

LESSON FIVE 11 – 12

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF DAVID AND HIS WARRIORS

2. THE REIGN OF DAVID

INTRODUCTION

The writer of Chronicles now comes to his principal theme, David and his kingdom. Joab, Abishai and Uriah play their roles in relation to David and his times. David's ability to unify the kingdom is a highlight of these chapters.

TEXT

Chapter 11:1. Then all Israel gathered themselves to David unto Hebron, saying, Behold, we are thy bond and thy flesh. 2. In times past, even when Saul was king, it was thou that leddest out and broughtest in Israel: and Jehovah thy God said unto thee, "Thou shalt be shepherd of my people Israel, and thou shalt be prince over my people Israel." 3. So all the elders of Israel came to the king to Hebron; and David made a covenant with them in Hebron before Jehovah; and they anointed David king over Israel, according to the word of Jehovah by Samuel. 4. And David and all Israel went to Jerusalem (the same is Jebus); and the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land, were there. 5. And the inhabitants of Jebus said to David, "Thou shalt not come in hither." Nevertheless David took the stronghold of Zion; the same is the city of David. 6. And David said, whosoever smiteth the Jebusites first shall be chief and captain. And Joab the son of Zeruah went up first, and was made chief. 7. And David dwelt in the stronghold; therefore they called it the city of David. 8. And he built the city round about, from Millo even round about; and Joab repaired the rest of the city. 9. And David waxed greater and greater; for Jehovah of hosts was with him.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 11:1. Then the leaders of Israel went to David at Hebron and told him, "We are your relatives, 2. and even when

Saul was king, you were the one who led our armies to battle and brought them safely back again. And the Lord your God has told you, 'You shall be the shepherd of my people Israel. You shall be their king.' " 3. So David made a contract with them before the Lord, and they appointed him as a king of Israel, just as the Lord had told Samuel. 4. Then David and the leaders went to Jerusalem (or Jebus, as it used to be called) where the Jebusites—the original inhabitants of the land—lived. 5, 6. But the people of Jebus refused to let them enter the city. So David captured the fortress of Zion, later called the City of David, and said to his men, "The first man to kill a Jebusite shall be made commander-in-chief!" Joab, the son of Zeruah, was the first, so he became the general of David's army. 7. David lived in the fortress and that is why that area of Jerusalem is called the City of David. 8. He extended the city out around the fortress while Joab rebuilt the rest of Jerusalem. 9. And David became more and more famous and powerful, for the Lord of the heavens was with him.

COMMENTARY

Upon the overthrow of Saul and his house David was anointed king in Hebron. David's tribe was Judah and Hebron was a principal city in that territory.¹ I Chronicles 11:1 says that "all Israel gathered" for this ceremony. The record in II Samuel indicated that Abner and Ishbosheth set up a rival government at Mahanaim out beyond the sea of Chinnereth to the east. This attempt was doomed to failure because it was Jehovah's will that David should rule over all Israel. The rebel forces lost their power when a quarrel arose between Abner and Ishbosheth with regard to a concubine. Ishbosheth was killed by two of his servants and Abner lost his life at the hands of Joab. So "all Israel" came under David's authority.

David had proved himself to be a powerful general. As Saul was plagued by an evil spirit, the spirit of Jehovah empowered David to accomplish Jehovah's will. The first anointing of David

¹Spence, H. D. M., *The Pulpit Commentary, I Chronicles*, p. 143.

took place at Bethlehem (I Samuel 16:1, 3, 12, 13). The second and third anointings were done at Hebron.

Once David had settled accounts with his rivals in the north and had all of Israel under his leadership, he sought out a place for the capital of his kingdom. Hebron was provincial and it was in the tribe of Judah. Jerusalem was more centrally located. It was on the border of the tribe of Benjamin and within the limits of that tribe. Jerusalem was set in a natural fortress of hills and it was very strategically elevated. Through all the years the Jebusites had occupied this city. They had not been displaced in Joshua's day. The tribe of Benjamin had not been able to dislodge them. These native peoples were so secure in their citadel that they taunted an enemy who would presume to overthrow them (II Samuel 5:6). The defiant attitude of the Jebusites did not alarm David. He offered the position of captain of the host to the man who would devise a way to take the city. Joab led a brave band of men through a water conduit (II Samuel 5:8) into the city. The Jebusites were smitten and David moved in, built up the city, fortified the walls and established this as his capital. Millo was a tower and an important part of the fortification of Jerusalem.¹ The establishment of Jerusalem was very important in the setting up of David's kingdom.

3. DAVID'S MIGHTY MEN (11:10-47)

TEXT

Chapter 11:10. Now these are the chief of the mighty men whom David had, who showed themselves strong with him in his kingdom, together with all Israel, to make him King, according to the word of Jehovah concerning Israel. 11. And this is the number 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 and slew them at one time. 12. And after him was Eleazar the son of Dodo, the Ahohite, who was one of the three mighty men. 13. He was

¹Schaff, Philip, *Lange's Commentary, Chronicles*, p. 98.

with David at Pas-dammim, and there the Philistines were gathered together to battle, where was a plot of ground full of barley; and the people fled from before the Philistines. 14. And they stood in the midst of the plot, and defended it, and slew the Philistines; and Jehovah saved them by a great victory.

15. And three of the thirty chief men went down to the rock to David, into the cave of Adullam; and the host of the Philistines were encamped in the valley of Rephaim, 16. And David was then in the stronghold, and the garrison of the Philistines was then in Beth-lehem. 17. And David longed, and said, "Oh that one would give me water to drink of the well of Beth-lehem, which is by the gate!" 18. And the three brake through the host of the Philistines, and drew water out of the well of Beth-lehem, that was by the gate, and took it, and brought it to David: but David would not drink thereof, but poured it out unto Jehovah, 19. and said, "My God forbid it me, that I should do this: shall I drink the blood of these men that have put their lives in jeopardy? For with the jeopardy of their lives they brought it." Therefore he would not drink it; These things did the three mighty men.

20. And Abishai, the brother of Joab, he was chief of the three: for he lifted up his spear against three hundred and slew them, and had a name among the three. 21. Of the three, he was more honorable than the two, and made their captain: howbeit he attained not to the first three. 22. Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, the son of a valiant man of Kabzeel, who had done mighty deeds, he slew the two sons of Ariel of Moab: he went down also and slew a lion in the midst of a pit in time of snow. 23. And he slew an Egyptian, a man of great stature, five cubits high; and in the Egyptian's hand was a spear like a weaver's beam; and he went down to him with a staff, and plucked the spear out of the Egyptian's hand, and slew him with his own spear. 24. These things did Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and had a name among the three mighty men. 25. Behold, he was more honorable than the thirty, but he attained not to the first three: and David set him over his guard. 26. Also the mighty men of the armies: Asahel the brother of Joab, Elhanan the son

of Dodo of Bethlehem, 27. Shammoth the Harorite, Helez the Pelonite, 28. Ira the son of Ikkesh the Tekoite, Abiezer the Anathothite, 29. Sibbecai the Hushathite, Ilai the Ahohite, 30. Maharai the Netophathite, Heled the son of Baanah the Netophathite, 31. Ithai the son of Ribai of Gibeah of the children of Benjamin, Benaiah the Pirathonite, 32. Hurai of the brooks of Gaash, Abiel the Arbathite, 33. Azmaveth the Baharumite, Eliahba the Shaalbonite, 34. the sons of Hashem the Gizonite, Jonathan the son of Shagee the Hararite, 35. Ahiam the son of Sacar the Hararite, Eliphal the son of Ur. 36. Hopher the Mecherathite, Ahijah the Pelonite, 37. Hezro the Carmelite, Naarai the son of Ezbai, 38. Joel the brother of Nathan, Mibhar the son of Hagri, 39. Zelek the Ammonite, Naharai the Berothite, the armorbearer of Joab the son of Zeruah, 40. Ira the Ithrite, Gareb the Ithrite, 41. Uriah the Hittite, Zabab the son of Ahlai, 42. Adina the son of Shiza the Reubenite, a chief of the Reubenites, and thirty with him, 43. Hanan the son of Maacah, and Joshaphat the Mithnite, 44. Uzzi the Ashterathite, Shama and Jeiel the sons of Hotham the Aroerite, 45. Jedaiel the son of Shimri, and Joha his brother, the Tizite, 46. Eliel the Mahavite, and Jeribai, and Joshaviah, the sons of Elnaam, and Ithmah the Moabite, 47. Eliel, and Obed, and Jaasiel the Mezobaite.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 11:10: These are the names of some of the bravest of David's warriors (who also encouraged the leaders of Israel to make David their king, as the Lord had said would happen): 11. Jashobeam (the son of a man from Hachmon) was the leader of the Top Three—the three greatest heroes among David's men. He once killed 300 men with his spear. 12. The second of The Top Three was Eleazar, the son of Dodo, a member of the subclan of Ahoh. 13. He was with David in the battle against the Philistines at Paddammim. The Israeli army was in a barley field and had begun to run away, 14. but he held his ground in the middle of the field, and recovered it and slaughtered the Philistines; and the Lord saved them with a great victory.

15. Another time, three of The Thirty went to David while he was hiding in the cave of Adullam. The Philistines were camped in the Valley of Rephaim, 16. and David was in the stronghold at the time; an outpost of the Philistines had occupied Bethlehem, 17. David wanted a drink from the Bethlehem well beside the gate, and when he mentioned this to his men, 18, 19. these three broke through to the Philistine camp, drew some water from the well, and brought it back to David. But he refused to drink it! Instead he poured it out as an offering to the Lord and said, "God forbid that I should drink it! It is the very blood of these men who risked their lives to get it."

20. Abishai, Joab's brother, was commander of The Thirty. He had gained his place among The Thirty by killing 300 men at one time with his spear. 21. He was the chief and the most famous of The Thirty, but he was not as great as The Three.

22. Benaiah, whose father was a mighty warrior from Kabzeel, killed the two famous giants from Moab. He also killed a lion in a slippery pit when there was snow on the ground. 23. Once he killed an Egyptian who was seven and one-half feet tall, whose spear was as thick as a weaver's beam. But Benaiah went up to him with only a club in his hand and pulled the spear away from him and used it to kill him. 24, 25. He was nearly as great as The Three, and he was very famous among The Thirty. David made him captain of his bodyguard.

26-47. Other famous warriors among David's men were: Asahel (Joab's brother); Elhanan, the son of Dodo from Bethlehem; Shammoth from Harod; Helez from Pelon; Ira (son of Ikkesh) from Tekoa; Abi-ezer from Anathoth; Sibbecai from Hushath; Ilai from Ahoh; Maharai from Netophah; Heled (son of Baanah) from Netophah; Ithai (son of Ribai) a Benjaminite from Gibe-ah; Benaiah from Pirathon; Hurai from near the brooks of Gaash; Abiel from Arbath; Azmaveth from Baharum; Eliahba from Sha-albon; The sons of Hashem from Gizon; Jonathan (the son of Shagee) from Harar; Ahiam (son of Sacher) from Harar; Eliphaz (son of Ur); Hopher from Mecherath; Ahijah from Pelon; Hezro from Carmel; Naarai (son

of Ezbai); Joel (brother of Nathan); Mibhar (son of Hagri); Zelek from Ammon; Naharai from Be-eroth—he was General Joab's armor bearer; Ira from Ithra; Gereb from Ithra; Uriah the Hittite; Zabad (son of Ahlai); Adina (son of Shiza) from the tribe of Reuben—he was among the thirty-one leaders of the tribe of Reuben; Hanan (son of Maacah); Joshaphat from Mithna; Uzzia from Ashterath; Shama and Je-iel (sons of Hotham) from Aroer; Jedia-el (son of Shimri); Joha (his brother) from Tiza; Eliel from Mahavi; Jeribai and Joshaviah (sons of Elnaam); Ithmah from Moab; Eliel; Obed; Ja-asiel from Mezoba.

COMMENTARY

Having introduced us to David, the chronicler now turns to a roll call of some of the warriors who were associated with the king. When David first fled from Saul (I Samuel, chapter 21); he had just a few men with him. Not long after this in the wilderness of Judah he was the leader of a band of four hundred men. Later, as he lived near the Philistine country in Ziklag, he numbered six hundred warriors in his bands as they engaged in guerilla warfare. Very early David demonstrated his ability as a leader of men. These men who first associated themselves with David were outlaws, debtors, slaves, distressed, discontented (I Samuel 22:2). David won their confidence. To them he was their champion, their pattern of excellence. He welded these men into a fighting force that terrorized every enemy. They became the nucleus of a mighty army which under David conquered Moab, Edom, Philistia, Ammon, Zobah, and Syria. When David received the control of the government upon Saul's death, Israel's territory could be contained in about six thousand square miles. When David died Israel controlled sixty thousand square miles. This territory extended from the Mediterranean Sea on the west to the Euphrates river on the north and east. Some of the men who assisted in this expansion and who held responsible positions under David are named here.

Joab must be listed among the officers of the first rank. He is mentioned in I Samuel 26:6 as the brother of Abishai. David's

sister, Zeruah, was the mother of three sons—Joab, Abishai, and Asahel. So these three men were nephews to David. It is likely that Joab was with David when he was running from Saul. He certainly took a prominent part in the conflict against Abner and Ishbosheth. Early in this struggle Abner killed Asahel. Joab, under the compulsion of the blood feud, waited for his opportunity. One day when Abner had come to Hebron to transfer the allegiance of the northern tribes to David, Joab caught Abner near the city gate at Hebron and there he killed Abner (II Samuel 3:27). Joab led in the conquest of the Syrians (II Samuel 10:13) and of the Ammonites (II Samuel 11:1). He also led in the conquest of the Edomites (I Kings 11:25). David became involved with Bathsheba. Uriah, the Hittite, another mighty warrior for David, had to be removed. Joab was the general who was ordered by his commander-in-chief to put Uriah at the front of the battle (II Samuel 11:14). When Absalom rebelled against David, Joab was still in charge of David's army. Joab personally killed Absalom as he hung by his hair from a tree. After Absalom had been killed in the battle by Joab, David reacted by appointing Amasa, who had been Absalom's captain, as military leader in Joab's place. When Sheba rebelled and Amasa could not command the respect of David's soldiers, Joab cruelly murdered Amasa and silenced the revolt. Near the conclusion of David's reign Adonijah tried to take the throne. Joab cast his lot with this son of David, knowing that Solomon had already been designated to be king. Before David died he told Solomon not to let Joab die a natural death. After David's death, Benaiah, Solomon's chief executioner, killed Joab (I Kings 2:34). Joab lived a long and turbulent life. He was one of the most important leaders in the establishment of David's empire.

Some separate incidents involving David's warriors are recorded here in this history. Jashobeam killed three hundred on one occasion by using his spear. A reference in II Samuel 23:8 probably concerns the same warrior. There he is said to have slain eight hundred at one time. It is possible that these are references to different occasions. Eleazar led in an engagement

against the Philistines in a barley field. The main Israelite army retreated. David and his three mighty men held their positions and repulsed the enemy. Jashobeam and Eleazar are two of the renowned warriors. Shammah (II Samuel 23:11, 33) most likely was the third. Pas-dammim may be translated "boundary of blood". Other bloody skirmishes had been fought there. The village was about fourteen miles southwest of Jerusalem. The account in II Samuel 23:11, 12 speaks of a field of lentils. The Hebrew words for barley and lentils are quite similar. Kennicott suggests that one word is spelled incorrectly by accident. Barley was an important cereal grain, but not as valuable as wheat. Lentils was a kind of bean widely used for soup. It is possible that barley and lentils were being grown in plots that joined each other. In this conflict the credit for the victory is Jehovah's.

Often in the record thirty chief men are referred to in relation to David's warriors. The "three" to whom reference is made here may have been Jashobeam, Eleazar, and Shammah. The "three" were with David at the cave of Adullam. The region of Adullam was known as early as the days of Juhad, Jacob's son (Genesis 38:1, 12, 20). One of the kings of Canaan located his government in this place (Joshua 12:15; 15:35). It was situated in Judah. There is some question as to its exact location. One suggestion is that it was in the foothills near Gaza. Another possibility would fix the site between Bethlehem and the Dead Sea (Dr. Thomson—"The Land and the Book"). At the time of the incident recorded in I Chronicles 11:15-19 the Philistine army was in the Valley of Rephaim. This valley lay just southwest of Jerusalem. Considering the risks involved in obtaining water from Bethlehem, Adullam was most likely situated in the area between the Valley of Rephaim and the Mediterranean. David's men dared to stir up the whole Philistine army in order to satisfy David's desire for a drink of water from the old home well at Bethlehem. David's men "brake through the host" of the Philistines. This most likely involved face to face encounter with the enemy. David recognized that courage beyond the line of duty had been required in order for his men

to procure the precious water. Motivated by a basic principle which he stated on another occasion (II Samuel 24:24) when he said he would not offer to his God that which had not cost him something, he poured out the thirst-quenching water as an offering (a libation) to Jehovah. His soldiers surely respected him for this act of self-denial and worship.

David's nephew, Abishai, was renowned for his bravery. When David was running from Saul (I Samuel 26:6, 7) in the wilderness of Ziph, Abishai went with David to take away Saul's spear and water bag. In these later days he distinguished himself among David's warriors. In this one engagement (verse 20) he was responsible for the slaughter of three hundred of the enemy. We do not know the names of the other two over whom he was chief.

Benaiah was of the tribe of Levi and he was always faithful in all assignments given him by David and Solomon. In David's government Joab was the captain of the host (II Samuel 8:16, 18), while Benaiah had charge of the Cherethites and Pelethites. These people were David's select bodyguards. The Cherethites lived south of Philistia. The Pelethites are usually identified with the Philistines. David's bodyguards were recruited largely from these people and through many crises remained loyal to the king. Benaiah's responsibility to David was great. In David's later years Benaiah grew in David's favor. When Adonijah rebelled (I Kings 1:7) and Joab went with him, Joab signed his own death warrant. In the charge given by David to Solomon (I Kings 2:5, 6), Joab was not to be allowed to die naturally. In Solomon's early reign Benaiah was charged (I Kings 2:34) as executioner to put Joab to death. Having done this, Benaiah became captain of the host. In his day Benaiah fought many and varied kinds of enemies. We learn here that he slew two Moabites. He killed an Egyptian giant. The giant must have been more than seven feet tall. The shaft of the giant's spear was "like a weaver's beam". This is a reference to a part of a great loom upon which the threads of the weaving would be attached. An ordinary man's hand could not grasp such a handle. Benaiah skillfully disarmed the Egyptian and turned the giant's weapon

upon the giant himself. In his own time David had used Goliath's sword to sever the giant's head after he felled him with a stone. On another occasion Benaiah matched his strength against the fury of a lion. Benaiah's memoirs surely would have contained many other accounts of remarkable courage.

Verses 26-47 list other men who served with honor in David's army. A comparable list is recorded in II Samuel 23:24-39. The number thirty (30) seemed to have a special meaning as it related to these warriors. No doubt, only those who demonstrated heroic bravery attained to this elite group. Sometimes thirty seven (37) were numbered among them (II Samuel 23:39). On occasion as many as forty eight (48) were named as belonging to this honored band (I Chronicles 11:26-47). Asahel had died at the hands of Abner (II Samuel 2:23). These great warriors represented various districts throughout Palestine. Elhanan came from Bethlehem. Shammoth the Harorite most likely came from Harod near the sea of Chinnereth. Ira represented Tekoa in Judah. Abiezer was from the village of Anathoth, a priestly town in Benjamin near Jerusalem. Zelek was of Ammonite descent and Uriah was from among the Hittites. The tribe of Reuben was represented by Adina. Haharai is identified as Joab's armor-bearer. Uriah the Hittite was Bathsheba's husband who carried his own death warrant to Joab. This entire record leaves us with many unanswered questions as to the complete identity and pedigree of each of these men. Their loyalty to the king and to the cause of Israel is well demonstrated in Uriah's obedience to his commanders and his comradeship with his fellow soldiers. Every one of them was willing to die for the king and for the people of Israel.

4. DAVID'S MEN IN SAUL'S DAY (12:1-22)

TEXT

Chapter 12:1. Now these are they that came to David to Ziklag, while he yet kept himself close because of Saul the son of Kish; and they were among the mighty men, his helpers in

war. 2. They were armed with bows, and could use both the right hand and the left in slinging stones and in shooting arrows from the bow: they were of Saul's brethren of Benjamin. 3. The chief was Ahiezer; then Joash, the sons of Shemaah the Gibeathite, and Jeziel, and Pelet, the sons of Azmaveth, and Beracah, and Jehu the Anathothite, 4. and Ishmaiah the Gibeonite, a mighty man among the thirty, and over the thirty, and Jeremiah, and Jahaziel, and Johanan, and Jozabad the Gederathite, 5. Eluzai, and Jerimoth, and Bealiah, and Shemariah, and Shephatiah the Haruphite, 6. Elkanah, and Isshiah, and Azarel, and Joezer, and Jashobeam, the Korahites, 7. and Joelah, and Zebadiah, the sons of Jeroham of Gedor.

8. And of the Gadites there separated themselves unto David to the stronghold in the wilderness, mighty men of valor, men trained for war, that could handle shield and spear; whose faces were like the faces of lions, and they were as swift as the roes upon the mountains: 9. Ezer the chief, Obadiah the second, Eliab the third, 10. Mishmannah the fourth, Jeremiah the fifth, 11. Attai the sixth, Eliel the seventh, 12. Johanan the eighth, Elzabad the ninth, 13. Jeremiah the tenth, Machbannai the eleventh. 14. These of the sons of Gad were captains of the host: he that was least was equal to a hundred, and the greatest to a thousand. 15. These are they that went over the Jordan in the first month, when it had overflowed all its banks; and they put to flight all them of the valleys both toward the east and toward the west.

16. And there came of the children of Benjamin and Judah to the stronghold unto David. 17. And David went out to meet them, and answered and said unto them, "If ye be come peaceably unto me to help me, my heart shall be knit unto you; but if ye be come to betray me to mine adversaries, seeing there is no wrong in my hands, the God of our fathers look there-on, and rebuke it." 18. Then the Spirit came upon Amasai, who was chief of the thirty, and he said, "Thine are we, David, and on thy side, thou son of Jesse: peace, peace be unto thee, and peace be to thy helpers; for thy God helpeth thee." Then David received them, and made them captains of the band.

19. Of Manasseh also there fell away some to David, when he came with the Philistines against Saul to battle: but they helped them not; for the lords of the Philistines upon advisement sent him away, saying, "He will fall away to his master Saul to the jeopardy of our heads." 20. As he went to Ziklag, there fell to him of Manasseh, Adnah, and Jozabad, and Jediah, and Michael, and Jozabad, and Elihu, and Zillethai, captains of thousands that were of Manasseh. 21. And they helped David against the band of rovers: for they were all mighty men of valor, and were captains in the host. 22. For from day to day men came to David to help him, until there was a great host, like the host of God.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 12:1. These are the names of the famous warriors who joined David at Ziklag while he was hiding from King Saul. 2. All of them were expert archers and slingers, and they could use their left hands as readily as their right! Like King Saul, they were all of the tribe of Benjamin. 3-7. Their chief was Ahi-ezer, son of Shemaah from Gibe-ah. The others were: His brother Joash; Jezi-el and Pelet, sons of Azmaveth; Beracah; Jehu from Anathoth; Ishmaiah from Gibeon (a brave warrior rated as high or higher than The Thirty); Jeremiah; Jahaziel; Johanan; Jozabad from Gederah; Eluzai; Jerimoth; Bealiah; Shemariah; Shephatiah from Haruph; Elkanah, Isshiah, Azarel, Jo-ezer, Jashobe-am—all Korahites; Jo-elah and Zebadiah (sons of Jeroham from Gedor).

8-13. Great and brave warriors from the tribes of Gad also went to David in the wilderness. They were experts with both shield and spear and were "lion-faced men, swift as deer upon the mountains." Ezer was the chief; Obadiah was second in command; Eliab was third in command; Mishmannah was fourth in command; Jeremiah was fifth in command; Attai was sixth in command; Eliel was seventh in command; Johanan was eighth in command; Elzabad was ninth in command; Jeremiah was tenth in command; Machbannai was eleventh in command. 14. These men were army officers; the weakest was worth a

hundred normal troops, and the greatest was worth a thousand! 15. They crossed the Jordan River during its seasonal flooding and conquered the lowlands on both the east and west banks.

16. Others came to David from Benjamin and Judah. 17. David went out to meet them and said, "If you have come to help me, we are friends; but if you have come to betray me to my enemies when I am innocent, then may the God of our fathers see and judge you." 18. Then the Holy Spirit came upon them, and Amasai, a leader of The Thirty, replied, "We are yours, David; We are on your side, son of Jesse, Peace, peace be unto you, And peace to all who aid you; For your God is with you." So David let them join him, and he made them captains of his army.

19. Some men from Manasseh deserted the Israeli army and joined David just as he was going into battle with the Philistines against King Saul. But as it turned out, the Philistine generals refused to let David and his men go with them. After much discussion they sent them back, for they were afraid that David and his men would imperil them by deserting to King Saul. 20. Here is a list of the men from Manasseh who deserted to David as he was en route to Ziklag; Adnah, Jozabad, Jedia-el, Michael, Jozabad, Elihu, Zillethai. Each was a high-ranking officer of Manasseh's troops. 21. They were brave and able warriors, and they assisted David when he fought against the Amalek raiders at Ziklag. 22. More men joined David almost every day until he had a tremendous army—the army of God.

COMMENTARY

The record in this chapter has to do with those friends who joined themselves to David and who were associated with him when he occupied the village of Ziklag in Saul's day. There is also a review of those leaders and tribes pledging their faithfulness to David at the time when he was anointed king of all Israel. When David went to the Philistines rather late in his experiences with Saul he was given the village of Ziklag where he and his soldiers and their families could make their

encampment (I Samuel 27:2-6). He remained in this territory for a year and four months (I Samuel 27:7). Although the exact site of Ziklag has not been determined in our day, it was known to be in the south of Judah on the border of the Philistine country. At Ziklag David experienced one of the most serious crises through which he was ever to pass as a leader in Israel. Presuming that the Philistines would let him and his men go to war with them against Saul and Israel (I Samuel 29), he had left his wives and the wives and families of his soldiers back at Ziklag unprotected. When the Philistine officers superior to Achish demanded that David and his men be dismissed from their army, David returned to Ziklag. Upon his arrival in the village he was shocked to learn that in his absence a band of Amalekites had raided the encampment and had escaped with wives, children, cattle and anything else they could carry. It was at this time (I Samuel 30:1-6) that David's soldiers were just about ready to turn on their leader and stone him. All of them were deeply grieved over the loss of wives and families. "David strengthened himself in Jehovah his God" and weathered this storm. He was then able to lead his men in speedy pursuit of the Amalekite raiders and miraculously they were able to re-possess every person and everything which had been stolen. So David was reinstated in his office as a leader in Israel.

This account in chapter 12 is particularly valuable because this information is not repeated.¹ A matter of primary concern in verses 1-7 is the listing of David's warriors from the tribe of Benjamin. That there should be such able soldiers in David's camp from Benjamin is all the more remarkable because king Saul was from the tribe of Benjamin. Saul's own people lost faith in him some considerable time before he died on Mount Gilboa. The kind of weapons used by soldiers at this time in history is a matter of interest. The bow and arrow was an ancient hunting and military device. The bow was made of elastic wood or of bronze. No doubt, bows were of different sizes, depending on the strength of the men who carried them. The bowstring was usually made from the intestines of oxen or

¹Cook, F. C., *The Bible Commentary*, p. 340.

camels. The arrows were constructed from reeds or light weight wood. Arrow heads were made of stone, bronze and iron. The quiver would usually be carried on the back or at the soldier's left side. The sling was used by the soldier, the shepherd, and the hunter. It was a leather thong, or it might be woven from rushes, hair, or the sinews of animals. The middle of the throng was wider than the ends. In this hollow place the stone was set. With the ammunition in position, the slinger would hold both ends of the weapon in his hand. He would swing it around his head until it attained the desired velocity. The stone was sent on its way as one end of the thong was released just at the right instant. The Benjamites were especially skilled in the use of the sling. They were said to be able "to sling a stone at a hair-breadth and not miss" (Judges 20:16). They could do this with the left hand. One of the remarkable details in this account (I Chronicles 12:2) is that David's soldiers from Benjamin could with equal expertness employ bow or sling with the right or the left hand. Several villages in Benjamin were represented by these warriors such as Gilbeah (Saul's home town), Anathoth, Gibeon. These men were with David in Ziklag.

The Gadites (verses 8-15) were from beyond the Jordan to the east. Like the men from Benjamin, the Gadite warriors had worthy credentials. They were men of valor, men trained for war. They could handle shield and spear. They had faces like lions. No enemy could frighten them or make them retreat. They were agile and could run like the deer. All of these qualifications required constant training. These men were certainly well conditioned physically and mentally for the work that was theirs to do. One soldier from among the Gadites was the equal of a hundred ordinary men. An outstanding Gadite warrior might be worth more than a thousand ordinary soldiers. There is no further detail with regard to verse 15. At some time of real distress the Gadite warriors had opportunity to demonstrate their prowess as soldiers. The enemy had fled before them.

Verses 16-18 tell of an incident when certain warriors out of Benjamin and Judah came to David when he was hiding out in

the territory of Judah. When David met them he advised them if they had come to cast their lot with him, they would be graciously received. He warned them, however, that if they intended to deal treacherously with him, as others of his supposed friends had done, the wrath of Jehovah would be unleashed against them. This incident reflects experiences David had known among his own people at Keilah and at Ziph. The chief spokesman here is named Amasai. He may have been the same person named in 2:17, Amasa, the son of Abigail, David's sister. David was immediately informed that these brethren had come to assist him. The Spirit of Jehovah took control of Amasai and taught him what to say. So he spoke words of peace and David gladly received these men into his camp. They were given positions of leadership among David's warriors.

Warriors from the tribe of Manasseh cast their lot with David (verses 19-22). As David turned back from following the Philistines into the final battle against Saul and as he returned to Ziklag, these Manassehite soldiers joined David's men. These helpers were especially valuable at this time because David had to pursue the "band of rovers", the Amalekites. These were important days in David's life. Every day more and more soldiers were joining his ranks. His army was about to become "like the army of God". This is just another way of saying that the small band of guerillas which he had gathered around him early has now become a well-organized task force.

The historian now calls the roll of the tribes of Israel. Each tribe can answer for itself as soldiers have come from every part of the kingdom to join themselves to David's army accepting him as their commander-in-chief (verses 23-40). The situation described here has to do with the time when Saul had died and David had come to Hebron where he was anointed king of Israel. The tribes presented warriors according to the following schedule:

Judah	6,800	Benjamin	3,000	Zebulun	50,000
Simeon	7,100	Ephraim	20,800	Naphtali	38,000
Levi	4,600	Manasseh (W)	18,000	Dan	28,600
Aaron	3,700	Issachar	200	Asher	40,000
Reuben-Gad-Manasseh (E) 120,000					

This gave David control over an army that numbered about 340,000 men. This compares with 603,550 soldiers in Israel's army at Sinai in Moses' day (Numbers 1:46). When David took the last census near the close of his life, he numbered 1,300,000 warriors (II Samuel 24:9). These 340,000 who now accept his generalship stand in sharp contrast to the 400 who first joined him as he fled from Saul. It is of interest to note that all of the tribes of Israel are represented among those who provide warriors for David. Even the tribe of Levi, which was exempt from military service, along with the house of Aaron, sent men for David's army.

The purpose of this assembly at Hebron was "to turn the kingdom of Saul over to David according to Jehovah's word" (verse 23). Jehoiada was the father of Benaiah and he presented himself as the leader of the house of Aaron. Zadok was the high priest. He was the son of Ahitub (II Samuel 8:17). He came as the leader of the Levites. The tribe of Issachar sent two hundred chieftains. No doubt they sent warriors too, but the number of warriors is not indicated. The warriors representing Zebulun were well qualified for any military assignment (verse 33). They were "not of a double heart." They had no second thoughts about what they ought to do when they heard the call to battle. The tribes beyond the Jordan had sent 40,000 men with Joshua in his day to help in the conquest of Canaan (Joshua 4:13). It had been feared that they might refuse to help their brethren take Canaan. Now in this later day they sent 120,000 warriors to serve under David. They were a part of the kingdom and wanted full representation.

The genuine military ability of all these soldiers is carefully emphasized. They could "order the battle array" (verse 38). The marvelous unity and happy disposition of the whole assembly promised better days and a new era for Israel. A divided kingdom was united. David had the potential for making a great king. It was a time for feasting. "There was joy in Israel" (verse 40).

SUMMARY QUESTIONS

LESSON FIVE 11-12

142. Name and locate the place where David was made king.
143. Locate the previous Bible reference mentioned in 11:2.
144. What had Jehovah told Samuel about David?
145. Name and carefully locate the place David chose for his capital city.
146. In David's military plans how could one become the captain of the host?
147. Identify Zeruah. How was Joab related to David?
148. Name the original sector of Jerusalem taken by David.
149. What is "Millo"?
150. What was the nature of the achievements of the "mighty men" of 11:10ff?
151. How was Jashobeam remembered?
152. In conflict with what enemy did Eleazar distinguish himself?
153. Carefully locate Adullam.
154. Describe the risks taken by David's warriors in securing water for the king.
155. What did David do with the water and why did he do this?
156. How did Abishai distinguish himself?
157. What military distinctions were earned by Benaiah?
158. How large is a weaver's beam?
159. Name two of Asahel's brothers.
160. Identify Uriah (11:41).
161. How many of David's highest ranking military leaders are numbered here?
162. What was Naharai's special assignment?
163. Carefully locate Ziklag.
164. What was a peculiarity about the warriors from the tribe of Benjamin?
165. Name two Benjaminite villages mentioned in 12:1-7.
166. How were the Gadite warriors described?

167. Identify two other men in the Old Testament named Obadiah.
168. How were the warriors from Judah and Benjamin answered by David when they first came to him?
169. In the last great Philistine conflict resulting in Saul's death why would the Philistines refuse David's help?
170. Identify the "band of rovers" in 12:21.
171. How is David's army described in 12:22?
172. List the various Hebrew tribes and the number of warriors each provided.
173. What does this listing indicate with regard to David's kingdom?
174. Describe the "perfect heart" of 12:38.
175. List the items of food used at a time of festival.
176. Why was there "joy in Israel"?