

# 2 Samuel 23 Commentary

PREVIOUS

NEXT

CLICK VERSE

To go directly to that verse

- [2 Samuel 23:1](#)
- [2 Samuel 23:2](#)
- [2 Samuel 23:3](#)
- [2 Samuel 23:4](#)
- [2 Samuel 23:5](#)
- [2 Samuel 23:6](#)
- [2 Samuel 23:7](#)
- [2 Samuel 23:8](#)
- [2 Samuel 23:9](#)
- [2 Samuel 23:10](#)
- [2 Samuel 23:11](#)
- [2 Samuel 23:12](#)
- [2 Samuel 23:13](#)
- [2 Samuel 23:14](#)
- [2 Samuel 23:15](#)
- [2 Samuel 23:16](#)
- [2 Samuel 23:17](#)
- [2 Samuel 23:18](#)
- [2 Samuel 23:19](#)
- [2 Samuel 23:20](#)
- [2 Samuel 23:21](#)
- [2 Samuel 23:22](#)
- [2 Samuel 23:23](#)
- [2 Samuel 23:24](#)
- [2 Samuel 23:25](#)
- [2 Samuel 23:26](#)
- [2 Samuel 23:27](#)
- [2 Samuel 23:28](#)
- [2 Samuel 23:29](#)
- [2 Samuel 23:30](#)
- [2 Samuel 23:31](#)
- [2 Samuel 23:32](#)
- [2 Samuel 23:33](#)
- [2 Samuel 23:34](#)
- [2 Samuel 23:35](#)
- [2 Samuel 23:36](#)
- [2 Samuel 23:37](#)
- [2 Samuel 23:38](#)
- [2 Samuel 23:39](#)

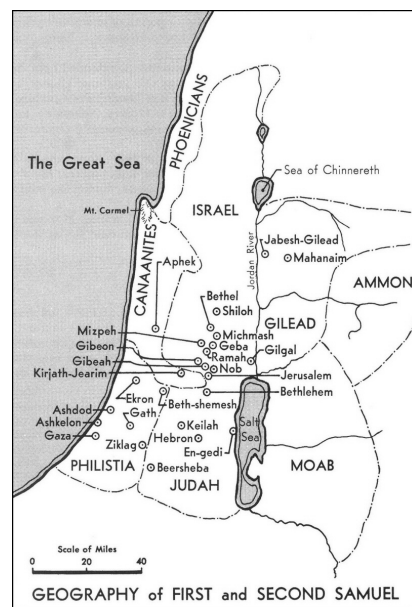
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Chart from recommended resource [Jensen's Survey of the OT](#) - used by permission  
[2 Samuel Chart](#) from Charles Swindoll

**TIMELINE OF THE BOOKS OF  
SAMUEL, KINGS & CHRONICLES**

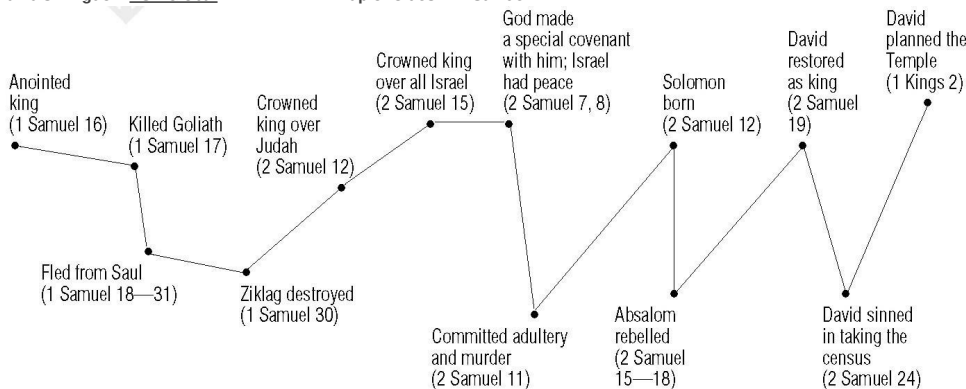
1107	1011				971	931	853	722	586	
1 Samuel		2 Samuel				1 Kings	1 Kings	2 Kings		
31	1-4	5-10	11-20	21-24	1-11	12-22	1-17	18-25		
1Chr 10		1 Chr 11-19		1 Chr 20-29	2 Chronicles 1-9	2 Chronicles 10-20	2 Chronicles 21-36			

**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.



Map of David's Kingdom-ESV Global

Map of Cities in 2 Samuel



HIGHS AND LOWS OF DAVID'S LIFE  
Source: [Life Application Study Bible \(borrow\)](#)

**2 Samuel 23:1** Now these are the last words of David. David the son of Jesse declares, The man who was raised on high declares, The anointed of the God of Jacob, And the sweet psalmist of Israel,

BGT 2 Samuel 23:1 κα ο τοι ο λ γοι Δαυιδ ο σχατοι πιστ ς Δαυιδ υ ς Ιεσσαι κα πιστ ς ν ρ ν ν στησεν κ ριος π χριστ ν θεο Ιακωβ κα ε πρεπε ς ψαλμο Ισραηλ

LXE 2 Samuel 23:1 And these are the last words of David. Faithful is David the son of Jessae, and faithful the man whom the Lord raised up to be the anointed of the God of Jacob, and beautiful are the psalms of Israel.

KJV 2 Samuel 23:1 Now these be the last words of David. David the son of Jesse said, and the man who was raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel, said,

NET 2 Samuel 23:1 These are the final words of David: "The oracle of David son of Jesse, the oracle of the man raised up as the ruler chosen by the God of Jacob, Israel's beloved singer of songs:

CSB 2 Samuel 23:1 These are the last words of David: The declaration of David son of Jesse, the declaration of the man raised on high, the one anointed by the God of Jacob, the favorite singer of Israel:

ESV 2 Samuel 23:1 Now these are the last words of David: The oracle of David, the son of Jesse, the oracle of the man who was raised on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, the sweet psalmist of Israel:

NIV 2 Samuel 23:1 These are the last words of David: "The oracle of David son of Jesse, the oracle of the man exalted by the Most High, the man anointed by the God of Jacob, Israel's singer of songs:

NLT 2 Samuel 23:1 These are the last words of David: "David, the son of Jesse, speaks-- David, the man who was raised up so high, David, the man anointed by the God of Jacob, David, the sweet psalmist of Israel.

NRS 2 Samuel 23:1 Now these are the last words of David: The oracle of David, son of Jesse, the oracle of the man whom God exalted, the anointed of the God of Jacob, the favorite of the Strong One of Israel:

NJB 2 Samuel 23:1 These are the last words of David: Thus speaks David son of Jesse, thus speaks the man raised to eminence, the anointed of the God of Jacob, the singer of the songs of Israel:

NAB 2 Samuel 23:1 These are the last words of David: "The utterance of David, son of Jesse; the utterance of the man God raised up, Anointed of the God of Jacob, favorite of the Mighty One of Israel.

- **the last:** Ge 49:1 De 33:1 Jos 23:1-24:32 Ps 72:20 2Pe 1:13-15
- **raised:** 2Sa 7:8,9 Ps 78:70
- **the anointed:** 1Sa 2:10 16:12,13 Ps 2:6 89:20
- **sweet psalmist:** 1Ch 16:4,5,7,9 Am 6:5 Lu 20:42 24:44 Eph 5:19,20 Col 3:16 Jas 5:13
- [2 Samuel 23 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## LAST WORDS OF THE SWEET PSALMIST

**Now these are the last words of David** - Last words are always "lasting words," especially if they come from the mouth of a man who is after God's own heart!

**David the son of Jesse declares, The man who was raised on high declares** - TLB = "David, the man to whom God gave such wonderful success"

**Son of Jesse** - 20x in 20v - 1 Sam. 16:18; 1 Sam. 20:27; 1 Sam. 20:30; 1 Sam. 20:31; 1 Sam. 22:7; 1 Sam. 22:8; 1 Sam. 22:9; 1 Sam. 22:13; 1 Sam. 25:10; 2 Sam. 20:1; 2 Sam. 23:1; 1 Ki. 12:16; 1 Chr. 10:14; 1 Chr. 12:18; 1 Chr. 29:26; 2 Chr. 10:16; 2 Chr. 11:18; Ps. 72:20; Lk. 3:32; Acts 13:22

**The anointed of the God of Jacob, And the sweet psalmist of Israel,**

**2 Samuel 23:2 "The Spirit of the LORD spoke by me, And His word was on my tongue.**

- Mt 22:43 Mk 12:36 Ac 2:25-31 Heb 3:7,8 2Pe 1:21
- [2 Samuel 23 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### Related Passages:

2 Peter 1:21+ for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

2 Timothy 3:16-17+ **All Scripture is inspired by God** and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; 17 so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

Acts 2:25-31+ (**DAVID'S WORDS QUOTED BY PETER** - NOTE THAT IN NASB PASSAGES IN ALL CAPS = DIRECT QUOTES FROM OT) "For **David says of Him**, 'I SAW THE LORD ALWAYS IN MY PRESENCE; FOR HE IS AT MY RIGHT HAND, SO THAT I WILL NOT BE SHAKEN. 26 'THEREFORE MY HEART WAS GLAD AND MY TONGUE EXULTED; MOREOVER MY FLESH ALSO WILL LIVE IN HOPE; 27 BECAUSE YOU

WILL NOT ABANDON MY SOUL TO HADES, NOR ALLOW YOUR HOLY ONE TO UNDERGO DECAY. 28 'YOU HAVE MADE KNOWN TO ME THE WAYS OF LIFE; YOU WILL MAKE ME FULL OF GLADNESS WITH YOUR PRESENCE.' 29 "Brethren, I may confidently say to you regarding the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. 30 "And so, because he was a prophet and knew that GOD HAD SWORN TO HIM WITH AN OATH TO SEAT one OF HIS DESCENDANTS ON HIS THRONE, 31 he looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that HE WAS NEITHER ABANDONED TO HADES, NOR DID His flesh SUFFER DECAY.

## DAVID A SPIRIT CONTROLLED MAN

**The Spirit of the LORD spoke by me**- David was like a conduit of supernatural revelation through a human instrument. He was functioning as a "vessel of honor, set apart, useful to the Master and prepared for every good work," (2Ti 2:21+) in his context "every good Word!" The Spirit moved David and he opened his mouth and spoke.

**And His word was on my tongue**- David is clearly stating that his words are fully inspired (cf "[plenary](#)") by God. David's tongue articulated the words but God's Spirit had (so to speak) placed those very words on his tongue.

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### QUESTION - [What is verbal plenary inspiration?](#)

**ANSWER** - The Bible is God's Word to humanity. It was written by human authors, but God prompted and guided them to write what they did. Every word, word form, and word placement found in the Bible's original manuscripts was divinely and intentionally written. This is the orthodox view of the church and is known as verbal plenary inspiration.

**Inspiration**, the quality of being "God-breathed," refers to the fact that God supernaturally guided the authors of the Bible to write exactly what He wanted to communicate. Everything in Scripture is there because that's what God desired to say to humanity. The extent of that inspiration is defined by the dual terms *verbal* and *plenary*. *Verbal* means that every word of Scripture is God-breathed. Every single word, not just the ideas behind the words, is in the Bible because God wanted it there. The word *plenary* means "complete or full"; when used to describe the inspiration of God's Word, *plenary* means that all parts of the Bible are equally of divine origin and equally authoritative.

The apostle Paul implicitly taught the verbal plenary inspiration of the Word of God. In Galatians 3:16, he wrote, "The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. Scripture does not say 'and to seeds,' meaning many people, but 'and to your seed,' meaning one person, who is Christ." Paul used the number of the noun—the fact that Moses wrote a singular word, not a plural—as the basis for his argument that Christ fulfills the covenant. This supports verbal inspiration. In Romans 15:4 Paul wrote that "everything that was written in the past was written to teach us" and in 2 Timothy 3:16 that "all Scripture is God-breathed." *Everything* and *all* are words that support the doctrine of plenary inspiration.

2 Peter 1:21 says, "For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit." This passage reveals how God led human authors to write Scripture. Men wrote as they were "carried along" or "moved" (KJV) by the Holy Spirit. What we read in the Bible is indeed God's words to us. According to Jesus, even the smallest letter within a word and the slightest pen stroke within a letter are God's design and will be fulfilled (Matthew 5:18).

The term **verbal plenary inspiration** should not be taken to mean that the words in the Bible themselves are "holy." The Greek word *halas* ("salt" in [Matthew 5:13](#)) is not "holy" simply because it's found in the Bible. Other, non-inspired writings also contain the word *halas*, and their use of the word does not make them special. What verbal plenary inspiration *does* mean is that all the words, forms of words, combination of words, and wording in the Bible are God's divine intention for Scripture. The words, phrases, and clauses work together to give us His message, and each portion of Scripture is purposefully there.

Verbal plenary inspiration applies to the [original manuscripts](#) of the books of the Bible. The [Bible translations](#) we have today are the works of scholars who have studied copies of the original manuscripts, but the doctrine of inspiration does not extend to translations. Most modern translations are [trustworthy](#), but no one translation is divinely inspired in the way the original manuscripts are.

Also, the doctrine of verbal plenary inspiration does not mean that God condones or encourages all the actions recorded in the Bible. For example, God states that murder is sinful, yet He also inspired historical records of people committing murder. So, the Bible contains true history as well as God's moral instructions. The Ten Commandments are inspired, and so is the written record of Absalom's murder of Amnon; both passages are instructive, and both passages are inspired. The interpretation and application of the Ten Commandments differs from that of Absalom's story and requires sound [biblical hermeneutics](#).

**Verbal plenary inspiration is an important concept and tenet of the Christian faith** God's inspiration of the text of Scripture extends to the very words themselves and to all parts of Scripture and all subject matters of Scripture. The doctrine of verbal plenary inspiration stands in contrast to the belief that only parts of the Bible are inspired or that only the thoughts or concepts that deal with religion are inspired. Verbal plenary inspiration is an essential characteristic of the Word of God, as His words reveal who He is and what He has done for us through Christ (see John 5:39–40; Acts 8:35). [GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

**2 Samuel 23:3 "The God of Israel said, The Rock of Israel spoke to me, 'He who rules over men righteously, Who rules in the fear of God,**

- **God:** Ge 33:20 Ex 3:15 19:5,6 20:2
- **the Rock:** 2Sa 22:2,32 De 32:4,30,31 Ps 42:9
- **He who rules** Ps 110:2
- **over men righteously:** Ex 23:6-8 De 16:18-20 Ps 82:3,4 Pr 31:9 Isa 11:4,5 32:1 Jer 23:5 Zec 9:9 Heb 1:8
- **rules in the fear of God;** Ex 18:21 2Ch 19:7-9 Ne 5:14
- [2 Samuel 23 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Exodus 17:6+ "Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock ([tsur](#); Lxx - ) at Horeb; and you shall strike the rock ([tsur](#)); and water will come out of it, that the people may drink." And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.

Comment - Paul speaks of the "Rock" as representing Christ, the true source of the water (1Co 10:4). Moses' striking the rock has been suggested as a picture or type of the crucifixion of Christ.

**The God of Israel said, The Rock ([tsur](#)) of Israel spoke to me** - David loves to call God his **Rock**. God as a **Rock** speaks of His provision of a **firm, unshakeable foundation** for all who trust in Him. The Septuagint translates **Rock** here with the Greek word [phulax](#) which means guard or sentinel, one who's job it is to stand watch. So our Rock on which we stand, watches over those who stand upon Him. **Rock** speaks of the stability and protection provided by Yahweh. Though everything might be changing, yet the Lord is still our Rock—**stable, strong, and unchanging**. As Robert Murray M'Cheyne said "The sea ebbs and flows, but the rock remains unmoved." What is true in the physical world, is infinitely more true in the spiritual world! Rest in the Rock of your salvation.

**Samuel Rutherford** addressing the believer's sometimes shaky sense of assurance (eternal security) quipped "Your Rock is Christ, and it is not the Rock which ebbs and flows, but your sea."

**Rock** is a common metaphor used for God (Jesus) in the Psalter, and stresses several aspects of His **protective care** for the person who trusts in Him. For example, God as our Rock provides a firm, unshakeable foundation ("On Christ the Solid Rock I stand, all other ground is sinking sand") for those who rely on Him. In other OT uses, the picture of Christ our Rock is that of a high, inaccessible rocky crag or mountain hideaway. David had experienced such literal places of protection (eg, cave at [Adullam](#) - 1Ch 11:15) by God as Saul and others sought his life. The literal rocks that were David's hiding place were a faint picture of Christ his spiritual Rock in Whom the beleaguered psalmist found safe haven and rest for his soul.

#### 'He who rules over men righteously, Who rules in the fear of God

**Rock** (see also here)([06697](#)) [tsur](#) is used a few times to describe a literal rock (usually a large rock or boulder), but the figurative uses are more common and usually descriptive of Jehovah. A rock includes ideas of strength and permanence. Figurative expressions include honey from the rock (clefts where bees lived) (Ps. 81:16); Abraham as the ancestral rock of Israel (Isa. 51:1); rock as a symbol of stability (Job 14:18; Nah. 1:6); God as the Rock to look to and depend on as source of strength and refuge (Ps. 31:2 = "Be to me a **Rock** of strength"; Isa. 17:10 = "have not remembered the **Rock** of your refuge"); God personified as a Rock of the nation of Israel (2Sa 23:3); of God as the Rock many times (Dt. 32:4, 18; Hab 1:12). It is used of an insufficient rock, a god of the pagan nations (Deut. 32:31).

In Ps 18:2 we find two words for 'rock', the first "rock" being "**sela**" (see below) and the second "rock" being "**tsur**." **Sela**' more frequently suggests a larger, more massive rock structure such as a **crag** (a steep rugged rock - eg, Job 39:28 uses sela' to describe a safe, resting place for the eagle "upon the rocky crag [sela'], an inaccessible place"), a **cliff** or a **mountainside**. **Tsur** on the other hand refers to smaller rock structures such as a boulder, but these distinctions are not absolute and there is overlap.

**Other uses of tsur in 2 Samuel** - 2Sa 21:10; 2Sa 22:3; 2Sa 22:32; 2Sa 22:47; 2Sa 23:3

**The Importance of Character in Rulers** - Mr. Stead quotes from Major Lennard's "How We Made Rhodesia," a passage to illustrate Dr. Jameson's opinions on morality and public life. "What differences can it make in a man as a legislator what his morals are, if he has genius and intellect, and can use them? I cannot see how in any way morals can affect a man's intellect, and so long as he keeps his immoralities to himself, I do not see how they can affect any one else." So the Prime Minister of Cape Colony. The man who cannot see the influence of morality upon mind, how it affects motive and outlook, and his whole attitude and action in public affairs may have many gifts, but he is unfit to be Prime Minister of any colony or state. Far higher than the view of the modern Prime Minister of South Africa was that which inspired that ancient, Prime Minister of North Africa, who regarded his position as a trust, and his work as a mission from God. "And Joseph said: It was not you that sent me hither, but God; and He hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt."

**2 Samuel 23:4 Is as the light of the morning when the sun rises, A morning without clouds, When the tender grass springs out of the earth, Through sunshine after rain.'**

- **as the light:** Jdg 5:31 Ps 89:36 110:3 Pr 4:18 Isa 60:1,3,18-20 Ho 6:5 Mal 4:2 Lu 1:78,79 Joh 1:7
- **morning:** Ho 6:3
- **tender:** De 32:2 Ps 72:6 Isa 4:2 Mic 5:7
- [2 Samuel 23 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **A RIGHTEOUS JUST RULER**

**Is as the light of the morning when the sun rises, A morning without clouds, When the tender grass springs out of the earth, Through sunshine after rain**

**2 Samuel 23:5 "Truly is not my house so with God? For He has made an everlasting covenant with me, Ordered in all things, and secured; For all my salvation and all my desire, Will He not indeed make it grow?"**

- **Truly is not my house so with God:** 2Sa 7:18 12:10 13:14,28 18:14 1Ki 1:5 2:24,25 11:6-8 12:14
- **For He has made an everlasting covenant with me:** 2Sa 7:14-16 1Ch 17:11-14 Ps 89:3,28 Isa 9:6,7 55:3 61:8 Jer 32:40 Jer 33:25,26 Eze 37:26 Heb 13:20
- **Ordered in all things, and secured:** 1Sa 2:35 25:28 1Ki 11:38 Ac 13:34 Heb 6:19
- **all my salvation:** Ps 62:2 119:81
- **desire:** Ps 27:4 63:1-3 73:25,26
- **to grow:** Isa 4:2 7:14 9:6,7 11:1 27:6 Am 9:11 1Co 3:6,7
- [2 Samuel 23 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### **Related Passages:**

2 Samuel 7:14-16+ (YAWHEH IS SPEAKING) "I will be a father to him and he will be a son to Me; when he commits iniquity, I will correct him with the rod of men and the strokes of the sons of men, 15 but My lovingkindness shall not depart from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you. 16"Your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever.'"

## **THE EVERLASTING DAVIDIC COVENANT**

**Truly is not my house so with God? TLB** - And it is my family He has chosen! NET - My dynasty is approved by God

**For** - Term of explanation as to how God or why God was with David's line.

**He has made an everlasting (perpetual) covenant with me**

**Ordered in all things, and secured** - He is speaking of the covenant that it is "arranged in all its particulars and secured" in every detail God's "contracts" (aka covenants) have no disclaimer or escape clauses, for His Word is sure and trustworthy and He dot's all the I's and crosses all the T's!

**For all my salvation and all my desire, Will He not indeed make it grow** - NET = "He always delivers me, and brings all I desire to fruition." CSB = "Will He not bring about my whole salvation and my every desire?" ESV "For will he not cause to prosper all my help and my desire?" NIV = "Will he not bring to fruition my salvation and grant me my every desire?"

**2 Samuel 23:6 "But the worthless, every one of them will be thrust away like thorns, Because they cannot be taken in hand;**

- **The worthless** 2Sa 20:1 De 13:13 1Sa 2:12
- **thorns:** Ge 3:18 Song 2:2 Isa 33:12 Eze 2:6
- [2 Samuel 23 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## FATE OF THE WORTHLESS

**But** - Term of contrast introduces a dramatic contrast with the previous godly description.

**The worthless** (godless - [beliyyaal](#)), **every one of them will be thrust away like thorns** - Just like the **worthless** sons of Eli (1Sa 2:12) who were thrust away from this life as the just retribution for their godless ways. (1Sa 4:17)

**Because** (term of explanation) **they cannot be taken in hand** - What a picture of the worthless, like thorns that cannot be picked up by hand lest they tear or pierce the hand that touches them.

**2 Samuel 23:7 But the man who touches them Must be armed with iron and the shaft of a spear, And they will be completely burned with fire in their place."**

- and they will: 2Sa 22:8-10 Isa 27:4 Mt 3:10-12 13:42 Lu 19:14,27 Joh 15:6 2Th 1:6-8 2:8 Heb 6:8
- [2 Samuel 23 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### Related Passages:

2 Thessalonians 1:6-8+ For after all it is only just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, 7 and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, 8 dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.

## THE ETERNAL PUNISHMENT OF THE WORTHLESS WICKED

**But** - Contrasts touching the worthless with a bare hand.

**The man who touches them must be armed with iron and the shaft of a spear** - NET - "must use an iron instrument or the wooden shaft of a spear."

**And they will be completely burned with fire in their place** - The worthless will be burned like "the chaff with unquenchable fire." (Mt 3:12)

NET Note - Heb "and with fire they are completely burned up in [the place where they] remain." The infinitive absolute is used before the finite verb to emphasize that they are completely consumed by the fire.

**2 Samuel 23:8 These are the names of the mighty men whom David had: Josheb-basshebeth a Tahchemonite, chief of the captains, he was called Adino the Eznite, because of eight hundred slain by him at one time;**

- **Tachmonite.** head of the three. 1Ch 11:11-12 1Ch 27:2,32
- [2 Samuel 23 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## Related Passages:

1 Chronicles 11:11 These constitute the list of the mighty men whom David had: Jashobeam, the son of a [Hachmonite](#), the chief of the thirty; he lifted up his spear against three hundred whom he killed at one time.

## LIST OF DAVID'S MIGHTY MEN BEGINS

**These are the names of the mighty men whom David had:** -The **mighty men** were like David's [Special Forces](#). **TLB** says "These are the names of the Top Three—the most heroic men in David's army."

**Josheb-basshebeth a [Tahchemonite](#), chief of the captains** (ESV - was chief of the three; NLT, NJB - leader of the three) **he was called Adino the Eznite, because of eight hundred slain by him at one time** - This is an incredible feat by Joshebe in killing 800 men not on separate days or over the course of his military life but at one time, presumably in one memorable battle! This number sounds almost like an error but

**JOSHEB-BASSHEBETH** - jo-sheb-ba-she'-beth (yoshebh ba-shebheth): This proper name in the Revised Version (British and American) takes the place of the translation "that sat in the seat" in the King James Version (2 Sam 23:8). The phrase so rendered is meaningless. The text has evidently suffered corruption. There can be no doubt that a proper name is intended. This, according to the parallel passage in 1 Ch 11:11, should be Jashobeam. Some scholars think that this also is a corruption, and by a process of emendation arrive at "Eshbaal" as the correct name (Driver, Hebrew Text of S; SBOT, at the place).

**ADINO** - ad'-i-no, a-di'-no (ʾadhino, "his adorned one"): The senior of David's "mighty men." "Josheb-basshebeth a Tahchemonite, chief of the captains; the same was Adino the Eznite, against eight hundred slain at one time" (2 Sam 23:8). This very exact rendering makes it evident even to an English reader that the text is imperfect. Ginsburg offers a corrected form taken substantially from the parallel passage in 1 Ch 11:11: "Jashobeam a son of a Hachmonite, chief of the captains; he lifted up his spear." This is plausible, and is very generally accepted, and eliminates the names Adino and Eznite, which do not occur elsewhere in the Bible. Some of the facts are against this. The Septuagint has the names Adino and Eznite. The Latin finds no proper names in the passage, but so translates the words as to presuppose the Hebrew text as we have it. It may be a case for suspended judgment. The texts concerning David's mighty men are fragmentary both in Samuel and in Chronicles. If they were more complete they would perhaps make it clear that the three seniors were comrades of David at Pas-dammim, Ephes-dammim (1 Ch 11:13; 1 Sam 17:1); and that we have in them additional details concerning that battle. The record says that on the death of Goliath the Philistines fled and the Israelites pursued (1 Sam 17:52 ff), but it is not improbable that during the retreat portions of the Philistine force rallied, so that there was strenuous fighting.

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### QUESTION - [Who were the mighty men of David?](#)

**ANSWER** - 2 Samuel 23:8–39 and 1 Chronicles 11:10–47 list a group of people known as mighty men of David or David's mighty men. They are also referred to as the "thirty chiefs" (1 Chronicles 11:15) and simply "the Thirty" (1 Chronicles 12:4). These mighty men of David were a group of David's toughest military warriors who were credited with heroic feats, including Josheb-basshebeth, who killed 800 men in one battle with a spear (2 Samuel 23:8).

Additional notable actions listed include the deeds of a man named Eleazar, who stayed on the battlefield when other warriors fled and killed Philistines until his hand was stuck clenched around his sword (2 Samuel 23:9–10); and the exploits of Abishai, the leader of the mighty men, who killed 300 men with a spear (23:18).

Benaiah was known for going into a pit on a snowy day and killing a lion and for killing a powerful Egyptian man with the man's own spear (2 Samuel 23:20–21). He also served as leader of David's bodyguards (23:23).

Within this list of mighty men are three men who served as a special elite group: Josheb-basshebeth, Eleazar, and Shammah. Their exact roles are not made clear, but they were certainly seen as stand-outs among David's mighty men.

Although the mighty men are called "the Thirty," a total of 37 men are listed, meaning that not all of these men were on the team the entire time. Some of them, like Uriah, were killed in battle during David's reign. Another explanation may be that David's elite group of mighty men numbered approximately 30, a figure not meant to be exact.

Some of these mighty men of David had considerable military skill and the blessing of God. David's mighty men served an important



role in protecting the king and fighting for the freedom of their nation, the land of Israel.

The full list of the mighty men of David is located in 2 Samuel 23 and includes the following names:

1. Josheb-basshebeth, a Tahchemonite
2. Eleazar, the son of Dodo
3. Shammah, the son of Agee the Hararite
4. Abishai
5. Benaiah
6. Asahel
7. [Elhanan](#)
8. Shammah of Harod
9. Elik of Harod
10. Helez the Paltite
11. Ira, the son of Ikkesh of Tekoa
12. Abiezer of Anthoth
13. Mebunnai the Hushathite
14. Zalmon the Ahohite
15. Maharai of Netophah
16. Heleb, the son of Baanah of Netophah
17. Ittai, the son of Ribai of Gibeah of the people of Benjamin
18. Benaiah of Pirathon
19. Hiddai of the brooks of Gaash
20. Abi-albon the Arbathite
21. Azmaveth of Bahurim
22. Eliahba the Shaalbonite
23. The sons of Jashen
24. Jonathan
25. Shammah the Hararite
26. Ahiam, the son of Sharar the Hararite
27. Eliphelet, the son of Ahasbai of Maacha
28. Eliam, the son of Ahithophel of Gilo
29. Hezro of Carmel
30. Paarai the Arbite
31. Igal, the son of Nathan of Zobah
32. Bani the Gadite
33. Zelek the Ammonite
34. Naharai of Beeroth
35. Ira the Ithrite
36. Gareb the Ithrite
37. [Uriah the Hittite GotQuestions.org](#)

**2 Samuel 23:9 and after him was Eleazar the son of Dodo the Ahohite, one of the three mighty men with David when they defied the Philistines who were gathered there to battle and the men of Israel had withdrawn.**

- **Eleazar:** 1Ch 11:12-14 27:4, Dodai
- **defied:** Nu 23:7,8 1Sa 17:10,26,36,45,46
- **the men:** Isa 63:3,5 Mk 14:50
- [2 Samuel 23 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

1 Chronicles 11:12-14 After him (**Josheb-basshebeth a Tahchemonite**) was Eleazar the son of Dodo, the Ahohite, who was one of the three mighty men. 13 He was with David at [Pasdammim](#) when the Philistines were gathered together there to battle, and there was a plot of ground full of barley; and the people fled before the Philistines. 14 They took their stand in the midst of the plot and defended it, and struck down the Philistines; and the LORD saved them by a great victory.

## MIGHTY MAN ELEAZAR

and after him was Eleazar ("God has helped") the son of [Dodo](#) the [Ahohite](#), one of the three mighty men with David when they defied the Philistines who were gathered there to battle and the men of Israel had withdrawn - Dodo himself was the commander of one of the divisions of the army (1Ch 27:4). 1Ch 11:13 says "the people fled before the Philistines" and here the **men of Israel**, surely the referring to the soldiers who retreated from the Philistine forces while Eleazar (and apparently David) took their stand.

**ELEAZAR** - The son of Dodo the Ahohite, of the tribe of Benjamin, one of the three most eminent of David's thirty-seven heroes (1 Chr. 11:12) who broke through the Philistine host and brought him water from the well of Bethlehem (2Sa 23:9, 16). There are 8 men named Eleazar found in the Bible, although none quite as noteworthy as Aaron's third son [Eleazar](#). Some were Levitical priests, one was of the same line as Jesus, one was known for having married and divorced a foreign wife, and one even fought the Philistines "till his hand grew tired and froze to the sword" (2 Samuel 23:10). You can read about each of these other men named Eleazar in 1 Samuel 7:1; 2 Samuel 23:9-10; 1 Chronicles 11:12; 23:21-22 and 24:28; Ezra 8:33; 10:2 and 25; Nehemiah 12:42; and Matthew 1:15.

**THREE MIGHTY MEN** - 7x/7v - 2Sa 23:9; 2Sa 23:16; 2Sa 23:17; 2Sa 23:22; 1Ch 11:12; 1Ch 11:19; 1Ch 11:24

**2 Samuel 23:10** He arose and struck the Philistines until his hand was weary and clung to the sword, and the LORD brought about a great victory that day; and the people returned after him only to strip the slain.

- **the Lord:** Jos 10:10,42 11:8 Jdg 15:14,18 1Sa 11:13 14:6,23 19:5 2Ki 5:1 Ps 108:13 144:10 Ro 15:18 2Co 4:5 Eph 6:10-18
- **and the people:** Ps 68:12 Isa 53:12
- [2 Samuel 23 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### Related Passage:

Judges 15:18 (SAMSON) Then he became very thirsty, and he called to the LORD and said, "You have given this great **deliverance** by the hand of Your servant, and now shall I die of thirst and fall into the hands of the uncircumcised?"

## ELEAZAR FIGHTS UNTIL WEARY & YAHWEH BRINGS VICTORY

**He (ELEAZAR) arose and struck the Philistines until his hand was weary and clung to the sword - NET** - "he stood his ground and fought the Philistines until his hand grew so tired that it seemed stuck to his sword." Here the writer says **he arose and struck** which implies Eleazar was alone but 1Ch 11:14 says "**They** (Parallel passage in 1Ch 11:13 - Eleazar "was with David at [Pasdammim](#)") took their stand in the midst of the plot and defended it, and struck down the Philistines; and the LORD saved ([yasha](#)) them by a great victory ([teshuah](#)); Lxx - [soteria](#) = salvation, deliverance)."

**and the LORD brought about a great victory ([teshuah](#) from [yasha](#)); Lxx - [soteria](#) = salvation, deliverance) that day** - 1Ch 11:14 says "the LORD saved ([yasha](#)) them (David and Eleazar)." Once again we see the characteristic juxtaposition of God's sovereignty and Man's responsibility. The idea is "Let God, Let's go." (See [Paradoxical Principle of 100% Dependent and 100% Responsible](#)). The victory is possible because of the LORD. I love the proverb which says "The horse is prepared for the day of battle, **but victory belongs to the LORD.**" (Pr 21:31)

**THOUGHT** - Are you experiencing victory over your tireless enemies, the [world](#), the [flesh](#) and the [devil](#)? If so, praise the LORD. If not you might ask whether you are trusting in your "horses and chariots" (whatever that might be in your life that is not directly related to the power and prestige of Yahweh). Ps 20:7<sup>±</sup> says "Some boast in chariots and some in horses, but we will boast in the Name of the LORD, our God."

Victory comes from you, O LORD.

May you bless your people. Interlude (Psa 3:8 NLT)

-- Ps 3:8NLT+

**and the people returned after him only to strip the slain**- It was not just a victory but a **great** victory! So complete was the defeat of the enemy that "When the army returned to him, the only thing left to do was to plunder the corpses." (2Sa 23:10NET)

**Victory** (08668) (teshuah from *yasha'* = save, deliver, help) means a deliverance, a victory, safety, salvation, preservation from harm. Teshuah is often in the context of military conflict (Jdg. 15:18; 1Sa 11:13; 1Ch 11:14). While victory was usually not obtained through human means (Ps 33:17; 108:12; 146:3; Pr21:31), safety came through a multitude of counselors (Pr 11:14; 24:6). The primary Source of deliverance is God (2Ch 6:41 = "O LORD God, be clothed with **salvation**"; Ps 119:81 = "My soul languishes for Your **salvation**; I wait for Your word."; Ps 144:10 = "Who gives salvation to kings, Who rescues David His servant from the evil sword."). The deliverance of the Lord is described by the prophets during the troubled times (Isa. 45:17; 46:13; Jer. 3:23; Lam. 3:26 = "It is good that he waits silently For the **salvation** of the LORD.").

**Gilbrant** - The LORD is the source of victory and help in all spheres of life in general; sometimes it is something experienced presently (Ps. 40:10, 16); sometimes it is a reality to be patiently waited for (Ps 119:41, 81). God's help or deliverance can come at anytime (51:14; Jer. 3:23). The author of Proverbs speaks of a deliverance that comes from counsel, indicating a deliverance from foolish actions and works, as well as their consequences (Prov. 11:14). The deliverance provided through wise counselors is applicable in war, government and nearly all other spheres of life. The LORD's end-time actions of salvation and deliverance will come, and the results will be everlasting (Isa. 45:17; 46:13). ([Complete Biblical Library](#))

**Teshuah - 34x/32v - deliverance(6), help\*(1), salvation(16), victory(11)**. Jdg. 15:18; 1 Sam. 11:9; 1 Sam. 11:13; 1 Sam. 19:5; 2Sa 19:2; 2 Sam. 23:10; 2 Sam. 23:12; 2 Ki. 5:1; 2 Ki. 13:17; 1 Chr. 11:14; 1 Chr. 19:12; 2 Chr. 6:41; Ps. 33:17; Ps. 37:39; Ps. 38:22; Ps. 40:10; Ps. 40:16; Ps. 51:14; Ps. 60:11; Ps. 71:15; Ps. 108:12; Ps. 119:41; Ps. 119:81; Ps. 144:10; Ps. 146:3; Prov. 11:14; Prov. 21:31; Prov. 24:6; Isa. 45:17; Isa. 46:13; Jer. 3:23; Lam. 3:26

**2 Samuel 23:11 Now after him was Shammah the son of Agee a Hararite. And the Philistines were gathered into a troop where there was a plot of ground full of lentils, and the people fled from the Philistines.**

- **Shammah**: 1Ch 11:27
- **the Philistines**: 1Ch 11:13,14
- [2 Samuel 23 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passage:

1 Chronicles 11:27 Shammoth the Hararite, Helez the Pelonite,

### NEXT MIGHTY MAN SHAMMAH

**Now after him was Shammah the son of Agee a Hararite. And the Philistines were gathered into a troop where there was a plot of ground full of lentils, and the people fled from the Philistines** - As des

**SHAMMAH** - The son of Agee, a Hararite, one of the "three mighty men" of David (2Sa23:11, Septuagint Samaia), who held the field against the Philistines. The parallel passage (1Ch 11:10 ff) ascribes this deed to Eleazar, the son of Dodo. The succeeding incident (2 Sam 23:13 ff), namely, the famous act of three of David's heroes who risked their lives to bring their leader water from the well of Bethlehem, has frequently been credited to Shammah and two other members of "the three"; but the three warriors are plainly said (2 Sam 23:13) to belong to "the thirty"; 2 Sam 23:33 should read "Jonathan, son of Shammah, the Hararite." Jonathan, one of David's "thirty," was a son of Shammah; the word "son" has been accidentally omitted (Driver, Budde, Kittel, etc.). The parallel passage (1 Ch 11:34) has "son of Shagee," which is probably, a misreading for "son of Agee." Lucian's version, "son of Shammah," is most plausible. "Shimei the son of Ela" (1 Ki 4:18) should also appear in this passage if Lucian's reading of "Ela" for "Agee" (2 Sam 23:11) be correct.

**2 Samuel 23:12 But he took his stand in the midst of the plot, defended it and struck the Philistines; and the LORD brought about a great victory.**

- **and the LORD** 2Sa 23:10 Ps 3:8 44:2 Pr 21:31
- [2 Samuel 23 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## EXPLOITS OF SHAMMAH

**But** - What a contrast. While the people fled, Shammah stood fast!

**He took his stand in the midst of the plot, defended it and struck the Philistines** - Shammah defeated the enemy by holding his ground and trusting in the LORD to give him the victory.

**THOUGHT** - One is reminded of the command to us as soldiers of the LORD (2Ti 2:3-4+) that when (not "if" but "when") we confronted by the schemes of our adversary we are to "**Submit** ([aorist imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) therefore to God. **Resist** ([aorist imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) the devil and he will flee from you (James 4:7+) And Peter's command "**resist** ([aorist imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) him (THE ADVERSARY) firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world." (1Pe 5:9+)

**and the LORD brought about a great victory** ([teshuah](#); Lxx - [soteria](#) = salvation, deliverance) - By now you already know what I will write! Once again we see the juxtaposition of God's hand of sovereign power and the human efforts of Shammah.

**THOUGHT** - The only way we can truly experience victory over our archenemies, the [world](#), the [flesh](#) and the [devil](#), is by fighting the good fight of faith, but doing so all the while depending on His Spirit's sovereign power for the victory. As David said "Thine, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty." And as the psalmist sang "O Sing to the LORD a new song, For He has done wonderful things, His right hand and His holy arm have gained the victory for Him." (Ps 98:1+)

Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory  
through our Lord Jesus Christ.

-- 1Cor 15:57+

**2 Samuel 23:13 Then three of the thirty chief men went down and came to David in the harvest time to the cave of Adullam, while the troop of the Philistines was camping in the valley of Rephaim.**

- **three of the thirty chief men**, 1Ch 11:15-19
- **the cave**: Jos 12:15 15:35 1Sa 22:1 Mic 1:15
- **valley of Rephaim**: 2Sa 5:18,22 1Ch 11:15 14:9 Isa 17:5
- [2 Samuel 23 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### Related Passages:

1 Chronicles 11:15-19 (Now **three of the thirty chief men** went down to the rock to David, into the cave of [Adullam](#), while the army of the Philistines was camping in the [valley of Rephaim](#). 16 David was then in the stronghold, while the garrison of the Philistines was then in Bethlehem. 17 David had a craving and said, "Oh that someone would give me water to drink from the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate!" 18 So the three broke through the camp of the Philistines and drew water from the well of Bethlehem which was by the gate, and took it and brought it to David; nevertheless David would not drink it, but poured it out to the LORD; 19 and he said, "Be it far from me before my God that I should do this. Shall I drink the blood of these men who went at the risk of their lives? For at the risk of their lives they brought it." Therefore he would not drink it. These things the three mighty men did.

## THREE OF THIRTY GO TO DAVID AT ADULLAM

**Then three of the thirty chief men went down and came to David in the harvest time to the cave of Adullam, while the troop of the Philistines was camping in the [valley of Rephaim](#)**

**THE THIRTY - A KEY PHRASE** - 2Sa 23:13; 2Sa 23:18; 2Sa 23:19; 2Sa 23:23; 2Sa 23:24; 1Ch 11:11; 1Ch 11:15; 1Ch 11:20; 1Ch 11:25; 1Ch 12:4; 1Ch 12:18; 1Ch 27:6

**2 Samuel 23:14 David was then in the stronghold, while the garrison of the Philistines was then in Bethlehem.**

- **David was then in the stronghold:** 1Sa 22:1,4,5 24:22 1Ch 12:16
- **while the garrison:** 1Sa 10:5 13:4,23 14:1,6
- [2 Samuel 23 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### **DAVID IN THE STRONGHOLD PHILISTINES IN BETHLEHEM**

**David was then in the stronghold, while the garrison of the Philistines was then in Bethlehem**

**2 Samuel 23:15 David had a craving and said, "Oh that someone would give me water to drink from the well of Bethlehem which is by the gate!"**

- **David had a craving** Nu 11:4,5 Ps 42:1,2 63:1 119:81 Isa 41:17 44:3 Joh 4:10,14 Joh 7:37
- **the well of Bethlehem:** Joh 4:14
- [2 Samuel 23 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### **DAVID CRAVES WATER FROM BETHLEHEM**

**David had a craving and said, "Oh that someone would give me water to drink from the well of Bethlehem which is by the gate!"** - This desire must have been clearly vocalized so that his mighty men were able to hear it, which led them to respond.

**2 Samuel 23:16 So the three mighty men broke through the camp of the Philistines, and drew water from the well of Bethlehem which was by the gate, and took it and brought it to David. Nevertheless he would not drink it, but poured it out to the LORD;**

- **the three:** 2Sa 23:9 1Sa 19:5 Ac 20:24 Ro 5:7 2Co 5:14
- **poured it:** Nu 28:7 1Sa 7:6 La 2:19 Php 2:17
- [2 Samuel 23 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### **THREE MIGHTY MEN RISK LIVES FOR WATER**

**So the three mighty men broke through the camp of the Philistines, and drew water from the well of Bethlehem which was by the gate, and took it and brought it to David** - Admittedly David had not asked them to risk their lives, but this does show the loyalty and commitment of these men to David as their leader.

**Nevertheless he would not drink it, but poured it out to the LORD**- Had I been one of the 3 mighty men, I would have been a bit put off by David's actions. After all the three had already risked their lives. But he does not just pour it out on the ground, but uses it as an offering unto YAHWEH, so that the efforts of these three was not a waste.

**2 Samuel 23:17 and he said, "Be it far from me, O LORD, that I should do this. Shall I drink the blood of the men who went in jeopardy of their lives?" Therefore he would not drink it. These things the three mighty men did.**

- **Be it far:** 2Sa 20:20 Ge 44:17 1Sa 2:30 26:11 1Ki 21:3 1Ch 11:19

- **the blood:** Ge 9:4 Lev 17:10 Ps 72:14 Mt 26:28 Mk 14:24 Joh 6:52-54
- **jeopardy:** Jdg 5:18 1Co 15:30
- [2 Samuel 23 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## DAVID'S EXPLANATION FOR NOT DRINKING THE WATER

and he said, "Be it far from me, O LORD, that I should do this. Shall I drink the blood of the men who went in jeopardy of their lives?" Therefore he would not drink it.

**These things the three mighty men did** - This seems to be like a summary statement.

**2 Samuel 23:18 Abishai, the brother of Joab, the son of Zeruah, was chief of the thirty. And he swung his spear against three hundred and killed them, and had a name as well as the three.**

- **Abishai:** 2Sa 2:18 3:30 10:10,14 18:2 20:10 1Sa 26:6-8 1Ch 2:16 11:20,21
- [2 Samuel 23 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## ABISHAI'S PROWESS WITH THE SPEAR

**Abishai**, the brother of Joab, the son of **Zeruah**, was chief of the thirty - **Abishai** was the leader of the thirty.

**And he swung his spear against three hundred and killed them, and had** (won) **a name as well as** (beside) **the three** - **NLT** = "He once used his spear to kill 300 enemy warriors in a single battle. It was by such feats that he became as famous as the Three." **NET** = "and gained fame among the three." **CSB** = "gaining a reputation among the Three" The identity of the **three hundred** is not specified but clearly were enemies of Israel. His prowess with the spear earned him a reputation among the thirty.

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**Bob Utley** - There is some confusion between "3" and "30" throughout this chapter (i.e., vv. 8,13,18,19,23,24). Apparently there was a military leadership of two levels.

1. three main leaders of the elite group of thirty leaders
2. thirty special leaders of military groupings; this is a title and not a number (cf. v. 39)
3. The JPSOA translates this as "another three," implying a third division of the elite military commanders.
  1. the three
  2. another three
  3. the thirty

**2 Samuel 23:19 He was most honored of the thirty, therefore he became their commander; however, he did not attain to the three.**

NET 2 Samuel 23:19 From the three he was given honor and he became their officer, even though he was not one of the three.

CSB 2 Samuel 23:19 Was he not more honored than the Three? He became their commander even though he did not become one of the Three.

ESV 2 Samuel 23:19 He was the most renowned of the thirty and became their commander, but he did not attain to the three.

NIV 2 Samuel 23:19 Was he not held in greater honor than the Three? He became their commander, even though he was not included among them.

NLT 2 Samuel 23:19 Abishai was the most famous of the Thirty and was their commander, though he was not one of the Three.

NRS 2 Samuel 23:19 He was the most renowned of the Thirty, and became their commander; but he did not

attain to the Three.

NJB 2 Samuel 23:19 He was a most illustrious member of the Thirty and became their captain, but he was not equal to the Three.

- **attain:** 2Sa 23:9,13,16 1Ch 11:25 Mt 13:8,23 1Co 15:41
- [2 Samuel 23 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## ABISHAI HONORED WITH COMMAND

**He was most honored of the thirty, therefore he became their commander** (officer) - [Abishai's](#) reputation as a warrior rose to the top of the thirty

**However** (term of contrast), **he did not attain to the three**- Either he did not attain to the honor of the other three or he was not included among them.

**2 Samuel 23:20 Then Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, the son of a valiant man of Kabzeel, who had done mighty deeds, killed the two sons of Ariel of Moab. He also went down and killed a lion in the middle of a pit on a snowy day.**

- **Benaiah:** 2Sa 8:18 20:23 1Ki 1:8,26,38 2:29-35,46 1Ch 18:17 27:5,6
- **Kabzeel:** Jos 15:21
- **he slew:** Ex 15:15
- **two sons of Ariel of Moab** 2Sa 1:23 1Ch 11:22-24 12:8
- **killed a lion:** Jdg 14:5,6 1Sa 17:34-37
- [2 Samuel 23 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### Related Passage:

1 Chronicles 11:22 Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, the son of a valiant man of Kabzeel, mighty in deeds, struck down the two sons of Ariel of Moab. He also went down and killed a lion inside a pit on a snowy day.

2 Samuel 8:18 Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was over the Cherethites and the Pelethites; and David's sons were chief ministers.

2 Samuel 20:23 Now Joab was over the whole army of Israel, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was over the Cherethites and the Pelethites (THE BODYGUARDS OF DAVID)

## NEXT MIGHTY MAN BENAIAH

**Then [Benaiah](#) the son of Jehoiada, the son of a valiant man of Kabzeel, who had done mighty deeds-** Benaiah was one of David's mighty warriors, son of Jehoiada the chief priest, a Levite, and was set by David over his bodyguard. Benaiah remained devoted to David during Absalom's rebellion (2Sa 20:23; 2Sa 15:18) and also when Adonijah attempted to take control of David's throne (1Ki 1:8) thus remaining faithful to Solomon with the result that he was raised into the place of Joab as commander-in-chief of the army.

**JEHOIADA** - Father of Benaiah, the captain of David's body-guard (2Sa 8:18; 2Sa 20:23; 23:20,22; 1 Ki 1:8, etc.). Jehoiada was "the son of a valiant man of Kabzeel" (2 Sam 23:20), but commentators read with Septuagint and Ewald, "Benaiah (the son of Jehoiada) a man of valor." Kabzeel was a town belonging to Judah on the border of Edom in the South (Josh 15:21). In 1 Ch 27:5, we read "Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada the priest, chief," the Revised Version (British and American), but the Revised Version margin has "chief minister" wrongly. Yet Jehoiada is nowhere else called a priest or even a Levite, though in 1 Ch 12:27 (Hebrew, verse 28) a Jehoiada is mentioned as a military "leader of the house of Aaron," who came to David to Hebron with other members of the house of Levi. In 1 Ch 27:34 there is named among David's counselors, "Jehoiada the son. of Benaiah," where some commentators would read with two manuscripts, "Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada" though Curtis, Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Books of Chronicles, 295, keeps the Massoretic Text.

**KABZEEL** - kab'-ze-el, kab'-zel (kabhtse'el "(whom) God collects"): One of the "uttermost cities" of Judah toward the border of Edom in the South (Negeb) (Josh 15:21). It was the native place of Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada, one of David's mighty men (2 Sam 23:20; 1 Ch 11:22). "Jekabzeel and the villages thereof," one of the places re-inhabited by the men of Judah (Neh 11:25), appears to be the same place. The site is unknown.

**killed the two sons of Ariel of Moab** - KJV has "lionlike men of Moab." NIV = "He struck down two of Moab's best men." Ariel = "lion of God"

**He also went down and killed a lion in the middle of a pit on a snowy day**- Not only was he known for killing strong lionlike men of Moab but killing a lion. NLT says "Another time, on a snowy day, he chased a lion down into a pit and killed it."

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#### QUESTION - [Who was Benaiah in the Bible?](#)

**ANSWER** - Several men in the Bible bear the name Benaiah, but one stands out from the rest. Benaiah, son of the chief priest Jehoiada, was one of David's "[mighty men](#)"—his toughest military troop. The Bible describes Benaiah as a fearless warrior noted for his heroic exploits. This Benaiah is the brilliant fighter who famously "went down into a pit on a snowy day and killed a lion" (1 Chronicles 11:22).

Benaiah was from the southern Judean city of Kabzeel. Before [David](#) became king, Benaiah was making a name for himself through numerous daring military achievements: "He struck down Moab's two mightiest warriors. He also went down into a pit on a snowy day and killed a lion. And he struck down a huge Egyptian. Although the Egyptian had a spear in his hand, Benaiah went against him with a club. He snatched the spear from the Egyptian's hand and killed him with his own spear. Such were the exploits of Benaiah son of Jehoiada; he too was as famous as the three mighty warriors" (2Sa 23:20–22).

When David fled from King Saul, he placed Benaiah in command of "the thirty" (1 Chronicles 27:6), a select group of warriors second only to "the three" of highest rank and bravery. Later, when Joab was made commander-in-chief, Benaiah was appointed to a high place in David's armed forces as commander of the Cherethites and Pelethites, an elite mercenary company in David's bodyguard from Crete and Philistia (2 Samuel 8:18; 20:23; 23:23; 1 Chronicles 18:17).

Benaiah's loyalty to King David earned him the rank of third army commander, with 24,000 men in his division. This troop served as part of the army rotation system established by King David (1 Chronicles 27:1–6). Benaiah remained devoted to David during Absalom's rebellion (2 Samuel 20:23; see also 15:18) and also when Adonijah attempted to take control of David's throne (1 Kings 1:8).

Benaiah was instrumental in safeguarding the passing of the royal succession to Solomon after David's death and thus gained the honor of assisting in Solomon's coronation at Gihon (1 Kings 1:32–40). As Solomon's supreme army commander and chief bodyguard, Benaiah was responsible for executing those who opposed the new king, including Adonijah, Joab, and Shimei (1 Kings 2:25, 34, 46).

*Benaiah*, a popular Hebrew name, means "the Lord has built." Other men named Benaiah in the Bible include a warrior from the town of Pirathon, who was also one of David's mighty men (2 Samuel 23:30; 1 Chronicles 11:31). This Benaiah was commander of 24,000 troops as well, in the eleventh division of King David's army (1 Chronicles 27:14).

1 Chronicles 4:36 mentions a Benaiah as a descendant of Simeon and leader of his tribe. This Benaiah participated in the conquest of Gedor during Hezekiah's reign. Another Benaiah was one of the musicians and priests who blew the trumpet as the ark of God was brought into Jerusalem by King David (1 Chronicles 15:24). Later, he was appointed to minister in music regularly before the ark of the covenant (1 Chronicles 16:6). At least eight other Benaiahs appear briefly in the Old Testament (1 Chronicles 27:34; 2 Chronicles 20:14; 31:13; Ezra 10:25, 30, 35, 43; 11:1, 13). But none of these distinguish themselves like David's elite warrior, the Benaiah who single-handedly executed Moab's top soldiers, jumped into a pit in a snowstorm to wrestle and kill a lion, and outmaneuvered an Egyptian giant, slaying him with his own spear. [GotQuestions.org](#)

**2 Samuel 23:21 He killed an Egyptian, an impressive man. Now the Egyptian had a spear in his hand, but he went down to him with a club and snatched the spear from the Egyptian's hand and killed him with his own spear.**

- **an impressive man** 1Ch 11:23, a man of great stature
- **killed him:** 1Sa 17:51 Col 2:15
- [2 Samuel 23 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries



## **BENAIAH'S BRAVERY AGAINST A GOLIATH SIZED MAN**

He ([Benaiah](#)) killed an Egyptian, an impressive (NET - impressive looking; CSB - huge) man. Now the Egyptian had a spear in his hand, but he went down to him with a club and snatched the spear from the Egyptian's hand and killed him with his own spear - [Benaiah](#) was notable for his bravery in this case against a particularly formidable opponent, 1Ch 11:23 stating that [Benaiah](#) "killed an Egyptian, a man of great stature five cubits tall (SEVEN AND A HALF FEET TALL). Now in the Egyptian's hand was a spear like a weaver's beam (LIKE GOLIATH'S IN 1Sa 17:7), but he went down to him with a club and snatched the spear from the Egyptian's hand and killed him with his own spear." The NLT says "Benaiah wrenched the spear from the Egyptian's hand and killed him with it."

**2 Samuel 23:22 These things Benaiah the son of Jehoiada did, and had a name as well as the three mighty men.**

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## **BENAIAH'S FEATS GAINED HIM FAME**

**These things Benaiah the son of Jehoiada did, and had a name as well as the three mighty men** - Benaiah gained fame even among the three elite warriors, which the NLT refers to as the "three mightiest warriors."

**2 Samuel 23:23 He was honored among the thirty, but he did not attain to the three. And David appointed him over his guard.**

- **He was honored among the thirty** 1Ch 27:6
- **over his guard:** 2Sa 8:8 2Sa 20:23 1Sa 22:14
- [2 Samuel 23 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### **Related Passages:**

2 Samuel 20:23 Now Joab was over the whole army of Israel, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was over the Cherethites and the Pelethites;

1 Chronicles 27:6 This Benaiah was the mighty man of the thirty, and had charge of thirty; and over his division was Ammizabad his son.

## **BENAIAH HONORED AMONG THE THIRTY**

**He was honored among the thirty, but he did not attain to the three. And David appointed him over his guard** - NET = "He received honor from the thirty warriors, though he was not one of the three elite warriors. David put him in charge of his bodyguard."

**THE THIRTY - A KEY PHRASE** - 2Sa 23:13; 2Sa 23:18; 2Sa 23:19; 2Sa 23:23; 2Sa 23:24; 1Ch 11:11; 1Ch 11:15; 1Ch 11:20; 1Ch 11:25; 1Ch 12:4; 1Ch 12:18; 1Ch 27:6

**2 Samuel 23:24 Asahel the brother of Joab was among the thirty; Elhanan the son of Dodo of Bethlehem,**

- **Asahel:** 2Sa 2:18 1Ch 11:26 1Ch 27:7
- [2 Samuel 23 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### **Related Passages:**

2 Samuel 2:18 Now the three sons of Zeruiah were there, Joab and Abishai and **Asahel**; and **Asahel** was as swift-footed as one of the gazelles which is in the field.

1 Chronicles 11:26 Now the mighty men of the armies were **Asahel** the brother of Joab, Elhanan the son of Dodo of Bethlehem,

1 Chronicles 27:7 The fourth for the fourth month was **Asahel** the brother of Joab, and Zebadiah his son after him; and in his division were 24,000.

## OTHER OF DAVID'S MIGHTY MEN

**Asahel** ("God made" or "made by God") **the brother of Joab was among the thirty**- The brother of Joab and Abishai. The three were sons of Zeruah, one of David's sisters (1 Ch 2:15,16; 2 Sam 2:18, etc.). The three brothers seem to have been from the beginning members of David's troop of strangely respectable brigands. Asahel was distinguished for his swift running, and this fact brought misfortune upon him and upon Israel. When Abner and the forces of Ish-bosheth were defeated near Gibeon, Asahel pursued Abner. Abner knew that he could outright Asahel, though he could not outrun him. He also knew that the time had come for making David king, and that a blood feud among the leaders would be a calamity. He expostulated with Asahel, but in vain. It came to a fight, and Abner slew Asahel (2 Sam 2:3). As a result the coming of David to the throne of all Israel was delayed; and when at last Abner brought it about, he himself was treacherously killed by Joab in alleged blood revenge for Asahel. Asahel is mentioned as sixth in the list of David's "mighty men" (2 Sam 23:24; 1 Ch 11:26). The earlier of the names in this list are evidently arranged in the order of seniority. If it be assumed that the list was not made till after the death of Asahel, still there is no difficulty in the idea that some of the names in the list were placed there posthumously. Asahel is also mentioned as the fourth of David's month-by-month captains (1 Ch 27:7).

**Elhanan** ("God has been gracious") **the son of Dodo of Bethlehem** - Note this **Elhanan** is different from the one described in 2Sa 21:19 who slew Lahmi, the brother of Goliath, the Gittite (1Chr. 20:5). Note also that that there are two men in chapter 23 named **Dodo**, the first being the father of Eleazar (2Sa 23:9) and this Dodo, the father of **Elhanan**.

**Charles Ryrie** points out that "The **thirty** composed the elite core of David's mighty men, to which replacements were added as men were killed. The active number was kept at 30 warriors; hence the list contains more than 30 names. (Borrow [Ryrie Study Bible](#))

**THE THIRTY - A KEY PHRASE** - 2Sa 23:13; 2Sa 23:18; 2Sa 23:19; 2Sa 23:23; 2Sa 23:24; 1Ch 11:11; 1Ch 11:15; 1Ch 11:20; 1Ch 11:25; 1Ch 12:4; 1Ch 12:18; 1Ch 27:6

### 2 Samuel 23:25 Shammah the Harodite, Elika the Harodite,

- **Shammah**: 1Ch 11:27-28, Shammoth the Harorite
- [2 Samuel 23 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

1 Chronicles 11:27-28 Shammoth the Harorite, Helez the Pelonite, 28 Ira the son of Ikkesh the Tekoite, Abiezer the Anathothite,

**Shammah the Harodite** - Distinct from **Shamman** the son of Agee the Hararite in 2Sa 23:11.

**Elika the Harodite** - The Septuagint omits Elika and his name is also omitted in the parallel passage in 1 Ch 11:27, where "Harorite" is a clerical error for "Harodite," the Hebrew letter dalet ("d") being taken for the Hebrew letter resh ("r"). Possibly Harodite may be connected with the well of HAROD

### 2 Samuel 23:26 Helez the Paltite, Ira the son of Ikkesh the Tekoite,

- **Paltite**: 1Ch 11:27 1Ch 27:10, Pelonite
- **Ira**: 1Ch 11:28 27:9
- **Tekoite**: 2Sa 14:2
- [2 Samuel 23 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

1 Chronicles 11:27 Shammoth the Harorite, Helez the Pelonite,

1 Chronicles 27:10 The seventh for the seventh month was Helez the Pelonite of the sons of Ephraim; and in his division were 24,000.

**Helez the Paltite** One of David's mighty men; according to 1Ch 27:10, he belonged to the sons of Ephraim and was at the head of the 7th course in David's organization of the kingdom.

**Ira the son of Ikkesh the Tekoite** - Ira is distinct from Ira the Jairite and priest of David in (2Sa 20:26)

#### 2 Samuel 23:27 Abiezer the Anathothite, Mebunnai the Hushathite,

- **Abiezer:** 1Ch 11:28, Antothite
- **Mebunnai:** 1Ch 11:29, Sibbecai
- [2 Samuel 23 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Abiezer** ("father of help") the **Anathothite** - In Abiezer the Anathothite of the Benjamites; and in his division were 24,000. He is one of One of David's mighty men, "the Anathothite" (2 Sam 23:27; 1 Ch 11:28), who was also one of David's month-by-month captains, his month being the ninth (1 Ch 27:12).

**Mebunnai** ("building of Jehovah") the **Hushathite** - One of David's mighty men. In 2Sa 21:18 he is named "Sibbechai" and is mentioned as the slayer of a Philistine giant. In 1 Chronicles 11:29 it reads "Sibbecai the Hushathite, Ithai the Ahoite." Easton's says he is one of David's heroes (1 Chr. 11:29), general of the eighth division of the army (1Ch 27:11). He slew the giant Saph in the battle of Gob (2 Sam. 21:18; R.V., "Sibbechai"). Called also Mebunnai (23:27).

#### 2 Samuel 23:28 Zalmon the Ahoite, Maharai the Netophathite,

- **Maharai:** 1Ch 11:30 27:13
- [2 Samuel 23 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Zalmon** ("shady") the **Ahoite** - One of David's warriors also Ithai (1 Chr. 11:29).

**Maharai** (*impetuous*) the **Netophathite** - ISBE - One of David's "braves" (2 Sam 23:28; 1 Ch 11:30; 27:13). He was one of the 12 monthly captains of David's administration, and took the 10th month in rotation. He was of the family of Zerach, and dwelt in Netophah in Judah.

#### 2 Samuel 23:29 Heleb the son of Baanah the Netophathite, Ithai the son of Ribai of Gibeah of the sons of Benjamin,

- **Heleb:** 1Ch 11:30, Heled, 1Ch 27:15, Heldai
- **Ithai:** 1Ch 11:31, Ithai
- [2 Samuel 23 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passage:

1 Chronicles 11:30 Maharai the Netophathite, **Heled the son of Baanah the Netophathite**, 31 **Ithai the son of Ribai** of Gibeah of the sons of Benjamin, Benaiah the Pirathonite,

1 Chronicles 27:15 The twelfth for the twelfth month was **Heldai the Netophathite of Othniel**; and in his division were 24,000.

**Heleb the son of Baanah the Netophathite**, - ISBE - A captain of the temple-service, appointed for the 12th month (1 Ch 27:15). Same as **Heled** (cheledh) in parallel list (compare 1 Ch 11:30), and is probably also to be identified with **Heleb**, son of Baanah the Netophathite, one of David's heroic leaders (2 Sam 23:29).

**Ithai the son of Ribai of Gibeah of the sons of Benjamin** - 1 Chronicles 11:31 **Ithai** the son of Ribai of Gibeah of the sons of Benjamin, Benaiah the Pirathonite,

## 2 Samuel 23:30 Benaiah a Pirathonite, Hiddai of the brooks of Gaash,

- **Benaiah:** 1Ch 11:31 27:14
- **Pirathonite:** Jdg 12:15
- **Hiddai:** 1Ch 11:32, Hurai
- **brooks:** De 1:24 Jdg 2:9
- [2 Samuel 23 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

[Benaiah](#) a [Pirathonite](#) - Not the same as Benaiah in 2Sa 23:20, 22.

[Hiddai](#) of the brooks of [Gaash](#) - 1 Chronicles 11:32 **Hurai** of the brooks of Gaash, Abiel the Arbathite,

## 2 Samuel 23:31 Abi-albon the Arbathite, Azmaveth the Barhumite,

- **Abi-albon:** 1Ch 11:32, Abiel
- **Barhumite:** 1Ch 11:33
- [2 Samuel 23 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

[Abi-albon](#) the [Arbathite](#), 1 Chronicles 11:32 **Hurai** of the brooks of Gaash, **Abiel the Arbathite**,

[Azmaveth](#) the [Barhumite](#) 1 Chronicles 11:33 Azmaveth the Baharumite, Eliahba the Shaalbonite,

## 2 Samuel 23:32 Eliahba the Shaalbonite, the sons of Jashen, Jonathan,

- Jashen: 1Ch 11:34, Hashem, the Gizonite
- [2 Samuel 23 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

[Eliahba](#) the [Shaalbonite](#),

the sons of [Jashen](#), Jonathan

## 2 Samuel 23:33 Shammah the Hararite, Ahiam the son of Sharar the Ararite,

- Shammah: 1Ch 11:27
- Sharar: 1Ch 11:35, Sacar
- [2 Samuel 23 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

[Shammah](#) the [Hararite](#), [Ahiam](#) the son of [Sharar](#) the Ararite

## 2 Samuel 23:34 Eliphelet the son of Ahasbai, the son of the Maacathite, Eliam the son of Ahithophel the Gilonite,

- Eliam: 2Sa 11:3 15:31 17:23 1Ch 27:33,34
- [2 Samuel 23 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

[Eliphelet](#) the son of [Ahasbai](#), the son of the [Maacathite](#), [Eliam](#) the son of [Ahithophel](#) the [Gilonite](#),

## 2 Samuel 23:35 Hezro the Carmelite, Paarai the Arbite,

- Hezrai: 1Ch 11:37, Hezro

- [2 Samuel 23 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

[Hezro](#) the [Carmelite](#), [Paarai](#) the [Arbite](#),

**2 Samuel 23:36 Igal the son of Nathan of Zobah, Bani the Gadite,**

- Igal: 1Ch 11:38, Joel
- [2 Samuel 23 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

[Igal](#) the son of Nathan of [Zobah](#), [Bani](#) the [Gadite](#),

**2 Samuel 23:37 Zelek the Ammonite, Naharai the Beerothite, armor bearers of Joab the son of Zeruiah,**

- Zelek: 1Ch 11:39
- Nahari: 1Ch 11:37
- [2 Samuel 23 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

[Zelek](#) the [Ammonite](#), [Naharai](#) the [Beerothite](#), armor bearers of Joab the son of Zeruiah,

**2 Samuel 23:38 Ira the Ithrite, Gareb the Ithrite,**

- Ira: 2Sa 20:26 1Ch 2:53, 11:40
- [2 Samuel 23 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

[Ira](#) the [Ithrite](#), [Gareb](#) the [Ithrite](#),

**2 Samuel 23:39 Uriah the Hittite; thirty-seven in all.**

- **Uriah:** 2Sa 11:3,6-27 12:9 1Ki 15:5 1Ch 11:41 Mt 1:6
- **thirty and seven in all:** in the parallel place in 1 Chronicles, there are sixteen added!
- [2 Samuel 23 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Uriah the Hittite; thirty-seven in all.**

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**QUESTION - [Who was Uriah the Hittite?](#)**

**ANSWER** - Uriah was a [Hittite](#) who had become part of King David's [mighty men](#); he is most known for being the husband of Bathsheba. There is much we can learn from Uriah and the account involving him.

We assume that all who were counted among David's mighty men were men David deemed to be trustworthy. In the account of [David](#), [Bathsheba](#), and Uriah, we see just how honorable Uriah was. The story is found in 2 Samuel 11. During the spring, the usual time for battles, the military forces of Israel went to war under the leadership of [General Joab](#), while King David remained in Jerusalem. As David was walking around one day, he saw Bathsheba bathing on the roof of her house and was intrigued by her beauty. He sent someone to ask about her and discovered she was Uriah's wife. Unfortunately, that knowledge did not dissuade David from acting on his lust; the king summoned Bathsheba to the palace and slept with her. As a result, she became pregnant.

After Bathsheba told David that she was pregnant, he tried to cover up his adultery. His first plan was to call Uriah home from battle. After asking how the battle was going, David told Uriah to go to his house and even sent along a gift for him. The idea was that, while he was home, Uriah would sleep with his wife, and thus he and others would think that the coming child belonged to Uriah. But Uriah was a man of principle. He did not go back to his house but remained at the palace entrance among the king's servants. When David learned of this the next morning, he asked Uriah why he hadn't gone home. "Uriah said to David, 'The ark and Israel and Judah are staying in tents, and my commander Joab and my lord's men are camped in the open country. How could I go to my

house to eat and drink and make love to my wife? As surely as you live, I will not do such a thing!” (2 Samuel 11:11). Though Uriah had been granted a temporary reprieve from battle by the king, he was a true soldier and chose to remain focused on his mission. Uriah could not fathom indulging his own pleasures while his band of brothers were fighting a battle that still needed to be won.

David asked Uriah to stay one more day and invited Uriah to eat and drink with him. David plied him with alcohol, and Uriah got drunk, but that night he still refused to return to his house and his wife’s embrace. Even drunk, Uriah retained his honor as a soldier.

Seeing that his plot to make Uriah believe the baby was his was not going to work, David turned to another, even more sinister plan. The king sent Uriah back to the battle bearing an official letter that instructed Joab, the commander of the army, to place Uriah where the fighting was fiercest and then to withdraw from him, leaving Uriah to die at the hands of the enemy. Joab followed orders, and Uriah the Hittite was killed, along with some others of David’s army. A messenger brought news of Uriah’s death to David, who sent this message back to Joab: “Don’t let this upset you; the sword devours one as well as another” (2 Samuel 11:25).

Murdering Uriah did not resolve David’s problems, of course. After the time for mourning ended, David took Bathsheba to be his wife. “But the thing David had done displeased the LORD” (2 Samuel 11:27). God sent the prophet Nathan to confront David regarding his sin. Nathan told a story of a rich man with many sheep and cattle and a poor man who had only one ewe lamb that was like a daughter to him. The rich man refused to use a sheep of his own to prepare a meal for a traveler and instead took the poor man’s ewe. “David burned with anger against the man” and even said the man should die and must pay four times the amount the lamb was worth (2 Samuel 12:5–6). “Then Nathan said to David, ‘You are the man!’” (2 Samuel 12:7). The prophet proceeded to describe all that God had given David and God’s willingness to give more. He asked why David had despised God’s word by doing evil, having Uriah killed and taking Uriah’s wife. Nathan also told David that the sword would never depart from his house, that his wives would be taken from him publicly, and that the son he had conceived with Bathsheba would die. All of this happened.

In a quick summation of David’s life, 1 Kings 15:5 says, “David had done what was right in the eyes of the Lord and had not failed to keep any of the Lord’s commands all the days of his life—except in the case of Uriah the Hittite.” David’s evil scheme against the honorable Uriah was a blot on an otherwise stellar record. Uriah was a casualty of someone else’s sin. He serves as an example of loyalty and honor and a reminder that our sin has consequences beyond ourselves.

We’re glad to note that David repented. Psalm 51 is his confession to God and a beautiful prayer for all of us when we sin. God also chose to give David and Bathsheba another son—[Solomon](#), who would become the next king and an ancestor of Jesus, the Messiah. God forgave David, just as He is willing to forgive us (1 John 1:9). [GotQuestions.org](#)