

LESSON 16

David's Victories

II Samuel 8, 10; I Chronicles 18

BEFORE WE BEGIN, and as we have said before, the Lord is not concerned with the exact chronology of the history He reveals to us. Sometimes He follows the line of the history of His people to a certain point, and then back-tracks in time to tell us events which have been happening at the same time. This is especially true during the time of the kings. In this lesson, you will match events from three passages from Scripture. Each time you come to a new city or country or river, find it on your map. Have your map out for this lesson.

LESSON OUTLINE

Read II Samuel 8:1, 2

A. Two Enemies

1. Read Genesis 15:18. These words were God's promise to Abram. Many times in the history of His people, God repeated this promise. You remember it from last year. Now God was fulfilling His promise by giving David and his army His power and strength. The land of Canaan itself was a small strip of land. Under Kings David and Solomon it was to grow into a strong and large empire.

2. It is important to know that David fought in obedience to Jehovah. He fought when his enemies took up their weapons against him; and he fought in defense of God's people. The victories were wonders from Jehovah.

a. David fought the Philistines. The name of the city in verse 1 means "mother city" or "capital city," which was Gath. David conquered the city to which he had fled for refuge from Saul some years earlier.

b. When David had been in hiding, he had sent his parents to Moab. Then the Moabites were friendly; but a severe change had come over them, and David had to fight them. After his victory, he made the whole army lie flat in three rows. Those in two lines he killed, and those in one line he kept alive. The survivors became David's servants, and brought him gifts, I Chronicles 18:2.

Discuss in class why David, as a God-fearing king, did this.

Read II Samuel 10:1-5

B. War With Ammon

1. Nahash, king of Ammon, died. Some time during David's life, perhaps when he was fleeing from Saul, Nahash had been kind to him. So David sent messengers to Hanun his son to express sympathy and comfort, in the formal custom of the eastern countries.
2. The princes of Moab deliberately stirred up Hanun against David, and put evil thoughts into his mind: that David's men were spies, searching the city (which was called Rabbah).
3. Their evil mistrust came from hatred of Israel, and was probably increased when they heard of the severe treatment David gave to the army of Moab.
4. In those days, men wore beards, and they took pride in them. It was a great insult to shave off a man's beard. Hanun did worse. He cut off half their beards. The messengers wore long, formal robes. Hanun cut off one-half of each robe from the hem to the waist. It was an embarrassing and insulting deed. David told the men to stay at Jericho until their beards were grown.

Read verses 6-14

5. Why did the Ammonites insult Israel? They wanted an occasion for war. They may have been jealous of King David's victories. They also were enemies of the living God. For 1,000 talents of silver they hired chariots, horsemen, and foot soldiers from the Syrians, I Chronicles 19:6.
6. When David sent Joab to fight the Ammonites, he found two armies, with horses and chariots, ready to fight him.
 - a. The Ammonites were stationed near to the gate of their capital city, Rabbah.
 - b. About four miles away, in the field of Medeba, the army of the Syrians were ready for battle.
7. Joab saw that the battle was before and behind him.
 - a. He took the choice soldiers and went with them to fight the Syrians, with Joab as captain.
 - b. He gave his brother Abishai the rest of the army to fight the Ammonites.
8. They agreed to help one another; and Joab encouraged his soldiers to be strong for their people and their God.
9. Verse 13 leads us to believe that there was no battle. The Syrians fled when Joab came close; and when the Ammonites saw the Syrians fleeing, they retreated into their city. Joab went back to Jerusalem.

Read verses 10:15-19

C. War With Syria

1. Although the Syrians had fled in fright, they did not want to lose the war. They went to their homeland to recoup*. This time they went far north to the Euphrates River, chapter 8:3, and Hadadezer gathered troops of Syrian soldiers from the other side of the river, with Shobach as their captain. Again, two armies were gathering against Israel.
2. When King David heard of it, he gathered his army from all Israel, crossed the Jordan, and came to Helam. It is not sure where Helam was. Your map will show it where most scholars think it was.
3. Both armies of the Syrians were soundly defeated. The Bible tells us about it in three different places: II Samuel 8:4, 5; chapter 10:18; and I Chronicles 19:18, 19.
4. The numbers of foot soldiers and charioteers who died in battle, and the horses which were houghed (pronounced "hocked," and means to disable by cutting a tendon in a leg), are not the same in these three passages. It is probably because some writers recorded the deaths on the battlefield and others include the prisoners which were taken.
5. The Syrians made peace with Israel and feared to help the Ammonites anymore. The Syrians became the servants of King David and brought gifts of brass; and David took their golden shields, to use in building the temple.

Read II Samuel 8:9-11

D. The Rest of the Wars

1. Toi, king of Hamath, was an enemy of Hadadezer, and had fought with him. When King David won a victory over Hadadezer, Toi sent his son with rich gifts of silver, gold, and brass, as tokens of friendship and peace. David reserved these gifts, too, for the house of the Lord.
2. David had one more enemy to conquer at this time: the Edomites. While David was busy with the wars in the north, the Edomites had begun to invade Israel. They were in the valley of salt, near the Dead Sea, I Chronicles 18:12. Abishai was the captain who defeated the Edomites.
3. These wars are important Bible history. Three times in the chapters you studied the Bible says that "the Lord helped David wherever he went." He helped him with His wonders, for David was fighting the battles of the Lord. And the Lord was fighting for His people.

DO NOT FORGET that Psalm 2 says, "Ask of me, and I will give thee the