

1 Chronicles Chapter 18

In verses 18:1 – 21:30: Selectively recounts David's military exploits.

Verses 1-13: This account of David's military conquests is a selective summary of (2 Sam. 8). The "Moabites" were descendants of Lot (Gen. 19:37), and lived east of the Dead Sea. The people of Israel had a troubled history with Moab (Judges 3:12-20), although the nation did protect David's parents during the reign of Saul (1 Sam. 22:3-4). David's great grandmother, Ruth, was originally from Moab.

Verses 1-11 (see notes on 2 Sam. 8:1-12).

1 Chronicles 18:1 "Now after this it came to pass, that David smote the Philistines, and subdued them, and took Gath and her towns out of the hand of the Philistines."

"Now after this it came to pass": Literally, and it befell afterwards. This expression does not put the contents of this chapter into direct chronological sequence with those of the last (compare note on 1 Chron. 17:1). The formula of the original history, from which both Samuel and Chronicles have derived a chief part of their substance, has been taken over without modification, after the manner of Oriental compilers. We may, therefore, regard the phrase as a mere mark of transition in the narrative.

"Gath and her towns": Hebrew, her daughters, that is, outlying dependencies. Samuel has: "and David took the bridle [control, supremacy] of the metropolis [mother-city] out of the hand," etc. The chronicler or his authority has interpreted this curious expression (*mètheg hā'ammāh*). If at the time Gath was the chief city of Philistia, and David made it recognize his suzerainty by payment of tribute, the phrases of both books are intelligible. In Solomon's time Gath was ruled by a king, Achish (1 Kings 2:39), but he was hardly independent of Solomon (compare 1 Kings 4:24). The general sense is the same if "*mètheg hā'ammāh*" be rendered the bridle of the arm. I.e., the sovereign control, or supremacy.

The Philistines were the continuing enemy of Israel. David had no difficulty in his youth destroying the giant, Goliath, and he had no difficulty in destroying the Philistines here. In both instances, God strengthened David for the task. Gath is mentioned here, because it was an unusually strong city. For God that meant nothing. Gath was like the mother city. She and the cities around her fell.

1 Chronicles 18:2 "And he smote Moab; and the Moabites became David's servants, [and] brought gifts."

(2 Sam. 8:2), adds details to the judgment of Moab.

For a fuller account of the battle at "Moab" (see 2 Sam. 8:1-2).

This is the battle where David measured them with a line. He killed some of them, and kept the others alive. The gifts were probably tribute they paid David. We are seeing, in the verses of this lesson, a list of David's conquests.

1 Chronicles 18:3 "And David smote Hadarezer king of Zobah unto Hamath, as he went to stablish his dominion by the river Euphrates."

The defeat of "Hadadezer king of Zobah" fulfilled the promise of God to Abraham that Israel would rule the land as far north as the Euphrates River (Gen. 15:18).

1 Chronicles 18:4 "And David took from him a thousand chariots, and seven thousand horsemen, and twenty thousand footmen: David also houghed all the chariot [horses], but reserved of them a hundred chariots."

The numbers here are correct; the number in (2 Sam. 8:4 for the horsemen is 1,700), which would not seem consistent with the other numbers, so the 1,700 probably resulted from a copyist's error.

See the notes (on 19:18 and 2 Sam. 8:4-6; 10:18).

We discussed in another lesson, that houghed means that he cut their legs just behind the back of their hoofs so they could not walk. Israel had not been a nation that depended upon chariots and horses. In this battle however, David does take 100 chariots. It appears in this battle, as many others David was in, he took a large number of captives instead of killing them. Hadarezer, king of Zobah, was from Syria. Zobah was north of Damascus. David established his kingdom with the help of God.

1 Chronicles 18:5 "And when the Syrians of Damascus came to help Hadarezer king of Zobah, David slew of the Syrians two and twenty thousand men."

When the Syrians came to help Hadarezer, David slew of the Syrians, etc. Thus, the enemies of God's church are often made to ruin themselves by helping one another.

This is a statement that the 22,000 men, they sent from Damascus to help, were killed.

1 Chronicles 18:6 "Then David put [garrisons] in Syria-damascus; and the Syrians became David's servants, [and] brought gifts. Thus the LORD preserved David whithersoever he went."

"Put garrisons in Syria of Damascus": To secure his rear in any future operations towards Hamath or towards the Euphrates.

"Brought gifts (see note on 1 Chron. 18:2).

"Preserved David": R.V. gave victory to David.

As we said earlier, David did not kill all of the enemies. He took many as slaves. He left some, and collected tribute from them. These garrisons were put in these areas to keep the people under submission to David. The LORD was with David. He actually fought for David.

1 Chronicles 18:7 "And David took the shields of gold that were on the servants of Hadarezer, and brought them to Jerusalem."

"The shields": Hebrew *שָׁלֵשׁ*. Much doubt has been entertained as to the meaning of this word. Its etymology is uncertain. Gesenius derives it from a root signifying "hardness." For the most part, however, the context of the seven places of its occurrence which he instances (2 Sam. 8:7; 2 Kings 11:10; 1 Chron. 18:7; 2 Chron. 23:9; Song of Solomon 4:4; Jer. 51:11; Ezekiel 27:11), favor the rendering "shields." Though the quotation from (Jeremiah 51:11; literally, "fill ye the shields"), is not so satisfactory. The wealth of Zobah is, of course, illustrated by these shields of gold.

We can see from this, the vast wealth of Zoba. It would be extravagant to make shields of gold. Later we will find that Solomon had shields of gold, as well.

1 Chronicles 18:8 "Likewise from Tibhath, and from Chun, cities of Hadarezer, brought David very much brass, wherewith Solomon made the brasen sea, and the pillars, and the vessels of brass."

Tibhath, and ... Chun": Two unknown places. The names in Samuel are Betah and Berothai. Vulgate in Samuel, "Bete," but here "Thebath," obviously equivalent to Tibhath. "Chun" is doubtless corrupt. All the versions support "Berothai" (LXX, "chosen cities;" compare Hebrew, *bārôth*), except Arabic and Vulgate here.

Much brass. Copper (as Job 28:2), or bronze (an alloy of copper and tin, which was well known to the ancients). Samuel, "copper in abundance" (*harbēh*), an older form of expression.

Wherewith Solomon made ... Not in the Hebrew of Samuel, though LXX. Adds it. doubtless corrupt. All the versions support "Berothai" (LXX, "chosen cities."

Much brass. Copper (as Job 28:2), or bronze (an alloy of copper and tin, which was well known to the ancients).

Wherewith Solomon made ... Not in the Hebrew of Samuel, though LXX adds it.

It appears, this land had much gold and brass. Brass symbolizes judgement and was used in the Brasen Sea, just inside the temple. When a person looked into the sea of glass, he was symbolically judged.

1 Chronicles 18:9 "Now when Tou king of Hamath heard how David had smitten all the host of Hadarezer king of Zobah;"

"Now when Tou king of Hamath heard": Samuel, "Toi." The Hebrew letters answering to w and y are often confused in Manuscripts. Tō-ū is right; so LXX and Vulgate in Samuel; Syriac, "Thû'"; Arabic, "Tû'u." The Syriac here has "Phûl king of the Antiochenes". The Arabic, "Phâwîl king of Antioch," an apparent allusion to Pul the Assyrian (1 Chron. 5:26). Professor Sayce believes he has read the name Tu-ve-es—that is, Toü—on the stones from Hamath, now in the British Museum.

1 Chronicles 18:10 "He sent Hadoram his son to king David, to inquire of his welfare, and to congratulate him, because he had fought against Hadarezer, and smitten him; (for Hadarezer had war with Tou;) and [with him] all manner of vessels of gold and silver and brass."

"Hadoram": In (2 Sam. 8:10), "Joram." Both these forms are probably Hebrew adaptations of the real name.

"To inquire of his welfare, and to congratulate him": R.V. to salute him, and to bless him (as Samuel).

"And with him all manner of vessels": Such informal tribute was an acknowledgment of David's suzerainty made in order to claim David's protection in war. Compare the action of Asa (1 Kings 15:18-19), and of Ahaz (2 Kings 16:7-8). In all three cases the policy was the same, i.e. to acknowledge a distant suzerain in order to gain the benefit of a valuable alliance, while losing the minimum of independence.

Hadoram is called Joram in another Scripture about this same event. It seems that Tou had indeed fought with Hadarezer. Tou had probably lost and had been paying tribute to him. His gifts to David were in appreciation for stopping the tyrant. These gifts were generous. This was a very wealthy land in the three metals: gold, silver, and brass.

1 Chronicles 18:11 "Them also king David dedicated unto the LORD, with the silver and the gold that he brought from all [these] nations; from Edom, and from Moab, and from the children of Ammon, and from the Philistines, and from Amalek."

David made a point to honor God for victories in battle by dedicating to God the gifts and spoils of "silver and gold" that he received from the nations he conquered. He was well aware that his success came from the hand of God.

(2 Sam. 8:12), adds new information.

When the temple was built by Solomon, it would take large amounts of gold, silver, and brass. David would use much of the wealth he received from these countries, to build the things of the temple. Of course, David would not build it, but his son. He would furnish much of the wealth for it however. There is a list of the lands that David spoiled in the verse above.

1 Chronicles 18:12 "Moreover Abishai the son of Zeruiah slew of the Edomites in the valley of salt eighteen thousand."

This detail give additional information to the account (in 2 Sam. 8:13), which emphasizes David's growing prestige. The heading over Psalm 60 recalls Joab's part in the battle. "Abishai" was David's cousin and Joab's brother (2:26).

We mentioned that the valley of salt is by the Salt Sea, or the Dead Sea. Abishai was in the service of David, when he did this act. The 18,000 would have come close to total destruction for them.

1 Chronicles 18:13 "And he put garrisons in Edom; and all the Edomites became David's servants. Thus the LORD preserved David whithersoever he went."

Or "prefects," (1 Chron. 18:6), in Edom. Samuel adds, "in all Edom he set garrisons," thus marking the complete subjugation of the country.

"Thus the Lord preserved David": (See 1 Chron. 18:6). David was victorious on all sides, north (1 Chron. 18:3-8), and south, east, and west (1 Chronicles).

"Whithersoever he went": Those who take God along with them wherever they go, may expect to prosper and be preserved in all places. And those are always under the eye of God that have God always in their eye.

Edom was no different, in that they paid tribute to David, as well. He put the garrisons and soldiers to watch over their activity, and to make sure they paid their taxes.

Verses 14-17 (see notes on 2 Sam. 8:15-18).

1 Chronicles 18:14 "So David reigned over all Israel, and executed judgment and justice among all his people."

David's internal administration and high officers of state.

"Executed": Was doing; a permanent state of things.

"Judgment and justice": Right and justice. The former is the quality, the latter the conduct which embodies it.

"Among. For, or unto.

This had been the work of the judges in old. Now, the king was also the one who meted out justice. Serious matters were brought before the king for judgement. David was a good king. He was fair in his judgements.

1 Chronicles 18:15 "And Joab the son of Zeruiah [was] over the host; and Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud, recorder."

"Recorder": The word is of the same root with that in (1 Chron. 16:4), "to record." The exact duties and position of this officer are not stated in any one place, but may be gathered from (2 Sam. 8:16; 20:24; 1 Kings 4:3; 2 Kings 18:18, 37; 2 Chron. 34:8). From these notices, belonging to somewhat separate times, we may gather the dignity and responsibility and trust of the office which the recorder filled, altogether in excess of his duty as mere historical secretary.

Joab was over David's troops. The recorder was important, because the Hebrews were very careful to keep records. The Hebrews kept accurate historical records.

1 Chronicles 18:16 "And Zadok the son of Ahitub, and Abimelech the son of Abiathar, [were] the priests; and Shavsha was scribe;"

"Abimelech" could be identified with Ahimelech (2 Sam. 8:17). He is probably the grandson of another Ahimelech, the father of Abiathar (1 Sam. 23:6; 30:7).

Because the tabernacle and the Ark were separated, God assigned one priest at each location: Zadok" served in Gibeon; "Abiathar" served in Jerusalem. Abiathar had been the only priest to escape the massacre of all the priests of Nob conducted by King Saul (1 Sam. 22-11-23). Later, he supported Adonijah, one of David's sons, in his wrongful claim to the throne (1 Kings 1:7). For this, Solomon dismissed him as a priest, thus fulfilling the prophecy that none of the descendants of Eli would continue to serve as priests (1 Sam. 2:27-36).

Zadok was priest at the same time as Abiathar. From this verse above, it seems that his son was the High Priest. The scribe was similar to a Secretary of State. They had the important job of copying Scriptures as well. Shavsha was more of a civil scribe in government.

1 Chronicles 18:17 "And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada [was] over the Cherethites and the Pelethites; and the sons of David [were] chief about the king."

"Benaiah" (compare 1 Chron. 11:22-25).

"The Cherethites and the Pelethites": David's bodyguard. The Cherethites were almost certainly Philistines (1 Sam. 30:14; Ezek. 25:16; Zeph. 2:5). The Pelethites were probably also Philistines (2 Sam. 15:18). Neither were heard of after the time of David unless the Carites of (2 Kings 11:4; R.V.), are the Cherethites. Foreign bodyguards are well known in history.

"Chief about the king": Literally, the chief at the king's hand. I.e. formed the executive to carry out his commands (compare Neh. 11:24).

In (2 Sam. 8:18; R.V.), David's sons are described as priests.

For "Cherethites" and "Pelethites" (see the note on 1 Kings 1:38-40).

The Cherethites and the Pelethites had been Philistines. David had conquered them and made them part of his guard. David had many sons by many wives and many sons by concubines possibly, that are not even mentioned. David's sons were princes.

1 Chronicles Chapter 18 Questions

1. In verse 1, David smote the _____.
2. What town did he take?
3. Who were the continuing enemy of Israel?
4. Who had David defeated in his youth?
5. In verse 2, he smote _____.
6. What did David do with those he did not kill?
7. What were the gifts they gave David?
8. Who was king of Zoba, when David smote them?
9. How many horsemen did David take from him?
10. What did David do to the horses, except those for 100 chariots?
11. Where was Zoba?
12. Who came to help Zoba?
13. What happened to them?
14. Where did David put garrisons?
15. What did David take, that were on the servants?
16. Solomon made the Brasen Sea with what?
17. Why was Tou happy about David winning over Zoba?
18. Why did he send his son to David?
19. What gifts did he take to David?
20. David used much of this wealth for what?
21. How many did Abishai kill of the Edomites at the valley of salt?
22. Where is the valley of salt located?
23. What happened to the Edomites?
24. David executed _____ and _____ among all his people.

25. Who was over the host?
26. Why was the recorder important?
27. Who were the priests?
28. The scribe was similar to the _____ of _____.
29. Who were the Cherethites, and the Pelethites?
30. What were David's sons?