

# 1 Chronicles 14 Commentary

PREVIOUS

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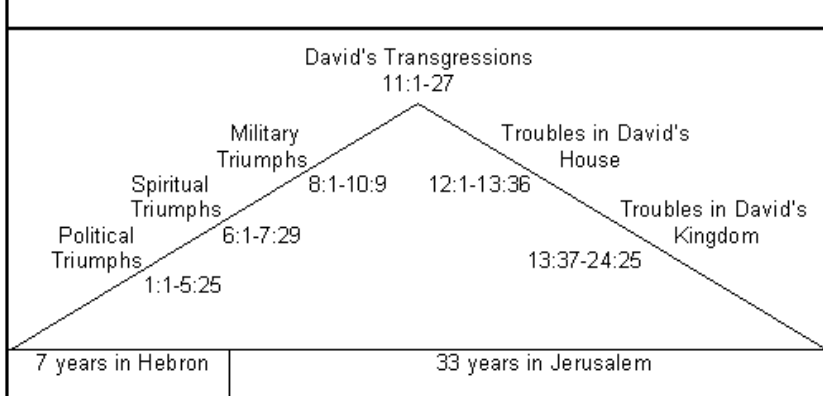
- 1 Chronicles 14:1
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## TIMELINE OF THE BOOKS OF SAMUEL, KINGS & CHRONICLES

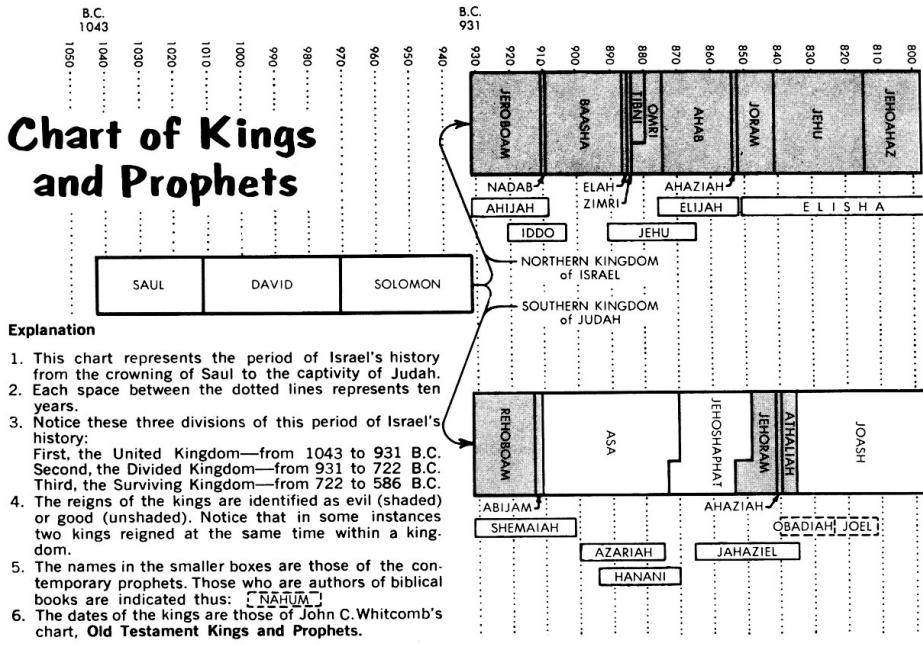
1107	1011				971	931	853	722	586
1 Samuel	2 Samuel				1 Kings	1 Kings	2 Kings		
31	1-4	5-10	11-20	21-24	1-11	12-22	1-17	18-25	
1 Chronicles 10		1Chr 11-19		1Chr 20-29	2 Chronicles 1-9	2 Chronicles 10-20	2 Chronicles 21-36		

**Legend:** B.C. dates at top of timeline are approximate. Note that 931 BC marks the division of the Kingdom into Southern Tribes (Judah and Benjamin) and Ten Northern Tribes. To avoid confusion be aware that **after the division** of the Kingdom in 931 BC, the Southern Kingdom is most often designated in Scripture as "**Judah**" and the Northern Kingdom as "**Israel**." Finally, note that 1 Chronicles 1-9 is not identified on the timeline because these chapters are records of genealogy.

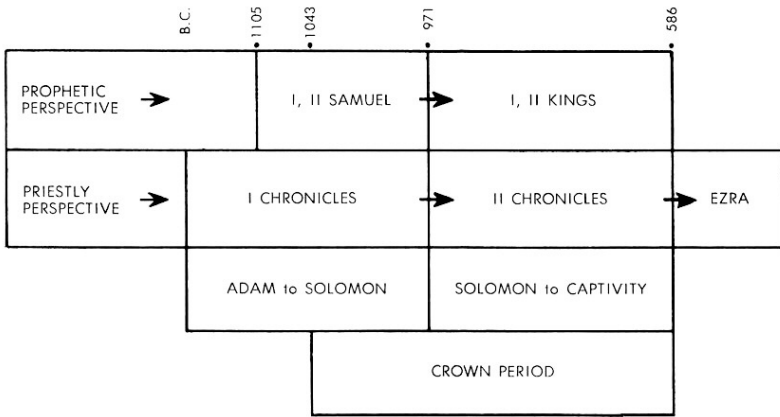
### Plot Development of 2 Samuel



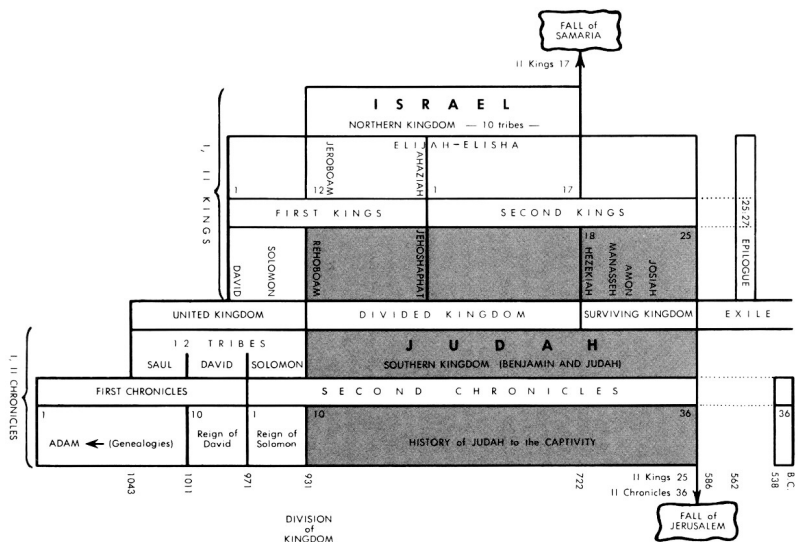
THE DOWNWARD SPIRAL



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Comparison of 1 Samuel thru 2 Chronicles



## FIRST CHRONICLES SUMMARY CHART

1 Chronicles 1-9:44	1 Chronicles 10:1-39:30
Royal Line of David	Reign of David
12 Tribes of David's Reign	Highlights of David's Reign

Genealogies	History
Ancestry	Activity
1000's of Years	Circa 33 Years

**1 Chronicles 14:1 Now Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David with cedar trees, masons and carpenters, to build a house for him.**

- B.C. 1043
- **Hiram** : 2Sa 5:11,12-16 1Ki 5:1,8-12 2Ch 2:11,12, Hiram
- **cedar** : 1Ch 22:2 1Ki 5:6,9,10,18 2Ch 2:3,8-10 Ezr 3:7
- **to build him** : 1Ch 17:1 2Sa 7:2 1Ki 7:1-12 Jer 22:13-15

**Related Passages:**

2 Samuel 5:11 Then Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David with cedar trees and carpenters and stonemasons; and they built a house for David.

1 Kings 5:1 Now Hiram king of Tyre sent his servants to Solomon, when he heard that they had anointed him king in place of his father, for Hiram had always been a friend of David.

Some think the events of this chapter preceded those of 1 Chronicles 13.

**Frederick Mabie:** This section of the Chronicler's work begins and ends with statements reflecting God's blessings on David both in Israel and in the surrounding nations (vv.2, 17). In between, the Chronicler details how God enabled David to defeat the Philistines, who had been in a position of power over Israel during the judges' time (cf. Jdg 13– 16), the time of Eli and Samuel (cf. 1Sa 4–7), and the reign of Saul (cf. 1Sa 8–31). This chapter is out of chronological order, perhaps as a means of contrasting the house of David and the house of Saul.

**J.A. Thompson:** The Chronicler presents a theological contrast between David and Saul. David, unlike Saul, was concerned for the ark (13:3). By incorporating indications of David's prosperity and success against the Philistines, the Chronicler demonstrated God's blessing on his servant for his faithfulness. By contrast, Saul's defeat because of his unfaithfulness (chap. 10) stresses the point. It is a theme that runs throughout Chronicles. The reigns of faithful kings are marked by divine blessing.

**Now Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David with cedar trees, masons and carpenters, to build a house for him-** Clearly David's influence had spread to other nations. No king simply sends these kind of gifts out of the goodness of his heart! More often he sends an army, rather than gifts! This was the beginning of a long and profitable relationship with Hiram, which continued into the time of Solomon (2 Chron 2:3–16). David and Hiram had a common enemy in the Philistines. Philistia battled with Israel on land and the Phoenicians at sea. One might propose the axiom - The enemy of my enemy is my friend.

**Apple** - The cedar logs supplied by Hiram (1 Chron 14:1) were from the Cedrus libani, trees renowned for their beauty and height, reaching as high as thirty meters. Kings of Mesopotamia, Phoenicia, Persia, and Greece all used cedar for building temples and palaces. The legendary cedar forests of Lebanon go back to the beginnings of written script (Daoud: 49–51). Cedar was particularly desirable for its fragrance.

**Frederick Mabie:** It is noteworthy that David accepts Phoenician assistance in the building of his palace (cf. Solomon in the building of Yahweh's temple [2Ch 2:3–16]). The Phoenicians were noted for supplying raw building materials and having the technical expertise to construct buildings and fabricate artistic objects with wood, metal, fabric, and stone. The area of Tyre (Phoenicia or Lebanon more broadly) was a well-known source for quality lumber such as cedar. In the biblical world the wood of the slow-growing cedar tree was especially desired for important building projects, such as palaces and temples, given its fragrance and durability. Phoenician stonemasons were skilled in both construction techniques and specialty craftsmanship, such as dressed masonry (ashlar) and carved basalt orthostats (e.g., lion figures shaped from stone).

**ISBE NOTE ON HIRAM** - (aka Hiram" "Horam") A king of Tyre (980-947 B.C.) who lived on most friendly terms with both David and Solomon. After David had taken the stronghold of Zion, entered into an alliance with and sent messengers and workmen and materials to build a palace for him at Jerusalem (2Sa5:11; 1Ch 14:1). Solomon, on his accession to the throne, made an alliance with Hiram, and Hiram furnished the new king of Israel with skilled workmen and with cedar trees and fir trees and algum trees from Lebanon for the building of the Temple. In return Solomon gave annually to Hiram large quantities of wheat and oil (1 Ki 5:1ff; 2 Ch 2:3ff) and Hiram took part in Solomon's traffic to the Eastern Seas (1Ki 9:27; 10:11; 2Ch 8:18; 9:10). "At the end of twenty years,

wherein Solomon had built the two houses, the house of Yahweh and the king's house," Solomon made a present to Hiram of twenty cities in the land of Galilee. Hiram was not at all pleased with these cities and contemptuously called them "**Cabul**." His displeasure, however, with this gift does not seem to have disturbed the amicable relations that had hitherto existed between the two kings, for subsequently Hiram sent to the king of Israel 120 talents of gold (1Ki 9:10-14). Hiram and Solomon maintained merchant vessels on the Mediterranean and shared mutually in a profitable trade with foreign ports (1Ki 10:22). Hiram's servants, "shipmen that had knowledge of the sea," taught the sailors of Solomon the route from Ezion-geber and Elath to Ophir, whence large stores of gold were brought to King Solomon (1Ki 9:26; 2Ch 8:17 f).

**Tyre** was a seaport on the Mediterranean Sea and lay north of Israel. Tyre was the capital of Phoenicia, which controlled about 150 miles of the Mediterranean coastline north of the Bay of Acre. Hiram established relations with David, which was an astute move economically and politically and it was this same King Hiram who later supplied Solomon with materials for the Temple (1Ki 5:1). At this time David clearly commanded the respect of kings in nations surrounding Israel. Hiram's offer of cedar trees must be understood in the context of the fact that this prized tree (see note below) once prevalent in Lebanon, was scarce by the time of David, making cedar wood quite prized! But not only did Hiram provide the supplies but also the laborers. In fact 1Ch 14:1 says Hiram's objective was "to build a house for him." That's a nice present to give a new king! This is surely one of the manifold manifestations of the good hand of the LORD upon His king after His own heart.

**Walton on cedar.** Cedar trees are slow growing and can live up to three thousand years and attain heights of 120 feet. Beautiful grain, sweet-smelling aroma and durability combined to make **cedar** the wood of choice for most temples and palaces of the ancient world. High resin content inhibited the growth of fungus. The forests of Lebanon on the west slope of the Lebanon range (at elevation levels of about five thousand feet) were one of the few places where it grew. Both Mesopotamia and Egypt were importing it beginning as early as the fourth millennium B.C. By the year 1000, there was little that remained of the legendary forests, making the rare wood all the more valuable. (See page 329 in [IVP Background Commentary - OT](#))

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**F. Whitfield** - The act of Hiram here in sending messengers to David with timber and masons and carpenters to build a house for himself, shows how David's influence had made itself felt far and near. We are furnished with the reason of this influence (see 1 Chronicles 11:9). It was because "the Lord was with him." Thus it ever is with the Christian: "The Lord is with him." Hence his influence. Christ in us is the mighty power for a holy life and for producing a permanent impression. Men like Hiram will pay homage to this, however morally distant they may be from conversion to God. And this is the power the true Christian should seek to possess, and the influence he should wield. "And David perceived that the Lord had confirmed him king over Israel, for his kingdom was lifted up on high, because of his people Israel. Observe the latter part of this passage. Kings are to remember why they are kings. It is on account of God's kingdom and God's people. When they forget their relation to God, God's people, and God's work, they forget their true mission in God's world. By me kings reign." The subject should never forget the relation in which he stands to God; how much less should the king forget it! -

**1 Chronicles 14:2 And David realized that the LORD had established him as king over Israel, and that his kingdom was highly exalted, for the sake of His people Israel.**

- **the LORD** : 1Ch 17:17 2Sa 7:16 Ps 89:20-37
- **his kingdom** : Nu 24:7 2Sa 7:8
- **because** : 1Ki 10:9 2Ch 2:11 Es 4:14 Isa 1:25-27 Da 2:30

**Related Passage:**

2 Samuel 7:16+ "Your house and your **kingdom** shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever."

**DAVID ACKNOWLEDGES  
HIS BOUNTY FROM YAHWEH**

**And** - This conjunction connects with the gift of a house from King Hiram. Clearly other kings recognized David's stature which is what opened David's eyes to the fact that it was not because he (David) was so good, but because his God was so good and generous.

**THOUGHT** - Are we quick to recognize the hand of blessing on our lives as not the result of our own doing, but the result of the [good hand of the LORD](#) upon our life? Perhaps the moment you (I) might bow and give Him thanks for the blessings in your (my) life.

**David realized that the LORD had established him as king over Israel, and that his kingdom was highly exalted, for the sake of His people Israel. David realized ([yada](#); Lxx - [ginosko](#)) that the LORD had established him as king over Israel, and that He had exalted his kingdom for the sake of His people Israel** - Not only was his kingdom highly exalted, but it was a kingdom that would endure forever (aka the "[Davidic Covenant](#)" - 2Sa 7:16+) when the greater Son of David, the Messiah, returns and sets up His Millennial Kingdom on earth (Jer 23:5 - "Righteous Branch" = Messiah) and reigns from Jerusalem with a resurrected David ruling under Him (see Jer 30:9+ and this is one reason Jesus is called **King of kings and Lord of lords** - Rev 19:16+). Note the reason God blessed David - **for the sake of His people Israel**

**THOUGHT** - Has God blessed you spiritually or financially? Who do you think that blessing is for...just yourself? Do you think (like I used to think) that I have worked hard and earned this!!! Wrong! God bestowed His rich blessings on you because He abounds in amazing grace (unmerited favor!). We are blessed to be a blessing! Who are you blessing today, this week, this month? We are to like "pipelines," empty conduits, through whom the Father pours our His grace, mercy, kindness, etc to others around us. When that happens others see our good (God) works and receive a proper opinion (glorify) of our Father in Heaven. His supernatural work in and through us is the visible evidence of the invisible God (Mt 5:16+).

David's realization reminds us of the words of James 1:17+ that "Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow." What had **David realized**? As he sat in "his city" he **realized** God was faithful, for almost 20 years earlier He had made David a promise that he would one day be king over Israel (1Sa 16:12-13+). Our God is a covenant keeping God, a promise keeping God (SeeWhy Study Covenant)! David also came to realize that Yahweh had not blessed him and his people because David was so good, but because He was so good and so faithful to also keep His covenant and promises He had made with Israel. David just happened to be the "instrument" in His hands by which Yahweh brought this into being!

**THOUGHT** - Dear believing reader, do you have food and shelter? Whether you live in a tent or a palace, you can know that ALL you have is from the good hand of the LORD. It is good to frequently pause during our busy days and through our Great High Priest Jesus "continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name. And do not neglect doing good and sharing, for with such sacrifices God is pleased." (Heb 13:15-16+, cf 1Th 5:18+, Ps 7:17+, Ps 9:1+, Ps 18:49+, Ps 30:12+, Ps 44:8+, Ps 50:14+, Ps 52:9+, Ps 54:6+, Ps 69:30+, Ps 92:1+, Ps 100:4+) What have you thanked your kind, generous Father for today?

**Mark Boda:** This is a reminder that Israel's royal house functioned as a mediatorial figure serving both as vice-regent of the Lord in Israel and on earth (Ps 2), but also as the one who ensured righteousness, justice, and even blessing for the people of God. Any exaltation for the human monarch found its source in the divine kingdom and was for the sake of the people he represented and served.

**Life Application Study Bible** ([borrow](#)) - Although the pagan kingdoms based their greatness on conquest, power, armies, and wealth, David knew that his greatness came only from God. To be great means keeping a close relationship with God personally and nationally. To do this, David had to keep his ambition under control. Although he was famous, successful, and well liked, he gave God first place in his life and served the people according to God's purposes. **Do you seek greatness from God or from people? In the drive for success, remember to keep your ambition under God's control.**

**August Konkell:** The construction of a palace, the recognition of the new state by a powerful neighboring kingdom, and the growth of a harem are all features of an established king. David knew that the LORD had established him as king over Israel and that his kingdom had been highly exalted for the sake of his people Israel (1 Chron 14:2). This kingdom belongs to God. To further demonstrate the point, the new king seeks divine guidance in military decisions (v. 10), which assures his victory in battle.

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**Guzik** - David knew two things that made his reign great. Every godly leader should know these two things well.

1. David knew that the LORD had established him as king over Israel: David knew that God called him and established him over Israel.
2. His kingdom was highly exalted for the sake of His people Israel: David knew God wanted to use him as a channel to bless His people. It was not for David's sake that he was lifted up, but for the sake of His people Israel.

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**Guzik** - David knew three things that made his reign great. Every godly leader should know these three things well.

1. **David knew that the LORD had established him as king over Israel:** David knew that God called him and established him

over Israel.

2. **He had exalted His kingdom:** David knew that the kingdom belonged to God – it was **His kingdom**.
3. **For the sake of His people Israel** David knew God wanted to use him as a channel to bless His people. It was not for David's sake that he was lifted up, but for the **sake of His people Israel**.

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**Realized** (03045) [yada](#) to know, to learn, to perceive, to discern, to experience, to confess, to consider, to know people relationally, to know how, to be skillful, to be made known, to make oneself known, to make to known. As noted below in several examples, the Septuagint translates yada often with the Greek verb [ginosko](#), which conveys the sense of to know by experience and/or to know intimately (as used in Mt 1:25KJV+ and ESV which says Joseph "knew her not" which the NAS paraphrases "kept her a virgin"). And many of the uses of **yada** also have this experiential emphasis as with the Greek [ginosko](#).

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The treaty between these two kings illustrates —

I. THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD IN THE EXALTATION OF A GOOD MAN.

II. THE INFLUENCE OF A GOOD MAN UPON OTHERS WHEN THUS EXALTED. Men pay homage to moral worth and holy life. This power every Christian may possess and wield.

III. THE DESIGN FOR WHICH GOD EXALTS A GOOD MAN ([2 Samuel 5:12](#)). Not for themselves, but for others are men enriched and honoured.

(J. Wolfendale.)

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**J P Lange -**

**Man throws down. God lifts up:**

1. Persons.
2. Societies.
3. Nations.

**Lifts up above:**

1. Distress.
  2. Opposition.
  3. Danger.
- 

**John Calvin** - David knew to what end God had exalted his reign: it was because of his people, Israel. David could easily have thought that God was making him prosper to maintain him as ruler over the kingdom. But to know the intention of God and to what end he does something takes far more prudence. David perceived that God was exalting him because of his people Israel. So David knew the reason why he was reigning. It was not for his personal profit but for the common salvation of all.

This is well worth noting, for we must always remember that it is not enough for us to recognize the blessings of God. We must also always use those properly. How? When God has brought us back from some illness, when he has saved us from some danger, we must realize that he does this so we might thank him and honor his name. Moreover, let us realize that we must apply everything we are granted to his service.

In sum, let us learn that, whenever God shows mercy to his people or to an individual member of the body, it is so that we will call on him and recognize him as the author of every good, then give ourselves to his service and dedicate all that we have to it.

On the other hand, when I see that God has set me apart for some service, I must realize that it is not because of me that he has prolonged my life but because he wants to use me in the service of his church. This is the prudence we should manifest whenever God favors us. Let us realize that these blessings are not to be useless but always think: God has preserved me so many times. I must, therefore, show that I am aware of this.

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**QUESTION - [What is the Davidic covenant?](#)**

**ANSWER** - The Davidic Covenant refers to God's promises to David through Nathan the prophet and is found in 2 Samuel 7 and later summarized in 1 Chronicles 17:11–14 and 2 Chronicles 6:16. This is an unconditional covenant made between God and David through which God promises David and Israel that the Messiah (Jesus Christ) would come from the lineage of David and the tribe of Judah and would establish a kingdom that would endure forever. The Davidic Covenant is unconditional because God does not place any conditions of obedience upon its fulfillment. The surety of the promises made rests solely on God's faithfulness and does not depend at all on David or Israel's obedience.

The Davidic Covenant centers on several key promises that are made to David. First, God reaffirms the promise of the land that He made in the first two covenants with Israel (the Abrahamic and Mosaic Covenants). This promise is seen in 2 Samuel 7:10, "I will provide a place for my people Israel and will plant them so that they can have a home of their own and no longer be disturbed. Wicked people will not oppress them anymore." God then promises that David's son will succeed him as king of Israel and that this son (Solomon) would build the temple. This promise is seen in 2 Samuel 7:12–13, "I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, your own flesh and blood, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my Name."

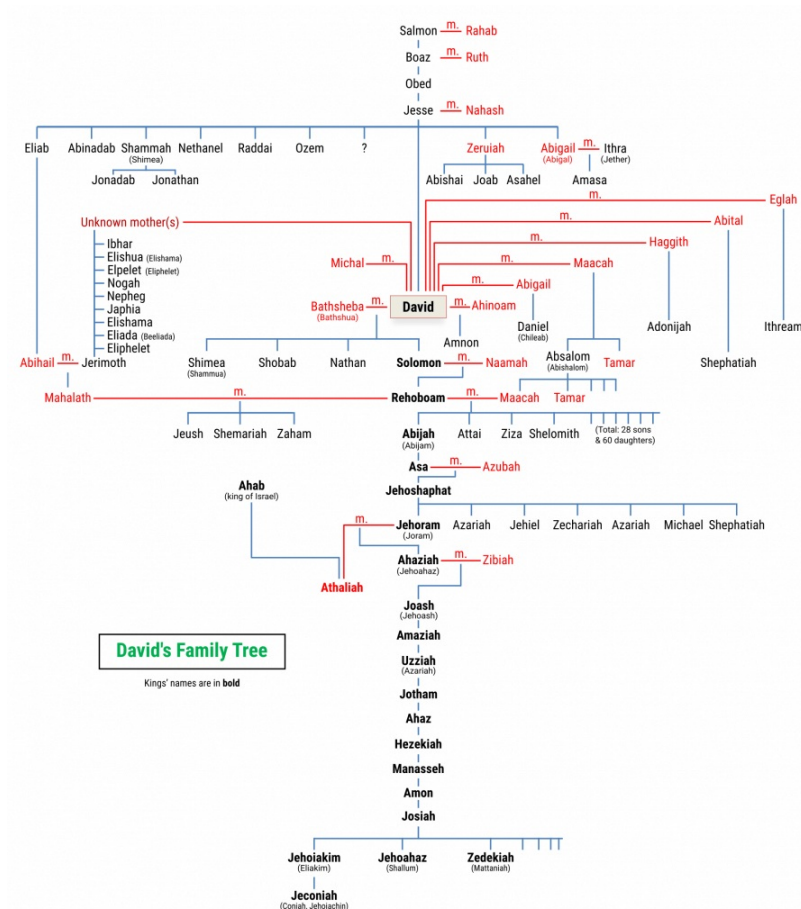
But then the promise continues and expands: "I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever" (verse 13), and "Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever" (verse 16). What began as a promise that David's son Solomon would be blessed and build the temple turns into something different—the promise of an everlasting kingdom. Another Son of David would rule forever and build a lasting House. This is a reference to the Messiah, Jesus Christ, called the Son of David in Matthew 21:9.

The promise that David's "house," "kingdom," and "throne" will be established forever is significant because it shows that the Messiah will come from the lineage of David and that He will establish a kingdom from which He will reign. The covenant is summarized by the words "house," promising a dynasty in the lineage of David; "kingdom," referring to a people who are governed by a king; "throne," emphasizing the authority of the king's rule; and "forever," emphasizing the eternal and unconditional nature of this promise to David and Israel.

Other references to the Davidic Covenant are found in Jeremiah 23:5; 30:9; Isaiah 9:7; 11:1; Luke 1:32, 69; Acts 13:34; and Revelation 3:7. [GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

**1 Chronicles 14:3 Then David took more wives at Jerusalem, and David became the father of more sons and daughters.**

- **took** : 1Ch 3:1-4 De 17:17 2Sa 5:13 1Ki 11:3 Pr 5:18,19 Ec 7:26-29 9:9 Mal 2:14 Mt 19:4,5,8



Click to Enlarge David's Family Tree  
Source: [Bibletales.online](http://Bibletales.online)

**DAVID SOWS THE SEEDS OF POLYGAMY**

**Then** - Expression of time. Marks progress in the narrative. What had God just done for David? Exalted him. It seems that this exaltation was not enough, for he wanted more women in his harem. Did God's exaltation morph (so to speak) in to personal pride ("Look what I have accomplished!")? That is certainly possible (as it is with all of us when we experience God's favor, especially favor that others can see).

**David took more wives at Jerusalem** - 2 Samuel 5:13+ has "Meanwhile David **took more concubines** and wives from Jerusalem, after he came from Hebron; and more sons and daughters were born to David." Sin is deceptive and attractive and destructive and progressive (if not quickly confessed) and it was all of these things in King David's life as see beginning in 2Sa 11:1-2ff.+ (See depiction of the effects/after-effects/sin in the [diagram above](#).)

**Wives** in the ancient near east were a sign of wealth and success and also a way to make political alliance. Hosea 8:7 says "For they sow the wind and they reap the whirlwind." The number of David's **wives** showed that David was willing to live a life of splendor of an ancient monarch, but the seed he as sowing was witnessed by Solomon, and David's lack of self-control in adding wives would reap sorrowful consequences for him. He would be shamed before the entire nation when Absalom lay with his concubines in fulfillment of prophecy (2Sa 12:11-12+, fulfilled 2Sa 16:21-22+). Solomon imitated David's sin which eventually led to his ruin and splitting of the Kingdom of Israel (1Ki 11:1-17). What is sad is that while David took more wives at Jerusalem, but more wives were not enough to satisfy his lust! In 2Sa 11:1-2+ we see that he looked at and lusted for Bathsheba and after adultery and murder of Uriah her husband, took one more wife in Jerusalem! 2Sa 11:27+ says "When the time of mourning was over, David sent and brought her (BATHSHEBA) to his house and she became his wife; then she bore him a son. **But the thing that David had done was evil in the sight of the LORD.**"

**David** is directly disobeyed the LORD'S clear instruction in Dt 17:17+ "He (THE KING OF ISRAEL) **shall not multiply wives for himself**, (HERE IS THE PROBLEM) or else **his heart will turn away**; nor shall he greatly increase silver and gold for himself."

**Thomas Constable:** The progress of revelation helps us understand this issue. Old Testament saints had revelation concerning the sin of polygamy (Gen. 2:24; Deut. 17:16-17). However, they did not have the added privilege and responsibility of the teachings of Jesus Christ and the apostles on this subject (Matt 5; 19; 1 Cor. 7; Eph. 5; Col. 3; 1 Tim. 3; Titus 1; Heb. 13; 1 Pet. 3). Greater privilege always results in greater responsibility. David's understanding of God's will was not as comprehensive as ours is, and consequently God did not hold him as culpable as He holds us in this particular matter.

**Guzik** has an interesting comment - Certainly, David (and everyone else) saw these many children as God's sign of blessing upon David and his many marriages (**ED:** cf Ps 127:3-4). Yet most of the trouble to come in David's life came from his relationships with women and problems with his children. **It is often true that the seeds to our future trouble are sown in times of great success and prosperity. In some ways, David handled trials better than success.**

**and David became the father of more sons and daughters** - The children born in Hebron were not mentioned because the focus of this account is on Jerusalem. As noted below David had 8 wives, 19 named sons, 1 named daughter and an unknown number of children by his concubines (the number of which is not known). In this aspect of numerous children, David transcended Saul, whose dynasty came to an end with the loss of his house (1Ch 10:6).

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#### **F B Meyer - Our Daily Homily - And David took him more wives out of Jerusalem.**

This is terribly disappointing! **According to the ideas of the surrounding nations, the greatness of a monarch was gauged by the extent of his harem.** But the law of Moses put severe restraint on the multiplication of wives, **"that his heart turn not away"** (Deuteronomy 17:17). It seems as though the soul of David sank into sensual indulgence and luxuriance. It lost much of its early hardihood and strength in consequence; and at this period of his life those seeds were sown, which in after years brought forth such a plentiful and terrible harvest of anguish, murder, and impurity in his family.

Few of us realize how much our character owes to the stern discipline to which God subjects us. The only way to keep us healthy and vigorous is to send us many a nipping frost, many a keen northern blast. The bleak hillside breeds stronger natures than the warm sheltered valley. The difference between Anglo-Saxon and Negro is largely wrought by temperature and soil. The campaign, with its strain on every power of endurance, trains better soldiers than the barracks. As David was a stronger, better man, when hunted like a coney in the rocks of Engedi, so are we braced to a nobler life, when all things seem against us.

Few of us can be trusted with unbroken happiness. God is compelled to withhold what the flesh craves. But where prosperity has shone on your path, be very careful not to abuse it. Consider it as indicating God's loving trust in you. He would rather convey His lesson in sunshine than in storm. But walk carefully and humbly, looking to Him constantly for daily grace, and never relaxing the girdle about the loin.

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## QUESTION - [Why did God allow polygamy / bigamy in the Bible?](#) ([Watch associated video](#))

**ANSWER** - The question of polygamy is interesting in that most people today view polygamy as immoral while the Bible nowhere explicitly condemns it. The first instance of polygamy/bigamy in the Bible is that of Lamech in Genesis 4:19: "Lamech married two women." Several prominent men in the Old Testament were polygamists. Abraham, Jacob, David, Solomon, and others all had multiple wives. Solomon had [700 wives and 300 concubines](#) (essentially wives of a lower status), according to 1 Kings 11:3. What are we to make of these instances of polygamy in the Old Testament? There are three questions that need to be answered: 1) Why did God allow polygamy in the Old Testament? 2) How does God view polygamy today? 3) Why did it change?

**1) Why did God allow polygamy in the Old Testament?** The Bible does not specifically say why God allowed polygamy, and we must remember that allowance is not the same as approval. As we speculate about God's permissive silence, there is at least one key factor to consider. In patriarchal societies, it was nearly impossible for an unmarried woman to provide for herself. Women were often uneducated and untrained. Women relied on their fathers, brothers, and husbands for provision and protection. Unmarried women were often subjected to prostitution and slavery.

So, God may have allowed polygamy to protect and provide for the women who otherwise may have been left destitute. A man would take multiple wives and serve as the provider and protector of all of them. While definitely not ideal, living in a polygamist household was far better than the alternative of prostitution, slavery, or starvation. In addition to the protection/provision factor, polygamy enabled a much faster expansion of humanity, fulfilling God's command to "be fruitful and increase in number; multiply on the earth" (Genesis 9:7).

**2) How does God view polygamy today?** Even while recording cases of polygamy, the Bible presents [monogamy](#) as the plan that conforms most closely to God's ideal for marriage. The Bible says that God's original intention was for one man to be married to only one woman: "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife [not wives], and they will become one flesh [not fleshes]" (Genesis 2:24). The consistent use of the singular in this verse should be noted. Later, in Deuteronomy 17:14–20, God says that the kings were not to multiply wives (or horses or gold). While this cannot be interpreted as a command that kings must be monogamous, it does indicate that having multiple wives causes problems. Such problems can be clearly seen in the life of Solomon (1 Kings 11:3–4).

In the New Testament, 1 Timothy 3:2, 12 and Titus 1:6 list being "the husband of one wife" as a qualification for spiritual leadership in the church. The phrase could literally be translated "a one-woman man." However broadly or narrowly that qualification should be applied, in no sense can a polygamist be considered a "one-woman man." Is the prohibition of polygamy only for elders and deacons, the "example-setters"? No, the standard of monogamy should apply to all Christians.

Ephesians 5:22–33 speaks of the relationship between husbands and wives. When referring to a husband (singular), the passage always also refers to a wife (singular). "For the husband is the head of the wife [singular]. . . . He who loves his wife [singular] loves himself. For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife [singular], and the two will become one flesh. . . . Each one of you also must love his wife [singular] as he loves himself, and the wife [singular] must respect her husband [singular]." Further, if polygamy were allowable, the illustration of Christ's relationship with [His Body](#) (the Church) falls apart (Ephesians 5:32). In Colossians 3:18–19, Paul refers to husbands and wives in the plural, but in that passage it is clear that he is addressing all the husbands and wives among the Colossian believers.

**3) Why did it change?** It is not so much that God disallowed something He had previously allowed as it is that God restored marriage to His original plan. As seen in Genesis 2, polygamy was not God's original intent. God seems to have allowed polygamy to solve a problem, but that solution was not the ideal. In most modern societies, there is absolutely no need for polygamy. In most cultures today, women are able to provide for and protect themselves—removing the only "positive" aspect of polygamy. Further, most modern nations outlaw polygamy. According to Romans 13:1–7, we are to obey the laws the government establishes, including laws prohibiting polygamy.

Are there some instances in which the allowance for polygamy would still apply today? Perhaps, but it is unfathomable that there would be no other solution. Due to the ["one flesh"](#) aspect of marriage, the need for oneness and harmony in marriage, and the lack of any real need for polygamy, it is our firm belief that polygamy does not honor God and is not His design for marriage. [GotQuestions.org](#)

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## QUESTION - [How many children did King David have?](#)

**ANSWER** - David had eight named wives, others unnamed, and an unknown number of concubines. From these unions, the Bible names nineteen sons and one daughter, Tamar (1 Chronicles 3:1–9). If we count the son who died in infancy after having been conceived through David's adulterous relationship with Bathsheba (2 Samuel 12:16–23), David had at least twenty-one children by

his wives, plus an unknown number by his many [concubines](#). These are the named children, plus a little information about each of them:

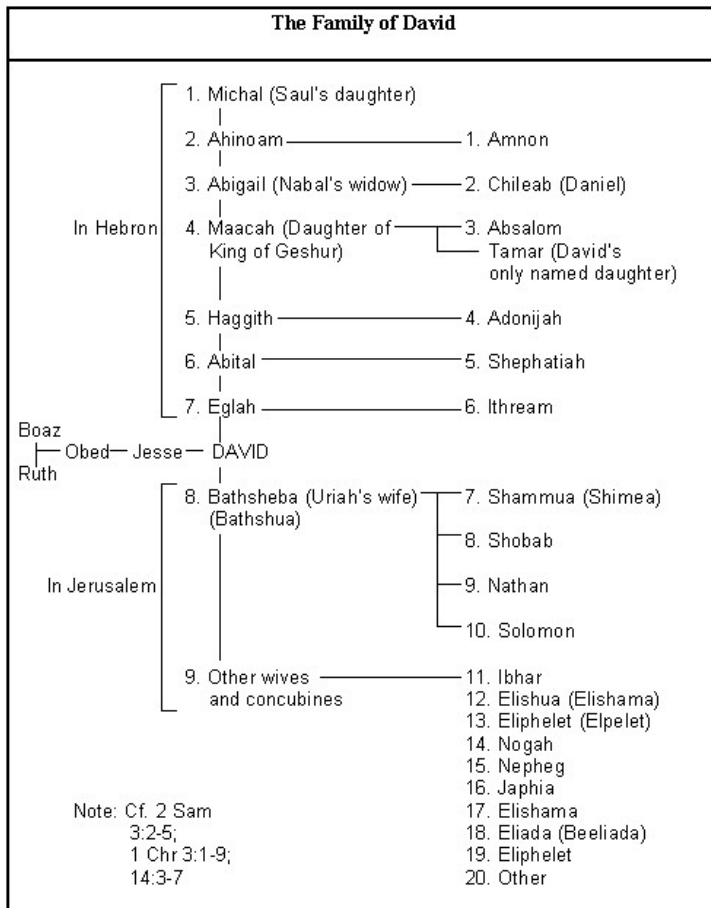
- 1) [Amnon](#). David's firstborn by his wife Ahinoam was a man of low character and driven by lust. He became obsessed with his half-sister Tamar (daughter of Maakah) and lured her to his room on false pretenses so he could rape her. He was later murdered in revenge by Tamar's full brother, Absalom (2 Samuel 13)
- 2) Daniel. Nothing is known of David's second son, born to his wife Abigail.
- 3) [Absalom](#). Third in line, Absalom is one of David's most notorious sons. A son of David's wife Maakah, Absalom was hot-tempered and power-hungry. He planned out the murder of his half-brother Amnon to avenge the rape of his sister, and then he plotted to steal his father's throne. He drew a following in Jerusalem, and David was forced to flee the city. To help complete his coup, Absalom had sex with David's concubines in view of everyone. He died in battle when [Joab](#), commander of David's army, killed him. See 2 Samuel 13—19.
- 4) [Adonijah](#). David's fourth son, by his wife Haggith, was handsome and undisciplined (1 Kings 1:6). He is known for a failed attempt to become king of Israel after his father died (1 Kings 1:9). Adonijah was eventually executed by his half-brother Solomon, the rightful king, for continued insurrection and attempts to steal the throne (1 Kings 2:23–25).
- 5) Shephatiah. Nothing is known of David's fifth son, born to his wife Abital.
- 6) Ithream. Nothing is known of this son by David's wife Eglah.
- 7) Shimea (Shammua). A son of Bathsheba, David's seventh son was born in Jerusalem, but nothing else is known about him.
- 8) Shobab. Another son of Bathsheba; nothing else is known about him.
- 9) Nathan. David's eighth son was also Bathsheba's, and nothing else is known of him. We can surmise that Nathan was named after the [prophet Nathan](#), who had a long-term association with David.
- 10) [Solomon](#) (also called Jedidiah). David's most famous son was also by Bathsheba. God chose Solomon to become the next king of Israel. God offered to grant Solomon anything he asked for. Solomon asked for wisdom to rule the people well (1 Kings 3:4–15). God was so pleased with Solomon's request that He granted the wisdom and also gave him unmatched wealth and a long life. Solomon was the author of most of the Proverbs, the Song of Solomon, and the book of Ecclesiastes.

David's remaining children were born in Jerusalem, but we don't know much else about them:

- 11) Ibhar
- 12) Elishama
- 13) Eliphelet
- 14) Nogah
- 15) Nepheg
- 16) Japhia
- 17) Elishama
- 18) Eliada
- 19) Eliphelet
- 20) [Tamar](#). We do not know Tamar's position in the birth order, but do know she was the daughter of Maakah. We are told of her rape at the hands of her half-brother Amnon and that afterwards she lived in isolation at her brother Absalom's house (2 Samuel 13:20).

David had a son named Jerimoth, who is mentioned in 2 Chronicles 11:18. It's not clear whether he is one of the sons mentioned above (using another name) or if he was one of David's sons by a concubine.

It is likely that David had many more sons and daughters who are not recorded in Scripture, as he had more wives and concubines than the ones who are identified (1 Chronicles 3:9). [GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)



**1 Chronicles 14:4** These are the names of the children born to him in Jerusalem: Shammua, Shobab, Nathan, Solomon,

- **Shammua** : 1Ch 3:5-9, Shimea, 2Sa 5:14, Shammuah
- **Nathan** : 2Sa 12:1 Lu 3:31
- **Solomon** : 1Ch 22:9-12 28:5,6 2Sa 12:24,25 1Ki 1:13,17 2:15 3:3,5-11 Mt 1:6

#### Related Passages:

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

**These are the names of the children born to him in Jerusalem: Shammua, Shobab, Nathan, Solomon**(see [David's family tree above](#) - one is more detailed)

#### QUESTION - [Who are the sons of David mentioned in the Bible?](#)

**ANSWER** - First Chronicles 3:1–9 lists the sons of [David](#). The list reads like this:

"These were the sons of David born to him in Hebron:

The firstborn was [Amnon](#) the son of [Ahinoam of Jezreel](#);

the second, Daniel the son of Abigail of Carmel;

the third, [Absalom](#) the son of Maacah daughter of Talmi king of Geshur;

the fourth, [Adonijah](#) the son of Haggith;

the fifth, Shephatiah the son of Abital;

and the sixth, Ithream, by his wife Eglah.

These six were born to David in Hebron, where he reigned seven years and six months.

David reigned in Jerusalem thirty-three years, and these were the children born to him there:

Shammua, Shobab, Nathan and [Solomon](#). These four were by Bathsheba daughter of Ammiel. There were also Ibhar, Elishua, Eliphelet, Nogah, Nepheg, Japhia, Elishama, Eliada and Eliphelet—nine in all. All these were the sons of David, besides his sons by his concubines. And Tamar was their sister."

Breaking down this list, we first have David's six sons born in Hebron: 1) Amnon, 2) Daniel, 3) Absalom, 4) Adonijah, 5) Shephatiah, and 6) Ithream.

Next, we have the thirteen sons born to David in Jerusalem: 7) Shimea, 8) Shobab, 9) Nathan, 10) Solomon, 11) Ibhar, 12) Elishama, 13) Eliphelet, 14) Nogah, 15) Nepheg, 16) Japhia, 17) Elishama, 18) Eliada, and 19) Eliphelet.

**In addition to the nineteen sons David had by his wives were a number of unnamed sons David fathered through his concubines.** He also had a daughter named Tamar. Another son named Jerimoth is mentioned in 2 Chronicles 11:18, although it is unclear whether he is one of the sons mentioned above (using another name) or one of David's sons by a concubine.

David also had a son with Bathsheba before she bore Solomon. This son died seven days after his birth (2 Samuel 12:16–23), and it is possible that he is not included in this list. If so, the sons of David with his wives would total at least 20. To that total we would add all the unnamed sons of his concubines.

At least three of David's sons died during David's lifetime. In addition to the death of Bathsheba's first son were the deaths of his sons Amnon and Absalom. Another son, Adonijah, was executed shortly after David's death for trying to usurp the throne (1 Kings 2:25).

David's son Solomon succeeded him as king and later built the temple of the Lord that David had dreamed of building. Ultimately, Jesus Christ was born as a descendant of David (Matthew 1:1), providing a fulfillment of prophecy and bestowing the greatest possible honor to King David.

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#### 1 Chronicles 14:5 Ibhar, Elishua, Elpelet,

- Elishua : 1Ch 3:6, Elishama ("my God has heard" "God of hearing"),, 2Sa 5:15

**Ibhar, Elishua, Elpelet** ("God is deliverance") - (see [David's family tree above](#))

**Believer's Study Bible** - Two additional sons, Elpelet (v. 5) and Nogah (v. 6), are listed among these children born to David in Jerusalem (cf. 2 Sam. 5:13-16). Their omission in the parallel account suggests that they may have died in infancy or youth and that no political significance was attached to them.

#### 1 Chronicles 14:6 Nogah, Nepheg, Japhia,

**Nogah, Nepheg, Japhia** (see [David's family tree above](#))

#### 1 Chronicles 14:7 Elishama, Beeliada and Eliphelet.

- Beeliada : Probably Beeliada is a mistake for Eliada, as the LXX., Syriac, and Arabic read here. 2Sa 5:16, Eliada
- and Eliphalet : 1Ch 3:8, Eliphelet, This variation merely arises from the change of a vowel. Here we have 13 persons mentioned, but only 11 in Samuel; and it is probable that the duplicate Elishama and Eliphelet dying when young, were therefore omitted in the latter.

**Elishama, Beeliada and Eliphelet** (see [David's family tree above](#))

**1 Chronicles 14:8 When the Philistines heard that David had been anointed king over all Israel, all the Philistines went up in search of David; and David heard of it and went out against them.**

- B.C. 1047, An, Ex, Is, 444
- **when** : 1Sa 21:11 2Sa 5:17-25
- **anointed** : 1Ch 11:3 2Sa 5:3
- **all the Philistines** : Ps 2:1-6 Rev 11:15-18

**Related Passage:**

2 Samuel 5:17 When the Philistines heard that they had anointed David king over Israel, all the Philistines went up to seek out David; and when David heard of it, he went down to the stronghold.

**PHILISTINE'S MOVE  
STIMULATES DAVID TO ATTACK**

**When the Philistines heard that David had been anointed king over all Israel - All Israel** means a united nation. David had been no great threat when the nation was divided, but an united Israel was a different matter. The Philistines hear the news of David's coronation and do not like what they hear! Can you imagine what must have gone through the mind of [Achish](#) (if he was still alive) of Gath, the city a younger fugitive David had sojourned in twice?

**THOUGHT** - What's the message for all of us? Be alert for attack when you experience God's hand of blessing/exaltation!!!

**all the Philistines went up in search of David; and David heard of it and went out against them.** First note the adjective **all**, which would suggest that there was a unified effort of all 5 Philistine city states. And recall the Philistines were still occupying the heartland of Israel as a result of Saul's defeat. So this "seeking" was not to have a peace conference with King David, but to instigate war with him. Presumably, they would have reasoned, "Let's attack him now before he becomes strong (although he was already being prospered by the LORD)."

**1 Chronicles 14:9 Now the Philistines had come and made a raid in the valley of Rephaim.**

- **the valley** : 1Ch 11:15 2Sa 5:18 23:13 Isa 17:5

**Related Passage:**

2 Samuel 5:18+ Now the Philistines came and spread themselves out in the valley of Rephaim.



**Now the Philistines had come and made a raid in the valley of Rephaim.** The valley of Rephaim (see map above and map [below](#)) is close to Jerusalem lying on the boundary between Judah and Benjamin (cf. Josh. 15:8; 18:16), and does not refer to the Baqa Valley, which was known by the same name but was far to the north on the east side of Jordan. The valley of Rephaim was the most direct approach to Jerusalem from Philistia. This valley is a battleground between David and the Philistines on more than one occasion (2Sa 5:18, 22; 2Sa 23:13; 1Ch 11:15; 14:9) probably because of its direct approach to Jerusalem.

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**Walton on Valley of Rephaim** ([SEE ALSO WIKIPEDIA](#)) - As the Sorek Valley moves eastward out of the Shephelah near Beth Shemesh, it breaks into several passes into the hills around Jerusalem. The Sorek Valley at one point turns northeast toward Gibeon, while the **Valley of Rephaim** turns east-southeast toward the area between Bethlehem and Jerusalem. It joins the north-south road from Jerusalem to Bethlehem and then heads northeast into Jerusalem. This would be a strategic location for the Philistines to cut David off from potential reinforcements from Judah. (See page 329 in [IVP Background Commentary - OT](#))

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**NAVE'S on VALLEY OF REPHAIM -**

- A fertile valley between Judah and Benjamin, Josh. 15:8; 18:16.
- Battle ground of David and the Philistines, 2Sa 5:18, 22; 23:13; 1Ch 11:15; 14:9.
- Productiveness of, Isa. 17:5.

**EASTON'S DICTIONARY - [VALLEY OF REPHAIM](#)** - (Josh. 15:8; 18:16, R.V.). When David became king over all Israel, the Philistines, judging that he would now become their uncompromising enemy, made a sudden attack upon Hebron, compelling David to retire from it. He sought refuge in "the hold" at Adullam (2 Sam. 5:17-22), and the Philistines took up their position in the valley of Rephaim, on the west and south-west of Jerusalem. Thus all communication between Bethlehem and Jerusalem was intercepted. While David and his army were encamped here, there occurred that incident narrated in 2 Sam. 23:15-17. Having obtained divine direction, David led his army against the Philistines, and gained a complete victory over them. The scene of this victory was afterwards called [Baal-perazim](#) (q.v.).

A second time, however, the Philistines rallied their forces in this valley (2 Sam. 5:22). Again warned by a divine oracle, David led his army to Gibeon, and attacked the Philistines from the south, inflicting on them another severe defeat, and chasing them with great slaughter to Gezer (q.v.). There David kept in check these enemies of Israel. This valley is now called el-Bukei'a.

**Wycliffe Bible Commentary** has a **good summary of chapters in First Chronicles which parallel chapters 5-10 in Second Samuel** writing that "2Sa 5-10 - 1 Chronicles 11:1-20:3 thus parallels and amplifies 2Sa 5-10 (omitting ch. 9, David's personal kindness to Mephibosheth). It describes his capture of Jerusalem, to become "the city of David," his political capital, together with his military supporters (1Chr 11:1-47, 1Chr 12:1-40). It recounts his winning of independence from the Philistines (1Chr 14:1-17) and his centralizing of worship by his installation of the ark in Jerusalem, which thus became Israel's religious capital as well (1Chr 13:1-14; 1Chr 15:1-29; 1Chr 16:1-43). It records the advance of his, armies, victorious in every direction (1Chr 18:1-17, 1Chr 19:1-19; 1Chr 20:1-8). The climax appears in God's prophecy through Nathan (1Chr 17:1-27): "I have been with thee whithersoever thou hast walked, and... I will subdue all thine enemies" (1Ch 17:8, 10). For this message of hope applies not only to David, but to "My people Israel.... for a great while to come" (1Chr 17:9, 17); to the struggling community of Ezra; to the church of that greater Son of David, of whom God said, "He shall be my Son" (1Chr 17:13); and to the kingdom, which is yet to be consummated, of the Messiah, whose "throne shall be established for evermore" (1Chr 17:14).

## Two Victories

David inquired of the Lord. —2 Samuel 5:19

King David was up against a familiar foe. Years before as a young shepherd boy, he had faced down Goliath, the top Philistine warrior, by killing him with a well-placed stone (1 Sam. 17). Now David was king of Israel, and here come the Philistines again! They heard he was king, and they decided to attack (2 Sam. 5:17).

What do we do first when trouble is on the way? We could panic. We could plan. Or we could first do what David did—pray. "David inquired of the Lord" (v.19), and God guided the king.

David had to fight two battles with the Philistines—one at Baal Perazim and one at the Valley of Rephaim. It was a good thing he consulted God, because in these two battles there were two different strategies. In the first one, God won the battle with His power alone: "The Lord has broken through," David recorded (v.20). For the next one, God gave David an action plan, and when he carried it out, the Israelites won (vv.23-25).

Each day we face many challenges. Although there is no one-size-fits-all answer, our first action should always be to consult God. As He guides us, we can have confidence in Him. Then, whether the victory comes through His miraculous intervention or through His guidance, all the glory goes to God.— by Dave Branon

### [Not to the strong is the battle.](#)

Not to the swift is the race;  
 Yet to the true and the faithful  
 Victory is promised through grace.  
 —Crosby

To stand up to any challenge, spend time on your knees.

**1 Chronicles 14:10** David inquired of God, saying, "Shall I go up against the Philistines? And will You give them into my hand?" Then the LORD said to him, "**Go up**, for I will give them into your hand."

- **inquired** : 1Ch 14:14 13:3 1Sa 23:2-4,9-12 2Sa 2:1 2Sa 5:19,23
- **Shall I go** : 1Sa 30:8 Pr 3:6
- **Go up** : Jdg 4:6,7 1Ki 22:6,15-17

#### Related Passages:

2 Samuel 2:1<sup>+</sup> Then it came about afterwards that **David inquired of the LORD**, saying, "Shall I go up to one of the cities of Judah?" And the LORD said to him, "**Go up.**" So David said, "Where shall I go up?" And He said, "To Hebron."

1 Samuel 23:2; 4<sup>+</sup> **So David inquired of the LORD**, saying, "Shall I go and attack these Philistines?" And the LORD said to David, "**Go and attack** the Philistines and deliver Keilah." 4 Then David inquired of the LORD once more. And the LORD answered him and said, "Arise, go down to Keilah, for I will give the Philistines into your hand."

1 Samuel 30:7; 8<sup>+</sup> Then David said to Abiathar the priest, the son of Ahimelech, "Please bring me the ephod." So Abiathar brought the ephod to David. 8 **David inquired of the LORD**, saying, "Shall I pursue this band? Shall I overtake them?" And He said to him, "**Pursue**, for you will surely overtake them, and you will surely rescue all."

Judges 4:6-7+ Now she sent and summoned Barak the son of Abinoam from Kedesh-naphtali, and said to him, "Behold, the LORD, the God of Israel, has commanded, 'Go and march to Mount Tabor (**MAN'S RESPONSIBILITY**), and take with you ten thousand men from the sons of Naphtali and from the sons of Zebulun. 7 'I will draw out to you Sisera (**GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY**), the commander of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his many troops to the river Kishon, and I will give him into your hand (**yad**) (**GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY**).'"

### DAVID'S "BATTLE PLAIN" SEEK GOD'S GUIDANCE

**David inquired of God** - How? The text does not say but recall he had previously called for the priest Abiathar to bring the ephod (1Sa 30:7-8<sup>+</sup>) and it is reasonable to assume that this may be how he inquired in this passage. What does David's seeking Yahweh show about David? Clearly it demonstrates that he is acknowledging that he is dependent on the LORD and is willing to humble himself and seek him instead of relying on his own clever plans. Again David gives us a great pattern to imitate when the Philistines are mustering against us! One is reminded of those great words in Zechariah 4:6 "'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' says [the LORD of hosts \(armies, Sabaoth\)](#)."

Note 2 inquiries and 2 answers in this section (1Ch 10:10,14). Does not this section encourage us to pray (especially with "attacked" by enemies from without and within)?

**Mabie** - David's seeking of God stands in sharp contrast to Saul, who either did not inquire of God (cf. 1Ch 10:13-14) or sought insight from pagan sources (cf. 1Sa 28:7-25). Moreover, the Chronicler illustrates that God brings success to David as "David did as God commanded him" (1Ch 14:16), an important spiritual lesson for the Chronicler's audience and God's people at all times

**Spurgeon** - Christian, if thou wouldst know the path of duty, take God for thy compass; if thou wouldst steer thy ship through the dark billows, put the tiller into the hand of the Almighty. Many a rock might be escaped if we would let our Father take the helm; many a shoal or quicksand we might well avoid if we would leave it to His sovereign will to choose and to command. The Puritan said, "As sure as ever a Christian carves for himself he'll cut his own fingers." "**I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go**" (Ps 32:8) is God's promise to His people. Let us, then, take all our perplexities to Him and say, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Leave not thy chamber this morning without inquiring of the Lord.

**Saying, "Shall I go up against the Philistines? And will You give them into my hand?"**- The Philistines were a formidable enemy, so instead of relying on his military skills, he seeks to rely on the LORD sage advice!

**THOUGHT** - David presents a good pattern for all of God's children to imitate, because we are always in spiritual warfare, and sometimes that warfare is especially intense and our adversary seems formidable and unconquerable! It is at times like that, that we need to run into the Strong Tower of our great God and seek His word and wisdom for what (and when) we are to do (cf Pr 18:10<sup>+</sup>). I love David's "song" in 1Ch 16:11+ which has become my goto verse in times of trial or affliction - "Seek the LORD and His strength; Seek His face

continually."

**Then the LORD said to him, "Go up, for I will give them into your hand (yad)** - God's Word clearly answered both of David's questions with two verbs, "go" and "give." To **give** into one's **hand** is the idiomatic way of saying God was going to **give** the Philistines into the power of Israel. Note that "**will**" often conveys a prophetic word as in this case and if God promises it, that settles it. It is as if the future tense verb could be translated as past tense because the outcome is absolutely certain. This is our sovereign, omnipotent God, beloved! Note once again the juxtaposition of God's power and David's responsibility, his "Let God, let's go" mindset!

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**Hand (03027) yad** meaning literally a hand and figuratively power or strength (translated "power" 44x, "strength" - 5x - both in NASB). The hand symbolized "power" or "strength" (Dt. 8:17). Dt. 32:36 described Israel's loss of power by saying "their hands were gone." Moses' hand was poignantly used to portray power in the plagues against Egypt (Exodus 10:12-25). The most notable use of this metaphor is its conveyance of God's power. 1Ch 29:12 declares that in Yahweh's hand is power and might (cf. Psalm 89:13). His hand is not "short" (or "weak") (Isaiah 59:1), but mighty. A predominant demonstration of his power was his deliverance of Israel from Egypt (Exodus 13:3-16; Numbers 33:3).

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**ILLUSTRATION** - The text, however, does not stress the diversity but the fact of Yahweh's guidance, primarily in its protective capacity. Nor is its vigilance limited to new kings and nascent kingdoms, for legions of kingdom servants remember being placed behind this protective shield. About 1545 in Montrose, Scotland, George Wishart, the mentor of John Knox, received a letter alleging to come from an intimate friend who had become suddenly ill and earnestly desired Wishart's presence at his death-bed. Wishart set out with a few friends but had scarcely gone a quarter of a mile before he stopped and abruptly announced, 'I am forbidden of God to go on this journey; will some of you be pleased to ride to yonder place [he pointed to a little hill], and see what you find, for I apprehend there is a plot laid against my life.' His scouts checked the hill and discovered some sixty horsemen concealed behind it, ready to seize Wishart. The 'friend's' letter had been a forgery of his eminence, the most bloody, treacherous Cardinal Beaton. In multiple ways Yahweh's guidance never ceases to secure his cause and his people. (Dale Ralph Davis - Ibid)

**1 Chronicles 14:11 So they came up to Baal-perazim, and David defeated them there; and David said, "God has broken through my enemies by my hand, like the breakthrough of waters." Therefore they named that place Baal-perazim.**

- **Baal perazim** : 2Sa 5:20 Isa 28:21
- **God** : Ps 18:13-15 44:3 144:1,10
- **like the breakthrough** : Ex 14:28 Job 30:14 Mt 7:27
- **Baal perazim** : that is, a place of breaches

## **GOD BREAKS THROUGH THE PHILISTINES**

**So they came up to Baal-perazim** - This name means "the Lord of breaking forth" and is a picture of waters breaking through a dam, even as David's troops broke through the Philistine ranks!

**and David defeated them there; and David said, "God has broken (parats) through my enemies by my hand, like the breakthrough of waters."** - Note the juxtaposition of Man's responsibility (**David defeated them**) and the LORD'S sovereignty (**God has broken through**) Not "Let go, let God," (passivity) but "Let God, let's go" (full dependence, active involvement). God's part, our part. (See NT parallel = [Paradoxical Principle of 100% Dependent and 100% Responsible](#)) David gives the glory to the LORD, not to his military maneuvering or expertise, another good pattern to [emulate](#)!

**Selman** - "God's 'breakout' in judgment (1 Chronicles 13:9-12) now becomes a 'breakout' in blessing for Israel as well as for Obed-Edom's household." The initial victory is understood as a divine break through comparable with an irresistible onrush of water (5:11), perhaps having in mind heavy rainfall in hilly country (Hertzberg) or "the breaking of a clay vessel full of water" (Tg.).

**Frederick Mabie**: As God did with Uzzah ("outburst" = [parats](#) in 1Ch 13:11), so God "breaks out" ([parats](#)) against the Philistines. In the same way that the place where God broke out against Uzzah is renamed "**Perez Uzzah**" (1Ch 13:11), so the name of the city where God breaks out against the Philistines is renamed "**Baal Perazim**" (v.11).

**Therefore they named that place Baal-perazim** Which means "Lord of the outbursts" or "the Lord of breaking forth." The name conveys the picture of flooding waters breaking through a dam, as David's troops broke through the Philistine assault.



**Dale Ralph Davis** - 'Baal-perazim' means 'lord of burstings out', commemorating the way Yahweh had broken down the Philistines. David compared Yahweh's activity to the way a massive torrent of water breaks down everything in its path. Just so Yahweh levels the opposition, and David names the site Smasherton. Micah 2:13<sup>+</sup> refers to 'the Breaker' (happōrēs) who will lead his remnant in breaking out of confinement into deliverance/freedom. I think the term refers to the Messiah. (Ibid) (**ED**: I THINK DAVIS IS CORRECT -- SEE STUDY OF [Christ The Breaker](#))

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**Broken** (06555) [parats](#) means to break through; burst out (qal); to spread abroad (niphil); to be broken down (pual); break loose (hitpa'el). The word (parats) could be used for breaking down the wall of a captured city (2 Kings 14:13). It was also used of divine anger breaking out against those who have offended God (Ex 19:22). It can also mean to urge someone to a particular course of action (1Sam. 28:23). It (parats) is a word which speaks of power that sweeps all obstacles before it, effectively undermining and demolishing all that would resist it. It is a presentation of the LORD as a warrior overthrowing His enemies (Isa. 42:13; Jer. 9:16–19). The idea of parats is break down the hedge, break down the wall, break through a barrier or retainer, break into the house of God, tear down the wall of Jerusalem. Parats described the breaking open of a barrel of water, the breaching of a wall during a siege or the bursting of a dam. In a military context parats referred to a sudden, violent, devastating attack.

**Parats** in 1Sa-2Chr - 1 Sam. 3:1; 1 Sam. 25:10; 1 Sam. 28:23; 2 Sam. 5:20; 2 Sam. 6:8; 2 Sam. 13:25; 2 Sam. 13:27; 2 Ki. 5:23; 2 Ki. 14:13; 1 Chr. 4:38; 1 Chr. 13:2; 1 Chr. 13:11; 1 Chr. 14:11; 1 Chr. 15:13; 2 Chr. 11:23; 2 Chr. 20:37; 2 Chr. 24:7; 2 Chr. 25:23; 2 Chr. 26:6; 2 Chr. 31:5; 2 Chr. 32:5;

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### **Bob Gass - Fresh Word for Today - Breakthrough!**

So he attacked them at Baal-Perazim and wiped them out. That is why the place has been known as ... "the place of breaking through." (1 Chronicles 14:11, TLB)

Never forget, everybody you meet is fighting a battle of some kind. They need a breakthrough! If you need one, too, look at what David did. The enemy had come against him in overwhelming force, but David did two things. First, he reminded himself that "the Lord had made him king" (1 Chronicles 14:2). Today remind yourself whose child you are, whose Spirit lives within you, and on whose word you're standing. God didn't make only David a king—He made you one, too, so don't let the enemy push you around. (See Revelation 12:11.)

Next, David inquired of the Lord, "Shall I go up against the Philistines?" (1 Chronicles 14:14). Have you talked it over with the Lord? Did you stay in His presence long enough to hear what He had to say? God doesn't respond to your need, He responds to your obedience! When you've obeyed Him—you're invincible!

What happened next is a key for you! David said, "God hath used me to sweep away my enemy" (1 Chronicles 14:11). Sometimes God will do it for you; other times He'll use you to do it! That's why you must hear from Him before you move. He'll provide the harvest, but you have to plant the seed. You can't do God's part, and He won't do yours! It's not a question of just doing something, it's a matter of doing what He tells you to do.

THE MOMENT YOU DO, YOU'RE ON THE THRESHOLD OF "A BREAKTHROUGH," AND THAT'S JUST WHAT GOD HAS IN MIND FOR YOU TODAY!

**1 Chronicles 14:12 They abandoned their gods there; so David gave the order and they were burned with fire.**

- **were burned** : Ex 12:12 32:20 De 7:5,25 1Sa 5:2-6 2Ki 19:18

### **FUTILITY & FATE OF IDOLS**

**They abandoned their gods there; so David gave the order and they were burned with fire-** In 2Sa 5:21+ we read "They abandoned their idols there, so David and his men carried them away." Apparently the Philistines took their idols (cf. 1Sa 31:9<sup>+</sup>) into battle thinking this would give them power over the Israelites, (cf. Israelites had done same thing with Ark of God 1Sa 4:3-4<sup>+</sup>), but they discovered that their lifeless idols were powerless and of no assistance in war with David and His God, so they left them behind and the Hebrews "confiscated them" (NLT). The 2Sa 5:21 passage leaves a false impression that David's men might have taken them back home to place them in their trophy cases, but this clearly states David ordered them to be **burned with fire**. With these orders David is fulfilling the commands in Deut. 7:5,25<sup>+</sup> and Deut 12:3<sup>+</sup>.

**THOUGHT** - There is an implied principle in David's orders regarding the confiscated idols - burn them! Does this not apply to those idols with which the world seeks to ensnare us? If we are not careful those things we think we possess may end up possessing us. If we sense that is happening with anything that is beginning to replace God in our heart, we need to "burn them," (in some way remove them from our heart, which may look different for different idols).

**Spurgeon** - The Philistines brought their gods with them, in the hope of being thereby defended; but "David and his men burned them." That was the very best thing to do with them. What a pity they did not save them for aesthetic purposes! Thus do men with fine old works of art, like pictures of the Virgin Mary. No, no, burn them; for that is the very best thing to do with anything that ever has been worshipped of mortal man. If they have ever been set up in the place of God, they are cursed from that moment, let them be burned, or dashed in pieces, or in some way destroyed. "There they left their images, and David and his men burned them."

**Walton** has an interesting background note on **abandoned their idols** - s. Nearly every army in the ancient Near East included priests and diviners (as seen in the Mari texts), prophets (2 Kings 3) and portable sacred objects (Assyrian Annals of Shalmaneser III [858-824 B.C.]). In this way, the god(s) could be consulted on the battlefield or invoked to lead the soldiers to victory. In the divine warrior motif, the deity is fighting the battles and defeating the deities of the enemy. In most situations prayers would be made and omens asked to assure the god's presence. The idols would only be abandoned under the most critical circumstances. There are several cases in the ancient world of statues of a god being carried off as trophies of war. For examples see [comment](#) on 1 Samuel 5:2. (See page 329 in [IVP Background Commentary - OT](#))

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## James Butler - [Sermon Starters](#) - THE TACTICS OF TEMPTATION

"The Philistines yet again spread themselves abroad in the valley" (1 Chronicles 14:13).

The Philistines were the enemy of Israel. They wanted to destroy Israel. Like the modern-day Arabs, they wanted Israel out of the land and were always attacking them and without justified reason. When David became king, they attacked Israel. Our text for this sermonette speaks of one of those attacks. Many lessons can be learned from the Philistines' actions. We focus here on the lesson of temptation which is seen in this attack.

### FIRST—THE PERSISTENCY OF TEMPTATION

"Yet again." Though they were defeated in the previous attack (1 Chronicles 14:9–12), yet the Philistines returned to attack again. So it is with temptation. We may defeat a temptation and be rid of it for awhile, but it will be back to work on us again and again. Even with Christ, temptation and the devil "departed from him [but] for a season" (Luke 4:13) Evil does not give up quickly; therefore, we must be persistent in keeping up our guard against evil and in battling evil.

### SECOND—THE PLENTIFULNESS OF TEMPTATION

"Spread themselves." The Philistines would fill as much of the land as they could with their armies. Temptation does the same. It likes to fill every nook and cranny of our life so no matter which way we turn we are confronted with some sort of temptation. "Be filled with the Spirit" (Ephesians 5:18) will help to defeat and eliminate temptation in many areas of our life.

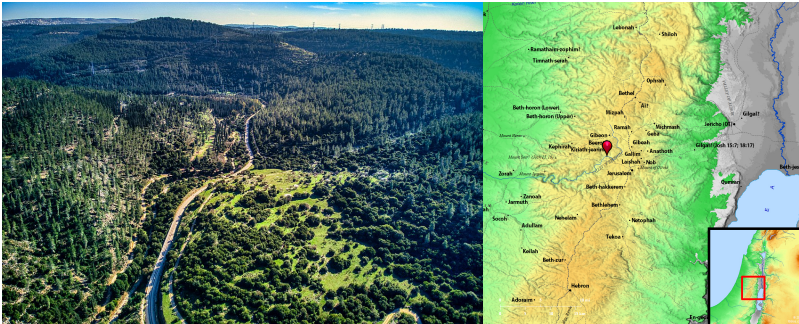
### THIRD—THE PERCEPTION OF TEMPTATION

"Spread themselves." The Hebrew language here means to expand. What the Philistines tried to do (which many armies tried to do then) was to make it appear they were more in number than they really were. This clever tactic was to cower the Israelites into surrender. Temptation likes to do the same. It likes to say that everyone is doing it so why should we not do it. Temptation would try to give itself a much more impressive appearance than it really is. All sin is like that. It inflates the blessings and its recommendation of evil until it is "spread" throughout society in popularity.

### FOURTH—THE PLACE OF TEMPTATION

"In the valley." The valley speaks of the down times in our life. The valley speaks of our time of discouragement, depression, despair, and doubt. This is a favorite place for temptation to "spread" itself. In the valley of life we are tempted to throw in the towel and give up. This makes it a fertile ground for temptation to grow and be effective. The enemy knows when and where to attack. He knows when and where we are at our weakest and when and where we are the most vulnerable. But when in the valley, keep your eye focused on the Lord and appeal to Him for help. This is what David did and this is how he overcame the pesky Philistines when they attacked in the valley.

- yet: 1Ch 14:9 2Sa 5:22-25 1Ki 20:22



Valley of Rephaim

**The Philistines made yet another raid in the valley** (of Rephaim). The Philistines launch a second offensive at the same location, although the interval of time between the two attacks is not specified. If at first you don't succeed try again. One wonders if they brought different idols with them this time?!

**1 Chronicles 14:14 David inquired again of God, and God said to him, "You shall not go up after them; circle around behind them and come at them in front of the balsam trees.**

- **inquired** : 1Ch 14:10 Ps 27:4
- **turn away** : Jos 8:2-7 Joh 9:6,7

### DAVID CONSULTS HIS COMMANDING OFFICER

**David inquired again of God,**- This is a fascinating verse, because it would have been so easy to think that he has already spoken to the LORD and had gained a victory, so surely He would give another victory! In war good communication is essential, and cutting an enemies lines of communication can be the key to victory. Praise God that the lines of communication can never be cut between us and our commanding Officer, the LORD Almighty.

**THOUGHT** - There is a good lesson for all of us in David's second inquiry! He did not trust in self, but was willing to wait on the LORD even though he had experienced victory. This is a variation on Paul's command to "**Pray** (present imperative see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) without ceasing." (1Th 5:17+). One only wishes that David had prayed before he took another wife!

**and God said to him, "You shall not go up after them; circle around behind them and come at them in front of the balsam trees** - The LORD gives what might seem like an unusual strategy, but David obeys. Notice this answer is not a "Yes" or "No" reply from the LORD, but is a specific set of instructions. This would suggest that this was not obtained by use of the ephod, but by some other means, either dreams or a prophet.

**NET NOTE** - 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.

**Spurgeon - Morning and Evening - "And David enquired of the Lord."** —2 Samuel 5:23, 1 Chronicles 14:14

When David made this enquiry he had just fought the Philistines, and gained a signal victory. The Philistines came up in great hosts, but, by the help of God, David had easily put them to flight. Note, however, that when they came a second time, David did not go up to fight them without enquiring of the Lord. Once he had been victorious, and he might have said, as many have in other cases, "I shall be victorious again; I may rest quite sure that if I have conquered once I shall triumph yet again. Wherefore should I tarry to seek at the Lord's hands?" Not so, David. He had gained one battle by the strength of the Lord; he would not venture upon another until he had ensured the same. He enquired, "Shall I go up against them?" He waited until God's sign was given. Learn from David to take no step without God. Christian, if thou wouldst know the path of duty, take God for thy compass; if thou wouldst steer thy ship through the dark billows, put the tiller into the hand of the Almighty. Many a rock might be escaped, if we would let our Father take the helm; many a shoal or quicksand we might well avoid, if we would leave to his sovereign will to choose and to command. The Puritan said, "As sure as ever a Christian carves for himself, he'll cut his own fingers;" this is a great truth. Said another old

divine, "He that goes before the cloud of God's providence goes on a fool's errand;" and so he does. We must mark God's providence leading us; and if providence tarries, tarry till providence comes. He who goes before providence, will be very glad to run back again. "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go," is God's promise to his people. Let us, then, take all our perplexities to him, and say, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Leave not thy chamber this morning without enquiring of the Lord.

**John Calvin** - There was a reason why God commanded David to go behind his enemies and not to attack them directly. For our faith must be proved in various ways, and if David had always conquered his enemies in one way, he would not have been so keenly aware of the help of God. There was another benefit in David's recognizing that God could smite his enemies both from the back and from the front. He could punish them one way now, and another way later, thereby cleverly surprising them. When one means fails us, God has more than a million more in his hand to offer us. That is what David recognized. Likewise, let us carefully recognize that when God uses different methods that we do not understand with our own minds, we must humble ourselves and adore his wisdom. When he is hidden from us and we cannot see the reason why he acts as he does, we must turn everything over to him and accept as good everything that he declares to be his will. This is how the foolishness of God overcomes the wisdom of the world ([1 Cor. 1:25](#)). When we cannot understand why God does something, we show arrogance in our nature when we presume to be his judges and boldly condemn him. Men have tried all sorts of trickery to find ways to contradict God, but they only remain confounded. Well, then, that is the point: God takes care of his people in such strange ways that we cannot understand why he uses various approaches. But when God's way seems foolish to us, let us learn to receive with deep sobriety and reverence what we know has proceeded from him.

**1 Chronicles 14:15 "It shall be when you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the balsam trees, then you shall go out to battle, for God will have gone out before you to strike the army of the Philistines."**

- when thou shalt hear : Some, taking the word {bechaim,} translated "mulberry trees," as a proper name, render, "when thou shalt hear a sound of going upon the summits of Bechaim;" other understanding {rosh,} "a top," in the sense of beginning or entrance, read, "when thou hearest a sound of footsteps at the entrance of the grove of mulberry trees;" and others think a rustling among the leaves is intended. The Targumist read, "When thou shalt hear the sound of the angels coming to thy assistance, then go out to battle; for an angel is sent from the presence of God, that he may render thy way prosperous." If there had not been an evident supernatural interference, David might have thought that the {ruse de guerre} which he had used, was the cause of his victory. Lev 26:36 2Ki 7:6 19:7 Ac 2:2
- then thou : Jud 4:14 7:9,15 1Sa 14:9-22 Php 2:12,13
- for God : Isa 13:4 45:1,2 Mic 2:12,13

## LISTEN FOR THE SUPERNATURAL SOUND

**It shall be when you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the balsam trees**, What a beautiful metaphorical description, depicting the tops of balsam trees as marching. It is as if God has His army anywhere and everywhere, ever ready to spring into action to aid his saints.

**THOUGHT** - God's sending help when David cried out reminds me of [Hebrews 2:18+](#) which says "since He Himself (JESUS) was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is ([dunamai](#) in [present tense](#) - continually) able to **come to the aid** of those who are ([present tense](#) - continually being) tempted (TESTED)." A critical part of this verse is the verb **come to the aid**, the Greek verb [boetheo](#), which means to run to give aid upon hearing the cry or call for help! Can you see the implication? When the temptation (test) is attacking us, we need to cry out to Jesus, Who continually has the supernatural ability (able [dunamai](#) in [present tense](#)) to run to our aid! So...[Cry out!](#)

**Another THOUGHT** - "There was a place for waiting, but a place also for action." (Baldwin) Today every believer in Christ must wait for and then obey the moving of the Holy Spirit with vigor. Do I have ears to hear and a heart to obey when I hear the Lord's **the sound of marching in the tops of the balsam trees**? [See Henry Blackaby on joining God](#) when He is moving.

"When you hear and see evidence of God moving out, rouse yourself, and join Him. One of my prayers for 2023 is that God would open up my ears to hear the sound of His marching so that I can join him. For most of my life, I've done the opposite. I've assumed it's my responsibility to fix everything, and seek his help. No, that's his job. My job is to join him 5 in what he's doing. At the end of

the day, your greatest Strategy for Success = Submission." ([J D Greear](#))

**Guzik** makes a good point - After the first victory over the Philistines, David was wise enough to wait on the LORD before the second battle. It is easy for many in the same situation to say, "I've fought this battle before. I know how to win. This will be easy." *David always triumphed when he sought and obeyed God.* In his commentary on this passage, Adam Clarke noted the remarkable guidance of God in David's life and asked a good question. "*How is it that such supernatural directions and assistances are not communicated now? Because they are not asked for; and they are not asked for because they are not expected; and they are not expected because men have not faith; and they have not faith because they are under a refined spirit of atheism, and have no spiritual intercourse with their Maker.*"

**F B Meyer** - "It was not merely a fitful breeze stealing through the leaves; it was not the going of the wind; but of angel squadrons who were proceeding against the enemies of Israel."

**Spurgeon** on **sound of marching in the tops of the balsam trees** - "As the Rabbis have it, and it is a very pretty conceit if it be true, the footsteps of angels walking along the tops of the mulberry trees make them rustle; that was the sign for them to fight, when God's cherubim were going with them, when they should come, who can walk through the clouds and fly through the air, led by the great Captain himself, walking along the mulberry trees, and so make a rustle by their celestial footsteps."

**Then** - This [time phrase](#) always begs the question "**When?**" Sometimes the answer is very obvious as in this passage, but it is still worth pausing to ponder. The answer is **when** you hear the supernatural sound. **Then...**move out!

**Andrew Hill** - . Instead of meeting the enemy in a head-on clash, David is instructed to entrap the enemy by circling around the Philistine army. The divine signal for engaging the enemy is most unusual, as David and his army are cautioned to wait for the "sound of marching" in the treetops before attacking (1Ch 14:15). The rustling of the leaves in the trees is most likely the Spirit of God, since David is told God will go before him in battle. The noise, perhaps akin to soldiers' feet rushing into battle, is designed to confuse the Philistine army (cf. 2 Kings 7:6). David and the Israelites rout the Philistines and drive them in a northwesterly direction away from Jerusalem through Gibeon (or Gibeah?; cf. "Geba" in 2 Sam. 5:25) to Gezer (1 Chron. 14:16).

**Selman** thinks it was "An army of angels would move ahead of David's and strike the Philistines. David could not see the angelic force, but he would hear them as they marched above the balsam treetops."

**You shall go out to battle** - When God gives this sign to move out, you need to move out immediately!

**Guzik** - At the signal that the LORD was at work, David and his troops rushed forward to victory. This principle is true in our everyday walk with God. When we sense that the Lord is at work, we must **advance quickly**, and we will see a great victory won. "We must also, in the spiritual warfare, observe and obey the motions of the Spirit, when He setteth up His standard; for those are the sounds of God's goings, the footsteps of his anointed." (Trapp) There is something wonderful about the King James Version translation of 2 Samuel 5:24: *When thou hearest the sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees, that then thou shalt bestir thyself.* When you hear the work of God happening, *bestir thyself—advance quickly.* **Spurgeon** liked to point out that it said *bestir thyself*—often we think we must stir others up. That often just becomes hype and emotionalism. Instead, stir yourself.. When we see the work of God happening around us, it is like the sound in the mulberry trees – the rustling sound should awaken us to prayer and devotion. A time of crisis or tragedy is also like the sound in the mulberry trees – the rustling sound should awaken us to confession and repentance. "Now, what should I do? The first thing I will do is, I will bestir myself. But how shall I do it? Why, I will go home this day, and I will wrestle in prayer more earnestly than I have been wont to do that God will bless the minister, and multiply the church." (Spurgeon)

**for** ([term of explanation](#) - explaining why you need to move fast) **God will have gone out before you to strike the army of the Philistines - Will have gone out** is past tense (ESV = "has gone out"), so sure is His going out to strike the enemy. So the tops of the balsam trees may have been marching, but ultimately it was Yahweh Himself Who led the strike against the Philistines!

**THOUGHT** - Note the juxtaposition of God's part (in this verse) and man's part (described in the next verse). This pattern is repeated throughout the Scripture and describes God's sovereignty and man's responsibility. It is not the aberrant teaching in the popular phrase "Let go, let God," but is more accurately (as David discovered), "Let God, let's go!" Yes, the battle is the Lord's, but He calls His people to fight. No passive soldiers in the LORD'S army!

**Dale Ralph Davis** on the LORD gone out (yasa/yatsa) - The verb 'to go out/forth' (yāšā') is a very common one but frequently refers to going into or leading into battle (see 2Sa 5:2). (Preuss, TDOT, 6:229, claims it is used more than 120 times in this sense.) For example, when Deborah ordered Barak into battle against Sisera's hordes she exclaimed, 'Has not Yahweh gone out (yāšā') before you?' (Jdg 4:14). That is, the divine captain had entered combat and his people had only to follow. So here in verse 24 Yahweh styles Himself as the Warrior Who plunges into battle and knocks off the Philistines. Note what vigorous images the text gives us of

Yahweh's power: the Leveler and the Warrior. Contemporary Christians must not tone these down, for the text means to impress us with the fact that we do not have a namby-pamby godlet who is house-broken in line with our canon of conceivability. (People abandon gods like that, and they're carried off to the landfill, v. 21). No, Yahweh's people have a God who is a smasher and a fighter, a God 'mighty in battle' (Ps. 24:8), who can therefore defend his sheep and restrain and conquer all his and our enemies.

Hence 2 Samuel 5 leads us straight into eschatology, that is, last things, for if this is our God who protects his kingdom under David, then his people never need fear, for this God is more than able to always lead us in triumph (cf. 2 Cor. 2:14) and to impose his kingdom at the last in all its power and glory. There can be no doubt. After all, he is the Leveler and Warrior. (Ibid)

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**Spurgeon - Faith's Checkbook** - THERE are signs of the Lord's moving which should move us. The Spirit of God blows where he listeth, and we hear the sound thereof. Then is the time for us to be more than ever astir. **We must seize the golden opportunity, and make the most we can of it.** It is ours to fight the Philistines at all times; but when the Lord himself goes out before us, then we should be specially valiant in the war. The breeze stirred the tops of the trees, and David and his men took this for the signal for an onslaught, and at their advance the Lord, himself, smote the Philistines. Oh, that this day the Lord may give us an opening to speak for him with many of our friends! Let us be on the watch to avail ourselves of the hopeful opening when it comes. Who knows but this may be a day of good tidings; a season of soul-winning. Let us keep our ear open to hear the rustle of the wind, and our minds ready to obey the signal. Is not this promise "then shall the Lord go out before thee," a sufficient encouragement to play the man? Since the Lord goes before us, we dare not hold back.

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**G Campbell Morgan - Borrow** [Life applications from every chapter of the Bible](#)

When thou hearest the sound of marching in the tops of the mulberry-trees, that then thou shalt go out to battle: for God is gone out before thee. —1 Chr 14.15.

It is very remarkable how constantly these words have been made use of by the people of God. The spiritual instinct which has caused this is a true one. In this chapter David is seen taking counsel of God before going to battle against the Philistines. That is the fundamental note. It shows that he was conscious of his relation to the Throne of God, both for guidance and for strength. In the first case he was told to go, and victory resulted. The second time he was forbidden to go until there should be granted the supernatural indication of the sound of marching in the tops of the mulberry-trees. He obeyed, waited for the sign, went forward, and again to victory. In these days, signs of this particular kind are not given. They are no longer necessary to a people whose holy right it is to live in constant and close fellowship with God through His Son, by the communion of the Holy Spirit. And yet we use the words, and properly. In that very communion of the Holy Spirit, signs are given to the people of God by which they know the hour of their opportunity. They are mystic, but none the less definite. There are times when waiting for such signs is the only true attitude. When they are granted, there is no mistaking them. Their method can never be tabulated or described, but the fact of them is one of the most real experiences of the life of fellowship.

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**F B Meyer - 1 Chronicles 14:15** **Then thou shalt go out to battle; for God is gone forth before thee.**

What was this "going"? It was not merely a fitful breeze stealing through the leaves; it was not the going of the wind; but of angel squadrons who were proceeding against the enemies of Israel. This thought often occurs in Scripture— as when Jacob met God's host; and the warrior-Savior told Joshua that He was captain of a host whom God had commissioned to take Jericho; so also the horses and chariots of fire surrounded Elisha. Harken to the measured footfall of God's host, beneath which the mulberry trees sway, though no wind stirs the sultry air.

God's hosts go forth against His foes and ours. Perhaps we should feel less oppressed with the burden of the fight if we realized this. The battle is not ours, but God's. He will deliver the Philistines to us so that we shall have to do little else than fight and spoil. Oh, believe in the co-operation of the Holy Spirit. Lonely missionary in some distant station of the foreign field, listen for the moving in the tops of the mulberry trees! God is stirring for thy succor. Thou art a coworker with Him in making known His salvation; and He will prosper thee.

Let us wait for our instructions. David inquired of the Lord; let us not anticipate Him. It is useless to go up until He has gone out before us. We may as well save ourselves from disappointment by quietly waiting for the salvation of our God. But oh, be sure that those who wait for God shall not be long before the God for whom they wait shall go forth before them to smite the host, whether it be the hosts of temptation that oppress the inner life, or the hosts of spiritual foes that oppose the progress of God's work.

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**Spurgeon - Morning and Evening** - The members of Christ's Church should be very prayerful, always seeking the unction of the Holy One to rest upon their hearts, that the kingdom of Christ may come, and that his "will be done on earth, even as it is in heaven;" but there are times when God seems especially to favour Zion, such seasons ought to be to them like "the sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees." We ought then to be doubly prayerful, doubly earnest, wrestling more at the throne than we have been

wont to do. Action should then be prompt and vigorous. The tide is flowing—now let us pull manfully for the shore. O for Pentecostal outpourings and Pentecostal labours. Christian, in yourself there are times “when thou hearest the sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees.” You have a peculiar power in prayer; the Spirit of God gives you joy and gladness; the Scripture is open to you; the promises are applied; you walk in the light of God’s countenance; you have peculiar freedom and liberty in devotion, and more closeness of communion with Christ than was your wont. Now, at such joyous periods when you hear the “sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees,” is the time to bestir yourself; now is the time to get rid of any evil habit, while God the Spirit helpeth your infirmities. Spread your sail; but remember what you sometimes sing—

“I can only spread the sail;  
Thou! Thou! must breathe the auspicious gale.”

Only be sure you have the sail up. Do not miss the gale for want of preparation for it. Seek help of God, that you may be more earnest in duty when made more strong in faith; that you may be more constant in prayer when you have more liberty at the throne; that you may be more holy in your conversation whilst you live more closely with Christ.

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**Spurgeon - Act Promptly** when you hear **The sound in the mulberry trees** - If any of your acquaintance have been in the house of God, if you have induced them to go there, and you think there is some little good doing but you do not know, take care of that little. It may be God has used us as a foster mother to bring up his child, so that this little one may be brought up in the faith, and this newly converted soul may be strengthened and edified. But I’ll tell you, many of you Christians do a deal of mischief, by what you say when going home. **A man once said that when he was a lad he heard a certain sermon from a minister, and felt deeply impressed under it. Tears stole down his cheeks, and he thought within himself, “I will go home to pray.”** On the road home he fell into the company of two members of the church. One of them began saying, “Well, how did you enjoy the sermon?” The other said, “I do not think he was quite sound on such a point.” “Well,” said the other, “I thought he was rather off his guard,” or something of that sort; and one pulled one part of the minister’s sermon to pieces, and another the other, until, said the young man, before I had gone many yards with them, I had forgotten all about it; and all the good I thought I had received seemed swept away by those two men, who seemed afraid lest I should get any hope, for they were just pulling that sermon to pieces which would have brought me to my knees. How often have we done the same! People will say, “What did you think of that sermon?” I gently tell them nothing at all, and if there is any fault in it—and very likely there is, it is better not to speak of it, for some may get good from it.

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**THOUGHT** - The preceding comments remind me of the seven realities in Henry Blackaby’s [Experiencing God](#).

1. God is always at work around you.
  2. God pursues a continuing love relationship with you that is real and personal.
  3. God invites you to become involved with Him in His work. **(ED: WHEN YOU HEAR THE SOUND OF MARCHING...)**
  4. God speaks by the Holy Spirit through the Bible, prayer, circumstances and the church to reveal Himself, His purposes and His ways.
  5. God’s invitation for you to work with Him always leads you to a crisis of belief that requires faith and action.
  6. You must make major adjustments in your life to join God in what He is doing.
  7. You come to know God by experience as you obey Him and He accomplishes His work through you.
- (Borrow [Experiencing God : knowing and doing the will of God](#) Blackaby, Henry)**

**1 Chronicles 14:16 David did just as God had commanded him, and they struck down the army of the Philistines from Gibeon even as far as Gezer.**

- did as God : Ge 6:22 Ex 39:42,43 Joh 2:5 13:17 15:14
- Gibeon : 2Sa 5:25, Geba
- Gazer : 1Ch 6:67 Jos 16:10, Gezer

## **DAVID'S UNQUESTIONING OBEDIENCE TO UNUSUAL INSTRUCTIONS**

**David did just as God had commanded him** - This is faith in action, or better stated, faith that leads to inaction. That is, David’s

remained inactive, waiting to hear the sign from God, because he believed God's Word. That's faith in inaction/action! As the title implies, Yahweh's instructions were not in the handbook of conventional ancient warfare and yet he did not question but fully obeyed, always the best policy!

I hope that may be said of you and me all our lives long.

-- Spurgeon

**And struck down the Philistines from Gibeon (Geba) as far as Gezer (see map).** - Obedience brings blessing and victory. Trust and obey beloved, for there is no other way to be happy in Jesus, then to trust and obey! Victory over the strong enemy was the result of David's obedience.

**THOUGHT** - Christians are engaged in continual spiritual warfare against a strong, invisible enemy and yet the LORD has given us His Word by which we can experience victory against such powerful forces. Ephesians 6:10-18<sup>+</sup> would be a great passage to commit to memory as it begins with a clear command to "be strong in the LORD and in the strength of His might." Paul is not saying "Let go, let God," but more like "Let God, let's go!" Be strong in HIS power which implies we need to jettison our self-reliance, our clever reasonings to foil the enemy, etc and depend wholly on the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit and then stand firm (our responsibility enabled by the Spirit's power). Paul gives 4 commands in Eph 6:10-14<sup>+</sup> ("**be strong,**" "**put on...**," "**take up...**," and "**stand firm.**") - see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#) We need to imitate David and obey, walking (fighting) not by sight but by faith (2Co 5:7<sup>+</sup>, cf 2Co 4:18<sup>+</sup>), and He will win the victory just as He did for David.

**Paul Apple** - After realizing that David has reconsolidated the tribes of Israel, the Philistines attack twice (1Ch 14:8, 13) but are defeated and driven back. David's victory succeeds in removing the Philistine foothold in the hill country and part of the Shephelah (1Ch 14:16). Following his first victory, David burns the abandoned Philistine idols (1Ch 14:12), according to Deuteronomic instruction (cf. Dt 7:5-6; 12:1-3). Thus David's twofold victory over the Philistines at the beginning of his reign emphatically shows God's hand of protection and blessing over the king and the nation as David seeks him and obeys his Word (cf. 1Ch 14:10-11, 14-16, 17)...these victories were not final, and military encounters with the Philistines were to continue for some time (2Sa. 8.1; 1Ch 18.1, etc.).

**Life Application Study Bible (borrow)** - David fought his battles the way God instructed him. In each instance he (1) asked if he should fight or not, (2) followed instructions carefully, and (3) gave God the glory. We can err in our "battles" by ignoring these steps and instead (1) do what we want without considering God's will, (2) do things our way and ignore advice in the Bible or from other wise people, and (3) take the glory ourselves or give it to someone else with out acknowledging the help we received from God. All these responses are sinful.

**1 Chronicles 14:17 Then the fame of David went out into all the lands; and the LORD brought the fear of him on all the nations.**

- **fame of David** : Jos 6:27 2Ch 26:8 Ps 18:44
- **the fear of him** : Ex 15:14-16 De 2:25 Dt 11:25 Jos 2:9-11 9:24

#### Related Passages:

Psalm 18:44<sup>+</sup> As soon as they hear, they obey me; Foreigners submit to me.

Exodus 15:14-16<sup>+</sup> "The peoples have heard, they tremble; Anguish has gripped the inhabitants of Philistia. 15"Then the chiefs of Edom were dismayed; The leaders of Moab, trembling grips them; All the inhabitants of Canaan have melted away. 16"Terror and dread fall upon them; By the greatness of Your arm they are motionless as stone; Until Your people pass over, O LORD, Until the people pass over whom You have purchased.

Deuteronomy 2:25<sup>+</sup> (**YAHWEH'S PROMISE TO ISRAEL WHEN SHE OBEYED**) 'This day **I will begin to put the dread and fear of you upon the peoples everywhere under the heavens**, who, when they hear the report of you, will tremble and be in anguish because of you.'

Deuteronomy 11:25<sup>+</sup> "No man will be able to stand before you (**WHEN ISRAEL WAS OBEDIENT TO THE LORD!**); the LORD your God will lay the dread of you and the fear of you on all the land on which you set foot, as He has spoken to you.



Joshua 2:9-11+ (**GENTILE RAHAB THE HARLOT'S TESTIMONY**) and said to the men, "I know that the LORD has given you the land, and that the terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land have melted away before you. 10 "For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed. 11 "When we heard it, our hearts melted and no courage remained in any man any longer because of you; for the LORD your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath.

## **DAVID'S FAME AND FEAR SPREAD**

**Then** - When? When God gave David and Israel great victory over the mighty Philistine forces.

**The fame of David went out into all the lands** - David became famous for his military prowess.

**Frederick Mabie:** This summary statement reflects the Chronicler's sustained focus on God's goodness in establishing and blessing the reign of David. This blessing is expressed via the position of respect and power attained by Israel during the reign of David and is likewise seen during the reigns of Solomon (2Ch 9:9, 24) and Jehoshaphat (cf. 2Ch 17:10–11).

**And the LORD brought the fear of him on all the nations**- Compare "David realized that the LORD had established him as king over Israel, and that his kingdom was highly exalted." Establishment, exaltation, fame and fear are from Yahweh! So the nations feared David per se not because of David, but because the LORD brought it about!

**Andrew Hill:** The spread of David's fame and the fear of Yahweh among the nations are interrelated (14:17). As God blesses David's faithfulness, so David's success brings glory and honor to God. The Chronicler's report of David's growing reputation foreshadows the covenant blessing of God's promise to make David's name among the greatest of the world (17:8). Fittingly, the defeat of the Philistines at Rephaim reverses the outcome at Mount Gilboa and avenges the deaths of Saul and Jonathan, closing the story on that tragic first chapter in the history of Israelite kingship. Presumably the Chronicler intends this account of the reversal of fortune for Israel under King David as a message of hope and encouragement for his audience—"fodder" for possibility thinking on the part of his generation.

**John Schultz:** David's double victory over the Philistines made him internationally famous. We are not told which countries expressed appreciation or interest, but simply that all the nations feared him. This emphasized Israel's security. No other nation would want to attack Israel and occupy its territory. Israel became known as the most powerful nation in the world.