

2nd Samuel Chapters 8-10 – John Karmelich

1. My title for this three chapter section is, “Blessings and Obedience”.
 - a) Let me summarize these three chapters of 2nd Samuel in 3 sentences:
 - i) Chapter 8: David leads the Israel army to victory over enemies.
 - ii) Chapter 9: David shows special kindness to Jonathan’s crippled son.
 - iii) Chapter 10: David leads the Israel army to victory over enemies.
 - b) In Chapters 8 and 10, we have story after story after story of Israel’s battles with their enemies. Each war story has a little different twist, but in the end, Israel wins.
 - c) Sandwiched between these war stories is a whole chapter dedicated to the fact that David gives special favor to his late-best friend’s only living son, Mephibosheth.
 - d) This lesson is going to spend a lot of time focusing on the “why is this here” question.
 - i) The short answer is to understand “blessings”. God shows unmerited blessings on David and David in turn, shows unmerited blessings on others.
 - ii) Both sets of blessings are due to promises. God makes an unconditional promise to bless David. Chapters 8 and 10 are examples of those blessings. Chapter 9 is about David fulfilling his promise to his late best friend Jonathan. David gives a special blessing to Jonathan’s only living son.
 - iii) To summarize this whole lesson: “God blesses us, God expects us to bless others”.
2. Every now and then, it is good to stop and see the bible in context. When you just study a few verses, you can miss the context of the verses in comparison to the whole chapter. Sometimes just studying one or two chapters can also cause us to miss an even bigger picture.
 - a) In chapters 8 and 10, we have a handful of separate war stories. I can teach you some of the historical background with facts and figures. While that is interesting, I take the view that the more important aspect is to ponder how these stories affect our lives.
 - b) One of the ways is to see these three chapters in context of the whole book. God made promises to bless David and build him a dynasty. In these war stories, David is figuring, “Well, if God is going to build me a dynasty, then God must want to work through me to build a great kingdom. Time for me to go kick butt on my enemies!” ☺
 - c) The application for us is all about having the boldness to “step out in faith” and do something for God. The results themselves are up to God, but God desires that we take the effort to go forward and then watch God do great things through us.
 - d) The application of Chapter 9 is about “reflecting” God’s love on others. God shows incredible blessings to David in Chapters 8 and 10. In Chapter 9, we read of David showing incredible blessings on others.
 - e) I can just hear the pessimists out there saying, “Well, yeah, if I was being blessed like David, I too, would have no problems doing good things for others”. ☺
 - f) The lesson to learn is to work on the scale that God has for you. God does not call all of us to be leaders of a nation. Some of us lead a party of one and some lead a small group. God does desire to work through us on whatever scale God has for you at the moment. Want a bigger impact? It might help by showing love and kindness to those around you and then let God decide when you’re ready for a promotion. ☺
3. There is also another “big-picture” idea I want to throw out as a theory: Sometimes I see the entire bible as “man on trial, and man giving every possible excuse that he can to God, and then man failing after that excuse is eliminated”. Let me explain and how it ties to these chapters.
 - a) One of the great questions of life is, “Can mankind be pleasing and obedient to God? In a sense every historical era of the bible is the answer to that question. Let me explain:

- b) First God tried Adam and Eve in a paradise setting. The idea is they were to trust God as to what is right and wrong. Adam and Eve then decided they were going to figure it out by themselves. (Thus, the tree was called, “the tree of the knowledge of good and evil”). The rest of human history can be viewed as God testing to see if man could live a good life without Him. First, God tried a thousand years or so, with “man by himself”. That period of time got so bad a flood was needed to clean up that problem. ☺
 - c) Next, man could give the excuse that, “It’s not our fault we’re sinning. It’s the bad influence of everyone around us.” God said, “OK, I’ll wipe out everyone except one godly family and start over via a flood.” That didn’t help as the “sin gene” still existed. In fact, the chapter after the flood was over is all about a grave sin committed by Noah.
 - d) The next possible excuse man could give God was, “If only there was a good nation of people that were isolated from the world and be examples to others. Then that one nation could be good people.” God answered that request and created the Israelites.
 - e) After that, there was more corruption. So the Israelites said, “If only we had judges to watch over us.” That didn’t work.
 - f) Then came King Saul, the “people’s choice” for a king. That was a mistake. ☹ Then the Israelites said, “If only we had a king that would conquer all the enemies around us, then we would be ok.” That was David. It still didn’t overcome the “sin problem”. Despite the fact that Israel was at the height of power by conquering all around them, there was still the sin issue. David slept with Bathsheba at the height of his power (Chapter 11).
 - g) After David will come Solomon. It is mankind asking in effect, “If we had a time of peace and prosperity all around us, then we will be obedient to God. That didn’t work either.
 - h) My point of this exercise is one can see the bible as a series of “tests and results” where man tries different situations and sees if they can live a life pleasing to God. We are now reading of an era in time here in 2nd Samuel when Israel was at the height of power by conquering all the enemies around them.
 - i) History showed that “it isn’t enough”. Having great political and military power does not take away the temptation for sins as we will see in the future chapters of 2nd Samuel.
 - j) Even the cross itself doesn’t fully deal with the sin problem on earth. We still sin despite our new nature in Christ. God still leaves our old sin nature within us so we understand just what problem sin is. He also wants us to learn to trust Him on a day to day basis.
 - k) OK enough rambling. I’ve got three chapters to cover. Let’s get moving. ☺
4. Chapter 8, Verse 1: In the course of time, David defeated the Philistines and subdued them, and he took Gath from the control of the Philistines.
- a) What is not obvious from the text is that all of the “conquering” that happen in Chapter 8 and 10 follow a geographical pattern. It is as if the bible is saying, “First David conquered everyone to the north of him, then David conquered everyone to the east, and then the south”. Just know that this pattern is there.
 - b) David conquered the Philistines. If you remember from 1st Samuel, the “headquarters” of their base in Israel was a city called Gath. If you cross-reference this text here in 2nd Samuel with the same story in 1st Chronicles, Chapter 16, you learn that another name for the City of Gath is “Gath” as referenced here in Verse 1.
 - c) Remember that the Philistines had been enemies of the Israelites for centuries. Saul failed to be obedient to God and he failed to fully get rid of the Philistines. David was obedient to God and God gave David the privilege of subduing them out of the Israelite territory. The Philistines will come back in future generations, but not during David’s lifetime.
 - d) Getting off topic for a moment, a nickname for the nation of Israel is “Palestine”. The word “Palestine” is a derivative of the word “Philistine”. After the Romans destroyed Israel in 70AD, they (Romans) wanted to insult the Jewish people. Therefore, they called the Promised Land “Palestine” as if to say it was the land of the Philistines. To this day, the term “Palestine” is an insult to those who think the land is not a Jewish homeland.

5. Verse 2: David also defeated the Moabites. He made them lie down on the ground and measured them off with a length of cord. Every two lengths of them were put to death, and the third length was allowed to live. So the Moabites became subject to David and brought tribute.
 - a) Here, we read something gruesome: After finishing conquering the Philistines, David then goes after another group of people called the Moabites. After winning that war, David somehow divided the soldiers (or the people) into two groups. One group has two-thirds of the Moabites and David puts them to death. The other third now have to pay annual taxes to the Israelites as a subservient kingdom.
 - b) OK, why did David do this? The short answer is we don't know.
 - c) If you remember, David's great-grandmother was a Moabite. That was Ruth. In fact, back when David was on the run from Saul, David sent his family over to Moabite territory for protection. (Reference: 1st Samuel 22:3-4). There is a Jewish tradition that the Moabites killed David's family and this is about revenge.
 - d) Chapters 8 and 10 are all stories of war-battles. This is the only story where we read of David killing a portion of the conquered Moabites and making the rest subservient.
 - i) Part of the reason may be God's judgment on the Moabites. This is one of tribes that fought the Israelites as they entered the Promised Land. This may be God's way of saying to them, "The Israelites are my chosen people, they are here to stay and you will now pay for what you did to them."
 - e) It's hard for us to comprehend a lifestyle of "kill or be killed". Remember that the enemies of Israel were a daily death threat. (Gee, what's changed today? ☺) God called on David to eliminate those who didn't want the nation of Israel to exist. This action is also David "sending a message" to other potential enemy nations of the Israelites.
 - f) As we go from "war story to war story" in Chapters 8 and 10, notice how each one is a little different. While there are lessons to learn in the subtleties, the "variety" shows that God is blessing David and "the way God blesses David yesterday is a little different than how he blesses David today or tomorrow". God works that way in our life as well.
6. Verse 3: Moreover, David fought Hadadezer son of Rehob, king of Zobah, when he went to restore his control along the Euphrates River. ⁴ David captured a thousand of his chariots, seven thousand charioteers and twenty thousand foot soldiers. He hamstringed all but a hundred of the chariot horses.
 - a) Now we have war battle #3. This time, we have a king of "Zobah". These are people that lived in what-is-today Syria. David is no longer in the territory of Israel. David is fighting and winning out in "Syria".
 - b) Back in Genesis, God told Abraham that his descendants will have a specific territory. (Ref.: Genesis 15:18). God told Abraham that the territory from Egypt to the Euphrates River would belong to his descendants. That would cover most of Syria and Iraq.
 - i) Here, roughly 1,000 years after that promise to Abraham, is David getting all of that territory. Until now, the Israelites "barely" controlled what we think of as modern Israel. Here under David, that territory expands to much of Syria.
 - ii) The question becomes, "Did David fulfill that promise to Abraham?" The answer is "yes and no". God promised Abraham that He would "give" that territory to his descendants. In David's case, he won it in battle, but that extra territory would only last a generation. I personally take the view at Jesus' Second Coming, "all" the land promised to the Nation of Israel will be theirs during the millennium.
 - c) The text also mentions David hamstringing (i.e., crippling) most of the horses.
 - i) Back in Deuteronomy Chapter 17, there is a law that says a king of Israel must not multiply horses (Deut. 17:16). The idea is that God wants the Israelites to be dependent upon Him for their security and not a large military.

- ii) A more practical theory is that although David couldn't have all of those horses for himself, he also didn't want them to fall into the hands of his enemies, so David hamstrung them so they couldn't be used.
 - iii) The next verse of Deuteronomy states that a king shall not multiply wives to himself. It is interesting how David obeyed the horse-law, but somehow "overlooked" the multiple-wife law. More on that in the next lesson.
- 7. Verse 5: When the Arameans of Damascus came to help Hadadezer king of Zobah, David struck down twenty-two thousand of them. ⁶ He put garrisons in the Aramean kingdom of Damascus, and the Arameans became subject to him and brought tribute. The LORD gave David victory wherever he went.
 - a) Here we have battle scene #4. In battle #3, David fought the King of Zobah.
 - i) The Arameans were allies with Zobah and fought for Zobah.
 - ii) David in turn, killed 20,000 Arameans.
 - iii) To use an old cliché, the Arameans bet on the wrong horse. ☺
 - b) What God is doing here is teaching the surrounding nations that you "Don't mess with the Israelites and more importantly the God of the Israelites".
 - c) God wanted the Israelites to be His witness to the world. Every now and then, God needed to "show off His power" just to get the surrounding nations to understand that the God of Israel is more powerful than any of their "gods". By defeating the nations all of around, and by David being zealous for God, this is God saying in effect, "Now that I've got a guy willing to take a stand for me, it is time for me to show off my power to the surrounding nations so that others will understand that I "am" the God of the people of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob".
 - d) The lesson for us is that the secret to "power" in life is to let God work through us. God wants to bless us and God wants us to be a witness for Him. God will then "show off His power" through us for the purposes of being His witnesses.
 - i) The book of Acts is full of stories and miracles of God showing off his power when and only when that power is used for God's glory and not for the glory of the individual.
 - e) Look at the last line of Verse 6: "The LORD gave David victory wherever he went."
 - i) That is a good summary verse of the whole chapter. The rest is just details.
 - ii) David is not giving himself the credit, nor his army, but God. David realizes that it is God giving David the victory.
 - f) Why is David winning all the time? Mainly because God promised Abraham that all of this territory would belong to Abraham's descendants. That promise was not conditional. All God was looking for was "a man after his own heart" who was willing to step out in faith and "take" what God has promised.
 - i) (Didn't you just see this next mini-sermon coming? ☺) That is what God requires of us. He is looking for men and women willing to boldly go out for God. God will give us victories in life, on His timing. God will get His will done, but God desires to work through people to get it done.
 - g) OK John, what are the specifics? What are "boldly" supposed to do? Glad you asked! ☺ The primary purpose of the Christian life is to "build up the body of Christ". (Reference: Ephesians 4:12) That means that all Christians work together for the benefit of other Christians. For some, that means working on bringing in new members. For others, it is about helping to mature those who are already believers. God wants all of us to get involved, somehow, someway. God gives each of us specific talents to do so. Some help just one person at a time. Some work on large scales. The point is go "boldly" and go do "The Lord's Work". The power of God will then manifest itself to help.

8. Verse 7: David took the gold shields that belonged to the officers of Hadadezer and brought them to Jerusalem. ⁸ From Tebah and Berothai, towns that belonged to Hadadezer, King David took a great quantity of bronze.
 - a) Here we have the results of battle #4 in our series. This time, we read of the gold shields and bronze that David won in the battle. (In case you were interested, the shields are probably wall decorations as opposed to actual battle shields.)
 - b) In Verse 11, we learn that David took all the stuff he won and gave it to God. That alone is another word-picture lesson for us. When we do get “blessings” from God, our job is then to “give it back to Him”. When we help bring in new Christians, or help mature existing Christians, we give the thanks to God and not ourselves.
 - i) This does not mean that every dollar we earn should go to our church. God does expect us to provide for ourselves and those in our family. This is about giving God the credit for all of our victories in life.
9. Verse 9: When Tou king of Hamath heard that David had defeated the entire army of Hadadezer, ¹⁰ he sent his son Joram to King David to greet him and congratulate him on his victory in battle over Hadadezer, who had been at war with Tou. Joram brought with him articles of silver and gold and bronze.
 - a) Now we read of another king called “Hamath”. This king was at war with the king that David just defeated. Therefore this King Hamath made friends with David and brought David more “stuff” (i.e., silver, gold and bronze) as a thank you gift.
 - b) Notice the pattern: In Verses 7-8, David took what prizes he got and give it to God.
 - i) David then got more “unearned blessings” that were unexpected.
 - ii) Then David gave those new gifts to God as well (Verse 11 coming up). It’s almost as if David and God are trying to “one-up” each other as to who can give the most.
 - iii) This ties to the classic Christian cliché, “You can’t out give God.” The historian Josephus states that David’s riches exceeded that of any Jewish king, other than his son Solomon. The point is that David got stuff, he gave it to God and then God “out blessed” whatever David gave to God. You can’t “out-give” God.
 - iv) I’ve yet to see one person go broke from giving too much to God. Both Judaism and Christianity teach of giving 10% of your take home earnings to God. The idea of giving 10% of your earnings to God is God’s way of saying, “Hey come on, test Me! See for yourself if it possible for you to out give Me. Try outgiving me and watch the results”. (My paraphrase of Malachi 3:10).
10. Verse 11: King David dedicated these articles to the LORD, as he had done with the silver and gold from all the nations he had subdued: ¹² Edom and Moab, the Ammonites and the Philistines, and Amalek. He also dedicated the plunder taken from Hadadezer son of Rehob, king of Zobah.
 - a) Here is a summary verse of those David had already conquered in his lifetime. The only nation not part of this Chapter 8-group is “Amalek”. If you remember, David defeated the Amalekites prior to David becoming the king. (Reference: 1st Samuel Chapter 30.)
 - b) As to Verse 11, I’ve already beaten that one to death, so I’ll move on. ☺
11. Verse 13: And David became famous after he returned from striking down eighteen thousand Edomites in the Valley of Salt.
 - a) This verse requires some background commentary: According to some extra-biblical sources, while David was out fighting other nations, the Edomites took advantage of this and went into Southern Israel. David then came back into Israel territory, attacked the Edomites, and killed 18,000 Edomite soldiers in the “Valley of Salt”.
 - b) This battle was actually (General) Joab’s victory, but David still got credit as the King of Israel. This verse ties to another battle we’ll get to in Chapter 10.

12. Verse 14: He (David) put garrisons throughout Edom, and all the Edomites became subject to David. The LORD gave David victory wherever he went.
 - a) Since the Edomites were now subject to the Israelites, David put Israelite soldiers (“garrisons”) in their territory to keep an eye on them.
 - b) This verse helps to show the rise of power of the Israelite nation and just how far they will fall in future generations. It shows that at one point, Israel was so strong, it controlled other nations. Due to the corruption of future kings after David, the kingdom diminishes in power to the point where the Israelites are finally conquered and removed altogether.
 - c) Verse 14 has another “all inclusive” statement of, “The LORD gave David victory wherever he went.”
 - i) Notice that with each of the battles, the details are different, but the main result is the same. The main result is, “God gave David victory wherever he went.”
 - a) In that sense, the rest of Chapter 8 and 10 are just details.
 - ii) David understood it was God and not himself that made these victories possible. That should be our perspective as well during the victorious moments of our life.
13. Verse 15: David reigned over all Israel, doing what was just and right for all his people. ¹⁶ Joab son of Zeruiah was over the army; Jehoshaphat son of Ahilud was recorder; ¹⁷ Zadok son of Ahitub and Ahimelech son of Abiathar were priests; Seraiah was secretary; ¹⁸ Benaiah son of Jehoiada was over the Kerethites and Pelethites; and David's sons were royal advisers.
 - a) After all of the victories, David gives the “ending credits”. Yes we have give God the credit, but we also need to thank those under us.
 - b) Notice the line, “David’s sons were royal advisers”. I’m not sure what that meant, but I’m speculating it meant that David wanted his sons to “be involved with the action”. David was told by God that David was the first of a dynasty, and therefore, David needed to work with his sons and teach them about God and being a king.
14. Chapter 9, Verse 1: David asked, "Is there anyone still left of the house of Saul to whom I can show kindness for Jonathan's sake?"
 - a) OK, we now take a break from war-stuff and switch topics.
 - b) David is thinking about his old buddy Jonathan. Many years earlier, Jonathan, the son of King Saul, understood that David would be king one day instead of Saul. Therefore, Jonathan asked David to vow to spare his family. David agreed. (Ref: 1 Samuel 20:14-15)
 - c) A tradition among the kings of that era is when you become a king, you kill all the heirs of the previous king. That way, no one will want to come back and seize your throne.
 - d) Jonathan died in battle along with his father Saul (Reference: 1st Samuel 31:2)
 - e) Now here in Chapter 9, David is thinking about the vow. I suspect it was more than just the vow, David misses his best friend. David wants to show kindness to any of his offspring that might still be alive.
15. Verse 2: Now there was a servant of Saul's household named Ziba. They called him to appear before David, and the king said to him, "Are you Ziba?" "Your servant," he replied. ³ The king asked, "Is there no one still left of the house of Saul to whom I can show God's kindness?" Ziba answered the king, "There is still a son of Jonathan; he is crippled in both feet." ⁴ "Where is he?" the king asked. Ziba answered, "He is at the house of Makir son of Ammiel in Lo Debar."
 - a) Now we get introduced to someone named “Ziba”. Back in 2nd Samuel Chapter 4, when Saul and Jonathan were killed, Jonathan had a son named Mephibosheth. The servants of Saul were naturally worried that the next king would kill any sons of Saul. Therefore the servant picked up the young “prince” Mephibosheth and carried him away.
 - b) Now we learn in Chapter 9 the guy who carried Mephibosheth away was named Ziba.
 - c) In 2nd Samuel Chapter 4, Ziba accidentally dropped “prince” Mephibosheth and that caused the boy to be lame in his feat. Ziba probably carried that guilt all of these years.

- d) Now, many years later, David is asking Ziba and the whereabouts of Mephibosheth. Ziba is probably thinking, "OK, this is it, time's up. It's time for me to turn Mephibosheth over to David and let him kill him. No more being on the run."
 - e) Notice the first thing Ziba says to David is that the boy is "crippled in his feet".
 - i) It is as if Ziba is thinking, "You know David, Mephibosheth is not a threat to you. The poor kid is crippled. Don't worry about him."
 - ii) By the way, nowhere in the text does David ever comment on his disability.
 - iii) This text also indicates that David had no idea Mephibosheth was crippled.
 - f) Ziba then discloses Mephibosheth whereabouts in Verse 4.
 - i) Ziba may be thinking, "I might as well tell David the kids' whereabouts. He's bound to find out anyway". The other possibility is Ziba comprehended how David wanted to be kind to Mephibosheth and told of his location.
 - g) Let's do a few more verses and then we'll talk about the application to you & I.
16. Verse 5: So King David had him brought from Lo Debar, from the house of Makir son of Ammiel. ⁶ When Mephibosheth son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, came to David, he bowed down to pay him honor. David said, "Mephibosheth!" "Your servant," he replied. ⁷ "Don't be afraid," David said to him, "for I will surely show you kindness for the sake of your father Jonathan. I will restore to you all the land that belonged to your grandfather Saul, and you will always eat at my table."
- a) This is a great happy ending story: You can imagine Mephibosheth thinking, "I've been on the run from David all my life. I was born a cripple and now this is how I'm going to die." He gets taken to the king. Instead of being pronounced dead, he gets told that the land belonging to his grandfather Saul will belong to him and further, he will get to eat at the king's table from now on.
 - b) So why did David do this? First of all, he did this for the sake of his vow. I also believe this is a "test" on God's part: David was now at the height of power. All of God's promises to David have now come true. Still, David made this vow to Jonathan many years ago. This is the moment where God is in effect, pondering, "Now that David has gotten his success, will David still keep the promises that he made earlier in life?" In other words, David gets "blessed" and now it is time for David to be "obedient" to his own vows, just as God was obedient to keep His!
 - i) Vows are an important issue to God. God expects us to be men and women of our word. If for no other reason, "How can people ever take you seriously about God if you don't have a reputation for keeping your word?"
 - c) There is another "word-picture" from this story: Mephibosheth can be viewed as a model for salvation. This guy was crippled and "marked for death". God requires "perfection" from us in order to live with him in heaven. Thus the "perfect sacrifice" is needed on our behalf. We too are "condemned to death and crippled by sin."
 - i) You can take this model a step further and see that Mephibosheth did nothing to "earn" this blessing. He got "saved" only by the merits of King David. That alone is a wonderful word-picture how God has called us and saved us.
 - ii) Something else to see from this model: What David promised Jonathan is that he would spare his family. For David to keep that vow, all David had to do is tell Mephibosheth, "I promised your father I would spare your life. Now go back home and have a nice life. " ☺
 - iii) Instead, we read of Mephibosheth eating at the dinner table every night with the King! In that culture, to eat with someone is to become "one" with them. David is in a sense, making Mephibosheth part of his family. This crippled young man gets blessed only out of the grace of David. That is a model for what God desires for us. God saved us so He can have a relationship with us.

- d) When I think of this story of David and Mephibosheth, I think of this verse:
 - i) “Here I am! I (Jesus) stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.” (Rev. 3:20 NIV).
 - ii) Jesus is inviting us to “join him and eat with him”. It is a metaphor not only for salvation, but to spend time with Jesus. That is the “offer” presented to Mephibosheth and a model for us.
 - iii) Notice also that Mephibosheth was not “forced” to accept this offer. This was a free-will offer on David’s part.
17. Verse 8: Mephibosheth bowed down and said, "What is your servant, that you should notice a dead dog like me?"
- a) Mephibosheth was humbled by this offer. He thought of himself as a “dead dog”, which is a Hebrew metaphor for the “lowest of lows”.
 - b) This is a guy who, by society’s culture was marked for death. He was a cripple since he was a young boy. I suspect this is a guy that thought of himself as, “I am a nothing. I was made a cripple and that is what I deserved. It is just a matter of time until the king will want to kill me”.
 - c) Instead, we read of David not only sparing him, but blessing Him tremendously. The reason we read this wonderful story tucked in-between the war victories is that it is a model of our salvation. God picks us who are condemned by sin. Not only does God “spare us”, but out of His unconditional love, then wants to bless us for no other reason than for God to show his love upon us.
 - d) We need to have the humility of Mephibosheth before God. Occasionally, we need to approach God and ask, “Why did you pick a dead dog like me?” There is a popular Christian praise song with the line, “I was nothing, until You have found me, You have given life to me”. That applies here.
18. Verse 9: Then the king summoned Ziba, Saul's servant, and said to him, "I have given your master's grandson everything that belonged to Saul and his family. ¹⁰ You and your sons and your servants are to farm the land for him and bring in the crops, so that your master's grandson may be provided for. And Mephibosheth, grandson of your master, will always eat at my table." (Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants.)
- a) Now we get back to Ziba. Again, Ziba was a servant in King Saul’s household. Ziba was the guy who dropped Mephibosheth and caused him to be a cripple in the first place.
 - b) The last part of Verse 10 says that Ziba has 15 sons. We now know what Ziba has been doing since we last read of him in Chapter 4. ☺
 - c) David tells Ziba in effect, “You know the land that was allocated to the family of Saul? We’ll, it still belongs to Saul’s family. I want you, Ziba, along with your 15 kids and your 20 servants to go farm that land. Part of the crops you will bring to me so Mephibosheth can eat with me at my house”.
19. Verse 11: Then Ziba said to the king, "Your servant will do whatever my lord the king commands his servant to do." So Mephibosheth ate at David's table like one of the king's sons.
- a) Verse 11 is Ziba agreeing to David’s terms.
 - b) I suspect Ziba was guilt-ridden for many years. He was the guy that dropped the boy and caused him to be crippled in the first place. Here was a chance to make up for that guilt and Ziba agreed to these terms.
 - c) In that culture, having lots of children is considered a blessing. (Ref: Psalm 127:5) His wife may not have thought of 15 children as a blessing, but I digress. ☺ This is a farming community. Lots of children means lots of cheap labor. Ziba was “blessed” with 15 children and had 20 servants as stated in Verse 10.

- d) Now we find out why God blessed Ziba with so many children and servants. God was setting this up as an “opportunity” so that God could show blessings through David to Mephibosheth. The point here is we never know why God is blessing us, and often it is for some future opportunity for us to give glory to God.
 - e) Just so you know, this does not mean Ziba’s children are now slave labors. It means a portion of the crops go to David’s household and the rest they keep. David is also blessing Ziba by not taking away the land that was allocated to Saul.
20. Verse 12: Mephibosheth had a young son named Mica, and all the members of Ziba's household were servants of Mephibosheth. ¹³ And Mephibosheth lived in Jerusalem, because he always ate at the king's table, and he was crippled in both feet.
- a) Here is the happy ending for Mephibosheth. He lives “happily ever after” in the king’s palace. Whenever all of David’s wives and kids are assembled together for dinner, here comes Mephibosheth in crutches, who is now “equal” among the king’s children.
 - b) What is interesting to contemplate is we don’t read of any miracle of Mephibosheth no longer needing crutches. He still must live with his infirmity. That is also a picture of our new life with God. We still carry the “scars” of our former life living on earth. We are forgiven and we are blessed, but God never guarantee’s He will “magically” remove all pain from our past hurts. There are cases where He does, but it is not a guarantee. (If it were people, would come to Jesus just for the healings, and not out of gratitude.)
 - c) Before I wrap up Chapter 9, let me emphasize again, how there are many wonderful sermons preached how we are like Mephibosheth. We have been crippled by the sin of this world and we have been “called” and been “blessed to dine with the king”. This wonderful story is sandwiched between the war stories of Chapters 8 and 10. It is God saying to David, “I will bless you in victory. Now go and bless others. Be obedient to the vows you have made as I have been obedient in the vows I have kept.”
 - i) The model for us is to show love to others as God has shown to us. God has blessed us in tremendous ways and He wants us to share that love with others. This chapter is an example of David being obedient to his own promises and bestowing God’s love on the “undeserving”.
 - d) Meanwhile, back at the war-front, here comes Chapter 10. ☺
21. Chapter 10, Verse 1: In the course of time, the king of the Ammonites died, and his son Hanun succeeded him as king. ² David thought, "I will show kindness to Hanun son of Nahash, just as his father showed kindness to me." So David sent a delegation to express his sympathy to Hanun concerning his father.
- a) Now we have a whole new story. Let me set the scene:
 - i) There is a neighboring nation of people called the Amorites.
 - ii) Sometime in the recent past, there was a king of the Amorites named Nahash.
 - iii) Apparently King Nahash showed kindness to David in the past. Most suspect that there was some sort of peace treaty between King Nahash and David.
 - iv) In Verse 1, David hears that Nahash is dead. In Verse 2, David sends a delegation of men (like ambassadors) to Nahash’s son Hanun to express sympathy.
 - v) This may also be a political gesture. If King Nahash had a peace agreement with Israel, David may want to make sure that peace agreement continues with the next king in line, which is his son Hanun.
22. Verse 2 (cont.) When David's men came to the land of the Ammonites, ³ the Ammonite nobles said to Hanun their lord, "Do you think David is honoring your father by sending men to you to express sympathy? Hasn't David sent them to you to explore the city and spy it out and overthrow it?" ⁴ So Hanun seized David's men, shaved off half of each man's beard, cut off their garments in the middle at the buttocks, and sent them away.

- a) The next scene takes place in the courtroom of King Hanun of the Ammonites.
 - i) The advisors to King Hanun tell the king in effect, “Hey, don’t trust these ambassadors from Israel. Don’t you know they’re really spies? They’re just here to size us up before they attack us!”
 - ii) King Hanun apparently believed his advisors. They decide to shame David’s diplomats. They cut off half of their beard (i.e., clean-shaven on half of their face) and ripping their garments so their rear end is exposed.
 - iii) There are lots of theories as to why the beards were cut. It was a cultural sign of shame. A slave was clean shaven and a free man had a beard.
- b) OK, what is really going on here, and why should I care? ☺ Why is it important that these Ammonites don’t trust the Israelites and how is it relevant to my life?
 - i) First of all, it may be a way that God is “working” in the background. In a matter of verses, we are going to read of the Israelites conquering these people. This may have been a way for God to secretly “motivate” them to get into the battle.
 - ii) There is another bible story where God allows a “lying spirit” to influence false-prophets so that God’s will to get accomplished. (Ref.: 1st Kings 22:22-23). My point is God can work “this way” in order to get His will accomplished. God’s will, in this case, is David to be ruler over all the land of the surrounding area.
 - iii) If your “former friends are now turning against you”, be aware that God may have a greater purpose for allowing this happen. In this case, it was all about another opportunity to give Israel victory over the surrounding nations and show that the “God of Israel” is the one and only true God.
- c) There is another possibility here, and this has to do with the demonic influence of “anti-Semitism” (i.e., bigotry against Jewish people).
 - i) If you stop and think about it, there is no logical reason why the Jewish nation is hated so much around the world. Why are so many nations “hell-bent” on the destruction of this tiny nation of Israel? It is only the size of Rhode Island with no significant natural resources.
 - ii) I’m 100% convinced that anti-Semitism has demonic influences. Satan wants to stop, or at least delay as long as possible Jesus Second Coming. He knows that when this happens, it means his own destruction. Having Israel as a nation again brings closer the events of Jesus Second Coming. (We don’t know the day or hour, but part of the end time events require the Jewish temple to exist. That of course, can’t happen unless the Jewish people are back in the homeland.) To destroy the modern Nation of Israel would delay that event.
 - iii) Now let’s go back to Genesis. When God cursed Satan in the Garden of Eden, God promised that “Eve’s “seed” will bruise Satan’s head” (Reference: Genesis 3:15). That means that a descendant of Adam and Eve will damage Satan. It refers to the events leading up to the Second Coming. For thousands of years after Garden of Eden, Satan has been trying to “find the guy” as to prevent, or at least delay as long as possible the events of Jesus First and Second Coming.
 - a) After God starting working through Noah, he committed a great sin in his post-flood years. (Ref.: Genesis Chapter 9). Satan “focused” his attack.
 - b) When God told Jacob that the king would come through the tribe of Judah, Satan now knew where to “more focus” his attack. Remember how his brothers left him for dead, and all the “attacks” on Joseph’s life after that?
 - c) In Chapter 7 of 2nd Samuel, God promised that the Messiah would come through David. Now Satan knew more where to focus his attack.

- iv) Now do you think it is a “coincidence” that David had to fight all sorts of wars in Chapters 8 and 10? Now do you think it is a “coincidence” that the neighboring nation of the Amorites don’t trust David? What type of spirit was advising the Amorite king anyway?
 - v) My point of all of this is to understand that there are demonic influences in the world and they have a “game plan”. It doesn’t mean they will win in the end. Just understand what their purpose is. Also understand this is not their sole purpose. They also go after Christians to make us ineffective witnesses for God.
 - vi) Oh, and by the way, after David wins all of these wars in Chapter 10, we’re going to read of the adultery of David and Bathsheba in Chapter 11. Think of that as Satan changing his strategy from “macro to micro”. In other words, if Satan couldn’t defeat David on the battlefield, he then goes after him through internal weaknesses. More on that in the next lesson.
- d) Meanwhile, back to David versus the Ammonites. ☺
23. Verse 5: When David was told about this, he sent messengers to meet the men, for they were greatly humiliated. The king said, "Stay at Jericho till your beards have grown, and then come back."
- a) When David got word how these guys were publicly humiliated, he told them to stay at Jericho until they got a full beard back again. We assume David also told them to put on new clothing, but that goes without saying. ☺
 - b) Jericho was the first town in Israelite territory they would reach, so it was picked.
24. Verse 6: When the Ammonites realized that they had become a stench in David's nostrils, they hired twenty thousand Aramean foot soldiers from Beth Rehob and Zobah, as well as the king of Maacah with a thousand men, and also twelve thousand men from Tob.
- a) The Ammonites realized that they ticked off David. When they originally shamed the ambassador’s they knew David would be angry, but you get the impression they didn’t know if David would actually attack them. The Ammonite nation is larger than Israel.
 - b) Apparently the Ammonites were wealthy. In Verse 6, they hired a total of 31,000 soldiers from different countries to help fight against David. If you know the term “mercenary soldier”, it refers to a soldier-for-hire. That is the case here.
 - c) Going back to my “demonic anti-Semitism” theory, notice how there were no shortage of soldiers willing to fight Israel!
 - d) I think the purpose of showing these statistics is to tell the reader that God is more powerful than anything the “enemy” throws at His people. Statistically, there could have been 10 or 100 times as many mercenary soldiers hired. If God desires the victory, and the people are willing to step forward in faith, victory will happen.
 - i) Can’t you just hear a Jewish soldier after the victory telling his children, “The Ammonites hired 31,000 soldiers! But it didn’t matter because God was with us!”
25. Verse 7: On hearing this, David sent Joab out with the entire army of fighting men. ⁸The Ammonites came out and drew up in battle formation at the entrance to their city gate, while the Arameans of Zobah and Rehob and the men of Tob and Maacah were by themselves in the open country.
- a) In this battle, David himself did not go out. “General-Joab” led the army.
 - b) What is being stated in these verses is that the Ammonites fought from behind the walls of their city, while the mercenary soldiers fought in the field. The idea was to surround the Israelites. The mercenaries would attack the Israelites from behind and the Ammonites would defend the fort itself.

26. Verse 9: Joab saw that there were battle lines in front of him and behind him; so he selected some of the best troops in Israel and deployed them against the Arameans.¹⁰ He put the rest of the men under the command of Abishai his brother and deployed them against the Ammonites.¹¹ Joab said, "If the Arameans are too strong for me, then you are to come to my rescue; but if the Ammonites are too strong for you, then I will come to rescue you."¹² Be strong and let us fight bravely for our people and the cities of our God. The LORD will do what is good in his sight."
- a) When you read through all of Samuel, "General" Joab he has his good and bad moments. Here is one of Joab's shining moments. He boldly takes the lead and fights despite the odds that appear to be against him. He steps out in faith and trusts God.
 - b) Joab strikes me as the Israelite version of General Patton. I don't think the word "surrender" is part of his vocabulary. Joab would never say, "You know guys, we're surrounded. We better make a peace treaty and come back and fight another day". ☺
 - c) Joab divided the Israelite army in two battalions. One is under Joab and the other is under the command of Joab's brother Abishai.
 - i) Joab then says to his brother in effect, "Let's stay in communication. If you are losing and need more help, I'll send some troops over to help you. If I'm in trouble, you send some more men to help me."
 - d) Joab then gives a one verse "fire up the troop speech" in Verse 12. Joab ends with the words, "The LORD will do what is good in his sight."
 - i) Joab never strikes me as the kind of guy who trusts in God and then sits back and waits for God to work. Joab is the kind of guy who thinks, "Sure I believe in God. I also believe in my sword and my shield. If God wants me to win, He'll make it happen". Joab is a shoot first, analyze it later kind of guy.
 - e) When you read through the New Testament, there were situations where the disciples boldly stood up, and there were other situations where they did flee for their lives. My point is that God does not expect us in every situation to go forth despite the odds. With that said, God always wants us to step in faith. There are situations where God does want you to look to Him for guidance and not look at the situation around you. Joab's men could have seen the armies and run in fear. Instead Joab gets the men to realize God is behind them and the odds are now "meaningless".
27. Verse 13: Then Joab and the troops with him advanced to fight the Arameans, and they fled before him.¹⁴ When the Ammonites saw that the Arameans were fleeing, they fled before Abishai and went inside the city. So Joab returned from fighting the Ammonites and came to Jerusalem.
- a) In Verse 14, the Ammonites were losing. The Ammonites went behind the city walls.
 - b) Joab did not try to knock down the city gate. Instead, we read of Joab (and presumably the army) going back to Jerusalem.
 - c) This will "set up" Chapter 11. In Chapter 11, Israel is at war again, while David stays home with Bathsheba. The point here is that the war with the Ammonites is not over, and that sets up Chapter 11.
28. Verse 15: After the Arameans saw that they had been routed by Israel, they regrouped.¹⁶ Hadadezer had Arameans brought from beyond the River; they went to Helam, with Shobach the commander of Hadadezer's army leading them.
- a) Remember the mercenary soldiers? They didn't quit. Verse 15 says they lost the battle and then regrouped to try to fight again. After all, if they were soldiers for hire, they can't have the reputation for losing. It will negatively affect their market value. ☺
 - b) These verses are to show that just because the Ammonites "ran and hid", the battle was not over.

29. Verse 17: When David was told of this, he gathered all Israel, crossed the Jordan and went to Helam. The Arameans formed their battle lines to meet David and fought against him.¹⁸ But they fled before Israel, and David killed seven hundred of their charioteers and forty thousand of their foot soldiers. He also struck down Shobach the commander of their army, and he died there.¹⁹ When all the kings who were vassals of Hadadezer saw that they had been defeated by Israel, they made peace with the Israelites and became subject to them. So the Arameans were afraid to help the Ammonites anymore.
- a) Now we read of David himself getting involved in the battle. To summarize the battle, David won “big time”. The text says that 40,000 enemy soldiers were killed along with 700 hundred chariot riders. The Ammonite top general, named Shobach also died.
 - b) Notice that when Joab fought without David, the Israelites still won. When David fought as the leader, the victory was far greater.
 - c) This is also a “set up” for the Bathsheba incident in Chapter 11. The first verse of Chapter 11 gives the editorial comment that David “should” have been fighting wars instead of being a peeping-Tom at Bathsheba. ☺ God gives Israel greater victories when David himself is leading the troops.
30. OK, let’s stand back and take this all in.
- a) Chapter 10 is all about one war between the Israelites and the Ammonites.
 - b) The Ammonites also hired another group called the Arameans.
 - c) The Arameans continued to fight even after the Ammonites lost.
 - d) The point is Israel won. The details were different with each battle but Israel won.
 - e) The “big picture” idea is that God blessed Israel due to God’s unconditional promises to Abraham and David. The details of each battle are different, if for no other reason to show that God’s promises stand the test of time despite different circumstances.
 - f) The application to you and me is that God made promises to you and me through Jesus, who is called the “Son of David and the Son of Abraham” in the first verse of the New Testament. God promises us eternal salvation and promises us unconditional blessings. Like Mephibosheth, we don’t earn those blessings, we just get them out of God’s unmerited love for us.
 - g) God also promises us “victories” in life. They may not be in military warfare, but the blessings are there for us. Those “here-and-now” blessings are tied to our obedience. What made David special is He understood how God was blessing him, and he in turn, blessed others. God shows His love to us, and Jesus’ command for us is to reflect God’s love within us upon others.
 - h) Next week, the second most famous sin in the bible (after the Garden of Eden). ☺
31. Let’s Pray: Heavenly Father, You bless us with so much and want to bless us even more. We don’t deserve what you give us, but only out of Your love, you shower us with blessings. Help us, in turn, to not “hold it in”, but show your love and reflect that love upon others. Help us to share the Good News of Jesus with others. Help us to walk in obedience and be good witnesses for you in all that we do. We ask this in Jesus name, Amen.