



First Chronicles - Chapter Fourteen

II 1 Chronicles 10:1-2 Chronicles 9:31 - The United Kingdom of David and Solomon (continues)

II.b 1 Chronicles 13:1-16:43 - David's Transfer of the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem (continues)

Summary of Chapter Fourteen

Some of the events described in this chapter actually preceded the first mission to collect the ark in the previous chapter, but as with 1 Chronicles Chapters 11-12, the writer is not offering an alternative chronology to his source in Second Samuel. The events in question were evidently not confined to the three months that the ark was in the house of Obed-Edom. Rather, these materials have been repositioned here as illustrations of the Chronicler's message that blessings accrued to David because he gave priority to seeking God, and that his reign was the antithesis of Saul's. Although David had not gone about the mission in quite the correct way, his basic intentions were right. The blessings that come to David include a palace, a growing family, military success, and the acclaim and fear of the surrounding nations. Each of these will serve as typical blessings on righteous kings in the subsequent narrative. A subsidiary theme of this chapter is the consolidation of David's power in and around Jerusalem.

II.b.ii 1 Chronicles 14:1-7 - David Established at Jerusalem

This chapter provides a brief introduction to the long relationship that David and Solomon would have with the king of Tyre. It also gives an account of the additional wives that David took since coming to Jerusalem.

¹ King Hiram of Tyre sent messengers to David, along with cedar logs, and masons and carpenters to build a house for him. ² David then

perceived that the Lord had established him as king over Israel, and that his kingdom was highly exalted for the sake of his people Israel.

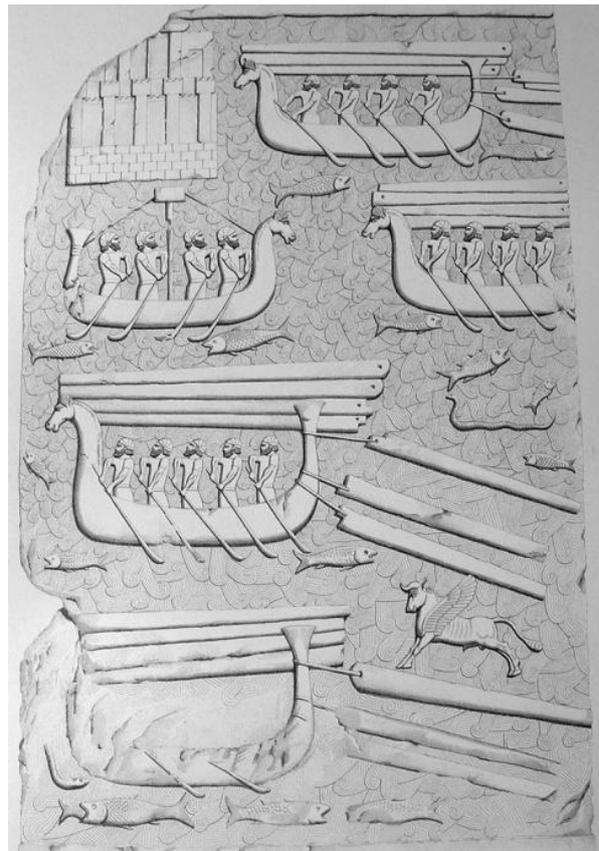
1 Chronicles 14:1-2

Hiram king of Tyre. Hiram's assistance in building David's house, i.e. his palace in Jerusalem, signifies a Gentile ruler's recognition of David's kingship over Israel. King Hiram of Tyre is mentioned in 1 Kings 5:1-18 as a friend of Solomon who provides the cedars to build the temple, just as here he provides David with cedar logs to build his palace. This showed David's influence and importance. Neighbouring kings honoured him with the finest craftsmen and wood to build a palace. This relationship with Hiram also showed that David was more than a man of war. He knew how to build important political alliances.

Tyre was a Phœnician trading empire, and it was in its interest to keep the inland trade routes open to its merchants, especially those through Israel to Egypt. According to Josephus, however, Hiram did not begin to reign until near the end of David's own reign, i.e. circa 980-947 BC. If that is correct, either this construction should be dated toward the end of David's reign or the Hiram in First Kings is the successor of the Hiram here, therefore possibly King Abibaal, who continued his father's good relationship with David. Hiram's father was King Abibaal but nothing is known of his reign.

The cedars of Lebanon, which have now all but disappeared, were famous throughout the Near East. There are Assyrian reliefs of men cutting them down and transporting them to Nineveh.

To the right is one of a series of reliefs from the northwest façade of court VIII of Sargon's palace at Dur-Šarruken, modern Khorsabad, showing Phœnician boats with their characteristic horse-head sternposts transporting cedar logs off the coast of Lebanon.



David then perceived. David knew two things that made his reign great. Every godly leader should know these two things well:

- David knew that the Lord had established him as king over Israel. David knew that God had called him and established him over Israel.

- He knew that his kingdom was highly exalted for the sake of his people Israel. David knew God wanted to use him as a channel to bless his people. It was not for David's sake that he was lifted up, but for the sake of God's people Israel.

³ David took more wives in Jerusalem, and David became the father of more sons and daughters. ⁴ These are the names of the children whom he had in Jerusalem: Shammua, Shobab, and Nathan; Solomon, ⁵ Ibhar, Elishua, and Elpelet; ⁶ Nogah, Nepheg, and Japhia; ⁷ Elishama, Beeliada, and Eliphelet.

1 Chronicles 14:3-7

David took more wives in Jerusalem. David had already taken wives in Hebron; six are listed in 2 Samuel 3:2-5 - Ahinoam, Abigail, Maacah, Haggith, Abital and Eglah, and he had married Michal, Saul's daughter many years before that. Now he takes even more. This was in direct disobedience to the Lord's commands for kings: **<<And he must not acquire many wives for himself, or else his heart will turn away; also silver and gold he must not acquire in great quantity for himself>>** (Deuteronomy 17:17). Scripture also reveals that David also took more concubines when he lived in Jerusalem; refer to 2 Samuel 5:13. Chronicles makes no mention of David's sin with Bathsheba, but after the murder of her husband she was one of the additional wives that David added to his household in Jerusalem.

David became the father of more sons and daughters. Certainly David and, indeed, everyone else saw these many children as God's sign of blessing upon David and his many wives. Yet most of the trouble to come in David's life comes from his relationship with women and from his children. It is often true that the seeds of future trouble are sown in times of great success and prosperity. In some ways, David handled trials better than success.

Nathan was an ancestor of Jesus in the genealogy given in Luke 3:31, which many believe traces the physical descent of Joseph to David. This differs from Matthew 1:6, where Solomon is listed as Matthew follows royal descent. He is distinct from the prophet Nathan who frequently advised and even chastised David with messages from the Lord.

Solomon was born after the events described in this chapter as he was a son born to David and Bathsheba.

Beeliada was also known as Eliada in 2 Samuel 5:16 and 1 Chronicles 3:8. The Chronicler omits a reference to Hebron in his source to concentrate on Jerusalem, the seat of David's dynastic house, as signified by Solomon who was born and reigned there. David's family flourishes, in contrast to Saul's: **<<Thus Saul died; he and his three sons and all his house died together>>** (1 Chronicles 10:6).

II.b.iii 1 Chronicles 14:8-17 - Defeat of the Philistines

Just after David was anointed king over all Israel, the Philistines twice attacked Israel. On both occasions David inquired of the Lord before going against these raiders and on each occasion God commanded him to go, giving different instructions for the second battle. On both occasions David routed the Philistines.



David Defeats the Philistines circa 1000 BC

Soon after David was established as king over all Israel, the Philistines prepared to attack David's forces at the nearby Valley of Rephaim. David defeated them, but they regrouped and prepared for a second attack. This time, on the instructions of the Lord, David attacked them from the rear and struck them down from Gibeon to Gezer.

The first battle between David and the Philistines (vv.8-12) may be a flashback to the time before David had conquered Jerusalem as 2 Samuel 5:17, the source of v.8, refers to 'the stronghold,' possibly in Adullam. The time of the second battle (vv.13-16) is uncertain. In their present context, both battle reports illustrate the threats that existed to the ark's progress to Jerusalem. David's success against the Philistines cleared the way for the mission to be resumed unimpeded.

⁸ When the Philistines heard that David had been anointed king over all Israel, all the Philistines went up in search of David; and David heard of it and went out against them. ⁹ Now the Philistines had come and made a raid in the valley of Rephaim. ¹⁰ David inquired of God, 'Shall I go up against the Philistines? Will you give them into my hand?' The Lord said to him, 'Go up, and I will give them into your hand.'

1 Chronicles 14:8-10

All the Philistines went up in search of David. David's success brought new challenges from the outside. As God worked mightily in David's life, the devil also got to work and brought opposition against David.

The valley of Rephaim lay southwest of Jerusalem and formed part of the boundary between Judah and Benjamin according to Joshua 15:8. It may correspond to the valley of Baca in Psalm 84:6, due to the balsam trees that were there. These are named, literally, weepers because of their drops of milky sap.

David inquired of God. As David sought God and looked to him for guidance he was blessed. God honoured David's dependence on him and gave him the promise of victory; refer to the comment made on 1 Samuel 23:1-4.

¹¹ So he went up to Baal-perazim, and David defeated them there. David said, 'God has burst out against my enemies by my hand, like a bursting flood.' Therefore that place is called Baal-perazim. ¹² They abandoned their gods there, and at David's command they were burned.

1 Chronicles 14:11-12

God has burst out against my enemies by my hand. David was the leader but the Lord has the victory: <<*For the Lord will rise up as on Mount Perazim, he will rage as in the valley of Gibeon to do his deed—strange is his deed! – and to work his work – alien is his work!*>> (Isaiah 28:21). At the battle of Baal-perazim David defeated the Philistines with an overwhelming force, like a bursting flood. This does not necessarily imply that Israel had overwhelming numbers of men but that the Lord's strength was with them and they could fight like a much superior force.

They abandoned their gods there, and at David's command they were burned. The Philistines brought their idols to the battle, thinking they would help defeat the Israelites in much the same way as the Israelites had taken the ark into battle against the Philistines about seventy years earlier; refer to 1 Samuel 4:1-11. Because David inquired of God and obeyed God, they were able to capture and destroy the Philistine idols.

¹³ Once again the Philistines made a raid in the valley. ¹⁴ When David again inquired of God, God said to him, 'You shall not go up after them; go around and come on them opposite the balsam trees. ¹⁵ When you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the balsam trees, then go out to battle; for God has gone out before you to strike down the army of the Philistines.' ¹⁶ David did as God had commanded him, and they struck down the Philistine army from Gibeon to Gezer.

1 Chronicles 14:13-16

David again inquired of God. After the first victory over the Philistines, David was wise enough to wait on the Lord before the second battle. It is easy for many in the same situation to say, "I've fought this battle before. I know how to win. This will be easy." David always triumphed when he sought and obeyed God.

You shall not go up after them; go around and come on them opposite the balsam trees. God directed David differently in this battle. Even against the same enemy, not every battle is the same.

In his commentary on this account in 2 Samuel Chapter 5, Adam Clarke noted the remarkable guidance of God in David's life and asked a good question. "How is it that such supernatural directions and assistances are not communicated now? Because they are not asked for; and they are not asked for because they are not expected; and they are not expected because men have no faith; and they have no faith because they are under a refined spirit of atheism, and have no spiritual intercourse with their Maker."

God has gone out before you to strike down the army of the Philistines. Before commencing the battle David waited for the Lord to strike the camp of the enemy first. The sign of God's work was the sound of marching in the tops of the balsam trees. It may be that the sound of marching was a distinct sound caused by the Lord that frightened the Philistines as it did in 2 Kings 7:6. Another possibility is that the Philistines knew the sound was the sound of the balsam trees, so David was able to use the sound as cover for his attack. By this victory, David drove the Philistines out of the central hill country. The balsam trees are also translated as other varieties including pear trees, mulberry trees and aspen.

Charles Spurgeon commented, "Now, what should I do? The first thing I will do is, I will bestir myself. But how shall I do it? Why, I will go home this day, and I will wrestle in prayer more earnestly than I have been wont to do that God will bless the minister, and multiply the church." He makes the point that church leaders often think they need to stir other people up to do the work of God. What is actually required is for each person to stir themselves up to action.

David did as God had commanded him. He did this by waiting for evidence of God's work and then giving himself completely to the battle. The victory that sprang from this obedience made David and Israel respected and feared among neighbouring nations. Because he looked to the Lord for his strength and for his strategy, he was able to beat back two Philistine offenses, to secure the independence of God's people, and to terminate forever the threat of Philistine conquest and oppression.

¹⁷ The fame of David went out into all lands, and the Lord brought the fear of him on all nations.

1 Chronicles 14:17

The Chronicler offers a summarising comment, with another implicit contrast between David and Saul: victory leading to security for Israel and fame for David, as opposed to defeat leading to occupation of Israel's land by foreigners and ignominy for Saul; refer to 1 Chronicles 10:7 and 10:13-14.

The Lord brought the fear of him on all nations. Such fear will keep them from attacking Israel: <<*The peoples heard, they trembled; pangs seized the inhabitants of Philistia. Then the chiefs of Edom were dismayed; trembling seized the leaders of Moab; all the inhabitants of Canaan melted away. Terror and dread fell upon them; by the might of your arm, they became still as a stone until your people, O Lord, passed by, until the people whom you acquired passed by*>> (Exodus 15:14-16). Refer also to 2 Chronicles 14:14, 17:10 and 20:29 for other examples of a fear sent by God on neighbouring peoples.