

SECOND BOOK OF SAMUEL

&

FIRST BOOK OF CHRONICLES

IV. KING DAVID

2 SAMUEL 1-10

& 1 CHRONICLES 11-19

¹After the death of Saul, David, having returned from defeating the Amalekites, remained two days in Ziklag.

²On the third day, a man came from Saul's camp, with his clothes torn and dirt on his head. When he came to David, he fell to the ground and did obeisance. ³David said to him, "Where have you come from?" He said to him, "I have escaped from the camp of Israel." ⁴David said to him, "How did things go? Tell me!" He answered, "The army fled from the battle, but also many of the army fell and died; and Saul and his son Jonathan also died." ⁵Then David asked the young man who was reporting to him, "How do you know that Saul and his son Jonathan died?"

⁶The young man reporting to him said, "I happened to be on Mount Gilboa; and there was Saul leaning on his spear, while the chariots and the horsemen drew close to him. ⁷When he looked behind him, he saw me, and called to me. I answered, 'Here sir.' ⁸And he said to me, 'Who are you?' I answered him, 'I am an Amalekite.'

⁹He said to me, 'Come, stand over me and kill me; for convulsions have seized me, and yet my life still lingers.' ¹⁰So I stood over him, and killed him, for I knew that he could not live after he had fallen. I took the crown that was on his head and the armlet that was on his arm, and I have brought them here to my lord."

This is the beginning of the third section of the narrative of David's rise to power. The first part recounts David's service in Saul's court (1Samuel 16-20), the second part recounts the growing tension between Saul and David (1Samuel 21-31). Here in the third part we hear of David's consolidation of power (2Samuel 1-7). The translators responsible for the Septuagint judged it a good place to make the division when they made the Book of Samuel into two books.

The authors of this part are continuing their attempt to defend David against the accusation that he played a part in the fall of Saul and his family. David was the chief beneficiary, but this was because of the will of YHWH. We have already seen that David himself did nothing to bring Saul down. Here we witness his genuine grief at the news.

One is left with the impression that the soldier bringing the report, and the crown and armlet, is expecting that David will be delighted at the news, and will be generous in rewarding him. The role the man gives himself (verses 6-10) does not fit with the account in 1Samuel 31. It is his way of big-noting himself. He does not know the large-heartedness of David – something the authors of the account are keen to underline.

His case is made all the more precarious when he declares he is an Amalekite (verse 8). David has just come from revenging the devastation caused by the Amalekites in Ziklag (verse 1; see 1Samuel 30).

The Chronicler

The Chronicler skips over chapters 1-4 and takes up the story again when David is crowned king at Hebron in 2Samuel 5.

David gives expression to his profound grief, for Saul, but especially for his dear and loyal friend, Jonathan.

Twice David could have killed Saul but did not do so in respect for one who is 'YHWH's anointed' (see 24:1-22; 26:1-25). Such respect obviously means nothing to the Amalekite. David orders him to be killed (verse 15). As a resident alien he is subject to the laws that apply to Israelites. In killing YHWH's anointed he forfeits his right to live.

11Then David took hold of his clothes and tore them; and all the men who were with him did the same. 12They mourned and wept, and fasted until evening for Saul and for his son Jonathan, and for the army of YHWH and for the house of Israel, because they had fallen by the sword. 13David said to the young man who had reported to him, "Where do you come from?" He answered, "I am the son of a resident alien, an Amalekite." 14David said to him, "Were you not afraid to lift your hand to destroy YHWH's anointed?" 15Then David called one of the young men and said, "Come here and strike him down." So he struck him down and he died. 16David said to him, "Your blood be on your head; for your own mouth has testified against you, saying, 'I have killed YHWH's anointed.'"

¹⁷David sang this lamentation over Saul and his son Jonathan, ¹⁸and said that it should be taught to the people of Judah. It is recorded in the Book of Jashar.

**¹⁹Your glory, O Israel, lies slain upon your high places!
How the mighty have fallen!**

**²⁰Tell it not in Gath, proclaim it not in the streets of Ashkelon;
lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice,
the daughters of the uncircumcised exult.**

**²¹You mountains of Gilboa,
let there be no dew or rain upon you,
nor bounteous fields!
For there the shield of the mighty was defiled,
the shield of Saul, anointed with oil
no more.**

**²²From the blood of the slain,
from the fat of the mighty,
the bow of Jonathan did not turn back,
nor the sword of Saul return empty.**

**²³Saul and Jonathan, beloved and lovely!
In life and in death they were not divided;
they were swifter than eagles,
they were stronger than lions.**

**²⁴O daughters of Israel, weep over Saul,
who clothed you with crimson, in luxury,
who put ornaments of gold on your apparel.**

**²⁵How the mighty have fallen in the midst
of the battle!
Jonathan lies slain upon your high places.**

**²⁶I am distressed for you, my brother Jonathan;
greatly beloved were you to me;
your love to me was wonderful,
passing the love of women.**

**²⁷How the mighty have fallen,
and the weapons of war perished!**

Those composing this narrative refer to 'the Book of Jashar' for David's lament. It is mentioned also in Joshua 10:13 and in 1Kings 8:53. The three quotes are in archaic Hebrew poetry. There may be a connection between the word 'Jashar' ('upright') and 'Jeshurun' (Deuteronomy 32:15 and 33:5, 26), a term used of Israel. The authors may be referring to a 'book', celebrating the actions of YHWH, the Upright, in Israel, but they may also be referring to the professional oral repertoire of the temple singers. David has a reputation in the legends of being a skilled musician. We may have here an example of his skill.

No commentary is needed. Any attempt could only distract from the lament. Let us allow its poignant beauty to enter our souls.

David 'inquired of YHWH', no doubt using the ephod as in 30:7-8. God summons David to Hebron with his wives. This is a final departure from Philistia.

Hebron is the obvious choice for David's anointing as king of Judah (verse 4; see also 1Samuel 30:31). It is the traditional burial place of Abraham (Genesis 23) and Sarah (Genesis 25:9-10).

He praises Jabesh-gilead for burying Saul. Clearly he does not consider that his influence is limited to Judah.

Abner, Saul's cousin and the commander of his army (first mentioned in 1Samuel 14:50), had escaped the carnage on Mount Gilboa, as had Saul's son, Ishbaal ('man of Baal'). Some manuscripts read Ishbosheth ('man of a shameful thing'). He is called 'Ishyo' ('man of YHWH') in 1Samuel 14:49 (see commentary). Abner made Ishyo king over all of Israel, except Judah. He does so in Gilead. Clearly the Philistines are the de facto rulers west of the Jordan.



¹After this David inquired of YHWH, "Shall I go up into any of the cities of Judah?" YHWH said to him, "Go up." David said, "To which shall I go up?" He said, "To Hebron." **²So David went up there, along with his two wives, Ahinoam of Jezreel, and Abigail the widow of Nabal of Carmel.** **³David brought up the men who were with him, every one with his household; and they settled in Hebron.** **⁴Then the people of Judah came, and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah.**

When they told David, "It was the people of Jabesh-gilead who buried Saul," **⁵David sent messengers to the people of Jabesh-gilead, and said to them, "May you be blessed by YHWH, because you showed this loyalty to Saul your lord, and buried him! ⁶Now may YHWH show steadfast love and faithfulness to you! And I too will reward you because you have done this thing.** **⁷Therefore let your hands be strong, and be valiant; for Saul your lord is dead, and the house of Judah has anointed me king over them."**

⁸But Abner son of Ner, commander of Saul's army, had taken Saul's son, Ishbaal, and brought him over to Mahanaim.

⁹He made him king over Gilead, the Geshurites, Jezreel, Ephraim, Benjamin, and over all Israel. (¹⁰Ishbaal, Saul's son, was forty years old when he began to reign over Israel, and he reigned two years.) But the house of Judah followed David.

(¹¹The time that David was king in Hebron over the house of Judah was seven years and six months.)

¹²Abner son of Ner, and the servants of Ishbaal son of Saul, marched out from Mahanaim towards Gibeon. ¹³Joab son of Zeruah, and the servants of David, had also marched out, and they met at the pool of Gibeon. One group sat on one side of the pool, while the other sat on the other side. ¹⁴Abner said to Joab, "Let some soldiers come forward and have a contest before us." Joab said, "Let them come forward." ¹⁵So they came forward and were counted as they passed by, twelve for Benjamin and Ishbaal son of Saul, and twelve of the servants of David. ¹⁶Each grasped his opponent by the head, and thrust his sword into his opponent's side; so they fell down together. (Therefore that place was called Helkath-hazzurim, which is at Gibeon.)

¹⁷The fighting was very fierce that day; and Abner and the men of Israel were driven back by the servants of David.

¹⁸The three sons of Zeruah were there, Joab, Abishai, and Asahel. Now Asahel was as swift of foot as a wild gazelle.

¹⁹Asahel pursued Abner, turning neither to the right nor to the left as he followed him. ²⁰Then Abner looked back and said, "Is it you, Asahel?" He answered, "Yes, it is." ²¹Abner said to him, "Turn to your right or to your left, and seize one of the soldiers, and take his spoil." But Asahel would not turn away from following him. ²²Abner said again to Asahel, "Turn away from following me; why should I strike you to the ground? How then could I show my face to your brother Joab?"

²³But he refused to turn away. So Abner struck him in the stomach with the butt of his spear, so that the spear came out at his back. He fell there, and died where he lay. And all those who came to the place where Asahel had fallen and died, stood still.

The two bands meet at Gibeon (see Joshua 9-10; 1Kings 3:4), a few ks northwest of Gibeon, Saul's town in Benjamin, and agree to hold a contest. Rather than both armies fighting, let the result be determined by choosing twelve each to represent their army and let victory depend on the outcome of the contest. On the 'pool' compare Jeremiah 41:12.

The outcome was indecisive since all twenty-four were killed, so a wholesale battle erupts.

Abner's band were forced to flee.

Asahel, son of David's sister, Zeruah (see 1Samuel 26:6), and brother of Joab, David's commander-in-chief, rashly pursues Abner. Abner tries to tell him to stop, but when Asahel persists, Abner holds out his spear and Asahel runs into it, killing himself.

Joab's pursuit of Abner stops when Abner, sensibly, reminds him that they are kinsmen and should not be fighting each other. Joab agrees.

Abner goes back to Mahanaim to the east of the Jordan in Gilead, and Joab returns to Hebron, and Asahel is buried in the family tomb at Bethlehem (see map page 133).

In the civil war that followed, David's power grew.

²⁴But Joab and Abishai pursued Abner. As the sun was going down they came to the hill of Ammah, which lies before Giah on the way to the wilderness of Gibeon.

²⁵The Benjaminites rallied around Abner and formed a single band; they took their stand on the top of a hill. ²⁶Then Abner called to Joab, "Is the sword to keep devouring forever? Do you not know that the end will be bitter? How long will it be before you order your people to turn from the pursuit of their kinsmen?" ²⁷Joab said, "As God lives, if you had not spoken, the people would have continued to pursue their kinsmen, not stopping until morning." ²⁸Joab sounded the trumpet and all the people stopped; they no longer pursued Israel or engaged in battle any further.

²⁹Abner and his men travelled all that night through the Arabah; they crossed the Jordan, and, marching the whole forenoon, they came to Mahanaim. ³⁰Joab returned from the pursuit of Abner; and when he had gathered all the people together, there were missing of David's servants nineteen men besides Asahel.

³¹But the servants of David had killed of Benjamin three hundred sixty of Abner's men. ³²They took up Asahel and buried him in the tomb of his father, which was at Bethlehem. Joab and his men marched all night, and the day broke upon them at Hebron.

³¹There was a long war between the house of Saul and the house of David; David grew stronger and stronger, while the house of Saul became weaker and weaker.

²Sons were born to David at Hebron: his firstborn was Amnon, of Ahinoam of Jezreel; ³his second, Chileab, of Abigail the widow of Nabal of Carmel; the third, Absalom son of Maacah, daughter of King Talmi of Geshur; ⁴the fourth, Adonijah son of Haggith; the fifth, Shephatiah son of Abital; ⁵and the sixth, Ithream, of David's wife Eglah. These were born to David in Hebron.

⁶While there was war between the house of Saul and the house of David, Abner was making himself strong in the house of Saul.

⁷Now Saul had a concubine named Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah. And Ishbaal said to Abner, "Why have you been sleeping with my father's concubine?" ⁸The words of Ishbaal made Abner very angry; he said, "Am I a dog's head? Today I keep showing loyalty to the house of your father Saul, to his brothers, and to his friends, and have not given you into the hand of David; and yet you charge me now with a crime concerning this woman. ⁹So may God do to Abner and so may he add to it! For just what YHWH has sworn to David, that will I accomplish for him, ¹⁰to transfer the kingdom from the house of Saul, and set up the throne of David over Israel and over Judah, from Dan to Beer-sheba."

¹¹And Ishbaal could not say another word to Abner, because he feared him.

This list is repeated in 1 Chronicles 3:1-4 in the section devoted to genealogies. We already know about David's wives Ahinoam and Abigail (1Samuel 25:42-43). The other wives are mentioned only here. As for his sons, we hear of Amnon again in chapter 13, Absalom in chapters 13-18, and Adonijah in 1Kings 1. The others are not mentioned again.

Rizpah (verse 7) recurs again in 2Samuel 21:10-11. If it were not already obvious, this scene leaves the reader in no doubt that it is Abner, not 'Ishbaal' (= Ishyo = Ishbosheth; see 1Samuel 14:49), who wields power in Israel. If Ishbaal doesn't watch his words, Abner will hand his kingdom over to David.

Verses 9-10 have a Deuteronomistic flavour to them. They rely on 1Samuel 13:13-14; 15:26-28; and on 1Samuel 15:35 – 16:13. The Deuteronomists are preparing the reader to see David as the sole ruler over all of Israel. In keeping with its being numbered among the prophetic writings, 2Samuel is focusing on what YHWH is doing and how YHWH is carrying out his purposes in Israel.

Abner decides to carry out his threat and offer the kingdom to David, if David will enter into a covenant with him. David agrees on condition that his first wife, Michal, Saul's daughter, is restored to him (see 1Samuel 18:20-27; 1Samuel 25:44). This opens the way for him to make a legitimate claim to the throne. Ishbaal's involvement adds authority to the union.

¹²Abner sent messengers to David at Hebron, saying, "To whom does the land belong? Make your covenant with me, and I will give you my support to bring all Israel over to you." ¹³He said, "Good; I will make a covenant with you. But one thing I require of you: you shall never appear in my presence unless you bring Saul's daughter Michal when you come to see me."

¹⁴Then David sent messengers to Saul's son Ishbaal, saying, "Give me my wife Michal, to whom I became engaged at the price of one hundred foreskins of the Philistines." ¹⁵Ishbaal sent and took her from her husband Paltiel the son of Laish. ¹⁶But her husband went with her, weeping as he walked behind her all the way to Bahurim. Then Abner said to him, "Go back home!" So he went back.

Abner organises for David to be appointed king, as YHWH's chosen saviour of Israel.

¹⁷Abner sent word to the elders of Israel, saying, "For some time past you have been seeking David as king over you. ¹⁸Now then bring it about; for YHWH has promised David: 'Through my servant David I will save my people Israel from the hand of the Philistines, and from all their enemies'." ¹⁹Abner also spoke directly to the Benjaminites; then Abner went to tell David at Hebron all that Israel and the whole house of Benjamin were ready to do.

²⁰When Abner came with twenty men to David at Hebron, David made a feast for Abner and the men who were with him. ²¹Abner said to David, "Let me go and rally all Israel to my lord the king, in order that they may make a covenant with you, and that you may reign over all that your heart desires." So David dismissed Abner, and he went away in peace.

²²Just then the servants of David arrived with Joab from a raid, bringing much spoil with them. But Abner was not with David at Hebron, for David had dismissed him, and he had gone away in peace. ²³When Joab and all the army that was with him came, it was told Joab, "Abner son of Ner came to the king, and he has dismissed him, and he has gone away in peace." ²⁴Then Joab went to the king and said, "What have you done? Abner came to you; why did you dismiss him, so that he got away? ²⁵You know that Abner son of Ner came to deceive you, and to learn your comings and goings and to learn all that you are doing."

²⁶When Joab came out from David's presence, he sent messengers after Abner, and they brought him back from the cistern of Sirah; but David did not know about it.

²⁷When Abner returned to Hebron, Joab took him aside in the gateway to speak with him privately, and there he stabbed him in the stomach. So he died for shedding the blood of Asahel, Joab's brother.

David sets up a feast for Abner and his men, and sends him away in peace.

Joab arrives back from a raid. He is not happy, and, without David knowing, he sends his men out to bring Abner back.

When Abner returns, Joab stabs and kills him. The reason given is revenge for Abner having killed Joab's brother, Asahel (see 2Samuel 2:23). The account in no way blames David for Abner's death, though it haunted David all his life (see 1Kings 2:5, 32).

In verse 28 the Deuteronomists are pursuing their agenda to ensure that David is not blamed for the way in which he became king. David declares his innocence, and calls down divine vengeance of Joab and his house. 'Holding a spindle'(verse 29) is woman's work, unfitting for a military hero.

David gives Abner a 'state funeral', leading the lamentations himself.

The genuineness of David's grief was noticed by all, and won him admiration and praise.

He is not pleased with his violent nephews.

²⁸Afterward, when David heard of it, he said, "I and my kingdom are forever guiltless before YHWH for the blood of Abner son of Ner. ²⁹May the guilt fall on the head of Joab, and on all his father's house; and may the house of Joab never be without one who has a discharge, or who is leprous, or who holds a spindle, or who falls by the sword, or who lacks food!" (³⁰Now Joab and his brother Abishai had been laying in wait for Abner because he had killed their brother Asahel in the battle at Gibeon.)

³¹Then David said to Joab and to all the people who were with him, "Tear your clothes, and put on sackcloth, and mourn over Abner." And King David followed the bier. ³²They buried Abner at Hebron. The king lifted up his voice and wept at the grave of Abner, and all the people wept. ³³The king lamented for Abner, saying, "Should Abner die as a fool dies? ³⁴Your hands were bound, but not by manacles; your feet were tied, but not by fetters; as one falls before the wicked you have fallen." And all the people wept over him again.

³⁵Then all the people came to persuade David to eat something while it was still day; but David swore, saying, "So may God do to me, and more, if I taste bread or anything else before the sun goes down!" ³⁶All the people took notice of it, and it pleased them; just as everything the king did pleased all the people. ³⁷So all the people and all Israel understood that day that the king had no part in the killing of Abner son of Ner. ³⁸And the king said to his servants, "Do you not know that a prince and a great man has fallen this day in Israel? ³⁹Today I am powerless, even though anointed king; these men, the sons of Zeruah, are too violent for me. YHWH pay back the one who does wickedly in accordance with his wickedness!"

¹When Saul's son Ishbaal heard that Abner had died at Hebron, his courage failed, and all Israel was dismayed.

²Saul's son had two captains of raiding bands; the name of the one was Baanah, and the name of the other Rechab. They were sons of Rimmon a Benjamite from Beeroth (for Beeroth is considered to belong to Benjamin. ³The people of Beeroth had fled to Gittaim and are there as resident aliens to this day).

⁴Saul's son Jonathan had a son who was crippled. He was five years old when the news about Saul and Jonathan came from Jezreel. His nurse picked him up and fled; and, in her haste to flee, she dropped him and he became lame. His name was Meribbaal.

We are introduced to Ishbaal's captains, from Beeroth. It was one of the four Hivite cities whose inhabitants deceived Israel, making peace with Joshua on the pretence that they were from a distant land (Joshua 9:17). The inhabitants of Beeroth and the other three Hivite towns (Gibeon, Kiriath-jearim, and Chephirah) were thus spared annihilation and were allowed to live among the Israelites as woodcutters and water carriers (Joshua 9:26–27). All four towns were incorporated into the tribal territory of Benjamin (Joshua 18:25–28). The location of Gittaim ('double winepress') is uncertain.

We are introduced also to Jonathan's son, Meribbaal (verse 4; sometimes given as Meribbosheth). He is mentioned here to alert us to the fact that the assassination of Saul's son, Ishbaal, does not end Saul's line.

Meribbaal was lame as a result of an accident when he was a child. After the deaths of Saul and Jonathan he placed himself under the protection of David (2Samuel 9:6) and enjoyed special status in the royal household (2Samuel 9:10–11). He was implicated in treachery during the rebellion of Absalom (2Samuel 16:1–4; 19:24–25, 30) but was spared by David when the rest of the house of Saul was exterminated (2Samuel 21:7). David remained faithful to the covenant he made with Jonathan (1Samuel 18:3; 23:18).

Ishbaal's captains assassinate Ishbaal. The translation of verses 6-7 is based on the Septuagint. They bring his severed head to David expecting a reward. David has them killed and dismembered. Ishbaal is 'buried in the tomb of Abner at Hebron' (verse 12; see 2Samuel 3:32).

Once again the authors of this narrative are determined to avert from David, king of Judah (see 2Samuel 2:4), any blame for Ishbaal's death, even though it cleared the way for him to incorporate Israel into his kingdom.

⁵Now the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, Rechab and Baanah, set out, and about the heat of the day they came to the house of Ishbaal, while he was taking his noonday rest. ⁶The gate-keeper had been gathering wheat; she had nodded and fallen asleep. So Rechab and his brother, Baamnah slipped by ⁷and came inside the house, where Ishbaal was lying upon a couch in his bedchamber. They struck him and killed him. They cut off his head. Then they took his head and travelled the Arabah road all night long. ⁸They brought the head of Ishbaal to David at Hebron and said to the king, "Here is the head of Ishbaal, son of Saul, your enemy, who sought your life; YHWH has avenged my lord the king this day on Saul and on his offspring." ⁹David answered Rechab and his brother Baanah, the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, "As YHWH lives, who has redeemed my life out of every adversity, ¹⁰when the one who told me, 'See, Saul is dead,' thought he was bringing good news, I seized him and killed him at Ziklag. This was the reward I gave him for his news. ¹¹How much more then, when wicked men have killed a righteous man on his bed in his own house! And now shall I not require his blood at your hand, and destroy you from the earth?" ¹²So David commanded the soldiers, and they killed them; they cut off their hands and feet, and hung their bodies beside the pool at Hebron. But the head of Ishbaal they took and buried in the tomb of Abner at Hebron.

David is anointed king over all Israel

¹Then all the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron, and said, "Look, we are your bone and flesh. ²For some time, while Saul was king over us, it was you who led out Israel and brought it in. YHWH said to you: It is you who shall be shepherd of my people Israel, you who shall be ruler over Israel."

³So all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron; and King David made a covenant with them at Hebron before YHWH, and they anointed David king over Israel.

⁴David was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years. ⁵At Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months; and at Jerusalem he reigned over all Israel and Judah thirty-three years.

Verses 1-2 come from the Deuteronomists, who have been preparing us for the momentous event of David being crowned as king of all Israel from the time when the elders of Israel approached Samuel and asked him to 'appoint a king to govern us' (1Samuel 8:5). The first to be anointed was Saul (1Samuel 10:1, 24; 11:15). When Saul took it upon himself to offer the sacrifice at Gilgal (1Samuel 13:9), Samuel declared:

You have done foolishly; you have not kept the commandment of YHWH your God, which he commanded you. YHWH would have established your kingdom over Israel forever, but now your kingdom will not continue; YHWH has sought out a man after his own heart; and YHWH has appointed him to be ruler over his people, because you have not kept what YHWH commanded you.

Later, when Saul failed to carry out God's orders in the battle against the Amalekites, Samuel declared (1Samuel 15:28):

YHWH has torn the kingdom of Israel from you this very day, and has given it to a neighbour of yours, who is better than you.

Samuel was instructed to anoint David, the youngest son of Jesse (1Samuel 16:13). Saul's son, Jonathan, made a covenant with David and declared (1Samuel 23:17):

You shall be king over Israel.

Saul, too, acknowledges this (1Samuel 24:20):

Now I know that you shall surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in your hand.

The Chronicler (1Chronicles 11:1-3)

As noted on page 126, The Chronicler opens with nine chapters of genealogical material. In chapter 10 he recounts the death of Saul. This is followed immediately (1Chronicles 11:1-3) by the anointing of David as king over all Israel. His account repeats that of the Deuteronomists, except that he adds the following to verse 3:

according to the word of YHWH by Samuel.

The details in verse 4 are recorded in the section of Chronicles devoted to genealogies (see 1Chronicles 3:4). Verse 5 is found later in 1Chronicles 29:27.

David and his men capture the Jebusite city of Jerusalem. References to Jerusalem go back to the third millennium. It was not captured at the time of Joshua (see Joshua 15:63; Judges 1:21). David is the first to capture it. It became the ‘city of David’, strategically placed for his capital, being on the border between Judah to the south and Israel to the north.

The ‘Millo’ (verse 9) refers to a major land fill, probably on the east slope of the city facing the Kidron valley.

Verse 10 marks the end of the story of David’s rise to power which began in 1Samuel 16:14. Fittingly it ends with the statement that ‘YHWH was with him’.

The Chronicler (1Chronicles 11:4-9)

The Chronicler has ‘David and all Israel’ marching on the city (not just David and his men). He omits any mention of the blind and the lame, and adds a reference to Joab (1Chronicles 11:6):

David had said, “Whoever attacks the Jebusites first shall be chief and commander.” And Joab son of Zeruiah went up first, so he became chief.

The Chronicler (1Chronicles 11:10 – 14:2)

The Chronicler, with his love of lists, follows the capture of Jerusalem with a list of David’s principal champions (1Chronicles 11:10-47). This list, with a number of changes, repeats the list given in 2Samuel 23:8-39 (see pages 201-202). The Chronicler adds a list of David’s first supporters (1Chronicles 12:1-23). The list includes representatives from each of the tribes. In this way he portrays David as the one who gathered all of Israel into one nation. He follows with a list of those who joined David at Hebron and supported his kingship (1Chronicles 12:24-41). These lists are followed in 1Chronicles 13 with bringing of the ark into the city (see 2Samuel 6:1-11, pages 146-147).

“The king and his men marched to Jerusalem against the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land, who said to David, “You will not come in here, even the blind and the lame will turn you back”—thinking, “David cannot come in here.”⁷ Nevertheless David took the stronghold of Zion, which is now the city of David.⁸ David had said on that day, “Whoever would strike down the Jebusites, let him get up the water shaft to attack the lame and the blind, those whom David hates.” Therefore it is said, “The blind and the lame shall not come into the temple.”⁹ David occupied the stronghold, and named it the city of David. David built the city all around from the Millo inward.¹⁰ And David became greater and greater, for YHWH, the God of hosts, was with him.

¹¹King Hiram of Tyre sent messengers to David, along with cedar trees, and carpenters and masons who built David a house. ¹²Then David knew that YHWH had established him king over Israel, and that he had exalted his kingdom for the sake of his people Israel.

¹³In Jerusalem, after he came from Hebron, David took more concubines and wives; and more sons and daughters were born to David. ¹⁴These are the names of those who were born to him in Jerusalem: Shammua, Shobab, Nathan, Solomon, ¹⁵Ibhar, Elishua, Nepheg, Japhia, ¹⁶Elishama, Eliada, and Eliphelet.

Tyre was the capital city of the Phoenicians (also known as the Sidonians). Hiram's friendship with David is given later as the reason for his supplying Solomon with material and workers for the construction of the temple (see 1Kings 5:1-12).

His gesture here is read by David as proof that YHWH had 'established him king over all Israel'. For the Deuteronomists 'Israel' includes both the northern and the southern kingdoms.

If Josephus is correct in the information he gives concerning Hiram of Tyre (see *The Antiquities* 8.62), his gift to David took place late in David's reign.

Earlier we were given a list of the children born to David in Hebron (see 2Samuel 3:2-5 (= 1Chronicles 3:1-4). In verses 13-14 we have the list of his sons born after capturing and settling in Jerusalem.

In the Newer Testament, Luke 3:31 traces Jesus' descent from David through Nathan (not Solomon as in Matthew 1:6).

Both these fragments have been inserted here by the Deuteronomists to underline the blessing of David by YHWH.

The Chronicler (1Chronicles 14:1-7)

The Chronicler copies verses 11-12 in 1Chronicles 14:1-2, and verses 13-16 in 1Chronicles 14:3-7. He lists David's children also in the genealogical section of his work, in 1Chronicles 3:5-8.

The Deuteronomists have inserted this account here as providing the context for the transfer of the ark. These battles may have taken place before the capture of Jerusalem. The Valley of Rephaim is south-west of Jerusalem. Having discerned God's will (presumably through use of the Urim and Thummim), David attacked the Philistines from the high ground, called 'Baal-perazim' because, as the Deuteronomists say, it was YHWH who led David's forces to victory (see verse 20; see 3:18). Verses 22-25 recount a second victory over the Philistines, using a different tactic learned from discerning YHWH's will.

The Chronicler (1Chronicles 14:8-17)

These scenes are repeated by the Chronicler. With his usual care to avoid any suggestion that David and his people might be defiled by the presence of the Philistine idols, he alters verse 21 to read:

The Philistines abandoned their gods there, and at David's command they were burned.

– 1Chronicles 14:12

The Chronicler concludes his account with:

The fame of David went out into all lands, and YHWH brought the fear of him on all nations.



¹⁷When the Philistines heard that David had been anointed king over Israel, they went up in search of him; but David heard about it and went down to the stronghold. ¹⁸When the Philistines had come and spread out in the valley of Rephaim.

¹⁹David inquired of YHWH, "Shall I go up against the Philistines? Will you give them into my hand?" YHWH said to David, "Go up; for I will certainly give the Philistines into your hand."

²⁰So David came to Baal-perazim, and David defeated them there. (He said, "YHWH has burst forth against my enemies before me, like a bursting flood." Therefore that place is called Baal-perazim.)

²¹The Philistines abandoned their idols there, and David and his men carried them away.

²²Once again the Philistines came up, and were spread out in the valley of Rephaim. ²³When David inquired of YHWH, he said, "You shall not go up; go around to their rear, and come upon them opposite the balsam trees. ²⁴Then, when you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the balsam trees, be on the alert; for then YHWH has gone out before you to strike down the army of the Philistines." ²⁵David did just as YHWH had commanded him; and he struck down the Philistines from Geba all the way to Gezer.

¹David gathered all the chosen men of Israel, thirty thousand. ²David and the entire army that was with him set out and went to Baalah-judah, to bring up from there the ark of God, which is called by the name of YHWH of hosts who is enthroned on the cherubim. ³They carried the ark of God on a new cart, and brought it out of the house of Abinadab, which was on the hill. Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, were guiding the new cart ⁴with the ark of God. Uzzah walked alongside the cart, and Ahio went in front. ⁵David and all the house of Israel were dancing before YHWH with all their might, with songs and lyres and harps and tambourines and castanets and cymbals.

The Deuteronomists insert here an older account of the transfer of the ark. It is this transfer that appears to be celebrated in Psalm 132:1-10. The last we heard of the ark was when it was lodged at Kiriath-jearim 'at the house of Abinadab on the hill' (1 Samuel 7:1). The Deuteronomists commented:

From the day that the ark was lodged at Kiriath-jearim, a long time passed, some twenty years, and all the house of Israel lamented after YHWH.

– 1 Samuel 7:2

Kiriath-jearim is half-way between Jerusalem and Gezer. It is called here by its earlier name (Baalah = consort of Baal).

It was David's victories over the Philistines (2 Samuel 5:17-25; see 3:18) that cleared the way for him to fetch the ark. On the 'cherubim' see 1 Samuel 4:4, and the commentary on 3:3). To say that the ark is 'called by the name of YHWH' (verse 2) is a way of acknowledging the transcendence of God, and speaking of a place where God can be encountered without limited God to that location.

Neither Uzzah nor his brother Ahio are mentioned outside this scene. In regard to the instruments (verse 5) compare Psalm 150.

The Chronicler

The Chronicler repeats this scene in 1 Chronicles 13:1-8. He considerably expands verse 1.

David consulted with the commanders of the thousands and of the hundreds, with every leader. ²David said to the whole assembly of Israel, "If it seems good to you, and if it is the will of YHWH our God, let us send abroad to our kindred who remain in all the land of Israel, including the priests and Levites in the cities that have pasture lands, that they may come together to us. ³Then let us bring again the ark of our God to us; for we did not turn to it in the days of Saul." ⁴The whole assembly agreed to do so, for the thing pleased all the people. ⁵So David assembled all Israel from the Shihor of Egypt to Lebo-hamath, to bring the ark of God from Kiriath-jearim.

'Nodan' (called 'Chidon' in 1Chronicles 13:9) is named only here.

Uzzah's death is seen as divine punishment for touching the ark, an action that is clearly taboo whatever the circumstances. Being sacred, the ark is dangerous.

Fearing YHWH, David decides not to bring the ark into the city, but leaves it with Obed-edom, a Philistine from Gath. We are told that the ark remained there for three months and that Obed-edom was blessed by YHWH.

The Chronicler (1Chronicles 13:9-14)

These verses are repeated by the Chronicler.

In chapter 14 the Chronicler places the account of Hiram of Tyre (verses 1-2; see 2Samuel 5:11-12, page 144). This is followed by the list of David's sons born after the capture of Jerusalem, including Nathan and Solomon (verses 3-7; see 2Samuel 5:13-16, page 144). In 1Chronicles 3:5, both Nathan and Solomon are listed as have Bath-shua (= Bathsheba) as their mother.

In 14: 8-27 the Chronicler gives the account of David's victories over the Philistines (see 2Samuel 5:17-25, page 145).

⁶When they came to the threshing floor of Nodan, Uzzah reached out his hand to the ark of God and took hold of it, for the oxen had let it slip. ⁷The anger of YHWH was kindled against Uzzah; and God struck him there because he reached out his hand to the ark; and he died there beside the ark of God.

⁸David was angry because YHWH had burst forth with an outburst upon Uzzah; so that place is called Perez-uzzah, to this day. ⁹David was afraid of YHWH that day; he said, "How can the ark of YHWH come into my care?" ¹⁰So David was unwilling to take the ark of YHWH into his care in the city of David; instead David took it to the house of Obed-edom the Gittite. ¹¹The ark of YHWH remained in the house of Obed-edom the Gittite three months; and YHWH blessed Obed-edom and all his household.

The Chronicler (1Chronicles 15:1-24)

With his special interest in lists, and especially in the temple and the cult, the Chronicler inserts here the following. Note the meticulous care that goes into preparing for the ark to come to Jerusalem.

¹David built houses for himself in the city of David, and he prepared a place for the ark of God and pitched a tent for it. ²Then David commanded that no one but the Levites were to carry the ark of God, for YHWH had chosen them to carry the ark of YHWH and to minister to him forever. ³David assembled all Israel in Jerusalem to bring up the ark of YHWH to its place, which he had prepared for it. ⁴Then David gathered together the descendants of Aaron and the Levites: ⁵of the sons of Kohath, Uriel the chief, with one hundred twenty of his kindred; ⁶of the sons of Merari, Asaiah the chief, with two hundred twenty of his kindred; ⁷of the sons of Gershon, Joel the chief, with one hundred thirty of his kindred; ⁸of the sons of Elizaphan, Shemaiah the chief, with two hundred of his kindred; ⁹of the sons of Hebron, Eliel the chief, with eighty of his kindred; ¹⁰of the sons of Uzziel, Amminadab the chief, with one hundred twelve of his kindred.

¹¹David summoned the priests Zadok and Abiathar, and the Levites Uriel, Asaiah, Joel, Shemaiah, Eliel, and Amminadab. ¹²He said to them, "You are the heads of families of the Levites; sanctify yourselves, you and your kindred, so that you may bring up the ark of YHWH, the God of Israel, to the place that I have prepared for it. ¹³Because you did not carry it the first time, YHWH our God burst out against us, because we did not give it proper care." ¹⁴So the priests and the Levites sanctified themselves to bring up the ark of YHWH, the God of Israel. ¹⁵And the Levites carried the ark of God on their shoulders with the poles, as Moses had commanded according to the word of YHWH.

¹⁶David also commanded the chiefs of the Levites to appoint their kindred as the singers to play on musical instruments, on harps and lyres and cymbals, to raise loud sounds of joy. ¹⁷So the Levites appointed Heman son of Joel; and of his kindred Asaph son of Berechiah; and of the sons of Merari, their kindred, Ethan son of Kushaiah; ¹⁸and with them their kindred of the second order, Zechariah, Jaaziel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Unni, Eliab, Benaiah, Maaseiah, Mattithiah, Eliphelehu, and Mikneiah, and the gatekeepers Obed-edom and Jeiel. ¹⁹The singers Heman, Asaph, and Ethan were to sound bronze cymbals; ²⁰Zechariah, Aziel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Unni, Eliab, Maaseiah, and Benaiah were to play harps according to Alamoth; ²¹but Mattithiah, Eliphelehu, Mikneiah, Obed-edom, Jeiel, and Azaziah were to lead with lyres according to the Sheminith. ²²Chenaniah, leader of the Levites in music, was to direct the music, for he understood it. ²³Berechiah and Elkanah were to be gatekeepers for the ark. ²⁴Shebaniah, Joshaphat, Nethanel, Amasai, Zechariah, Benaiah, and Eliezer, the priests, were to blow the trumpets before the ark of God. Obed-edom and Jehiah also were to be gatekeepers for the ark.

David takes the prosperity experienced by Obed-edom as a sign that God's anger (see 6:8) has passed. Dressed with the priestly garment, the ephod, he proceeds with his plan to bring the ark into the city, with the offering of sacrifice, and great jubilation.

He places it in a tent specially prepared, and offers more sacrifices, some completely consumed by fire, others in which the offering was shared by the whole community as a communion sacrifice.

The Chronicler (1Chronicles 15:25–16:3)

The equivalent of verses 13-15 speaks of the role of the Levites and expands on the Deuteronomists' text:

²⁶And because God helped the Levites who were carrying the ark of the covenant of YHWH, they sacrificed seven bulls and seven rams. ²⁷David was clothed with a robe of fine linen, as also were all the Levites who were carrying the ark, and the singers, and Chenaniah the leader of the music of the singers; and David wore a linen ephod. ²⁸So all Israel brought up the ark of the covenant of YHWH with shouting, to the sound of the horn, trumpets, and cymbals, and made loud music on harps and lyres.

¹²When King David was told that YHWH has blessed the household of Obed-edom and all that belongs to him, because of the ark of God, he went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-edom to the city of David with rejoicing; ¹³and when those who bore the ark of YHWH had gone six paces, he sacrificed an ox and a fatling. ¹⁴David, clad in a linen ephod, danced before YHWH with all his might. ¹⁵So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of YHWH with shouting, and with the sound of the trumpet.

¹⁶As the ark of YHWH came into the city of David, Michal daughter of Saul looked out of the window, and saw King David leaping and dancing before YHWH; and she despised him in her heart.

¹⁷They brought in the ark of YHWH, and set it in its place, inside the tent that David had pitched for it; and David offered burnt offerings and offerings of well-being before YHWH. ¹⁸When David had finished offering the burnt offerings and the communion offerings of, he blessed the people in the name of YHWH of hosts, ¹⁹and distributed food among all the people, the whole multitude of Israel, both men and women, to each a cake of bread, a portion of meat, and a cake of raisins. Then all the people went back to their homes.

Michal complains

²⁰David returned to bless his household. But Michal the daughter of Saul came out to meet him, and said, "How the king of Israel distinguished himself today, uncovering himself today before the eyes of his servants' maids, as any shameless dancer!"

²¹David said to Michal, "In the presence of YHWH I am a dancer! Blessed be YHWH who chose me in place of your father and all his household, to appoint me as prince over Israel, the people of YHWH, Yes, I have danced before YHWH.

²²I will make myself yet more contemptible than this, and I will be abased in my own eyes; but by the maids of whom you have spoken, by them I shall be held in honour." ²³And Michal the daughter of Saul had no child to the day of her death.

Michal fails to understand what David is doing. His point is that Jerusalem is not 'David's city' but the city of YHWH. This is cause, not only for celebration, but also for the people to see David humbling himself before YHWH.

Michal's childlessness cuts across David's goal which was to combine his house with Saul's by having a child by Saul's daughter (see 1Samuel 14:49). God has other plans.

The Chronicler

The Chronicler does not include this passage.

The Chronicler inserts here a song of praise (16:4-43)

⁴David appointed certain of the Levites as ministers before the ark of YHWH, to invoke, to thank, and to praise YHWH, the God of Israel. ⁵Asaph was the chief, and second to him Zechariah, Jeiel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Mattithiah, Eliab, Benaiah, Obed-edom, and Jeiel, with harps and lyres; Asaph was to sound the cymbals, ⁶and the priests Benaiah and Jahaziel were to blow trumpets regularly, before the ark of the covenant of God. ⁷Then on that day David first appointed the singing of praises to YHWH by Asaph and his kindred.

Verses 8-22 = Psalm 105:1-15 in the Psalter

**⁸O give thanks to YHWH, call on his name,
make known his deeds among the peoples.
⁹Sing to him, sing praises to him,
tell of all his wonderful works.
¹⁰Glory in his holy name;
let the hearts of those who seek YHWH rejoice.
¹¹Seek YHWH and his strength,
seek his presence continually.
¹²Remember the wonderful works he has done,
his miracles, and the judgments he uttered,
¹³O offspring of his servant Israel,
children of Jacob, his chosen ones.
¹⁴He is YHWH our God;
his judgments are in all the earth.
¹⁵Remember his covenant forever,
the word that he commanded, for a thousand generations,
¹⁶the covenant that he made with Abraham,
his sworn promise to Isaac,
¹⁷which he confirmed to Jacob as a statute,
to Israel as an everlasting covenant,
¹⁸saying, "To you I will give the land of Canaan
as your portion for an inheritance."
¹⁹When they were few in number,
of little account, and strangers in the land,
²⁰wandering from nation to nation,
from one kingdom to another people,
²¹he allowed no one to oppress them;
he rebuked kings on their account,
²²saying, "Do not touch my anointed ones;
do my prophets no harm."**

Verses 23-33 = Psalm 96:1-13 in the Psalter

**²³Sing to YHWH, all the earth.
Tell of his salvation from day to day.**

- ²⁴Declare his glory among the nations,
his marvelous works among all the peoples.**
- ²⁵For great is YHWH, and greatly to be praised;
he is to be revered above all gods.**
- ²⁶For all the gods of the peoples are idols,
but YHWH made the heavens.**
- ²⁷Honour and majesty are before him;
strength and joy are in his place.**
- ²⁸Ascribe to YHWH, O families of the peoples,
ascribe to YHWH glory and strength.**
- ²⁹Ascribe to YHWH the glory due his name;
bring an offering, and come before him.
Worship YHWH in holy splendor;
³⁰tremble before him, all the earth.
The world is firmly established; it shall never be moved.**
- ³¹Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice,
and let them say among the nations, "YHWH is king!"**
- ³²Let the sea roar, and all that fills it;
let the field exult, and everything in it.**
- ³³Then shall the trees of the forest sing for joy
before YHWH, for he comes to judge the earth.**

Verses 34-36 = Psalm 106:1, 47-48 in the Psalter

- ³⁴O give thanks to YHWH, for he is good;
for his steadfast love endures forever.**
- ³⁵Say also: "Save us, O God of our salvation,
and gather and rescue us from among the nations,
that we may give thanks to your holy name,
and glory in your praise.**
- ³⁶Blessed be YHWH, the God of Israel,
from everlasting to everlasting."**

Then all the people said "Amen!" and praised YHWH.

³⁷David left Asaph and his kinsfolk there before the ark of the covenant of YHWH to minister regularly before the ark as each day required, ³⁸and also Obed-edom and his sixty-eight kinsfolk; while Obed-edom son of Jeduthun and Hosah were to be gatekeepers. ³⁹And he left the priest Zadok and his kindred the priests before the tabernacle of YHWH in the high place that was at Gibeon, ⁴⁰to offer burnt offerings to YHWH on the altar of burnt offering regularly, morning and evening, according to all that is written in the law of YHWH that he commanded Israel. ⁴¹With them were Heman and Jeduthun, and the rest of those chosen and expressly named to render thanks to YHWH, for his steadfast love endures forever. ⁴²Heman and Jeduthun had with them trumpets and cymbals for the music, and instruments for sacred song. The sons of Jeduthun were appointed to the gate. ⁴³Then all the people departed to their homes, and David went home to bless his household.

For the first time we are introduced to ‘the prophet Nathan’(verse 2). He will appear again in chapter 12.

The ark has been in a number of temporary dwellings. David now wants to give it, and therefore YHWH, a permanent home. At first Nathan, the king’s counsellor, agrees, but then is given a message by God to convey to David. YHWH chose to be with his people throughout their wanderings. It is YHWH who has given them a permanent home (see Joshua 21:43-45). It is not for David to think to contain God in a place of his choosing. It is worth reflecting on how the exiles in Babylon would have read verses 10-11.

Verse 10 indicates that YHWH’s response to David’s desire to build a temple is not entirely negative. In accordance with Deuteronomy 12, YHWH (not David) ‘will appoint a place’. It is interesting to read Luke’s reflection on this scene as we find it in a speech made by Stephen to the Jewish council, when he was accused of speaking out against the temple (see Acts 7:44-50).

Our ancestors had the tent of testimony in the wilderness, as God directed when he spoke to Moses, ordering him to make it according to the pattern he had seen. Our ancestors in turn brought it in with Joshua when they dispossessed the nations that God drove out before our ancestors. And it was there until the time of David, who found favour with God and asked that he might find a dwelling place for the house of Jacob. But it was Solomon who built a house for him. Yet the Most High does not dwell in houses made with human hands; as the prophet says, ‘Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. What kind of house will you build for me, says the Lord, or what is the place of my rest? Did not my hand make all these things?’

¹Now when the king was sitting in his house, and YHWH had given him rest from all his enemies around him, ²he said to the prophet Nathan, “Here I sit in a house of cedar, while the ark of God sits in a tent.” ³Nathan said to the king, “Go, do all that you have in mind; for YHWH is with you.”

⁴But that same night the word of YHWH came to Nathan: ⁵Go and tell my servant David: Thus says YHWH: Are *you* the one to build *me* a house to live in? ⁶I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent, ⁷wherever I have moved about among the people of Israel. Did I ever speak a word with any of the tribal leaders of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, “Why have you not built me a house of cedar?”

⁸Now therefore thus you shall say to my servant David: Thus says YHWH of hosts: I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep to be prince over my people Israel; ⁹and I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth.

¹⁰And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may live in their own place, and be disturbed no more; and evildoers shall afflict them no more, as formerly, ¹¹from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies.

¹¹Moreover YHWH declares to you that YHWH will make you a house.

¹²When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come forth from your body, and I will establish his kingdom.

¹³He will build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. ¹⁴I will be a father to him, and he shall be a son to me. When he commits iniquity, I will punish him with a rod such as mortals use, with blows inflicted by human beings.

¹⁵But I will not take my steadfast love from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you.

¹⁶Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me; your throne shall be established forever.

¹⁷In accordance with all these words and with all this vision, Nathan spoke to David.

YHWH's words are not only for David personally. David is told that his 'house', his dynasty, is secured by God (verses 11-12). There will be failings (the Deuteronomists are all too aware of this), and these failings cannot go unpunished (verse 14). The punishment, however, will not include a rejection of David's family. What happened to Saul will not happen to David (verse 15).

In Nathan's oracle the Deuteronomists see the fulfilment of earlier promises. They also are preparing the readers for the accession of Solomon to the throne (see 1Kings 1-2), and to his building of the temple (1Kings 5-9). The repetition of the word 'forever'(verses 13 and 16), shows that, in spite of the fact that Jehoiachin, the last of the Davidic line to rule from Jerusalem, is in exile in Babylon, the Deuteronomists have not given up on the idea that David's dynasty will be restored.

It is this conviction that will lead to the Messianic hope, and, in the Newer Testament, the Jews who followed Jesus saw him as the fulfilment of this promise. The revelation to Mary concerning her son, Jesus, includes the words:

The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.

– Luke 1:32-33

The Chronicler (1Chronicles 17:1-15)

The Chronicler reproduces this passage. Note especially verse 14:

I will confirm him in my house and in my kingdom forever, and his throne shall be established forever.

Note 'my house' and 'my kingdom'. From verse 1, the Chronicler omits: 'and YHWH had given him rest from all his enemies around him'. Perhaps this is because there are still wars to be waged (see 2Samuel 8 and 12).

This prayer, presented as David's, is a prayer that sees any good that has come to Israel through the house of David, as being the work, not of any of the kings, but of YHWH himself.

Its authors know the failings of the kings and blame them for God's anger in bringing about the ravaging of Judah, the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, and the Babylonian exile.

Yet they are not blind to the good that has come from some of the exceptional kings, notably David himself, Hezekiah and Josiah, and they look forward to the coming of an anointed king of the house of David who would do God's will and so bring about the reign of YHWH in the holy land, and, indeed, to the ends of the earth.

Most of the kings have failed to live up to what was required of them, but YHWH has remained faithful. While praising and thanking YHWH for what he achieved through David, and for remaining faithful throughout the four hundred years of the rule of the house of David over Judah, the authors of the prayer, basing their faith on the fidelity of God, continue to hope that there will be a revival, and that with God's blessing 'the house of your servant will be blessed forever' (verse 29).

The Chronicler

David's prayer is repeated in 1Chronicles 17:16-27.

18Then King David went in and sat before YHWH, and said, "Who am I, my Lord YHWH, and what is my house, that you have brought me thus far? **19**And yet this was a small thing in your eyes, my Lord YHWH; you have spoken also of your servant's house for a great while to come. **20**And what more can David say to you, that you should honour your servant? For you know your servant, O Lord YHWH! **21**Because of your promise, and according to your own heart, you have wrought all this greatness, so that your servant may know it. **22**Therefore you are great, O Lord YHWH; for there is no one like you, and there is no God besides you, according to all that we have heard with our ears. **23**Who is like your people, like Israel? Is there another nation on earth whose God went to redeem it as a people, and to make a name for himself, doing great and awesome things for them, by driving out before his people nations and their gods? **24**And you established your people Israel for yourself to be your people forever; and you, YHWH, became their God. **25**And now, YHWH God, as for the word that you have spoken concerning your servant and concerning his house, confirm it forever; do as you have promised. **26**Thus your name will be magnified forever in the saying, 'YHWH of hosts is God over Israel'; and the house of your servant David will be established before you. **27**For you, YHWH of hosts, the God of Israel, have made this revelation to your servant, saying, 'I will build you a house'; therefore your servant has found courage to pray this prayer to you. **28**And now, O Lord YHWH, you are God, and your words are true, and you have promised this good thing to your servant; **29**now therefore may it please you to bless the house of your servant, so that it may continue forever before you; for you, my Lord YHWH, have spoken, and with your blessing will the house of your servant be blessed forever."

¹Some time afterward, David attacked the Philistines and subdued them; David took Metheg-ammah out of the hand of the Philistines.

²He also defeated the Moabites and, making them lie down on the ground, measured them off with a cord; he measured two lengths of cord for those who were to be put to death, and one length for those who were to be spared. And the Moabites became servants to David and brought tribute.

**³David also struck down King Hada-
dezer son of Rehob of Zobah, as he
went to restore his monument at the
river Euphrates. ⁴David took from
him a thousand chariots, seven
thousand horsemen, and twenty
thousand foot soldiers. David ham-
strung all the chariot horses, but left
enough for a hundred chariots.**

**⁵When the Arameans of Damascus
came to help King Hadadezer of
Zobah, David killed twenty-two
thousand of them. ⁶Then David put
garrisons among the Arameans of
Damascus; and the Arameans be-
came servants to David and brought
tribute. (YHWH gave victory to
David wherever he went.) ⁷David
took the gold shields that were car-
ried by the servants of Hadadezer,
and brought them to Jerusalem.**

**⁸From Betah and from Berothai,
towns of Hadadezer, King David
took a great amount of bronze.**

Prior to David the Philistines were the dominant power in Israel. 'David subdued them'(verse 1).

Samuel reminded the people how YHWH sold his people into the hand (among others) of the king of Moab (1Samuel 12:9). Saul fought against Moab (1Samuel 14:47). David, on the other hand, entrusted his parents into the keeping of the king of Moab (1Samuel 22:3-4). We are told here that the Moabites submitted to David and paid a tribute (verse 2). David exercised his right as the victor to kill two out of every three prisoners.

Saul, too, fought against Zobar, the leading Aramaean state before the rise of Damascus (1Samuel 14:47; see map page 77). 'Thousand' ('elep) represents a military unit of uncertain size. David's victory gives credence to the idea that his kingdom stretched

from the Euphrates to the land of
the Philistines, even to the border of
Egypt.

– 1Kings 4:21

David was victorious also over the Arameans of Damascus (see map page 77). The point of the Deuteronomists here is expressed in verse 6: 'YHWH gave victory to David wherever he went'.

The Chronicler (1Chronicles 18:1-8)

These verses are repeated by the Chronicler. Instead of 'Metheg-ammah'(verse 1) he has 'Gath'. As regards the Moabites, he restricts the account to the final sentence in verse 2. In verse 8 he has Tibhath and Cun in place of Betah and Berothai, and he adds to verse 8:

**with this Solomon made the bronze
Sea and the bronze pillars and
furnishings.**

– 1Chronicles 18:8

Even the king of Hamath (about 200ks north of Damascus) is concerned to be-friend David. His gifts are set aside by David for YHWH. We are told that David went on to conquer Edom to the south. The Deuteronomists repeat the earlier statement, attributing the victories to YHWH (verse 14; see 8:6).

The Chronicler (1Chronicles 18:9-13)

Verses 9-13 are repeated by the Chronicler in 1Chronicles 18:9-13. However the Chronicler gives the name of the son of Toi as 'Hadoram', not Joram. The equivalent of verse 13 reads:

Abishai son of Zeruiah defeated the Edomites.

– 1Chronicles 18:12

* * * * *

Joab, the son of David's older sister, Zeruiah, was first mentioned in 2Samuel 2:13. Jehoshaphat is mentioned again in 2Samuel 20:24. This is the first mention of Zadok, who is inserted into the priestly family (Ahitub was Eli's grandson, see 1Samuel 14:3). In Chronicles 6:3-8 he is a direct descendant of Aaron's son, Eleazar. On 'Abiathar son of Ahimelek' (see 1Samuel 22:20; the Hebrew text has them in reverse order). It is the first mention also of Seraiah and Benaiah. The Cherethites (from Crete?) and the Pelethites are David's personal bodyguard.

For a variant list see 20:23-26.

The Chronicler (1Chronicles 18:14-17)

Verses 15-18 are repeated by the Chronicler. He names the secretary as Shavsha. Where the authors of 2Samuel state 'David's sons were priests', the Chronicler states:

They held the first place at the king's side.

– 1Chronicles 18:17

⁹When King Toi of Hamath heard that David had defeated the whole army of Hadadezer, ¹⁰Toi sent his son Joram to King David, to greet him and to congratulate him because he had fought against Hadadezer and defeated him. Now Hadadezer had often been at war with Toi. Joram brought with him articles of silver, gold, and bronze; ¹¹these also King David dedicated to YHWH, together with the silver and gold that he dedicated from all the nations he subdued, ¹²from Edom, Moab, the Ammonites, the Philistines, Amalek, and from the spoil of King Hadadezer son of Rehob of Zobah. ¹³David erected a monument when he returned from his defeat of the Araeans.

Abishai, son of Zeruiah, defeated the Edomites in the Valley of Salt - eighteen thousand of them.

¹⁴David put garrisons in Edom; throughout all Edom he put garrisons, and all the Edomites became David's servants. YHWH gave victory to David wherever he went.

¹⁵So David reigned over all Israel; and David administered justice and equity to all his people. ¹⁶Joab son of Zeruiah was in charge of the army; Jehoshaphat son of Ahilud was recorder; ¹⁷Zadok son of Ahitub and Abiathar, son of Ahimelek, were priests; Seraiah was secretary; ¹⁸Benaiah son of Jehoiada was in charge of the Cherethites and the Pelethites; and David's sons were priests.

¹David asked, "Is there still anyone left of the house of Saul to whom I may show kindness for Jonathan's sake?" ²Now there was a servant of the house of Saul whose name was Ziba, and he was summoned to David. The king said to him, "Are you Ziba?" And he said, "At your service!" ³The king said, "Is there anyone remaining of the house of Saul to whom I may show the kindness of God?" Ziba said to the king, "There remains a son of Jonathan, a cripple" ⁴The king said to him, "Where is he?" Ziba said to the king, "He is in the house of Machir son of Ammiel, at Lo-debar." ⁵Then King David sent and had him brought from the house of Machir son of Ammiel, at Lo-debar. ⁶Meribbaal son of Jonathan son of Saul came to David, and fell on his face and did obeisance. David said, "Meribbaal!" He answered, "I am your servant." ⁷David said to him, "Do not be afraid, for I will show you kindness for the sake of your father Jonathan; I am going to restore to you all the property of your grandfather, Saul, and you yourself shall eat at my table always." ⁸He did obeisance and said, "What is your servant, that you should look upon a dead dog such as I?" ⁹Then the king summoned Saul's steward, Ziba, and said to him, "All that belonged to Saul and to his house I have given to your master's grandson. ¹⁰You and your sons and your servants shall till the land for him, and shall bring in the produce, so that your master's grandson may have food to eat; but your master's grandson Meribbaal shall always eat at my table." (Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants.) ¹¹Then Ziba said to the king, "According to all that my lord the king commands his servant, so your servant will do." Meribbaal ate at David's table, like one of the king's sons. ¹²Meribbaal had a young son whose name was Mica. And all who lived in Ziba's house became Mephibosheth's servants. ¹³Meribbaal lived in Jerusalem, for he always ate at the king's table. Now he was lame in both his feet.

It is clear from verse 1 that something terrible has happened to Saul's family (we will be told later; see 2Samuel 21:1-9). The only surviving member is Jonathan's son, Meribbaal (see 2Samuel 4:4).

Meribbaal is living in Lo-debar, east of the Jordan and north of the Jabbok, near Mahanaim, the residence of his uncle, Ishbaal (2Samuel 2:8).

In this narrative we see David's fidelity to the covenant he had with Jonathan (verse 7; see 1Samuel 18:3; 20:8, 16; 23:18). Having Jonathan's son, Meribbaal, and grandson, Mica, with him in Jerusalem would also serve to discourage rebellion from those who wanted the kingship to stay in the house of Saul.

The Chronicler

The Chronicler chose not to include this narrative.

The Israelite army defeats the Ammonites

There was a history of war between Saul and the Ammonite kingdom (see 1Samuel 10-12; summed up in 1Samuel 14:47). Nahash may have allied himself with David at that time (verse 2).

¹Some time afterward, the king of the Ammonites died, and his son Hanun succeeded him. ²David said, "I will deal loyally with Hanun son of Nahash, just as his father dealt loyally with me." So David sent envoys to console him concerning his father. When David's envoys came into the land of the Ammonites, ³the princes of the Ammonites said to their lord Hanun, "Do you really think that David is honouring your father just because he has sent messengers with condolences to you? Has not David sent his envoys to you to explore the city, to spy it out, and to overthrow it?" ⁴So Hanun seized David's envoys, shaved off half the beard of each, cut off their garments in the middle at their hips, and sent them away. ⁵When David was told, he sent to meet them, for the men were greatly ashamed. The king said, "Remain at Jericho until your beards have grown, and then return."

⁶When the Ammonites saw that they had become odious to David, they sent and hired the Arameans of Beth-rehob and the Arameans of Zobah, twenty thousand foot soldiers, as well as the king of Maacah, and the men of Tob, twelve thousand men. ⁷When David heard, he sent Joab and all the army with the warriors.

Beth-rehob lay at the southern foot of Mount Hermon. Tob was a small state in Transjordan, about 20ks southeast of the Sea of Galilee. Maacah occupied the Golan heights.

⁸The Ammonites came out and drew up in battle array at the entrance of the gate; but the Arameans of Zobah and of Rehob, and the men of Tob and Maacah, were by themselves in the open country. ⁹When Joab saw that the battle was set against him both in front and in the rear, he chose some of the picked men of Israel, and arrayed them against the Arameans; ¹⁰the rest of his men he put in the charge of his brother Abishai, and he arrayed them against the Ammonites. ¹¹He said, "If the Arameans are too strong for me, then you shall help me; but if the Ammonites are too strong for you, then I will come and help you. ¹²Be strong, and let us be courageous for the sake of our people, and for the cities of our God; and may YHWH do what seems good to him."

¹³So Joab and the people who were with him moved forward into battle against the Arameans; and they fled before him. ¹⁴When the Ammonites saw that the Arameans fled, they likewise fled before Abishai, and entered the city. Then Joab returned from fighting against the Ammonites, and came to Jerusalem.

The Chronicler (1Chronicles 19:1-15)

The Chronicler repeats the Deuteronomists' account.

The battle of Helam

¹⁵But when the Arameans saw that they had been defeated by Israel, they re-grouped. ¹⁶Hadadezer sent and brought out the Arameans who were beyond the Euphrates; and they came to Helam, with Shobach the commander of the army of Hadadezer at their head. ¹⁷When this was told David, he gathered all Israel together, and crossed the Jordan, and came to Helam.

The Arameans arrayed themselves against David and fought with him.

¹⁸They fled before Israel; and David killed of the Arameans seven hundred chariot teams, and forty thousand horsemen, and wounded Shobach the commander of their army, so that he died there.

¹⁹When all the kings who were servants of Hadadezer saw that they had been defeated by Israel, they sued for peace with Israel, and became subject to them. So the Arameans were afraid to help the Ammonites any more.

This is a separate campaign begun by the Arameans. We have encountered Hadadezer already (see 2Samuel 8:3-8). David's defeat of the Arameans means that the Ammonites cannot call on them in any future war with Israel.

The Chronicler (1Chronicles 19:16-19)

The Chronicler continues to follow the account found here in 2Samuel.