.

² **tn** *Heb* "And Ahimaaz your son, and Jonathan the son of Abiathar, two of your sons, with you." The pronominal suffix on the last word is plural, referring to Zadok and Abiathar.

³ **tn** The pronoun is plural, referring to Zadok and Abiathar.

⁴ **tc** The translation follows 4QSam^a, part of the Greek tradition, the Syriac Peshitta, Targum, and Vulgate *uldavid* in reading "and to David," rather than MT דָּוִד (דָּוִד *David*, "and David"). As Driver points out, the Hebrew verb הִגִּיד (*higgid*, "he related") never uses the accusative for the person to whom something is told (S. R. Driver, *Notes on the Hebrew Text and the Topography of the Books of Samuel*, 316).

⁵ **tn** *Heb* "said."

⁶ **tn** *Heb* "cross over."

⁷ **tn** *Heb* "Will not Zadok and Abiathar the priests be there with you?" The rhetorical question draws attention to the fact that Hushai will not be alone.

⁸ **tn** *Heb* "from the house of the king."

⁹ **tn** *Heb* "and you must send by their hand to me every word which you hear." Both of the second person verb forms are plural with Zadok, Abiathar, and Hushai being the understood subjects.

¹⁰ **tn** *Heb* "a hundred summer fruit."

¹¹ **tn** *Heb* "What are these to you?"

¹² **tc** The translation follows the Qere and many medieval Hebrew mss in reading הַלֶּקֶחַ (הַלֶּקֶחַ *hallekhem*, "and the bread") rather than הַלֶּחֶם (הַלֶּחֶם *hallekhem*, "and to the bread") of the *Kethib*. The syntax of the MT is confused here by the needless repetition of the preposition, probably taken from the preceding word.

¹³ **tn** The Hebrew text adds "to drink."

¹⁴ **tn** *Heb* "son."

¹⁵ **map** For location see Map5-B1; Map6-F3; Map7-E2; Map8-F2; Map10-B3; JP1-F4; JP2-F4; JP3-F4; JP4-F4.

¹⁶ **tn** *Heb* "my father's."

¹⁷ **tn** *Heb* "came to." The form of the verb in the MT is odd. Some prefer to read וַיָּבֹאוּ (*vayyavo'*, preterite with *vav* consecutive) rather than וָבֹאוּ (*vavo'*, apparently perfect with *vav*), but this is probably an instance where the narrative offline *v^eqatal* construction introduces a new scene.

¹⁸ **tn** *Heb* "And look, from there a man was coming out from the clan of the house of Saul and his name was Shimei son of Gera, continually going out and cursing."

¹⁹ **tn** *Heb* "man of worthlessness."

²⁰ **tn** *Heb* "has brought back upon you."

16:10 But the king said, “What do we have in common,¹ you sons of Zeruiah? If he curses because the LORD has said to him, ‘Curse David!’ , who can say to him, ‘Why have you done this?’” **16:11** Then David said to Abishai and to all his servants, “My own son, my very own flesh and blood,² is trying to take my life. So also now this Benjaminite! Leave him alone so that he can curse, for the LORD has spoken to him. **16:12** Perhaps the LORD will notice my affliction³ and this day grant me good in place of his curse.”⁴

16:13 So David and his men went on their way. But Shimei kept going along the side of the hill opposite him, yelling curses as he threw stones and dirt at them.⁵ **16:14** The king and all the people who were with him arrived exhausted at their destination, where David⁶ refreshed himself.

The Advice of Ahithophel

16:15 Now when Absalom and all the men⁷ of Israel arrived in Jerusalem,⁸ Ahithophel was with him. **16:16** When David’s friend Hushai the Arkite came to Absalom, Hushai said to him,⁹ “Long live the king! Long live the king!”

16:17 Absalom said to Hushai, “Do you call this loyalty to your friend? Why didn’t you go with your friend?” **16:18** Hushai replied to Absalom, “No, I will be loyal to the one whom the LORD, these people, and all the men of Israel have chosen.¹⁰ **16:19** Moreover, whom should I

serve? Should it not be his son? Just as I served your father, so I will serve you.”¹¹

16:20 Then Absalom said to Ahithophel, “Give us your advice. What should we do?” **16:21** Ahithophel replied to Absalom, “Have sex with¹² your father’s concubines whom he left to care for the palace. All Israel will hear that you have made yourself repulsive to your father. Then your followers will be motivated to support you.”¹³ **16:22** So they pitched a tent for Absalom on the roof,¹⁴ and Absalom had sex with¹⁵ his father’s concubines in the sight of all Israel.

16:23 In those days Ahithophel’s advice was considered as valuable as a prophetic revelation.¹⁶ Both David and Absalom highly regarded the advice of Ahithophel.¹⁷

The Death of Ahithophel

17:1 Ahithophel said to Absalom, “Let me pick out twelve thousand men. Then I will go and pursue David this very night. **17:2** When I catch up with¹⁸ him he will be exhausted and worn out.¹⁹ I will rout him, and the entire army that is with him will flee. I will kill only the king **17:3** and will bring the entire army back to you. In exchange for the life of the man you are seeking, you will get back everyone.²⁰ The entire army will return unharmed.”²¹

17:4 This seemed like a good idea to Absalom and to all the leaders²² of Israel. **17:5** But Absalom said, “Call for²³ Hushai the Arkite, and let’s hear what he has to say.”²⁴ **17:6** So Hushai came to Absalom. Absalom said to him, “Here is what Ahithophel has advised. Should we follow his advice? If not, what would you recommend?”

¹ **tn** *Heb* “What to me and to you?”

² **tn** *Heb* “who came out from my entrails.” David’s point is that is his own son, his child whom he himself had fathered, was now wanting to kill him.

³ **tc** The Hebrew text is difficult here. It is probably preferable to read with the LXX, the Syriac Peshitta, and Vulgate בעניי (*bēʿonyi*, “on my affliction”) rather than the *Kethib* of the MT בעוני (*baʿovni*, “on my wrongdoing”). While this *Kethib* reading is understandable as an objective genitive (i.e., “the wrong perpetrated upon me”), it does not conform to normal Hebrew idiom for this idea. The *Qere* of the MT בעיני (*bēʿeni*, “on my eyes”), usually taken as synecdoche to mean “my tears,” does not commend itself as a likely meaning. The Hebrew word is one of the so-called *tiqqune sopherim*, or “emendations of the scribes.”

⁴ **tn** *Heb* “and the LORD will restore to me good in place of his curse this day.”

⁵ **tn** *Heb* “and he cursed and threw stones, opposite him, pelting [them] with dirt.” The offline *v^eqatal* construction in the last clause indicates an action that was complementary to the action described in the preceding clause. He simultaneously threw stones and dirt.

⁶ **tn** *Heb* “he”; the referent (David) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

⁷ **tn** *Heb* “and all the people, the men of Israel.”

⁸ **map** For location see Map5-B1; Map6-F3; Map7-E2; Map8-F2; Map10-B3; JP1-F4; JP2-F4; JP3-F4; JP4-F4.

⁹ **tn** *Heb* “to Absalom.” The proper name has been replaced by the pronoun “him” in the translation for stylistic reasons.

¹⁰ **tn** *Heb* “No for with the one whom the LORD has chosen, and this people, and all the men of Israel, I will be and with him I will stay.” The translation follows the *Qere* and several medieval Hebrew *mss* in reading לו (*lo*, “[I will be] to him”) rather than the MT לֹא (*loʾ*, “[I will] not be”), which makes very little sense here.

¹¹ **tn** *Heb* “Just as I served before your father, so I will be before you.”

¹² **tn** *Heb* “go to”; NAB “have (+ sexual NCV) relations with”; TEV “have intercourse with”; NLT “Go and sleep with.”

¹³ **tn** *Heb* “and the hands of all who are with you will be strengthened.”

¹⁴ **sn** That is, on top of the flat roof of the palace, so it would be visible to the public.

¹⁵ **tn** *Heb* “went to”; NAB “he visited his father’s concubines”; NIV “lay with his father’s concubines”; TEV “went in and had intercourse with.”

¹⁶ **tn** *Heb* “And the advice of Ahithophel which he advised in those days was as when one inquires of the word of God.”

¹⁷ **tn** *Heb* “So was all the advice of Ahithophel, also to David, also to Absalom.”

¹⁸ **tn** *Heb* “and I will come upon him.”

¹⁹ **tn** *Heb* “exhausted and slack of hands.”

²⁰ **tc** *Heb* “like the returning of all, the man whom you are seeking.” The LXX reads differently: “And I will return all the people to you the way a bride returns to her husband, except for the life of the one man whom you are seeking.” The other early versions also struggled with this verse. Modern translations are divided as well: the NAB, NRSV, REB, and NLT follow the LXX, while the NASB and NIV follow the Hebrew text.

²¹ **tn** *Heb* “all of the people will be safe.”

²² **tn** *Heb* “elders.”

²³ **tc** In the MT the verb is singular, but in the LXX, the Syriac Peshitta, and Vulgate it is plural.

²⁴ **tn** *Heb* “what is in his mouth.”

17:7 Hushai replied to Absalom, “Ahithophel’s advice is not sound this time.”¹ 17:8 Hushai went on to say, “You know your father and his men – they are soldiers and are as dangerous as a bear out in the wild that has been robbed of her cubs.² Your father is an experienced soldier; he will not stay overnight with the army. 17:9 At this very moment he is hiding out in one of the caves or in some other similar place. If it should turn out that he attacks our troops first,³ whoever hears about it will say, ‘Absalom’s army has been slaughtered!’ 17:10 If that happens even the bravest soldier – one who is lion-hearted – will virtually melt away. For all Israel knows that your father is a warrior and that those who are with him are brave. 17:11 My advice therefore is this: Let all Israel from Dan to Beer Sheba – in number like the sand by the sea! – be mustered to you, and you lead them personally into battle. 17:12 We will come against him wherever he happens to be found. We will descend on him like the dew falls on the ground. Neither he nor any of the men who are with him will be spared alive – not one of them! 17:13 If he regroups in a city, all Israel will take up ropes to that city and drag it down to the valley, so that not a single pebble will be left there!”

17:14 Then Absalom and all the men of Israel said, “The advice of Hushai the Arkite sounds better than the advice of Ahithophel.” Now the LORD had decided⁴ to frustrate the sound advice of Ahithophel, so that the LORD could bring disaster on Absalom.

17:15 Then Hushai reported to Zadok and Abiathar the priests, “Here is what Ahithophel has advised Absalom and the leaders⁵ of Israel to do, and here is what I have advised. 17:16 Now send word quickly to David and warn him,⁶ “Don’t spend the night at the fords of the desert⁷ tonight. Instead, be sure you cross over,⁸ or else the king and everyone who is with him may be overwhelmed.”⁹

17:17 Now Jonathan and Ahimaaz were staying in En Rogel. A female servant would go and inform them, and they would then go and inform King David. It was not advisable for them to be seen going into the city. 17:18 But a young man saw them on one occasion and informed Absa-

lom. So the two of them quickly departed and went to the house of a man in Bahurim. There was a well in his courtyard, and they got down in it. 17:19 His wife then took the covering and spread it over the top of the well and scattered some grain over it. No one was aware of what she had done.

17:20 When the servants of Absalom approached the woman at her home, they asked, “Where are Ahimaaz and Jonathan?” The woman replied to them, “They crossed over the stream.” Absalom’s men¹⁰ searched but did not find them, so they returned to Jerusalem.¹¹

17:21 After the men had left, Ahimaaz and Jonathan¹² climbed out of the well. Then they left and informed King David. They advised David, “Get up and cross the stream¹³ quickly, for Ahithophel has devised a plan to catch you.”¹⁴ 17:22 So David and all the people who were with him got up and crossed the Jordan River.¹⁵ By dawn there was not one person left who had not crossed the Jordan.

17:23 When Ahithophel realized that his advice had not been followed, he saddled his donkey and returned to his house in his hometown. After setting his household in order, he hanged himself. So he died and was buried in the grave¹⁶ of his father.

17:24 Meanwhile David had gone to Mahanaim, while Absalom and all the men of Israel had crossed the Jordan River. 17:25 Absalom had made Amasa general in command of the army in place of Joab. (Now Amasa was the son of an Israelite man named Jether, who had married¹⁷ Abigail the daughter of Nahash and sister of Zeruiah, Joab’s mother.) 17:26 The army of Israel¹⁸ and Absalom camped in the land of Gilead.

17:27 When David came to Mahanaim, Shobi the son of Nahash from Rabbah of the Ammonites, Makir the son of Ammiel from Lo Debar, and Barzillai the Gileadite from Rogelim 17:28 brought bedding, basins, and pottery utensils. They also brought food for David and all who were with him, including wheat, barley,

¹⁰ *tn* Heb “they”; the referents (Absalom’s men) have been specified in the translation for clarity.

¹¹ *tn* *map* For location see Map5-B1; Map6-F3; Map7-E2; Map8-F2; Map10-B3; JP1-F4; JP2-F4; JP3-F4; JP4-F4.

¹² *tn* Heb “they”; the referents (Ahimaaz and Jonathan) have been specified in the translation for clarity.

¹³ *tn* Heb “the water.”

¹⁴ *tn* Heb “for thus Ahithophel has devised against you.” The expression “thus” is narrative shorthand, referring to the plan outlined by Ahithophel (see vv. 1-3). The men would surely have outlined the plan in as much detail as they had been given by the messenger.

¹⁵ *tn* The word “River” is not in the Hebrew text here or in v. 24, but has been supplied in the translation for clarity.

¹⁶ *tc* The Greek recensions of Origen and Lucian have here “house” for “grave.”

¹⁷ *tn* Heb “come to.”

¹⁸ *tn* Heb “and Israel.”

¹ *tn* Heb “Not good is the advice which Ahithophel has advised at this time.”

² *tc* The LXX (with the exception of the recensions of Origen and Lucian) repeats the description as follows: “Just as a female bear bereft of cubs in a field.”

³ *tn* Heb “that he falls on them [i.e., Absalom’s troops] at the first [encounter]; or “that some of them [i.e., Absalom’s troops] fall at the first [encounter].”

⁴ *tn* Heb “commanded.”

⁵ *tn* Heb “elders.”

⁶ *tn* Heb “send quickly and tell David saying.”

⁷ *tn* Or “wilderness” (so KJV, NASB, NRSV, TEV).

⁸ *tn* That is, “cross over the Jordan River.”

⁹ *tn* Heb “swallowed up.”

flour, roasted grain, beans, lentils.¹ 17:29 honey, curds, flocks, and cheese.² For they said, “The people are no doubt hungry, tired, and thirsty there in the desert.”³

The Death of Absalom

18:1 David assembled the army that was with him. He appointed leaders of thousands and leaders of hundreds. 18:2 David then sent out the army – a third under the leadership of Joab, a third under the leadership of Joab’s brother Abishai son of Zeruiah, and a third under the leadership of Ittai the Gittite. The king said to the troops, “I too will indeed march out with you.”

18:3 But the soldiers replied,⁴ “You should not do this!⁵ For if we should have to make a rapid retreat, they won’t be too concerned about us.⁶ Even if half of us should die, they won’t be too concerned about us. But you⁷ are like ten thousand of us! So it is better if you remain in the city for support.” 18:4 Then the king said to them, “I will do whatever seems best to you.”

So the king stayed beside the city gate, while all the army marched out by hundreds and by thousands. 18:5 The king gave this order to Joab, Abishai, and Ittai: “For my sake deal gently with the young man Absalom.” Now the entire army was listening when the king gave all the leaders this order concerning Absalom.

18:6 Then the army marched out to the field to fight against Israel. The battle took place in the forest of Ephraim. 18:7 The army of Israel was defeated there by David’s men.⁸ The slaughter there was great that day – 20,000 soldiers were killed. 18:8 The battle there was spread out over the whole area, and the forest consumed more soldiers than the sword devoured that day.

18:9 Then Absalom happened to come across David’s men. Now as Absalom was riding on his⁹ mule, it¹⁰ went under the branches of a large oak tree. His head got caught in the oak and he was suspended in midair,¹¹ while the mule he had been riding kept going.

18:10 When one¹² of the men saw this, he reported it to Joab saying, “I saw Absalom hanging in an oak tree. 18:11 Joab replied to the man who was telling him this, “What! You saw this? Why didn’t you strike him down right on the spot?¹³ I would have given you ten pieces of silver¹⁴ and a commemorative belt!”¹⁵

18:12 The man replied to Joab, “Even if¹⁶ I were receiving¹⁷ a thousand pieces of silver,¹⁸ I would not strike¹⁹ the king’s son! In our very presence²⁰ the king gave this order to you and Abishai and Ittai, ‘Protect the young man Absalom for my sake.’²¹ 18:13 If I had acted at risk of my own life²² – and nothing is hidden from the king! – you would have abandoned me.”²³

18:14 Joab replied, “I will not wait around like this for you!” He took three spears in his hand and thrust them into the middle of Absalom while he was still alive in the middle of the oak tree.²⁴

18:15 Then ten soldiers who were Joab’s armor bearers struck Absalom and finished him off.

18:16 Then Joab blew the trumpet²⁵ and the army turned back from chasing Israel, for Joab had called for the army to halt. 18:17 They took Absalom, threw him into a large pit in the forest, and stacked a huge pile of stones over him. In

¹² **tc** 4QSam^a lacks the word “one.”

¹³ **tn** *Heb* “Why did you not strike him down there to the ground.”

¹⁴ **tn** *Heb* “ten [shekels] of silver.” This would have been about 4 ounces (114 grams) of silver by weight.

¹⁵ **tn** *Heb* “and a girdle” (so KJV); NIV “a warrior’s belt”; CEV “a special belt”; NLT “a hero’s belt.”

¹⁶ **tc** The translation follows the Qere and many medieval Hebrew mss in reading וְלוֹ (v^elu, “and if”) rather than MT וְלוֹ (v^elo, “and not”).

¹⁷ **tn** *Heb* “weighing out in my hand.”

¹⁸ **tn** *Heb* “a thousand [shekels] of silver.” This would have been about 25 pounds (11.4 kg) of silver by weight.

¹⁹ **tn** *Heb* “extend my hand against.”

²⁰ **tn** *Heb* “in our ears.”

²¹ **tc** The Hebrew text is very difficult here. The MT reads מִי (mi, “who”), apparently yielding the following sense: “Show care, whoever you might be, for the youth Absalom.” The Syriac Peshitta reads הִי (“for me”), the Hebrew counterpart of which may also lie behind the LXX rendering μοι (moi, “for me”). This reading seems preferable here, since it restores sense to the passage and most easily explains the rise of the variant.

²² **tc** The translation follows the Qere, many medieval Hebrew mss, and a number of the ancient versions in reading בְּנַפְשִׁי (v^enafshi, “against my life”) rather than the MT בְּנַפְשׁוֹ (v^enafsho, “against his life”).

²³ **tn** *Heb* “stood aloof.”

²⁴ **tn** There is a play on the word “heart” here that is difficult to reproduce in English. Literally the Hebrew text says “he took three spears in his hand and thrust them into the heart of Absalom while he was still alive in the heart of the oak tree.” This figure of speech involves the use of the same word in different senses and is known as antanaclasis. It is illustrated in the familiar saying from the time of the American Revolution: “If we don’t hang together, we will all hang separately.” The present translation understands “heart” to be used somewhat figuratively for “chest” (cf. TEV, CEV), which explains why Joab’s armor bearers could still “kill” Absalom after he had been stabbed with three spears through the “heart.” Since trees do not have “chests” either, the translation uses “middle.”

²⁵ **tn** *Heb* “the shofar” (the ram’s horn trumpet).

¹ **tc** The MT adds “roasted grain” וְקֵלָי (v^eqali) at the end of v. 28, apparently accidentally repeating the word from its earlier occurrence in this verse. With the LXX, the Syriac Peshitta, and an Old Latin ms the translation deletes this second occurrence of the word.

² **tn** *Heb* “cheese of the herd,” probably referring to cheese from cow’s milk (rather than goat’s milk).

³ **tn** Or “wilderness” (so KJV, NASB, NRSV, TEV, NLT).

⁴ **tn** *Heb* “the people said.”

⁵ **tn** *Heb* “march out.”

⁶ **tn** *Heb* “they will not place to us heart.”

⁷ **tc** The translation follows the LXX (except for the Lucianic recension), Symmachus, and Vulgate in reading אַתָּה (atta, “you”) rather than MT אַתָּה (atta, “now”).

⁸ **tn** *Heb* “servants” (also in v. 9).

⁹ **tn** *Heb* “the.”

¹⁰ **tn** *Heb* “the donkey.”

¹¹ **tn** *Heb* “between the sky and the ground.”

the meantime all the Israelite soldiers fled to their homes.¹

18:18 Prior to this² Absalom had set up a monument³ and dedicated it to himself in the King's Valley, reasoning "I have no son who will carry on my name." He named the monument after himself, and to this day it is known as Absalom's Memorial.

David Learns of Absalom's Death

18:19 Then Ahimaaz the son of Zadok said, "Let me run and give the king the good news that the LORD has vindicated him before his enemies."⁴

18:20 But Joab said to him, "You will not be a bearer of good news today. You will bear good news some other day, but not today,⁵ for the king's son is dead."

18:21 Then Joab said to the Cushite, "Go and tell the king what you have seen." After bowing to Joab, the Cushite ran off. **18:22** Ahimaaz the son of Zadok again spoke to Joab, "Whatever happens, let me go after the Cushite." But Joab said, "Why is it that you want to go, my son? You have no good news that will bring you a reward." **18:23** But he said,⁶ "Whatever happens, I want to go!" So Joab⁷ said to him, "Then go!" So Ahimaaz ran by the way of the Jordan plain, and he passed the Cushite.

18:24 Now David was sitting between the inner and outer gates,⁸ and the watchman went up to the roof over the gate at the wall. When he looked, he saw a man running by himself. **18:25** So the watchman called out and informed the king. The king said, "If he is by himself, he brings good news."⁹ The runner¹⁰ came ever closer.

18:26 Then the watchman saw another man running. The watchman called out to the gatekeeper, "There is another man running by himself." The king said, "This one also is bringing good news." **18:27** The watchman said, "It appears to me that the first runner is Ahimaaz¹¹ son of Zadok." The king said, "He is a good man, and he comes with good news."

18:28 Then Ahimaaz called out and said to the king, "Greetings!"¹² He bowed down before the king with his face toward the ground and said, "May the LORD your God be praised because he has defeated¹³ the men who opposed¹⁴ my lord the king!"

18:29 The king replied, "How is the young man Absalom?" Ahimaaz replied, "I saw a great deal of confusion when Joab was sending the king's servant and me, your servant, but I don't know what it was all about." **18:30** The king said, "Turn aside and take your place here." So he turned aside and waited.

18:31 Then the Cushite arrived and said,¹⁵ "May my lord the king now receive the good news! The LORD has vindicated you today and delivered you from the hand of all who have rebelled against you!"¹⁶ **18:32** The king asked the Cushite, "How is the young man Absalom?" The Cushite replied, "May the enemies of my lord the king and all who have plotted against you¹⁷ be like that young man!"

18:33 (19:1)¹⁸ The king then became very upset. He went up to the upper room over the gate and wept. As he went he said, "My son, Absalom! My son, my son,¹⁹ Absalom! If only I could have died in your place! Absalom, my son, my son!"²⁰

19:1 (19:2) Joab was told, "The king is weeping and mourning over Absalom." **19:2** So the victory of that day was turned to mourning as far as all the people were concerned. For the people heard on that day, "The king is grieved over his son." **19:3** That day the people stole away to go to the city the way people who are embarrassed steal away in fleeing from battle. **19:4** The king covered his face and cried out loudly,²¹ "My son, Absalom! Absalom, my son, my son!"

¹² tn Heb "Peace."

¹³ tn Heb "delivered over."

¹⁴ tn Heb "lifted their hand against."

¹⁵ tn Heb "And look, the Cushite came and the Cushite said."

¹⁶ tn Heb "for the LORD has vindicated you today from the hand of all those rising against you."

¹⁷ tn Heb "and all those rising against you for evil."

¹⁸ sn This marks the beginning of ch. 19 in the Hebrew text. Beginning with **18:33**, the verse numbers through **19:43** in the English Bible differ from the verse numbers in the Hebrew text (BHS), with **18:33** ET = **19:1** HT, **19:1** ET = **19:2** HT, **19:2** ET = **19:3** HT, etc., through **19:43** ET = **19:44** HT. From **20:1** the versification in the English Bible and the Hebrew Bible is again the same.

¹⁹ tc One medieval Hebrew ms, some mss of the LXX, and the Vulgate lack this repeated occurrence of "my son" due to haplography.

²⁰ tc The Lucianic Greek recension and Syriac Peshitta lack this repeated occurrence of "my son" due to haplography.

²¹ tn Heb "with a great voice."

¹ tn Heb "and all Israel fled, each to his tent." In this context this refers to the supporters of Absalom (see vv. 6-7, 16).

² tn Heb "and." This disjunctive clause (conjunction + subject + verb) describes an occurrence that preceded the events just narrated.

³ tn Heb "a pillar."

⁴ tn Heb "that the LORD has vindicated him from the hand of his enemies."

⁵ tn Heb "but this day you will not bear good news."

⁶ tn The words "but he said" are not in the Hebrew text. They are supplied in the translation for clarity.

⁷ tn Heb "he"; the referent (Joab) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

⁸ tn Heb "the two gates."

⁹ tn Heb "good news is in his mouth."

¹⁰ tn Heb "he"; the referent (the runner) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

¹¹ tn Heb "I am seeing the running of the first one like the running of Ahimaaz."

19:5 So Joab visited¹ the king at his home. He said, “Today you have embarrassed all your servants who have saved your life this day, as well as the lives of your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your concubines. **19:6** You seem to love your enemies and hate your friends! For you have as much as declared today that leaders and servants don’t matter to you. I realize now² that if³ Absalom were alive and all of us were dead today,⁴ it would be all right with you. **19:7** So get up now and go out and give some encouragement to⁵ your servants. For I swear by the LORD that if you don’t go out there, not a single man will stay here with you tonight! This disaster will be worse for you than any disaster that has overtaken you from your youth right to the present time!”

19:8 So the king got up and sat at the city gate. When all the people were informed that the king was sitting at the city gate, they⁶ all came before him.

David Goes Back to Jerusalem

But the Israelite soldiers⁷ had all fled to their own homes.⁸ **19:9** All the people throughout all the tribes of Israel were arguing among themselves saying, “The king delivered us from the hand of our enemies. He rescued us from the hand of the Philistines, but now he has fled from the land because of Absalom. **19:10** But Absalom, whom we anointed as our king,⁹ has died in battle. So now why do you hesitate to bring the king back?”¹⁰

19:11 Then King David sent a message to Zadok and Abiathar the priests saying, “Tell the elders of Judah, ‘Why should you delay any further in bringing the king back to his palace,¹¹ when everything Israel is saying has come to the king’s attention.¹² **19:12** You are my brothers – my very own flesh and blood!¹³ Why should you delay any further in bringing the king back?’ **19:13** Say to Amasa, ‘Are you not my flesh and

blood?’¹⁴ God will punish me severely,¹⁵ if from this time on you are not the commander of my army in place of Joab!”

19:14 He¹⁶ won over the hearts of all the men of Judah as though they were one man. Then they sent word to the king saying, “Return, you and all your servants as well.” **19:15** So the king returned and came to the Jordan River.¹⁷

Now the people of Judah¹⁸ had come to Gilgal to meet the king and to help him¹⁹ cross the Jordan. **19:16** Shimei son of Gera the Benjaminite from Bahurim came down quickly with the men of Judah to meet King David. **19:17** There were a thousand men from Benjamin with him, along with Ziba the servant²⁰ of Saul’s household, and with him his fifteen sons and twenty servants. They hurriedly crossed²¹ the Jordan within sight of the king. **19:18** They crossed at the ford in order to help the king’s household cross and to do whatever he thought appropriate.

Now after he had crossed the Jordan, Shimei son of Gera threw himself down before the king. **19:19** He said to the king, “Don’t think badly of me, my lord, and don’t recall the sin of your servant on the day when you, my lord the king, left²² Jerusalem!²³ Please don’t call it to mind! **19:20** For I, your servant,²⁴ know that I sinned, and I have come today as the first of all the house of Joseph to come down to meet my lord the king.”

19:21 Abishai son of Zeruiah replied, “For this should not Shimei be put to death? After all, he cursed the LORD’s anointed!” **19:22** But David said, “What do we have in common,²⁵ you sons of Zeruiah? You are like my enemy today! Should anyone be put to death in Israel today? Don’t you realize that today I am king over Israel?” **19:23** The king said to Shimei, “You won’t die.” The king vowed an oath²⁶ concerning this.

¹⁴ **tn** *Heb* “my bone and my flesh.”

¹⁵ **tn** *Heb* “Thus God will do to me and thus he will add.”

¹⁶ **tn** The referent of “he” is not entirely clear: cf. NCV “David”; TEV “David’s words”; NRSV, NLT “Amasa.”

¹⁷ **tn** The word “River” is not in the Hebrew text, but has been supplied in the translation for clarity.

¹⁸ **tn** The Hebrew text has simply “Judah.”

¹⁹ **tn** *Heb* “the king.” The pronoun (“him”) has been used in the translation to avoid redundancy.

²⁰ **tn** *Heb* “youth.”

²¹ **tn** *Heb* “rushed into.”

²² **tn** Though this verb in the MT is 3rd person masculine singular, it should probably be read as 2nd person masculine singular. It is one of fifteen places where the Masoretes placed a dot over each of the letters of the word in question in order to call attention to their suspicion of the word. Their concern in this case apparently had to do with the fact that this verb and the two preceding verbs alternate from third person to second and back again to third. Words marked in this way in Hebrew manuscripts or printed editions are said to have *puncta extraordinaria*, or “extraordinary points.”

²³ **map** For location see Map5-B1; Map6-F3; Map7-E2; Map8-F2; Map10-B3; JP1-F4; JP2-F4; JP3-F4; JP4-F4.

²⁴ **tn** The Hebrew text has simply “your servant.”

²⁵ **tn** *Heb* “what to me and to you.”

²⁶ **tn** *Heb* “swore to him.”

¹ **tn** *Heb* “came to.”

² **tn** *Heb* “today.”

³ **tc** The translation follows the *Qere*, 4QSam^a, and many medieval Hebrew mss in reading לו (lu, “if”) rather than MT לו (lo, “not”).

⁴ **tc** The Lucianic Greek recension and Syriac Peshitta lack “today.”

⁵ **tn** *Heb* “and speak to the heart of.”

⁶ **tn** *Heb* “all the people.”

⁷ **tn** The Hebrew text has simply “Israel” (see 18:16-17).

⁸ **tn** *Heb* “had fled, each to his tent.”

⁹ **tn** *Heb* “over us.”

¹⁰ **tc** The LXX includes the following words at the end of v. 11: “And what all Israel was saying came to the king’s attention.” The words are misplaced in the LXX from v. 12 (although the same statement appears there in the LXX as well).

¹¹ **tn** *Heb* “his house.”

¹² **tc** The Hebrew text adds “to his house” (= palace), but the phrase, which also appears earlier in the verse, is probably accidentally repeated here.

¹³ **tn** *Heb* “my bone and my flesh.”

19:24 Now Mephibosheth, Saul's grandson,¹ came down to meet the king. From the day the king had left until the day he safely² returned, Mephibosheth³ had not cared for his feet⁴ nor trimmed⁵ his mustache nor washed his clothes.

19:25 When he came from Jerusalem to meet the king, the king asked him, "Why didn't you go with me, Mephibosheth?" **19:26** He replied, "My lord the king, my servant deceived me! I⁶ said, 'Let me get my donkey saddled so that I can ride on it and go with the king,' for I⁷ am lame. **19:27** But my servant⁸ has slandered me⁹ to my lord the king. But my lord the king is like an angel of God. Do whatever seems appropriate to you. **19:28** After all, there was no one in the entire house of my grandfather¹⁰ who did not deserve death from my lord the king. But instead you allowed me to eat at your own table!¹¹ What further claim do I have to ask¹² the king for anything?"

19:29 Then the king replied to him, "Why should you continue speaking like this? You and Ziba will inherit the field together." **19:30** Mephibosheth said to the king, "Let him have¹³ the whole thing! My lord the king has returned safely¹⁴ to his house!"

19:31 Now when Barzillai the Gileadite had come down from Rogelim, he crossed the Jordan with the king so he could send him on his way from there.¹⁵ **19:32** But Barzillai was very old – eighty years old, in fact – and he had taken care of the king when he stayed in Mahanaim, for he was a very rich¹⁶ man. **19:33** So the king said to Barzillai, "Cross over with me, and I will take care of you while you are with me in Jerusalem."

19:34 Barzillai replied to the king, "How many days do I have left to my life, that I should go up with the king to Jerusalem? **19:35** I am presently eighty years old. Am I able to discern

good and bad? Can I¹⁷ taste what I eat and drink? Am I still able to hear the voices of male and female singers? Why should I¹⁸ continue to be a burden to my lord the king? **19:36** I will cross the Jordan with the king and go a short distance.¹⁹ Why should the king reward me in this way? **19:37** Let me²⁰ return so that I may die in my own city near the grave of my father and my mother. But look, here is your servant Kimham. Let him cross over with my lord the king. Do for him whatever seems appropriate to you."

19:38 The king replied, "Kimham will cross over with me, and I will do for him whatever I deem appropriate. And whatever you choose, I will do for you."

19:39 So all the people crossed the Jordan, as did the king. After the king had kissed him and blessed him, Barzillai returned to his home.²¹ **19:40** When the king crossed over to Gilgal, Kimham²² crossed over with him. Now all the soldiers²³ of Judah along with half of the soldiers of Israel had helped the king cross over.²⁴

19:41 Then all the men of Israel began coming to the king. They asked the king, "Why did our brothers, the men of Judah, sneak the king away and help the king and his household cross the Jordan – and not only him but all of David's men as well?"

19:42 All the men of Judah replied to the men of Israel, "Because the king is our close relative! Why are you so upset about this? Have we eaten at the king's expense?²⁵ Or have we misappropriated anything for our own use?" **19:43** The men of Israel replied to the men of Judah, "We have ten shares in the king, and we have a greater claim on David than you do! Why do you want²⁶ to curse us? Weren't we the first to suggest bringing back our king?" But the comments of the men of Judah were more severe than those of the men of Israel.

¹ tn Heb "son."

² tn Heb "in peace." So also in v. 31.

³ tn Heb "he"; the referent (Mephibosheth) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

⁴ tn Heb "done his feet."

⁵ tn Heb "done."

⁶ tn Heb "your servant."

⁷ tn Heb "your servant."

⁸ tn Heb "and he"; the referent (the servant) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

⁹ tn Heb "your servant."

¹⁰ tn Heb "father."

¹¹ tn Heb "and you placed your servant among those who eat at your table."

¹² tn Heb "to cry out to."

¹³ tn Heb "take."

¹⁴ tn Heb "in peace."

¹⁵ tc The MT reading אֶת־בַּיַרְדֵּן ('*et-vayarden*, "in the Jordan") is odd syntactically. The use of the preposition after the object marker אֶת (*et*) is difficult to explain. Graphic confusion is likely in the MT; the translation assumes the reading בַּיַרְדֵּן (*miyyarden*, "from the Jordan"). Another possibility is to read the definite article on the front of "Jordan" (הַיַּרְדֵּן, *hayyarden*; "the Jordan").

¹⁶ tn Heb "great."

¹⁷ tn Heb "your servant."

¹⁸ tn Heb "your servant."

¹⁹ tn Heb "Like a little your servant will cross the Jordan with the king."

²⁰ tn Heb "your servant."

²¹ tn Heb "to his place."

²² tn The MT in this instance alone spells the name with final ך (*nun*, "Kimhan") rather than as elsewhere with final ך (*mem*, "Kimham"). As in most other translations, the conventional spelling (with ך) has been used here to avoid confusion.

²³ tn Heb "people."

²⁴ tc The translation follows the Qere and many medieval Hebrew mss in reading the Hiphil verb הֵעֲבִירוּ (*he'eviru*, "they caused to pass over") rather than the Qal verb וַיַּעֲבִירוּ (*vay'eviru*, "they crossed over") of the MT.

²⁵ tn Heb "from the king."

²⁶ tn The translation understands the verb in a desiderative sense, indicating the desire but not necessarily the completed action of the party in question. It is possible, however, that the verb should be given the more common sense of accomplished action, in which case it means here "Why have you cursed us?"

Sheba's Rebellion

20:1 Now a wicked man¹ named Sheba son of Birci, a Benjaminite,² happened to be there. He blew the trumpet³ and said,

“We have no share in David;
we have no inheritance in this son of
Jesse!
Every man go home,⁴ O Israel!”

20:2 So all the men of Israel deserted⁵ David and followed Sheba son of Birci. But the men of Judah stuck by their king all the way from the Jordan River⁶ to Jerusalem.⁷

20:3 Then David went to his palace⁸ in Jerusalem. The king took the ten concubines he had left to care for the palace and placed them under confinement.⁹ Though he provided for their needs, he did not have sexual relations with them.¹⁰ They remained in confinement until the day they died, living out the rest of their lives as widows.

20:4 Then the king said to Amasa, “Call the men of Judah together for me in three days,¹¹ and you be present here with them too.” **20:5** So Amasa went out to call Judah together. But in doing so he took longer than the time that the king had allotted him.

20:6 Then David said to Abishai, “Now Sheba son of Birci will cause greater disaster for us than Absalom did! Take your lord’s servants and pursue him. Otherwise he will secure¹² forti-

fied cities for himself and get away from us.” **20:7** So Joab’s men, accompanied by the Kerethites, the Pelethites, and all the warriors, left Jerusalem to pursue Sheba son of Birci.

20:8 When they were near the big rock that is in Gibeon, Amasa came to them. Now Joab was dressed in military attire and had a dagger in its sheath belted to his waist. When he advanced, it fell out.¹³

20:9 Joab said to Amasa, “How are you, my brother?” With his right hand Joab took hold of Amasa’s beard as if to greet him with a kiss.

20:10 Amasa did not protect himself from the knife in Joab’s other hand, and Joab¹⁴ stabbed him in the abdomen, causing Amasa’s¹⁵ intestines to spill out on the ground. There was no need to stab him again; the first blow was fatal.¹⁶ Then Joab and his brother Abishai pursued Sheba son of Birci.

20:11 One of Joab’s soldiers who stood over Amasa said, “Whoever is for¹⁷ Joab and whoever is for David, follow Joab!” **20:12** Amasa was squirming in his own blood in the middle of the path, and this man had noticed that all the soldiers stopped. Having noticed that everyone who came across Amasa¹⁸ stopped, the man¹⁹ pulled him²⁰ away from the path and into the field and threw a garment over him. **20:13** Once he had removed Amasa²¹ from the path, everyone followed Joab to pursue Sheba son of Birci.

20:14 Sheba²² traveled through all the tribes of Israel to Abel of²³ Beth Maacah and all the Berite region. When they had assembled,²⁴ they too

¹ *tn* Heb “a man of worthlessness.”

² *tn* The expression used here יְמִינִי (*yemini*) is a short form of the more common “Benjamin.” It appears elsewhere in 1 Sam 9:4 and Esth 2:5. Cf. 1 Sam 9:1.

³ *tn* Heb “the shofar” (the ram’s horn trumpet). So also v. 22.

⁴ *tc* The MT reads לְאֹהֶלָיו (*le’ohalav*, “to his tents”). For a similar idiom, see 19:9. An ancient scribal tradition understands the reading to be לְאֱלֹהֵינוּ (*le’elohav*, “to his gods”). The word is a *tiqqun sopherim*, and the scribes indicate that they changed the word from “gods” to “tents” so as to soften its theological implications. In a consonantal Hebrew text the change involved only the metathesis of two letters.

⁵ *tn* Heb “went up from after.”

⁶ *tn* The word “River” is not in the Hebrew text, but has been supplied in the translation for clarity.

⁷ *map* For location see Map5-B1; Map6-F3; Map7-E2; Map8-F2; Map10-B3; JP1-F4; JP2-F4; JP3-F4; JP4-F4.

⁸ *tn* Heb “house.”

⁹ *tn* Heb “and he placed them in a guarded house.”

¹⁰ *tn* Heb “he did not come to them”; NAB “has no further relations with them”; NIV “did not lie with them”; TEV “did not have intercourse with them”; NLT “would no longer sleep with them.”

¹¹ *tn* The present translation follows the Masoretic accentuation, with the major mark of disjunction (i.e., the *atach*) placed at the word “days.” However, some scholars have suggested moving the *atach* to “Judah” a couple of words earlier. This would yield the following sense: “Three days, and you be present here with them.” The difference in meaning is slight, and the MT is acceptable as it stands.

¹² *tn* Heb “find.” The perfect verbal form is unexpected with the preceding word “otherwise.” We should probably read instead the imperfect. Although it is possible to understand the perfect here as indicating that the feared result is thought of as already having taken place (cf. BDB 814 s.v. בָּן 2), it is more likely that the perfect is simply the result of scribal error. In this context the imperfect would be more consistent with the following verb וַיִּהְיֶה (v*ehitsil*, “and he will get away”).

¹³ *sn* The significance of the statement *it fell out* here is unclear. If the dagger fell out of its sheath before Joab got to Amasa, how then did he kill him? Josephus, *Ant.* 7.1.1.7 (7.284), suggested that as Joab approached Amasa he deliberately caused the dagger to fall to the ground at an opportune moment as though by accident. When he bent over and picked it up, he then stabbed Amasa with it. Others have tried to make a case for thinking that two swords are referred to – the one that fell out and another that Joab kept concealed until the last moment. But nothing in the text clearly supports this view. Perhaps Josephus’ understanding is best, but it is by no means obvious in the text either.

¹⁴ *tn* Heb “he”; the referent (Joab) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

¹⁵ *tn* Heb “his”; the referent (Amasa) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

¹⁶ *tn* Heb “and he did not repeat concerning him, and he died.”

¹⁷ *tn* Heb “takes delight in.”

¹⁸ *tn* Heb “him”; the referent (Amasa) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

¹⁹ *tn* Heb “he”; the referent (the man who spoke up in v. 11) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

²⁰ *tn* Heb “Amasa.” For stylistic reasons the name has been replaced by the pronoun (“him”) in the translation.

²¹ *tn* Heb “him”; the referent (Amasa) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

²² *tn* Heb “he”; the referent (Sheba) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

²³ *tc* In keeping with the form of the name in v. 15, the translation deletes the “and” found in the MT.

²⁴ *tc* The translation follows the Qere, many medieval Hebrew mss, and the ancient versions in reading וַיִּקְרְבוּ יַחְדָּם (v*ayyiqqahu*, “and they were gathered together”) rather than the *Kethib* of the MT וַיִּקְרְבוּ יַחְדָּם (v*ayyiqquhu*, “and they cursed him”). The *Kethib* is the result of metathesis.

joined him. **20:15** So Joab's men⁴ came and laid siege against him in Abel of Beth Maacah. They prepared a siege ramp outside the city which stood against its outer rampart. As all of Joab's soldiers were trying to break through² the wall so that it would collapse, **20:16** a wise woman called out from the city, "Listen up! Listen up! Tell Joab, 'Come near so that I may speak to you.'"

20:17 When he approached her, the woman asked, "Are you Joab?" He replied, "I am." She said to him, "Listen to the words of your servant." He said, "Go ahead. I'm listening." **20:18** She said, "In the past they would always say, 'Let them inquire in Abel,' and that is how they settled things. **20:19** I represent the peaceful and the faithful in Israel. You are attempting to destroy an important city³ in Israel. Why should you swallow up the LORD's inheritance?"

20:20 Joab answered, "Get serious!⁴ I don't want to swallow up or destroy anything! **20:21** That's not the way things are. There is a man from the hill country of Ephraim named Sheba son of Bicri. He has rebelled⁵ against King David. Give me just this one man, and I will leave the city." The woman said to Joab, "This very minute⁶ his head will be thrown over the wall to you!"

20:22 Then the woman went to all the people with her wise advice and they cut off Sheba's head and threw it out to Joab. Joab⁷ blew the trumpet, and his men⁸ dispersed from the city, each going to his own home.⁹ Joab returned to the king in Jerusalem.

20:23 Now Joab was the general in command of all the army of Israel. Benaiah the son of Jehoida was over the Kerethites and the Perethites. **20:24** Adoniram¹⁰ was supervisor of the work crews.¹¹ Jehoshaphat son of Ahilud was the secretary. **20:25** Sheva was the scribe, and Zadok and Abiathar were the priests. **20:26** Ira the Jairite was David's personal priest.¹²

The Gibeonites Demand Revenge

21:1 During David's reign there was a famine for three consecutive years. So David inquired of the LORD.¹³ The LORD said, "It is because of Saul and his bloodstained family,¹⁴ because he murdered the Gibeonites."

21:2 So the king summoned the Gibeonites and spoke with them. (Now the Gibeonites were not descendants of Israel; they were a remnant of the Amorites. The Israelites had made a promise to¹⁵ them, but Saul tried to kill them because of his zeal for the people of Israel and Judah.) **21:3** David said to the Gibeonites, "What can I do for you, and how can I make amends so that you will bless¹⁶ the LORD's inheritance?"

21:4 The Gibeonites said to him, "We¹⁷ have no claim to silver or gold from Saul or from his family,¹⁸ nor would we be justified in putting to death anyone in Israel." David asked,¹⁹ "What then are you asking me to do for you?" **21:5** They replied to the king, "As for this man who exterminated us and who schemed against us so that we were destroyed and left without status throughout all the borders of Israel – **21:6** let seven of his male descendants be turned over to us, and we will execute²⁰ them before the LORD

¹⁰ tn Heb "Adoram" (so KJV, NAB, NRSV, CEV), but see 1 Kgs 4:6; 5:14.

¹¹ tn Heb "was over the forced labor."

¹² tn Heb "priest for David." KJV ("a chief ruler about David") and ASV ("chief minister unto David") regarded this office as political.

¹³ tn Heb "sought the face of the LORD."

¹⁴ tn Heb "and the house of bloodshed."

¹⁵ tn Heb "swore an oath to."

¹⁶ tn After the preceding imperfect verbal form, the subordinated imperative indicates purpose/result. S. R. Driver comments, "...the imper. is used instead of the more normal voluntative, for the purpose of expressing with somewhat greater force the intention of the previous verb" (S. R. Driver, *Notes on the Hebrew Text and the Topography of the Books of Samuel*, 350).

¹⁷ tc The translation follows the *Qere* and several medieval Hebrew MSS in reading לָנוּ (*lanu*, "to us") rather than the MT לִי (*li*, "to me"). But for a contrary opinion see S. R. Driver, *Notes on the Hebrew Text and the Topography of the Books of Samuel*, 53, 350.

¹⁸ tn Heb "house."

¹⁹ tn Heb "and he said"; the referent (David) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

²⁰ tn The exact nature of this execution is not altogether clear. The verb יָצַק (*yacaq*) basically means "to dislocate" or "alienate." In Gen 32:26 it is used of the dislocation of Jacob's thigh. Figuratively it can refer to the removal of an individual from a group (e.g., Jer 6:8; Ezek 23:17) or to a type of punishment the specific identity of which is uncertain (e.g., here and Num 25:4); cf. NAB "dismember them"; NIV "to be killed and exposed."

¹ tn Heb "they." The following context makes it clear that this refers to Joab and his army.

² tc The LXX has here ἐνοοῦσαν (*enoousan*, "were devising"), which apparently presupposes the Hebrew word מַחֲשָׁוִים (*makhshavim*) rather than the MT מַשְׁחִיתִים (*mashkhitim*, "were destroying"). With a number of other scholars Driver thinks that the Greek variant may preserve the original reading, but this seems to be an unnecessary conclusion (but see S. R. Driver, *Notes on the Hebrew Text and the Topography of the Books of Samuel*, 346).

³ tn Heb "a city and a mother." The expression is a hendiadys, meaning that this city was an important one in Israel and had smaller cities dependent on it.

⁴ tn Heb "Far be it, far be it from me." The expression is clearly emphatic, as may be seen in part by the repetition. P. K. McCarter, however, understands it to be coarser than the translation adopted here. He renders it as "I'll be damned if..." (*II Samuel* [AB], 426, 429), which (while it is not a literal translation) may not be too far removed from the way a soldier might have expressed himself.

⁵ tn Heb "lifted his hand."

⁶ tn Heb "Look!"

⁷ tn Heb "he"; the referent (Joab) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

⁸ tn Heb "they"; the referent (Joab's men) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

⁹ tn Heb "his tents."

in Gibeah of Saul, who was the LORD's chosen one."¹ The king replied, "I will turn them over."

21:7 The king had mercy on Mephibosheth son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, in light of the LORD's oath that had been taken between David and Jonathan son of Saul. **21:8** So the king took Armoni and Mephibosheth, the two sons of Aiah's daughter Rizpah whom she had born to Saul, and the five sons of Saul's daughter Merab² whom she had born to Adriel the son of Barzillai the Mehola-thite. **21:9** He turned them over to the Gibeonites, and they executed them on a hill before the LORD. The seven of them³ died⁴ together; they were put to death during harvest time – during the first days of the beginning⁵ of the barley harvest.

21:10 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 fell on them,⁶ she did not allow the birds of the air to feed⁷ on them by day, nor the wild animals⁸ by night. **21:11** When David was told what Rizpah daughter of Aiah, Saul's concubine, had done, **21:12** he⁹ went and took the bones of Saul and of his son Jonathan¹⁰ from the leaders¹¹ of Jabesh Gilead. (They had secretly taken¹² them from the plaza at Beth Shan. It was there that Philistines¹³ publicly exposed their corpses¹⁴ after¹⁵ they¹⁶ had killed Saul at Gilboa.) **21:13** David¹⁷ brought the bones of Saul and of Jonathan his son from there; they also gathered up the bones of those who had been executed.

21:14 They buried the bones of Saul and his son Jonathan in the land of Benjamin at Zela in

the grave of his father Kish. After they had done everything¹⁸ that the king had commanded, God responded to their prayers¹⁹ for the land.

Israel Engages in Various Battles with the Philistines

21:15 Another battle was fought between the Philistines and Israel. So David went down with his soldiers²⁰ and fought the Philistines. David became exhausted. **21:16** Now Ishbi-Benob, one of the descendants of Rapha,²¹ had a spear²² that weighed three hundred bronze shekels,²³ and he was armed with a new weapon.²⁴ He had said that he would kill David. **21:17** But Abishai the son of Zeruiah came to David's aid, striking the Philistine down and killing him. Then David's men took an oath saying, "You will not go out to battle with us again! You must not extinguish the lamp of Israel!"²⁵

21:18 Later there was another battle with the Philistines, this time in Gob. On that occasion Sibbekai the Hushathite killed Saph, who was one of the descendants of Rapha. **21:19** Yet another battle occurred with the Philistines in Gob. On that occasion Elhanan the son of Jair²⁵ the Bethlehemite killed the brother of Goliath the Gittite,²⁶ the shaft

¹⁸ **tc** Many medieval Hebrew MSS have here כָּבֵל (*kēkhol*, "according to all").

¹⁹ **tn** *Heb* "was entreated." The verb is an example of the so-called *niphal tolerativum*, with the sense that God allowed himself to be supplicated through prayer (cf. GKC 137 §51.c).

²⁰ **tn** *Heb* "his servants."

²¹ **tn** This name has the definite article and may be intended to refer to a group of people rather than a single individual with this name.

²² **tn** This is the only occurrence of this Hebrew word in the OT. Its precise meaning is therefore somewhat uncertain. As early as the LXX the word was understood to refer to a "spear," and this seems to be the most likely possibility. Some scholars have proposed emending the text of 2 Sam 21:16 to כִּיבֵּי (*khovai*; "his helmet"), but in spite of the fact that the word "helmet" appears in 1 Sam 17:5, there is not much evidence for reading that word here.

²³ **tn** Either the word "shekels" should be supplied here, or the Hebrew word מִשְׁקָל (*mishqal*, "weight") right before "bronze" is a corrupted form of the word for shekel. If the latter is the case the problem probably resulted from another occurrence of the word מִשְׁקָל just four words earlier in the verse.

²⁴ **sn** *Three hundred bronze shekels* would have weighed about 7.5 pounds (3.4 kg).

²⁵ **tn** The Hebrew text reads simply "a new [thing]," prompting one to ask "A new *what*?" Several possibilities have been proposed to resolve the problem: perhaps a word has dropped out of the Hebrew text here; or perhaps the word "new" is the result of misreading a different, less common, word; or perhaps a word (e.g., "sword," so KJV, NAB, NASB, NIV, CEV, NLT) is simply to be inferred. The translation generally follows the latter possibility, while at the same time being deliberately nonspecific ("weapon").

²⁶ **tn** *Heb* "Jaare-Oregim," but the second word, which means "weavers," is probably accidentally included. It appears at the end of the verse. The term is omitted in the parallel account in 1 Chr 20:5, which has simply "Jair."

²⁷ **sn** The Hebrew text as it stands reads, "Elhanan son of Jaare-Oregim the Bethlehemite killed Goliath the Gittite." Who killed Goliath the Gittite? According to 1 Sam 17:4-58 it was David who killed Goliath, but according to the MT of 2 Sam 21:19 it was Elhanan who killed him. Many scholars believe that the two passages are hopelessly at variance with one an-

¹ **tc** The LXX reads "at Gibeon on the mountain of the LORD" (cf. 21:9). The present translation follows the MT, although a number of recent English translations follow the LXX reading here (e.g., NAB, NRSV, NLT).

² **tc** The MT reads "Michal" here, but two Hebrew manuscripts read "Merab," along with some LXX manuscripts. Cf. 1 Sam 18:19.

³ **tc** The translation follows the *Qere* and several medieval Hebrew MSS in reading שִׁבְעָתָם (*shēva'tam*, "the seven of them") rather than MT שִׁבְעָתִים (*shiva'tim*, "seventy").

⁴ **tn** *Heb* "fell."

⁵ **tc** The translation follows the *Qere* and many medieval Hebrew MSS in reading בְּתֵחִילָת (*bitkhillat*, "in the beginning") rather than MT תְּחִילָת (*tekhillat*, "beginning of").

⁶ **tn** *Heb* "until water was poured on them from the sky."

⁷ **tn** *Heb* "rest."

⁸ **tn** *Heb* "the beasts of the field."

⁹ **tn** *Heb* "David." For stylistic reasons the name has been replaced by the pronoun ("he") in the translation.

¹⁰ **tn** *Heb* "the bones of Saul and the bones of Jonathan his son." See also v. 13.

¹¹ **tn** *Heb* "lords."

¹² **tn** *Heb* "stolen."

¹³ **tc** Against the MT, this word is better read without the definite article. The MT reading is probably here the result of wrong word division, with the letter ה (*he*) belonging with the preceding word שָׁם (*sham*) as the *he* directive (i.e., שָׁמָּה, *samah*, "to there").

¹⁴ **tn** *Heb* "had hung them."

¹⁵ **tn** *Heb* "in the day."

¹⁶ **tn** *Heb* "Philistines."

¹⁷ **tn** *Heb* "he"; the referent (David) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

of whose spear was like a weaver's beam. **21:20** Yet another battle occurred in Gath. On that occasion there was a large man¹ who had six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot, twenty-four in all! He too was a descendant of Rapha. **21:21** When he taunted Israel, Jonathan, the son of David's brother Shimeah, killed him. **21:22** These four were the descendants of Rapha who lived in Gath; they were killed² by David and his soldiers.³

David Sings to the Lord

22:1⁴ David sang⁵ to the LORD the words of this song when⁶ the LORD rescued him from the power⁷ of all his enemies, including Saul.⁸ **22:2** He said:

"The LORD is my high ridge,⁹ my stronghold,¹⁰ my deliverer.

22:3 My God¹¹ is my rocky summit where I take shelter,¹²

my shield, the horn that saves me,¹³ my stronghold,
my refuge, my savior. You save me from violence!¹⁴

22:4 I called¹⁵ to the LORD, who is worthy of praise,¹⁶

and I was delivered from my enemies.

22:5 The waves of death engulfed me; the currents¹⁷ of chaos¹⁸ overwhelmed me.¹⁹

22:6 The ropes of Sheol²⁰ tightened around me;²¹
the snares of death trapped me.²²

other. Others have proposed various solutions to the difficulty, such as identifying David with Elhanan or positing the existence of two Goliaths. But in all likelihood the problem is the result of difficulties in the textual transmission of the Samuel passage; in fact, from a text-critical point of view the books of Samuel are the most poorly preserved of all the books of the Hebrew Bible. The parallel passage in 1 Chr 20:5 reads, "Elhanan son of Jair killed Lahmi the brother of Goliath." Both versions are textually corrupt. The Chronicles text has misread "Bethlehemite" (בֵּית הַלְחִמִּי, *bet hallakhmi*) as the accusative sign followed by a proper name לַחְמִי ('*et lakhmi*). (See the note at 1 Chr 20:5.) The Samuel text misread the word for "brother" (אָח, '*akh*) as the accusative sign (אֶת, '*et*), thereby giving the impression that Elhanan, not David, killed Goliath. Thus in all probability the original text read, "Elhanan son of Jair the Bethlehemite killed the brother of Goliath."

¹ **tn** Heb "a man of stature."

² **tn** Heb "they fell."

³ **tn** Heb "his servants."

⁴ **sn** In this long song of thanks, David affirms that God is his faithful protector. He recalls in highly poetic fashion how God intervened in awesome power and delivered him from death. His experience demonstrates that God vindicates those who are blameless and remain loyal to him. True to his promises, God gives the king victory on the battlefield and enables him to subdue nations. A parallel version of the song appears in Ps 18.

⁵ **tn** Heb "spoke."

⁶ **tn** Heb "in the day," or "at the time."

⁷ **tn** Heb "hand."

⁸ **tn** Heb "and from the hand of Saul."

⁹ **tn** Traditionally "is my rock"; CEV "mighty rock"; TEV "is my protector." This metaphor pictures God as a rocky, relatively inaccessible summit, where one would be able to find protection from enemies. See 1 Sam 23:25, 28.

¹⁰ **tn** Traditionally "my fortress"; TEV "my strong fortress"; NCV "my protection."

sn My stronghold. David often found safety in such strongholds. See 1 Sam 22:4-5; 24:22; 2 Sam 5:9, 17; 23:14.

¹¹ **tc** The translation (along with many English versions, e.g., NAB, NIV, NRSV, NLT) follows the LXX in reading אֱלֹהֵי ('*elohi*, "my God") rather than MT's אֱלֹהֵי ('*elohē*, "the God of"). See Ps 18:2.

¹² **tn** Or "in whom."

¹³ **tn** Heb "the horn of my salvation," or "my saving horn."

sn Though some see "horn" as referring to a horn-shaped peak of a hill, or to the "horns" of an altar where one could find refuge, it is more likely that the horn of an ox underlies the metaphor (see Deut 33:17; 1 Kgs 22:11; Ps 92:10). The horn of the wild ox is frequently a metaphor for military strength; the idiom "exalt the horn" signifies military victory (see 1 Sam 2:10; Pss 89:17, 24; 92:10; Lam 2:17). In the ancient Near East powerful warrior-kings would sometimes compare themselves to a goring bull that uses its horns to kill its enemies. For examples, see P. Miller, "El the Warrior," *HTR* 60 (1967): 422-25, and R. B. Chisholm, "An Exegetical and Theological Study of Psalm 18/2 Samuel 22" (Th.D. diss., Dallas Theological Seminary, 1983), 135-36. 2 Sam 22:3 uses the metaphor of the horn in a slightly different manner. Here the Lord himself is compared to a horn. He is to the palmist what the horn is to the ox, a source of defense and victory.

¹⁴ **tn** The parallel version of the song in Ps 18 does not include this last line.

¹⁵ **tn** In this song of thanksgiving, where David recalls how the Lord delivered him, the prefixed verbal form is best understood as a preterite indicating past tense (cf. CEV "I prayed"), not an imperfect (as in many English versions).

¹⁶ **tn** Heb "worthy of praise, I cried out [to] the LORD." Some take מְהִלָּל (*mehillal*, "worthy of praise") with what precedes and translate, "the praiseworthy one," or "praiseworthy." However, the various epithets in vv. 1-2 have the first person pronominal suffix, unlike מְהִלָּל. If one follows the traditional verse division and takes מְהִלָּל with what follows, it is best understood as substantival and as appositional to יְהוָה (*yehvah*, "Yahweh"), resulting in "[to the] praiseworthy one I cried out, [to the] LORD."

¹⁷ **tn** The noun נַחַל (*nakhal*) usually refers to a river or stream, but in this context the plural form likely refers to the currents of the sea (see vv. 15-16).

¹⁸ **tn** The noun בְּלִיעַיָּא (*b'lyaya'ah*) is used here as an epithet for death. Elsewhere it is a common noun meaning "wickedness, uselessness" (see HALOT 133-34 s.v. בְּלִיעַיָּא). It is often associated with rebellion against authority and other crimes that result in societal disorder and anarchy. The phrase "man/son of wickedness" refers to one who opposes God and the order he has established. The term becomes an appropriate title for death, which, through human forces, launches an attack against God's chosen servant.

¹⁹ **tn** In this poetic narrative context the prefixed verbal form is best understood as a preterite indicating past tense, not an imperfect. (Note the preterite verbal form in the parallel/preceding line.) The verb בָּתַּת (*ba'at*) sometimes by metonymy carries the nuance "frighten," but the parallelism (note "engulfed" in the preceding line) favors the meaning "overwhelm" here.

²⁰ **tn** "Sheol," personified here as David's enemy, is the underworld, place of the dead in primitive Hebrew cosmology.

²¹ **tn** Heb "surrounded me."

²² **tn** Heb "confronted me."

22:7 In my distress I called to the LORD;
I called to my God.⁴
From his heavenly temple² he heard my
voice;
he listened to my cry for help.³
22:8 The earth heaved and shook,⁴
the foundations of the sky⁵ trembled.⁶
They heaved because he was angry.
22:9 Smoke ascended from⁷ his nose;⁸
fire devoured as it came from his mouth;⁹
he hurled down fiery coals.¹⁰
22:10 He made the sky sink¹¹ as he de-
scended;
a thick cloud was under his feet.
22:11 He mounted¹² a winged angel¹³ and

flew;
he glided¹⁴ on the wings of the wind.¹⁵
22:12 He shrouded himself in darkness,¹⁶
in thick rain clouds.¹⁷
22:13 From the brightness in front of him
came coals of fire.¹⁸
22:14 The LORD thundered¹⁹ from the sky;

¹tn In this poetic narrative the two prefixed verbal forms in v. 7a are best understood as preterites indicating past tense, not imperfects. Note the use of the *vav* consecutive with the prefixed verbal form that follows in v. 7b.

²tn Heb “from his temple.” Verse 10, which pictures God descending from the sky, indicates that the heavenly, not earthly, temple is in view.

³tn Heb “and my cry for help [entered] his ears.”

⁴tn The earth heaved and shook. The imagery pictures an earthquake, in which the earth’s surface rises and falls. The earthquake motif is common in Old Testament theophanies of God as warrior and in ancient Near eastern literary descriptions of warring gods and kings. See R. B. Chisholm, “An Exegetical and Theological Study of Psalm 18/2 Samuel 22” (Th. D. diss., Dallas Theological Seminary, 1983), 160-62.

⁵tn Ps 18:7 reads “the roots of the mountains.”

⁶tn In this poetic narrative context the prefixed verbal form is best understood as a preterite indicating past tense, not an imperfect. Note the three prefixed verbal forms with *vav* consecutive in the verse.

⁷tn Heb “within” or “[from] within.” For a discussion of the use of the preposition ב (bet) here, see R. B. Chisholm, “An Exegetical and Theological Study of Psalm 18/2 Samuel 22” (Th. D. diss., Dallas Theological Seminary, 1983), 163-64.

⁸tn Or “in his anger.” The noun אף (af) can carry the abstract meaning “anger,” but the parallelism (note “from his mouth”) suggests the more concrete meaning “nose” here (most English versions, “nostrils”). See also v. 16, “the powerful breath of your nose.”

⁹tn Heb “fire from his mouth devoured.” In this poetic narrative the prefixed verbal form is best understood as a preterite indicating past tense, not an imperfect. Note the two perfect verbal forms in the verse.

^{sn} For other examples of fire as a weapon in Old Testament theophanies and ancient Near Eastern portrayals of warring gods and kings, see R. B. Chisholm, “An Exegetical and Theological Study of Psalm 18/2 Samuel 22” (Th. D. diss., Dallas Theological Seminary, 1983), 165-67.

¹⁰tn Heb “coals burned from him.” Perhaps the psalmist pictures God’s fiery breath igniting coals (see Job 41:21), which he then hurls as weapons (see Ps 120:4).

¹¹tn The verb נָטַח (natah) can carry the sense “[to cause to] bend; [to cause to] bow down” (see HALOT 693 s.v. נָטַח). For example, Gen 49:15 pictures Issachar as a donkey that “bends” its shoulder or back under a burden (cf. KJV, NASB, NRSV “He bowed the heavens”; NAB “He inclined the heavens”). Here the LORD causes the sky, pictured as a dome or vault, to bend or sink down as he descends in the storm.

¹²tn Or “rode upon.”

¹³tn Heb “a cherub” (so KJV, NAB, NRSV); NIV “the cherubim” (plural); TEV “his winged creature”; CEV “flying creatures.”

^{sn} A winged angel. Cherubs, as depicted in the Old Testament, possess both human and animal (lion, ox, and eagle) characteristics (see Ezek 1:10; 10:14, 21; 41:18). They are pictured as winged creatures (Exod 25:20; 37:9; 1 Kgs 6:24-27; Ezek 10:8, 19) and serve as the very throne of God when the ark of the covenant is in view (Pss 80:1; 99:1; see Num

7:89; 1 Sam 4:4; 2 Sam 6:2; 2 Kgs 19:15). The picture of the LORD seated on the cherubs suggests they might be used by him as a vehicle, a function they carry out in Ezek 1:22-28 (the “living creatures” mentioned here are identified as cherubs in Ezek 10:20). In Ps 18:10 the image of a cherub serves to personify the wind (see the next line).

¹⁴tc The translation follows very many medieval Hebrew mss in reading נִיָּדָה (vayyade’, “and he glided”); cf. NIV “soared”; NCV “raced”) rather than MT נִיָּדָה (vayyera’, “and he appeared,” so NASB, CEV). See as well the Syriac Peshitta, Targum, Vulgate, and the parallel version in Ps 18:10, which preserves the original reading (see the note there).

¹⁵sn The wings of the wind. Verse 10 may depict the LORD mounting a cherub, which is in turn propelled by the wind current. Another option is that two different vehicles (a cherub and the wind) are envisioned. A third option is that the wind is personified as a cherub. For a discussion of ancient Near Eastern parallels to the imagery in v. 10, see M. Weinfeld, “Rider of the Clouds’ and ‘Gatherer of the Clouds,’” JANESCU 5 (1973): 422-24.

¹⁶tc Heb “he made darkness around him coverings.” The parallel text in Ps 18:11 reads “he made darkness his hiding place around him, his covering.” 2 Sam 22:12 omits “his hiding place” and pluralizes “covering.” Ps 18:11 may include a conflation of synonyms (“his hiding place” and “his covering”) or 2 Sam 22:12 may be the result of haplography/homoiogram. Note that three successive words in Ps 18:11 begin with the letter ס (samek): סִתְרוּ סְבִיבוֹתָי סְבִיבוֹתָי (sitra s’vivotav sukkato).

¹⁷tc Heb “a sieve of water, clouds of clouds.” The form הַשֵּׁרָת (khashrat) is a construct of הַשֵּׁרֶת (khashrah, “sieve”), which occurs only here in the OT. A cognate Ugaritic noun means “sieve,” and a related verb הִשֵּׁר (to sift) is attested in post-biblical Hebrew and Aramaic (see HALOT 363 s.v. הִשֵּׁר). The phrase הַשֵּׁרֶת־מַיִם (khashrat-mayim) means literally “a sieve of water.” It pictures the rain clouds as a sieve through which the rain falls to the ground. (See F. M. Cross and D. N. Freedman, *Studies in Ancient Yahwistic Poetry*, 146, note 33.)

¹⁸tc The parallel text in Ps 18:12 reads “from the brightness in front of him his clouds came, hail and coals of fire.” The Lucianic family of texts within the Greek tradition of 2 Sam 22:13 seems to assume the underlying Hebrew text: מִנְּהַר עָבְרוּ עִבְרוּ מִנְּהַר עָבְרוּ (minnogah negdo avru barad v’gakhale’esh, “from the brightness in front of him came hail and coals of fire”) which is the basis for the present translation. The textual situation is perplexing and the identity of the original text uncertain. The verbs עָבְרוּ (avru; Ps 18:12) and עָבְרוּ (ba’aru, 2 Sam 22:13) appear to be variants involving a transposition of the first two letters. The noun עָבַר (avav, “his clouds”; Ps 18:12) may be virtually dittographic (note the following עָבְרוּ), or it could have accidentally dropped from the text of 2 Sam 22:13 by virtual haplography (note the preceding עָבְרוּ [ba’aru], which might have originally read עָבְרוּ). The term בָּרַד (barad, “hail”; Ps 18:12) may be virtually dittographic (note the preceding עָבְרוּ), or it could have dropped from 2 Sam 22:13 by virtual haplography (note the preceding עָבְרוּ, which might have originally read עָבְרוּ). For a fuller discussion of the text, see R. B. Chisholm, “An Exegetical and Theological Study of Psalm 18/2 Samuel 22” (Th. D. diss., Dallas Theological Seminary, 1983), 74-76.

¹⁹tn The shortened text vowel indicates that the prefixed verbal form is a preterite.

the sovereign One¹ shouted loudly.²
22:15 He shot³ arrows and scattered
 them,⁴
 lightning and routed them.⁵
22:16 The depths⁶ of the sea were ex-
 posed;
 the inner regions⁷ of the world were un-
 covered
 by the LORD's battle cry,⁸
 by the powerful breath from his nose.⁹
22:17 He reached down from above and
 grabbed me;¹⁰
 he pulled me from the surging water.¹¹

22:18 He rescued me from my strong enemy,¹²
 from those who hate me,
 for they were too strong for me.
22:19 They confronted¹³ me in my day of
 calamity,
 but the LORD helped me.¹⁴
22:20 He brought me out into a wide open
 place;
 he delivered me because he was pleased
 with me.¹⁵
22:21 The LORD repaid¹⁶ me for my godly
 deeds;¹⁷
 he rewarded¹⁸ my blameless behavior.¹⁹
22:22 For I have obeyed the LORD's com-
 mands;²⁰
 I have not rebelled against my God.²¹
22:23 For I am aware of all his regula-
 tions,²²
 and I do not reject his rules.²³

¹ **tn** *Heb* "the Most High." This divine title (עֲלִיּוֹן, 'elyon) pictures God as the exalted ruler of the universe who vindicates the innocent and judges the wicked. See especially Ps 47:2.

² **tn** *Heb* "offered his voice." In this poetic narrative context the prefixed verbal form is best understood as a preterite indicating past tense, not an imperfect. Note the preterite form in the preceding line. The text of Ps 18:13 adds at this point, "hail and coals of fire." These words are probably accidentally added from v. 12b; they do not appear in 2 Sam 22:14.

sn Thunder is a common motif in Old Testament theophanies and in ancient Near Eastern portrayals of the storm god and warring kings. See R. B. Chisholm, "An Exegetical and Theological Study of Psalm 18/2 Samuel 22" (Th.D. diss., Dallas Theological Seminary, 1983), 179-83.

³ **tn** *Heb* "sent."

⁴ **tn** The pronominal suffixes on the verbs "scattered" and "routed" (see the next line) refer to David's enemies. Some argue that the suffixes refer to the arrows, in which case one might translate "shot them far and wide" and "made them move noisily," respectively. They argue that the enemies have not been mentioned since v. 4 and are not again mentioned until v. 17. However, usage of the verbs פָּיֵץ (*paits*, "scatter") and הִבֵּיט (*hamam*, "rout") elsewhere in Holy War accounts suggests the suffixes refer to enemies. Enemies are frequently pictured in such texts as scattered and/or routed (see Exod 14:24; 23:27; Num 10:35; Josh 10:10; Judg 4:15; 1 Sam 7:10; 11:11; Ps 68:14).

⁵ **sn** *Lightning* is a common motif in OT theophanies and in ancient Near Eastern portrayals of the storm god and warring kings. Arrows and lightning bolts are associated in other texts (see Pss 77:17-18; 144:6; Zech 9:14), as well as in ancient Near Eastern art. See R. B. Chisholm, "An Exegetical and Theological Study of Psalm 18/2 Samuel 22" (Th.D. diss., Dallas Theological Seminary, 1983), 187, 190-92.

⁶ **tn** Or "channels."

⁷ **tn** Or "foundations."

⁸ **tn** The noun is derived from the verb נָגַר (*nag'ar*) which is often understood to mean "rebuke." In some cases it is apparent that scolding or threatening is in view (see Gen 37:10; Ruth 2:16; Zech 3:2). However, in militaristic contexts this translation is inadequate, for the verb refers in this setting to the warrior's battle cry, which terrifies and paralyzes the enemy. See A. Caquot, *TDOT* 3:53, and note the use of the verb in Pss 68:30; 106:9; and Nah 1:4, as well as the related noun in Job 26:11; Pss 9:5; 76:6; 104:7; Isa 50:2; 51:20; 66:15.

⁹ **tn** *Heb* "blast of the breath" (literally, "breath of breath") employs an appositional genitive. Synonyms are joined in a construct relationship to emphasize the single idea. For a detailed discussion of the grammatical point with numerous examples, see Y. Avishur, "Pairs of Synonymous Words in the Construct State (and in Appositional Hendiads) in Biblical Hebrew," *Semitics* 2 (1971): 17-81.

¹⁰ **tn** *Heb* "stretched." Perhaps "his hand" should be supplied by ellipsis (see Ps 144:7). In this poetic narrative context the three prefixed verbal forms in this verse are best understood as preterites indicating past tense, not imperfects.

¹¹ **tn** *Heb* "mighty waters." The waters of the sea symbolize the psalmist's powerful enemies, as well as the realm of death they represent (see v. 5 and Ps 144:7).

¹² **tn** The singular refers either to personified death or collectively to the psalmist's enemies. The following line, which refers to "those [plural] who hate me," favors the latter.

¹³ **tn** The same verb is translated "trapped" in v. 6. In this poetic narrative context the prefixed verbal form is best understood as a preterite indicating past tense, not imperfect. Cf. NAB, NCV, TEV, NLT "attacked."

¹⁴ **tn** *Heb* "became my support."

¹⁵ **tn** Or "delighted in me" (so KJV, NASB, NIV, NRSV).

¹⁶ **tn** In this poetic narrative context the prefixed verbal form is best understood as a preterite indicating past tense, not imperfect.

¹⁷ **tn** *Heb* "according to my righteousness." As vv. 22-25 make clear, David refers here to his unwavering obedience to God's commands. He explains that the Lord was pleased with him and willing to deliver him because he had been loyal to God and obedient to his commandments. Ancient Near Eastern literature contains numerous parallels. A superior (a god or king) would typically reward a subject (a king or the servant of a king, respectively) for loyalty and obedience. See R. B. Chisholm, "An Exegetical and Theological Study of Psalm 18/2 Samuel 22" (Th.D. diss., Dallas Theological Seminary, 1983), 211-13.

¹⁸ **tn** The unreduced Hiphil prefixed verbal form appears to be an imperfect, in which case the psalmist would be generalizing. However, both the preceding and following contexts (see especially v. 25) suggest he is narrating his experience. Despite its unreduced form, the verb is better taken as a preterite. For other examples of unreduced Hiphil preterites, see Pss 55:14a; 68:9a, 10b; 80:8a; 89:43a; 107:38b; 116:6b.

¹⁹ **tn** *Heb* "according to the purity of my hands he repaid to me." Hands suggest activity and behavior.

²⁰ **tn** *Heb* "for I have kept the ways of the LORD." The phrase "ways of the LORD" refers here to the "conduct required" by the LORD (see HALOT 232 s.v. נִדְרָה). In Ps 25 the LORD's "ways" are associated with his covenantal demands (see vv. 4, 9-10). See also Ps 119:3 (cf. vv. 1, 4), as well as Deut 8:6; 10:12; 11:22; 19:9; 26:17; 28:9; 30:16.

²¹ **tn** *Heb* "I have not acted wickedly from my God." The statement is elliptical, the idea being, "I have not acted wickedly and, in so doing, departed from my God."

²² **tn** *Heb* "for all his regulations are before me." The term מִשְׁפָּטַי (*mishpatav*, "his regulations") refers to God's covenantal requirements, especially those which the king is responsible to follow (cf. Deut 17:18-20). See also Pss 19:9 (cf. vv. 7-8); 89:30; 147:20 (cf. v. 19), as well as the numerous uses of the term in Ps 119.

²³ **tn** *Heb* "and his rules, I do not turn aside from it." Ps 18:22 reads, "and his rules I do not turn aside from me." The prefixed verbal form is probably an imperfect; David here generalizes about his loyalty to God's commands. The LORD's "rules" are the stipulations of the covenant which the king was responsible to obey (see Ps 89:31; cf. v. 30 and Deut

22:24 I was blameless before him;
I kept myself from sinning.¹
22:25 The LORD rewarded me for my
godly deeds;²
he took notice of my blameless behavior.³
22:26 You prove to be loyal⁴ to one who is
faithful;⁵
you prove to be trustworthy⁶ to one who
is innocent.⁷
22:27 You prove to be reliable⁸ to one who
is blameless,
but you prove to be deceptive⁹ to one
who is perverse.¹⁰
22:28 You deliver oppressed¹¹ people,
but you watch the proud and bring them
down.¹²

17:18-20).

1 **tn** Heb “from my sin,” that is, from making it my own in any way. Leading a “blameless” life meant that the king would be loyal to God’s covenant, purge the government and society of evil and unjust officials, and reward loyalty to the LORD (see Ps 101).

2 **tn** Heb “according to my righteousness.” See v. 21.

3 **tn** Heb “according to my purity before his eyes.”

4 **tn** The imperfect verbal forms in vv. 26-30 draw attention to God’s characteristic actions. Based on his experience, the psalmist generalizes about God’s just dealings with people (vv. 26-28) and about the way in which God typically empowers him on the battlefield (vv. 29-30). The Hitpael stem is used in vv. 26-27 in a reflexive resultative (or causative) sense. God makes himself loyal, etc. in the sense that he conducts or reveals himself as such. On this use of the Hitpael stem, see GKC 149-50 §54.e.

5 **tn** Or “to a faithful follower.” A *khasid* (*khasid*, “faithful follower”) is one who does what is right in God’s eyes and remains faithful to God (see Pss 4:3; 12:1; 16:10; 31:23; 37:28; 86:2; 97:10).

6 **tn** Or “innocent.”

7 **tc** Heb “a warrior of innocence.” The parallel text in Ps 18:25 reads, probably correctly, גִּבּוֹר (*geber*, “man”) instead of גִּבּוֹר (*gibor*, “warrior”).

8 **tn** Or “blameless.”

9 **tc** The translation follows two medieval Hebrew MSS in reading תִּטְּפַל (*titappal*, from the root פָּתַל, “to twist”) rather than the MT תִּתְּפַל (*tittappal*, from the root תָּפַל, “to be tasteless,” “behave silly”; cf. KJV “unsavoury”). See as well the parallel passage in Ps 18:26. The verb פָּתַל (*patal*) is used in only three other texts. In Gen 30:8 it means literally “to wrestle,” or “to twist.” In Job 5:13 it refers to devious individuals, and in Prov 8:8 to deceptive words. Cf. NAB, NASB “astute”; NIV “shrewd”; NRSV “perverse”; TEV, NLT “hostile.”

10 **tn** The adjective עִקְשׁוּת (*iqqeshu*) has the basic nuance “twisted; crooked,” and by extension refers to someone or something that is morally perverse. It appears frequently in Proverbs, where it is used of evil people (22:5), speech (8:8; 19:1), thoughts (11:20; 17:20) and life styles (2:15; 28:6). A righteous king opposes such people (Ps 101:4). Verses 26-27 affirm God’s justice. He responds to people in accordance with their moral character. His response mirrors their actions. The faithful and blameless find God to be loyal and reliable in his dealings with them. But deceivers discover he is able and willing to use deceit to destroy them. For a more extensive discussion of the theme of divine deception in the OT, see R. B. Chisholm, “Does God Deceive?” *BSac* 155 (1998): 11-28.

11 **tn** Or perhaps “humble” (so NIV, NRSV, NLT; note the contrast with those who are proud).

12 **tc** Heb “but your eyes are upon the proud, you bring low.” Ps 18:27 reads “but proud eyes you bring low.”

22:29 Indeed,¹³ you are my lamp,¹⁴ LORD.
The LORD illumines¹⁵ the darkness around
me.¹⁶

22:30 Indeed,¹⁷ with your help¹⁸ I can
charge¹⁹ against an army;²⁰
by my God’s power²¹ I can jump over a
wall.²²

22:31 The one true God acts in a faithful
manner;²³
the LORD’s promise is reliable,²⁴
he is a shield to all who take shelter in
him.

13 **tn** Or “for.” The translation assumes that כִּי (*ki*) is asseverative here.

14 **tc** Many medieval Hebrew MSS, some LXX MSS, and the Syriac Peshitta support reading תֹּאִיר (*ta’ir*, “you cause to shine”) before the words “my lamp.” See Ps 18:28. The metaphor, which likens the LORD to a lamp or light, pictures him as the psalmist’s source of life. For other examples of “lamp” used in this way, see Job 18:6; 21:17; Prov 13:9; 20:20; 24:20. For other examples of “light” as a symbol for life, see Job 3:20; 33:30; Ps 56:13.

15 **tc** The Lucianic Greek recension and Vulgate understand this verb to be second person rather than third person as in the MT. But this is probably the result of reading the preceding word “LORD” as a vocative under the influence of the vocative in the first part of the verse.

16 **tn** Heb “my darkness.”

17 **tn** Or “for.” The translation assumes that כִּי (*ki*) is asseverative here.

18 **tn** Heb “by you.”

19 **tn** Heb “I will run.” The imperfect verbal forms in v. 30 indicate the subject’s potential or capacity to perform an action. Though one might expect a preposition to follow the verb here, this need not be the case with the verb רוּץ (*ruṣ*; see 1 Sam 17:22). Some emend the Qal to a Hiphil form of the verb and translate, “I put to flight [literally, “cause to run”] an army.”

20 **tn** More specifically, the noun refers to a raiding party or to a contingent of troops (see HALOT 177 s.v. II נָדָדוּ). The picture of a divinely empowered warrior charging against an army in almost superhuman fashion appears elsewhere in ancient Near Eastern literature. See R. B. Chisholm, “An Exegetical and Theological Study of Psalm 18/2 Samuel 22” (Th. D. diss., Dallas Theological Seminary, 1983), 228.

21 **tn** Heb “by my God.”

22 **tn** David uses hyperbole to emphasize his God-given military superiority.

23 **tn** Heb “[As for] the God, his way is blameless.” The term הָאֵל (*ha’el*, “the God”) stands as a nominative (or genitive) absolute in apposition to the resumptive pronominal suffix on “way.” The prefixed article emphasizes his distinctiveness as the one true God (see BDB 42 s.v. II אֵל 6; Deut 33:26). God’s “way” in this context refers to his protective and salvific acts in fulfillment of his promise (see also Deut 32:4; Pss 67:2; 77:13 [note vv. 11-12, 14]; 103:7; 138:5; 145:17).

24 **tn** Heb “the word of the LORD is purified.” The LORD’s “word” probably refers here to his oracle(s) of victory delivered to the psalmist before the battle(s) described in the following context. See also Pss 12:5-7 and 138:2-3. David frequently received such oracles before going into battle (see 1 Sam 23:2, 4-5, 10-12; 30:8; 2 Sam 5:19). The LORD’s word of promise is absolutely reliable; it is compared to metal that has been refined in fire and cleansed of impurities. See Ps 12:6. In the ancient Near East kings would typically seek and receive oracles from their god(s) prior to battle. For examples, see R. B. Chisholm, “An Exegetical and Theological Study of Psalm 18/2 Samuel 22” (Th. D. diss., Dallas Theological Seminary, 1983), 241-42.

22:32 Indeed,¹ who is God besides the LORD?
 Who is a protector² besides our God?³
 22:33 The one true God⁴ is my mighty refuge;⁵
 he removes⁶ the obstacles in my way.⁷
 22:34 He gives me the agility of a deer;⁸
 he enables me to negotiate the rugged terrain.⁹
 22:35 He trains¹⁰ my hands for battle;¹¹
 my arms can bend even the strongest bow.¹²
 22:36 You give me¹³ your protective shield;¹⁴

¹ **tn** Or “for.” The translation assumes that כִּי (*ki*) is asseverative here.

² **tn** *Heb* “rocky cliff,” which is a metaphor of protection.

³ **tn** The rhetorical questions anticipate the answer, “No one.” In this way the psalmist indicates that the LORD is the only true God and reliable source of protection. See also Deut 32:39, where the LORD affirms that he is the only true God. Note as well the emphasis on his role as protector (צוּר, *tsur*, “rocky cliff”) in Deut 32:4, 15, 17-18, 30.

⁴ **tn** *Heb* “the God.” See the note at v. 31.

⁵ **tc** 4QSam^a has בְּחֹרֵי (m) *azz^areni*, “the one girding me with strength”) rather than the MT בְּעוּזִי (*ma’uzzi*, “my refuge”). See as well Ps 18:32.

⁶ **tn** The prefixed verbal form with *vav* consecutive here carries along the generalizing tone of the preceding line.

⁷ **tn** *Heb* “and he sets free (from the verb בָּרַר, *natar*) [the] blameless, his [Kethib; “my”] (Qere) way.” The translation follows Ps 18:32 in reading “he made my path smooth.” The term תָּבִיב (tamim, “smooth”) usually carries a moral or ethical connotation, “blameless, innocent.” However, in Ps 18:33 it refers to a pathway free of obstacles. The reality underlying the metaphor is the psalmist’s ability to charge into battle without tripping (see vv. 33, 36).

⁸ **tc** *Heb* “[the one who] makes his feet like [those of] a deer.” The translation follows the Qere and many medieval Hebrew mss in reading רַגְלָי (raglai, “my feet”) rather than the MT רַגְלָי (raglav, “his feet”). See as well Ps 18:33.

⁹ **tn** *Heb* “and on my high places he makes me walk.” The imperfect verbal form emphasizes God’s characteristic provision. The psalmist compares his agility in battle to the ability of a deer to negotiate rugged, high terrain without falling or being injured. Habakkuk uses similar language to describe his faith during difficult times. See Hab 3:19.

¹⁰ **tn** *Heb* “teaches.”

¹¹ **tn** The psalmist attributes his skill with weapons to divine enabling. Egyptian reliefs picture gods teaching the king how to shoot a bow. See O. Keel, *Symbolism of the Biblical World*, 265.

¹² **tn** *Heb* “and a bow of bronze is bent by my arms.” The verb נָחַת (*nakhet*) apparently means “to pull back; to bend” here (see HALOT 692 s.v. נָחַת). The bronze bow referred to here was probably laminated with bronze strips, or a purely ceremonial or decorative bow made entirely from bronze. In the latter case the language is hyperbolic, for such a weapon would not be functional in battle.

¹³ **tn** Another option is to translate the prefixed verb with *vav* consecutive with a past tense, “you gave me.” Several prefixed verbal forms with *vav* consecutive also appear in vv. 38-44. The present translation understands this section as a description of what generally happened when the author charged into battle, but another option is to understand the section as narrative and translate accordingly.

¹⁴ **tc** Ps 18:35 contains an additional line following this one, which reads “your right hand supports me.” It may be omitted here due to homoiarcton. See the note at Ps 18:35.

tn *Heb* “and you give me the shield of your deliverance”; KJV, ASV “the shield of thy (your NRSV, NLT) salvation”; NIV “your shield of victory.” Ancient Near Eastern literature often refers to a god giving a king special weapons. See R. B. Ch-

your willingness to help enables me to prevail.¹⁵

22:37 You widen my path,¹⁶
 my feet¹⁷ do not slip.

22:38 I chase my enemies and destroy them;

I do not turn back until I wipe them out.

22:39 I wipe them out and beat them to death;

they cannot get up;

they fall at my feet.

22:40 You give me strength for battle;¹⁸

you make my foes kneel before me.¹⁹

22:41 You make my enemies retreat;²⁰

I destroy those who hate me.

22:42 They cry out,²¹ but there is no one to help them;²²

they cry out to the LORD,²³ but he does not answer them.

22:43 I grind them as fine as the dust of the ground;

I crush them and stomp on them like clay²⁴ in the streets.

22:44 You rescue me from a hostile army;²⁵
 you preserve me as a leader of nations;

isholm, “An Exegetical and Theological Study of Psalm 18/2 Samuel 22” (Th.D. diss., Dallas Theological Seminary, 1983), 260-61.

¹⁵ **tn** *Heb* “your answer makes me great.” David refers to God’s willingness to answer his prayer.

¹⁶ **tn** *Heb* “step.” “Step” probably refers metonymically to the path upon which the psalmist walks. Another option is to translate, “you widen my stride.” This would suggest that God gives him the capacity to run quickly.

¹⁷ **tn** *Heb* “lower legs.” On the meaning of the Hebrew noun, which occurs only here, see H. R. Cohen, *Biblical Hapax Legomena* (SBLDS), 112. A cognate Akkadian noun means “lower leg.”

¹⁸ **tn** *Heb* “you clothed me with strength for battle.”

¹⁹ **tn** *Heb* “you made those who rise against me kneel beneath me.”

²⁰ **tn** *Heb* “and [as for] my enemies, you give to me [the] back [or “neck”].” The idiom “give [the] back” means “to cause [one] to turn the back and run away.” See Exod 23:27 and HALOT 888 s.v. נָחַת.

²¹ **tc** The translation follows one medieval Hebrew ms and the ancient versions in reading the Piel יִשְׁעוּ (yishvu, “they cry for help”) rather than the Qal of the MT יִשְׁעוּ (yishu, “they look about for help”). See Ps 18:41 as well.

²² **tn** *Heb* “but there is no deliverer.”

²³ **tn** The words “they cry out” are not in the Hebrew text. This reference to the psalmists’ enemies crying out for help to the LORD suggests that the psalmist refers here to enemies within the covenant community, rather than foreigners. However, the militaristic context suggests foreign enemies are in view. Ancient Near Eastern literature indicates that defeated enemies would sometimes cry out for mercy to the god(s) of their conqueror. See R. B. Chisholm, “An Exegetical and Theological Study of Psalm 18/2 Samuel 22” (Th.D. diss., Dallas Theological Seminary, 1983), 271.

²⁴ **tn** Or “mud” (so NAB, NIV, CEV). See HALOT 374 s.v. בָּטָח.

²⁵ **tn** *Heb* “from the strivings of my people.” In this context רִיב (*riv*, “striving”) probably has a militaristic sense (as in Judg 12:2; Isa 41:11), and אָמ (*am*, “people”) probably refers more specifically to an army (for other examples, see the verses listed in BDB 766 s.v. אָמ 2.d). The suffix “my” suggests David is referring to attacks by his own countrymen, the “people” being Israel. However, the parallel text in Ps 18:43 omits the suffix.

people over whom I had no authority are now my subjects.⁴

22:45 Foreigners are powerless before me;² when they hear of my exploits, they submit to me.³

22:46 Foreigners lose their courage;⁴ they shake with fear⁵ as they leave⁶ their strongholds.⁷

22:47 The LORD is alive!⁸

My protector⁹ is praiseworthy!¹⁰ The God who delivers me¹¹ is exalted as king!¹²

22:48 The one true God completely vindicates me;¹³

he makes nations submit to me.¹⁴

22:49 He delivers me from my enemies;¹⁵ you snatch me away¹⁶ from those who

attack me;¹⁷

you rescue me from violent men.

22:50 So I will give you thanks, O LORD, before the nations!¹⁸

I will sing praises to you.¹⁹

22:51 He gives his chosen king magnificent victories;²⁰

he is faithful to his chosen ruler,²¹ to David and to his descendants forever!"

David's Final Words

23:1 These are the final words of David:

"The oracle of David son of Jesse, the oracle of the man raised up as the ruler chosen by the God of Jacob,²² Israel's beloved²³ singer of songs:

23:2 The LORD's spirit spoke through me; his word was on my tongue.

23:3 The God of Israel spoke, the protector²⁴ of Israel spoke to me.

The one who rules fairly among men, the one who rules in the fear of God,

23:4 is like the light of morning when the sun comes up,

a morning in which there are no clouds.

He is like the brightness after rain that produces grass from the earth.

23:5 My dynasty is approved by God,²⁵ for he has made a perpetual covenant with me,

arranged in all its particulars and secured. He always delivers me,

and brings all I desire to fruition.²⁶

23:6 But evil people are like thorns – all of them are tossed away, for they cannot be held in the hand.

¹ **tn** *Heb* "a people whom I did not know serve me." In this context the verb "know" (יָדָע, *yada'*) probably refers to formal recognition by treaty. People who were once not under the psalmist's authority now willingly submit to his rulership to avoid being conquered militarily (see vv. 45-46). The language may recall the events recorded in 2 Sam 8:9-10 and 10:19.

² **tn** For the meaning "to be weak; to be powerless" for the verb כָּהַשׁ (*kakhash*), see Ps 109:24. Verse 46, which also mentions foreigners, favors this interpretation. Another option is to translate "cower in fear" (see Deut 33:29; Pss 66:3; 81:15).

³ **tn** *Heb* "at a report of an ear they submit to me." The report of David's exploits is so impressive that those who hear it submit to his rulership without putting up a fight.

⁴ **tn** *Heb* "with, wear out."

⁵ **tc** The translation assumes a reading יָרָדוּ (*v^eyakhru^egu*, "and they quaked") rather than the MT יָרָדוּ (*v^eyakhg^eru*, "and they girded themselves"). See the note at Ps 18:45.

⁶ **tn** *Heb* "from."

⁷ **tn** *Heb* "prisons." Their besieged cities are compared to prisons.

⁸ **tn** Elsewhere the construction חַיִּי ה' (*khay-^ehvah*) is used exclusively as an oath formula, but this is not the case here, for no oath follows. Here the statement is an affirmation of the LORD's active presence and intervention. In contrast to pagan deities, he demonstrates that he is the living God by rescuing and empowering the psalmist.

⁹ **tn** *Heb* "my rocky cliff," which is a metaphor for protection.

¹⁰ **tn** Or "blessed [i.e., praised] be."

¹¹ **tn** *Heb* "the God of the rock of my deliverance." The term צוּר (*sur*, "rock") is probably accidentally repeated from the previous line. The parallel version in Ps 18:46 has simply "the God of my deliverance."

¹² **tn** The words "as king" are supplied in the translation for clarification. In the Psalms the verb רוּם (*rum*, "be exalted") when used of God, refers to his exalted position as king (Pss 99:2; 113:4; 138:6) and/or his self-revelation as king through his mighty deeds of deliverance (Pss 21:13; 46:10; 57:5, 11).

¹³ **tn** *Heb* "The God is the one who grants vengeance to me." The plural form of the noun "vengeance" indicates degree here, suggesting complete vengeance or vindication. In the ancient Near East military victory was sometimes viewed as a sign that one's God had judged in favor of the victor, avenging and/or vindicating him. See, for example, Judg 11:27, 32-33, 36.

¹⁴ **tn** *Heb* "and [is the one who] brings down nations beneath me."

¹⁵ **tn** *Heb* "and [the one who] brings me out from my enemies."

¹⁶ **tn** *Heb* "you lift me up." In light of the preceding and following references to deliverance, the verb רוּם (*rum*) probably here refers to being rescued from danger (see Ps 9:13). However, it could mean "exalt; elevate" here, indicating that the LORD has given him victory over his enemies and forced them to acknowledge the psalmist's superiority.

¹⁷ **tn** *Heb* "from those who rise against me."

¹⁸ **sn** This probably alludes to the fact that David will praise the LORD in the presence of the defeated nations when they, as his subjects, bring their tribute payments. Ideally God's chosen king was to testify to the nations of God's greatness. See J. Eaton, *Kingship and the Psalms* (SBT), 182-85.

¹⁹ **tn** *Heb* "to your name." God's "name" refers metonymically to his divine characteristics as suggested by his name, in this case "LORD," the primary name of Israel's covenant God which suggests his active presence with his people (see Exod 3:12-15).

²⁰ **tc** The translation follows the *Kethib* and the ancient versions in reading מַגְדִּיל (*magd^{il}*, "he magnifies") rather than the Qere and many medieval Hebrew MSS of the MT which read מִגְדּוֹל (*migdol*, "tower"). See Ps 18:50.

²¹ **tn** *Heb* "[the one who] does loyalty to his anointed one."

²² **tn** *Heb* "the anointed one of the God of Jacob."

²³ **tn** Or "pleasant."

²⁴ **tn** *Heb* "rock," used as a metaphor of divine protection.

²⁵ **tn** *Heb* "For not thus [is] my house with God?"

²⁶ **tn** *Heb* "for all my deliverance and every desire, surely does he not make [it] grow?"

23:7 The one who touches them must use an iron instrument or the wooden shaft of a spear. They are completely burned up right where they lie!"⁷¹

David's Warriors

23:8 These are the names of David's warriors:

Josheb-Basshebeth, a Tahkemonite, was head of the officers.² He killed eight hundred men with his spear in one battle.³ 23:9 Next in command⁴ was Eleazar son of Dodo,⁵ the son of Ahohi. He was one of the three warriors who were with David when they defied the Philistines who were assembled there for battle. When the men of Israel retreated,⁶ 23:10 he stood his ground⁷ and fought the Philistines until his hand grew so tired that it⁸ seemed stuck to his sword. The LORD gave a great victory on that day. When the army returned to him, the only thing left to do was to plunder the corpses.

23:11 Next in command⁹ was Shammah son of Agee the Hararite. When the Philistines assembled at Lehi,¹⁰ where there happened to be an area of a field that was full of lentils, the army retreated before the Philistines. 23:12 But he made a stand in the middle of that area. He

defended¹¹ it and defeated the Philistines; the LORD gave them a great victory.

23:13 At the time of¹² the harvest three¹³ of the thirty leaders went down to¹⁴ David at the cave of Adullam. A band of Philistines was camped in the valley of Rephaim. 23:14 David was in the stronghold at the time, while a Philistine garrison was in Bethlehem.¹⁵ 23:15 David was thirsty and said, "How I wish someone would give me some water to drink from the cistern in Bethlehem near the gate!"¹⁶ 23:16 So the three elite warriors broke through the Philistine forces and drew some water from the cistern in Bethlehem near the gate. They carried it back to David, but he refused to drink it. He poured it out as a drink offering to the LORD 23:17 and said, "O LORD, I will not do this!¹⁸ It is equivalent to the blood of the men who risked their lives by going."¹⁷ So he refused to drink it. Such were the exploits of the three elite warriors.¹⁸

23:18 Abishai son of Zeruiah, the brother of Joab, was head of the three.¹⁹ He killed three hundred men with his spear and gained fame among the three.²⁰ 23:19 From²¹ the three he was given honor and he became their officer, even though he was not one of the three.

23:20 Benaiah son of Jehoida was a brave warrior²² from Kabzeel who performed great exploits. He struck down the two sons of Ariel of Moab.²³ He also went down and killed a lion in a cistern on a snowy day. 23:21 He also killed

¹ **tn** *Heb* "and with fire they are completely burned up in [the place where they] remain." The infinitive absolute is used before the finite verb to emphasize that they are completely consumed by the fire.

² **tn** The Hebrew word is sometimes rendered as "the three," but BDB is probably correct in taking it to refer to military officers (BDB 1026 s.v. שְׁלִישֵׁי). In that case the etymological connection of this word to the Hebrew numerical adjective for "three" can be explained as originating with a designation for the *third* warrior in a chariot.

³ **tc** The translation follows some LXX mss (see 1 Chr 11:11 as well) in reading הוּא עָרַר אֶת־הַחֵיטָו (hu' 'orer 'et khanito, "he raised up his spear") rather than the MT's הוּא עָרַר אֶת־הַחֵיטָו (hu' 'adino ha'etsni [Kethib = הָעֵצְנִי, ha'etsno]; "Adino the Ezenite"). The emended text reads literally "he was wielding his spear against eight hundred, [who were] slain at one time."

⁴ **tn** *Heb* "after him."

⁵ **tc** This follows the *Qere* and many medieval Hebrew mss in reading דָּדוֹ (dodo) rather than the *Kethib* of the MT דָּדַי (dodai; cf. ASV, NIV, NLT). But see 1 Chr 27:4.

⁶ **tn** *Heb* "went up."

⁷ **tn** *Heb* "arose."

⁸ **tn** *Heb* "his hand."

⁹ **tn** *Heb* "after him."

¹⁰ **tn** The Hebrew text is difficult here. The MT reads לְחֵיטָו (lachayyah), which implies a rare use of the word חֵיטָו (chayyah). The word normally refers to an animal, but if the MT is accepted it would here have the sense of a troop or community of people. BDB 312 s.v. חֵיטָו. For example, understands the similar reference in v. 13 to be "a group of allied families, making a raid together." But this works better in v. 13 than it does in v. 11, where the context seems to suggest a particular staging location for a military operation. (See 1 Chr 11:15.) It therefore seems best to understand the word in v. 11 as a place name with ח (he) directive. In that case the Masoretes mistook the word for the common term for an animal and then tried to make sense of it in this context.

¹¹ **tn** *Heb* "delivered."

¹² **tn** The meaning of Hebrew אֶת־הַקֶּצִיר (el qatsir) seems here to be "at the time of harvest," although this is an unusual use of the phrase. As S. R. Driver points out, this preposition does not normally have the temporal sense of "in" or "during" (S. R. Driver, *Notes on the Hebrew Text and the Topography of the Books of Samuel*, 366).

¹³ **tc** The translation follows the *Qere* and many medieval Hebrew mss in reading שְׁלֹשָׁה (sh'loshah, "three") rather than the *Kethib* of the MT שְׁלִישִׁים (sh'loshim, "thirty"). "Thirty" is due to dittography of the following word and makes no sense in the context.

¹⁴ **tn** *Heb* "went down...and approached."

¹⁵ **map** For location see Map5-B1; Map7-E2; Map8-E2; Map10-B4.

¹⁶ **tn** *Heb* "Far be it to me, O LORD, from doing this."

¹⁷ **tn** *Heb* "for [it is not] the blood of the men who were going with their lives?"

¹⁸ **tn** *Heb* "These things the three warriors did."

¹⁹ **tc** The translation follows the *Qere*, many medieval Hebrew mss, the LXX, and Vulgate in reading הַשְׁלֹשָׁה (hash'losa, "the three") rather than the *Kethib* of the MT הַשְׁלִישִׁי (hashalisi, "the third," or "adjutant"). Two medieval Hebrew mss and the Syriac Peshitta have "thirty."

²⁰ **tn** *Heb* "and he was wielding his spear against three hundred, [who were] slain, and to him there was a name among the three."

²¹ **tn** Or "more than."

²² **tc** The translation follows the *Qere* and many medieval Hebrew mss in reading חַיִּיל (khayil, "valor") rather than the *Kethib* of the MT, חַי (khay, "life").

²³ **tc** *Heb* "the two of Ariel, Moab." The precise meaning of אַרְיֵאל is uncertain; some read "warrior." The present translation assumes that the word is a proper name and that בְּנֵי, "sons of," has accidentally dropped from the text by homoioarcton (note the preceding שְׁנֵי).

an impressive-looking Egyptian.¹ The Egyptian wielded a spear, while Benaiah attacked² him with a club. He grabbed the spear out of the Egyptian's hand and killed him with his own spear. **23:22** Such were the exploits of Benaiah son of Jehoida, who gained fame among the three elite warriors. **23:23** He received honor from³ the thirty warriors, though he was not one of the three elite warriors. David put him in charge of his bodyguard.

23:24 Included with the thirty were the following: Asahel the brother of Joab, Elhanan son of Dodo from Bethlehem,⁴ **23:25** Shammah the Harodite, Elika the Harodite, **23:26** Helez the Paltite, Ira son of Ikesh from Tekoa, **23:27** Abiezer the Anathothite, Mebunnai the Hushathite, **23:28** Zalmon the Ahohite, Maharai the Netophathite, **23:29** Heled⁵ son of Baanah the Netophathite, Ittai son of Ribai from Gibeath in Benjamin, **23:30** Benaiah the Pirathonite, Hiddai from the wadis of Gaash, **23:31** Abi-Albon the Arbathite, Azmaveth the Barhumite, **23:32** Eliahba the Shaalbonite, the sons of Jashen, Jonathan **23:33** son of⁶ Shammah the Hararite, Ahiam son of Sharar the Hararite, **23:34** Eliphelet son of Ahasbai the Maacathite, Eliam son of Ahithophel the Gilonite, **23:35** Hezrai⁷ the Carmelite, Paarai the Arbite, **23:36** Igal son of Nathan from Zobah, Bani the Gadite, **23:37** Zelek the Ammonite, Naharai the Beerothite (the armor-bearer⁸ of Joab son of Zeruiah), **23:38** Ira the Ithrite, Gareb the Ithrite **23:39** and Uriah the Hittite. Altogether there were thirty-seven.

David Displeases the Lord by Taking a Census

24:1 The LORD's anger again raged against Israel, and he incited David against them, saying, "Go count Israel and Judah."⁹ **24:2** The king told Joab, the general in command of his army, "Go through all the tribes of Israel from Dan to

Beer Sheba and muster the army, so I may know the size of the army."

24:3 Joab replied to the king, "May the LORD your God make the army a hundred times larger right before the eyes of my lord the king! But why does my master the king want to do this?"

24:4 But the king's edict stood, despite the objections of¹⁰ Joab and the leaders of the army. So Joab and the leaders of the army left the king's presence in order to muster the Israelite army.

24:5 They crossed the Jordan and camped at Aroer, on the south side of the city, at¹¹ the wadi of Gad, near Jazer. **24:6** Then they went on to Gilead and to the region of Tahtim Hodshi, coming to Dan Jaan and on around to Sidon.¹² **24:7** Then they went to the fortress of Tyre¹³ and all the cities of the Hivites and the Canaanites. Then they went on to the Negev of Judah, to Beer Sheba. **24:8** They went through all the land and after nine months and twenty days came back to Jerusalem.¹⁴

24:9 Joab reported the number of warriors¹⁵ to the king. In Israel there were 800,000 sword-wielding warriors, and in Judah there were 500,000 soldiers.

24:10 David felt guilty¹⁶ after he had numbered the army. David said to the LORD, "I have sinned greatly by doing this! Now, O LORD, please remove the guilt of your servant, for I have acted very foolishly."

24:11 When David got up the next morning, the LORD had already spoken¹⁷ to Gad the prophet, David's seer: **24:12** "Go, tell David, 'This is what the LORD says: I am offering you three forms of judgment. Pick one of them and I will carry it out against you.'"

24:13 Gad went to David and told him, "Shall seven¹⁸ years of famine come upon your land? Or shall you flee for three months from your enemy with him in hot pursuit? Or shall there be three days of plague in your land? Now decide¹⁹ what I should tell the one who sent me."

24:14 David said to Gad, "I am very upset! I prefer that we be attacked by the LORD, for his

¹ **tc** The translation follows the *Qere* and many medieval Hebrew *mss* in reading אִישׁ (ish, "man") rather than the *Kethib* of the MT, אִשָּׁר ('asher, "who").

² **tn** *Heb* "and he went down to."

³ **tn** Or "more than."

⁴ **map** For location see Map5-B1; Map7-E2; Map8-E2; Map10-B4.

⁵ **tc** The translation follows many medieval Hebrew *mss* in reading כְּהֵלֵב (khelev; cf. NAB, NIV, NLT) rather than the MT הֵלֵב (helev).

⁶ **tn** The Hebrew text does not have "the son of."

⁷ **tc** The translation follows the *Qere* and many medieval Hebrew *mss* in reading כְּחֵטְרַי (khetsrai; cf. KJV, NAB) rather than the *Kethib* of the MT, חֵטְרוֹ (khetsro).

⁸ **tc** The translation follows the *Qere* and many medieval Hebrew *mss* in reading the singular rather than the plural of the *Kethib* of the MT.

⁹ **sn** The parallel text in 1 Chr 21:1 says, "An adversary opposed Israel, inciting David to count how many warriors Israel had." The Samuel version gives an underlying theological perspective, while the Chronicler simply describes what happened from a human perspective. The adversary in 1 Chr 21:1 is likely a human enemy, probably a nearby nation whose hostility against Israel pressured David into numbering the people so he could assess his military strength. See the note at 1 Chr 21:1.

¹⁰ **tn** *Heb* "and the word of the king was stronger than."

¹¹ **tn** *Heb* "in the middle of."

¹² **map** For location see Map1-A1; JP3-F3; JP4-F3.

¹³ **map** For location see Map1-A2; Map2-G2; Map4-A1; JP3-F3; JP4-F3.

¹⁴ **map** For location see Map5-B1; Map6-F3; Map7-E2; Map8-F2; Map10-B3; JP1-F4; JP2-F4; JP3-F4; JP4-F4.

¹⁵ **tn** *Heb* "and Joab gave the number of the numbering of the people."

¹⁶ **tn** *Heb* "and the heart of David struck him."

¹⁷ **tn** *Heb* "and the word of the LORD came."

¹⁸ **tc** The LXX has here "three" rather than "seven," and is followed by NAB, NIV, NCV, NRSV, TEV, NLT. See 1 Chr 21:12.

¹⁹ **tn** *Heb* "now know and see."

mercy is great; I do not want to be attacked by men!"¹

24:15 So the LORD sent a plague through Israel from the morning until the completion of the appointed time. Seventy thousand men died from Dan to Beer Sheba. **24:16** When the angel² extended his hand to destroy Jerusalem, the LORD relented from his judgment.³ He told the angel who was killing the people, "That's enough! Stop now!"⁴ (Now the LORD's angel was near the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite.)

24:17 When he saw the angel who was destroying the people, David said to the LORD, "Look, it is I who have sinned and done this evil thing! As for these sheep – what have they done? Attack me and my family."⁵

David Acquires a Threshing Floor and Constructs an Altar There

24:18 So Gad went to David that day and told him, "Go up and build an altar for the LORD on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite." **24:19** So David went up as Gad instructed him to do, according to the LORD's instructions.

24:20 When Araunah looked out and saw the king and his servants approaching him, he⁶ went out and bowed to the king with his face⁷ to the ground. **24:21** Araunah said, "Why has my lord the king come to his servant?" David replied, "To buy from you the threshing floor so I can build an altar for the LORD, so that the plague may be removed from the people." **24:22** Araunah told David, "My lord the king may take

whatever he wishes⁸ and offer it. Look! Here are oxen for burnt offerings, and threshing sledges⁹ and harnesses¹⁰ for wood. **24:23** I, the servant of my lord¹¹ the king, give it all to the king!" Araunah also told the king, "May the LORD your God show you favor!" **24:24** But the king said to Araunah, "No, I insist on buying it from you! I will not offer to the LORD my God burnt sacrifices that cost me nothing."

So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen for fifty pieces of silver.¹² **24:25** Then David built an altar for the LORD there and offered burnt sacrifices and peace offerings. And the LORD accepted prayers for the land, and the plague was removed from Israel.

¹ **tn** *Heb* "There is great distress to me. Let us fall into the hand of the LORD, for great is his mercy, but into the hand of man let me not fall."

² **tn** *Heb* "messenger."

³ **tn** *Heb* "concerning the calamity."

⁴ **tn** *Heb* "Now, drop your hand."

⁵ **tn** *Heb* "let your hand be against me and against the house of my father."

⁶ **tn** *Heb* "Araunah." The name has been replaced in the translation by the pronoun ("he") for stylistic reasons.

⁷ **tn** *Heb* "nostrils."

⁸ **tn** *Heb* "what is good in his eyes."

⁹ **sn** *Threshing sledges* were heavy boards used in ancient times for loosening grain from husks. On the bottom sides of these boards sharp stones were embedded, and the boards were then dragged across the grain on a threshing floor by an ox or donkey.

¹⁰ **tn** *Heb* "the equipment of the oxen."

¹¹ **tc** The Hebrew text is difficult here. The translation reads עֶבֶד אֲדֹנָי (*eved 'adoni*, "the servant of my lord") rather than the MT's אֲרַוְנָה (*'Aravnah*). In normal court etiquette a subject would not use his own name in this way, but would more likely refer to himself in the third person. The MT probably first sustained loss of עֶבֶד (*eved*, "servant"), leading to confusion of the word for "my lord" with the name of the Jebusite referred to here.

¹² **tn** *Heb* "fifty shekels of silver." This would have been about 20 ounces (568 grams) of silver by weight.