

II Samuel 21-24
“Final Words on David’s Reign”

The final four chapters contain a carefully arranged set of six accounts and lists that are chronologically detached from the previous narratives. Although they all relate to David’s life in some way, they are collected from different periods in his career. Because of the evident organization of the materials as well as their lack of strong association with the previous narrative, these chapters are often termed an “appendix” or “epilogue.” The six distinct units of material in this section have been arranged into three chiasmic pairs (A B C C2 B2 A2). (Bergen, NAC, 441).

- I. **(A) 21:1-14—David as a Royal Judge**
- a. **Historical Antecedent:** Deuteronomy 20:10-18; Joshua 9:3-21
 - i. Though Israel was wrong to enter into such a covenant with the Gibeonites (Josh 9:14); once it was established they remained faithful to it (Josh 9:19).
 - b. **The Problem:** (1b-2) *It is for Saul and his bloody house, because he put the Gibeonites to death...Saul had sought to kill them in his zeal for the sons of Israel and Judah.*
 - i. Saul placed the kingdom of Israel before the kingdom of God.
 - c. **The Consequence:** (1a) *Now there was a famine in the days of David for three years, year after year...*
 - i. Israel was experiencing a judgmental Torah curse (cf. Lev 26:20).
 - d. **The Solution:** (3-14) David agrees to give seven sons of the house of Saul to the Gibeonites that they might “hang them before the LORD in Gibeah of Saul.” (The method of execution is uncertain.)
 - i. Their request was in keeping with the provisions of the Torah in cases involving the unsanctioned taking of human life (cf. Ex 21:23; Lev 24:21-22; Deut 19:21).
 - ii. (6) Seven represents the number of completion in the scriptures. Saul certainly took more than seven lives, but the seven members of his household will serve as a symbol of full retribution.
 - iii. (7) David honored his covenant with Jonathan by sparing Mephibosheth.
 - iv. (10-14) Rizpah’s mourning over and protection of the bodies leads David to provide for a proper burial for the seven members of Saul’s household along with the remains of Saul and Jonathan.
 - 1. *David effectively demonstrates his ability to lead in the role the LORD assigned to him resulting in the removal of the curse.*
- II. **(A2) 24:1-25—David as a Royal Priest**
- a. **The Problem:** Though the author does not provide us with specific details we know that “...again the anger of the LORD burned against Israel, and it incited David against them to say ‘Go, number Israel and Judah.’”
 - i. The LORD sovereignly allows Satan to incite David and then uses David’s action to bring judgment on Israel.
 - ii. (10) David recognizes his sin—*I have sinned greatly in what I have done... David has a heart for the LORD; a heart of repentance.*
 - b. **The Consequence:** (12-14) David must choose between three afflictions—1.) Seven years of famine 2.) Military defeat 3.) Three days of pestilence.
 - i. *David will place Israel in God’s hands and not the hands of men.*
 - c. **The Solution:** (17-25) David, seeing the destruction of his people (v.15), appeals to the LORD on their behalf asking that God’s hand be upon him alone.

- i. (18) The LORD, through Gad, instructs David to build an altar.
- ii. The “threshing floor of Araunah” would later become the site of the LORD’S temple (cf. 1 Chr 22:1).
- iii. (25) The LORD is pleased with David’s sacrifice and the plague is checked.
 - 1. *David is linked with Abraham who offered a sacrifice in this very area (Gen 22:13), and Aaron who acted as an intercessor to halt a divinely ordained plague (Nu 16:47-49). David serves as a royal priest, pointing toward Christ.*

III. **(B) 21:15-22—David’s Mighty Men**

- a. (15-17) David demonstrates his willingness to fight alongside the men he leads.
 - i. (17) Abishai, who is later used to crush the revolt of Sheba (20:6), rescues David by slaying Ishbi-Benob. *David has the loyalty of his men.*
- b. (18-22) The destruction of the descendants of the giants.
 - i. (18) Sibbecai kills Saph.
 - ii. (19) Elhanan kills Lahmi the brother of Goliath (1 Chr 20:5).
 - iii. (20-21) Jonathan, David’s brother, kills an unnamed Philistine.

IV. **(B₂) 23:8-39—David’s Mighty Men**

- a. These verses serve as the counterpart to the much shorter list in 21:15-22 and under gird the fact that David’s success was the result not only of his heart for and relationship with the LORD, but the efforts of those valiant men who surrounded him.
 - i. (39) The inclusion of Uriah the Hittite serves as a reminder that David was a sinner in need of God’s mercy.

V. **(C) 22:1-51—The LORD is David’s Deliverance**

- a. David’s song and the prayer of Hannah (1 Sam 2:1-10) serve as bookends for 1 and 2 Samuel.
- b. **David’s Song of Deliverance** (cf. Ps 18; 144):

(2-4) The LORD is David’s Savior	(5-6) David’s distress
(7) David’s petition	(8-16) The LORD’S cosmic response
(17-20) The LORD’S rescue	(21-25) David’s innocence
(26-30) The LORD’S faithfulness	(31-37) The LORD’S deliverance
(38-46) David’s victories	(47-51) Praise for the LORD as Savior

 - 1. *The message of the psalm may thus be summarized as follows: Because David scrupulously obeyed the Lord, the Lord rewarded him by responding to his pleas, delivering him during times of trouble and exalting him (Bergen, NAC, 451).*

VI. **(C₂) 23:1-7—The LORD is David’s Hope**

- a. (2-4) The essential character of the theocratic king:
 - i. (3) One who rules righteously in the fear of God.
 - 1. Only the king whose heart belongs to God can rule justly.
 - ii. (4) The benefits of righteous rule include *enlightenment* and *fruitfulness*.
- b. (5) David’s confidence rests solely in the covenantal love of God.
- c. (6-7) In contrast to the righteous ruler are “worthless” men who are full of guile, idolatry, and sexually immorality.
 - i. *David is a righteous king whose heart for God guides him in obeying the commandments of the LORD. He brings life and blessing to his people and judgment on his enemies. David’s dynasty is certified only by the LORD and serves to foreshadow Christ, the King of Kings.*