

Message #12**II Samuel 8:1-18**

In chapter 7, God made some amazing promises to David which centered on the fact that God would give amazing blessings to Israel through David. The problem with getting those blessings is that this world is filled with enemies. It would be nice if God made the promise and then “presto” the enemies are gone. But that is not how it works. David would need to fight battles and that is certainly what happens in this chapter.

Notice how chapter 8 begins, “now after this.” After the covenant that God made with David, God began to give David a series of victories and blessings that affected everyone connected to him.

This is a fascinating chapter because what we clearly see in this chapter is that great success in life does come from God, but it works in harmony with God’s people doing their part in the warfare battles of life.

BECAUSE DAVID WAS GOD’S FAITHFUL CHOSEN LEADER, GOD GAVE DAVID ONE VICTORY AFTER ANOTHER AND PROSPERED HIM AND BLESSED HIM IN EVERYTHING HE DID.

God made some amazing promises to David, but David could not just sit around the house and passively assume that he would experience all those blessings without doing anything. God would give him victories, but he had to fight the battles.

BLESSING #1 – David defeats the Philistines and takes control of their chief city. **8:1**

The Philistines controlled a great deal of the western part of Israel’s land. We learn from Genesis 10:14 that the Philistines were descendants of Noah’s son, Ham. They became a godless group. They became Israel’s enemies and tried to attack them all the time.

Saul was supposed to eliminate them but didn’t do it (I Sam. 9:16). David got after it. It was not an overnight victory. In fact, from II Sam. 21:15-22, we know that there were at least four different wars that David fought with the Philistines. So this did not happen overnight, but over time. David targeted the Philistines and he beat them. In fact, **verse 1** says he “subdued” them, which means he humiliated them.

John Woodhouse said the fact that David subdued them anticipates a day when every knee in heaven and on earth will bow before one from David’s line, Jesus Christ - Phil. 2:10 (*II Samuel*, p. 236).

Now the text says that David took control of “the chief city” (metheg-ammah). The Hebrew seems to suggest that David took their “mother city” which was probably Gath (I Chron. 18:1). Although the text does not specifically say it was Gath, whatever this city was, it was the central city and area for the Philistine military operations and David took it.

This was an amazing victory and blessing from God. David was a faithful man and God was blessing him and blessing everything he did.

BLESSING #2 – David defeats the Moabites and they became his servants. **8:2**

The Moabites controlled land southeast of Jerusalem on the other side of the Dead Sea. They were descendants of Abraham, through the son of Abraham's nephew, Lot (Gen. 19:36, 37). In fact, David was related to the Moabites through his great-grandmother, Ruth (Ruth 4:18-22).

At one point, they seemed too friendly to David because they thought David was Saul's enemy. In fact, when Saul was chasing David, David put his father and mother under the protection of the king of Moab (I Sam. 22:3-4).

The Moabites had a history of being antagonistic to Israel. When Israel was being led by Moses, they would not let the Israelites cross their land. Furthermore, the Moabites had hired Balaam to curse Israel and then they seduced the men of Israel into immorality and idolatry (Num. 22-25).

When David captured the Moabites, he made them lie down and executed $2/3^{\text{rds}}$ of them. Now we may not be able to figure this all out, but what we can conclude is David was led to do this. He could have executed all of them, but in pure grace, he didn't do it.

This would do at least three things: 1) It reduced the size of the Moabite army by $2/3^{\text{rds}}$; 2) It was a warning to any Moabite living not to turn against Israel; 3) It left some alive who could support David and Israel.

This was all part of God's justice. In fact, from **verse 15** we conclude in that this was the righteous and just thing to do. The $1/3^{\text{rd}}$ who were left, ended up becoming David's servants, who supported David by bringing tribute to him.

The thing I find eschatologically fascinating is that during the Tribulation, $2/3^{\text{rds}}$ of the Jews will be killed and $1/3$ will survive. It is almost as if this is a prelude picture of that very time.

Now why did David destroy $2/3^{\text{rds}}$ and show mercy to $1/3$. The truth is we do not know. What we do know from Scripture is that God shows mercy on whomever He wants (Rom. 9:14, 15) and this is a picture of just that.

BLESSING #3 – David defeats Hadadezer the king of Zobah and gains great spoil. **8:3-4**

The two most threatening powers were the Philistines to the west and the Moabites to the east, so with them gone, he decided to take on enemies in the north.

Zobah was a kingdom in the far north, even north of Damascus. When David defeated the king and took over this part of the land, he had control of all the north and east toward the Euphrates.

David had an amazing victory along the Euphrates. David took 1,700 horsemen and 20,000 foot soldiers, and he hamstringed their chariot horses except for those who could pull 100 chariots.

At this point in time, Israel did not use chariots. Also Deuteronomy 17:16 said that God's people should not just multiply horses for themselves, so David didn't. We simply view this as part of the expansion of the blessings of God.

BLESSING #4 – David destroys the Arameans and they became his servants. **8:5-6**

The Arameans came to help Hadadezer and when they did, David killed 22,000 of them. The Hebrew Aram is a reference to the Syrians. The noun "Aram" seems to refer to a broad area to the north and northeast of Israel that includes Syria, Lebanon and upper Mesopotamia (*Ibid.*, p. 603). When David had this victory, they became David's servants and brought him spoil.

Notice the end of **verse 6**, "the LORD helped David wherever he went."

We need to make a very important observation here; God is all you need for victory over any and every enemy. I don't know what your specific enemy is, but God is able to help you and be with you and give you victory just as he did David. The key is you must be faithful to Him.

BLESSING #5 – David brought gold to Jerusalem. **8:7**

We learn here that David accumulated great wealth. He took the gold shields worn by some and brought them to Jerusalem. God was not only blessing David spiritually and militarily, but also He was blessing him financially.

BLESSING #6 – David brought bronze to Jerusalem. **8:8**

Notice the text says they brought large amounts to David. Large amounts of bronze would be very useful for making military weapons and other things.

BLESSING #7 – David was supported by others who heard of his victories. **8:9-10**

As the reputation of David spread and as news of his success became known, some others who could have been David's enemies decided to support him.

We are introduced here to another king whose name was Toi. Toi was the king of Hamath. Toi was happy David defeated Hadadezer. He willingly sent gifts to David because he so appreciated what he had done.

He actually sent his own son, Joram, to King David, to greet him and bless him and he sent him items of silver, gold and bronze as gifts.

This is very illustrative of a baby who would be born through David's line. Men from the east would travel hundreds of miles to bring that baby their gifts—gold, frankincense and myrrh.

BLESSING #8 – David dedicated everything to the Lord. **8:11-12**

David could have taken all of this and just enjoyed the wealth of it. He could have said, I have struck it rich and I am going to thoroughly enjoy this wealth. But in Deuteronomy 17:17 it is specifically stated that a man's focus should not be on accumulating silver or gold because that will turn away one's heart. **So what David chose to do was to dedicate everything he had to the Lord.**

This is so important. Whatever God gave to David, he decided to dedicate to the Lord. David had the glory and honor of God in view in everything he did. In fact, much of this would be stored by David and turned over to Solomon in order to build a Temple for God.

One of the best things God's people can do is to dedicate everything we have to God and give God a portion of the material and financial gains we have in life.

BLESSING #9 – David made a name for himself. **8:13**

We may recall in II Sam. 7:9 that the LORD said He would make David's name great. Well it is happening. David is living the dream. He is not out for fame, but God is giving him fame. David was gaining an "international reputation." That reputation was further established when he struck down the Edomites.

He struck down 18,000 Edomites in the "Valley of Salt." This was probably an area close to the Dead Sea. People were hearing of David and what he was accomplishing because God was with him.

So David had victories all over the Promised Land. He had victories in the east, west, north and south.

BLESSING #10 – David put garrisons in Edom. **8:14**

A garrison was a place where David left Israelite troops to live and police. They were a very real presence that showed Israel controlled the land.

BLESSING #11 – David reigned over all Israel. **8:15**

Over and over again the O.T. says that God is a righteous and just God (Ps. 36:6; Is. 5:16; Jer. 9:24). He expects that His people will be righteous and just people at all times.

David administered justice and righteousness for all the people. This is the first of many times in the Bible where the word orders are "justice and righteousness." Both of these words are major themes of the Davidic reign. David was focused on what was just according to the word of God and what was righteous according to the word of God in regard to everything.

Now to help carry out justice and righteousness in all areas of life, David made some appointments and designations. You do need a team of faithful people around you if you are going to get a big job done for God.

This was a key to David's success. He made specific appointments of trustworthy men. He surrounded himself with military and religious leaders that were loyal and just and righteous. At least that is the way David saw them at the time of his appointments.

BLESSING #12 – David designated Joab to be over the army. **8:16a**

Joab was a very loyal soldier at David's side. It is sad that after David died, Joab united with the wrong side and Solomon executed him (I Kings 1:7, 18, 19; 2:22, 28-35).

BLESSING #13 – David designated Jehoshaphat to be the recorder. **8:16b**

A recorder was probably like a historian who was responsible to keep accurate public records of things. His job was to archive records, commands and correspondence. We don't know much about this guy except he must have been very faithful because he was still the recorder under Solomon (I Kings 4:3).

BLESSING #14 – David designated Zadok and Ahimelech to be priests. **8:17a**

Zadok will become a key figure and supporter of Solomon (I Kings 1:8, 38, 39). Ahimelech assisted David during the days of Saul (I Sam. 21:1-9). Both of these men were descendants of Israel's first high priest—Aaron. Zadok was the descendant from Eleazar, and Ahimelech was the son of Ithamar (I Chron. 24:1-3). They had both worked together to get the ark to Jerusalem (II Sam. 15:24,35).

BLESSING #15 – David designated Seraiah to be secretary. **8:17b**

Seraiah was David's royal secretary. He would have also been responsible for various records and correspondence. He would have assisted Jehoshaphat.

BLESSING #16 – David designated Benaiah to be over Cherethites and Pelethites. **8:17**

Benaiah was a mighty fighter and David put him in charge of his body guard (**23:20-23**). The Cherethites and Pelethites were like the secret service for David and Benaiah was in charge of them.

BLESSING #17 – David made his sons chief ministers. **8:18**

David's sons had good positions and high positions in David's cabinet. Not all of them will turn out to be good, worthy leaders, but they were in David's government in positions of responsibility.

Practical Lessons:

- 1. God does bless and prosper His people, but they cannot just sit and do nothing as they wait for it to happen.**
- 2. God gives His chosen people great victories, but they must fight battles to experience those victories.**
- 3. Great servants of God realize God is the One who gives them everything.**
- 4. Great servants dedicate everything to God and give God a portion of everything.**