

KING DAVID PART II

Last time we left King David safely in his palace in Jerusalem with his wives and concubines. But it wasn't long before David was called into battle against the Philistines – above all David was a man of war.

“**17** ¶ When the Philistines heard that David had been anointed king over Israel, they went up in full force to search for him, but David heard about it and went down to the stronghold. **18** Now the Philistines had come and spread out in the Valley of Rephaim; **19** so David enquired of the LORD, "Shall I go and attack the Philistines? Will you hand them over to me?" The LORD answered him, "Go, for I will surely hand the Philistines over to you." **20** So David went to Baal Perazim, and there he defeated them. He said, "As waters break out, the LORD has broken out against my enemies before me." So that place was called Baal Perazim.” (2Sa 5:17-20 NIV)

that defeat didn't completely end the challenge from the Philistines and David defeated them on several other occasions.

David then wanted to bring the Ark of the Covenant up to Jerusalem, but he became afraid and left the Ark in another house:

“**2** He and all his men set out from Baalah of Judah to bring up from there the ark of God, which is called by the Name, the name of the LORD Almighty, who is enthroned between the cherubim that are on the ark. **3** They set the ark of God on a new cart and brought it from the house of Abinadab, which was on the hill. Uzzah and Ahio, sons of Abinadab, were guiding the new cart **4** with the ark of God on it, and Ahio was walking in front of it. **5** David and the whole house of Israel were celebrating with all their might before the LORD, with songs and with harps, lyres, tambourines, sistrums and cymbals. **6** ¶ When they came to the threshing-floor of Nacon, Uzzah reached out and took hold of the ark of God, because the oxen stumbled. **7** The LORD's anger burned against Uzzah because of his irreverent act; therefore God struck him down and he died there beside the ark of God. **8** Then David was angry because the LORD's wrath had broken out against Uzzah, and to this day that place is called Perez Uzzah. **9** David was afraid of the LORD that day and said, "How can the ark of the LORD ever come to me?" **10** He was not willing to take the ark of the LORD to be with him in the City of David. Instead, he took it aside to the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite. **11** The ark of the LORD remained in the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite for three months, and the LORD blessed him and his entire household.” (2Sa 6:2-11 NIV)

After learning of this blessing, David did finally bring the Ark to Jerusalem amidst much celebration:

“**12** ¶ Now King David was told, "The LORD has blessed the household of Obed-Edom and everything he has, because of the ark of God." So David went down and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-Edom to the City of David with rejoicing. **13** When those who were carrying the ark of the LORD had taken six steps, he sacrificed a bull and a fattened calf. **14** David, wearing a linen ephod, danced before the LORD with all his might,” (2Sa 6:12-14 NIV)

to the disgust of David's wife Michal who thought David was making a spectacle of himself – and Michal was cursed with barrenness:

“And Michal daughter of Saul had no children to the day of her death.” (2Sa 6:23 NIV)

God gave David and Israel a period of peace from their enemies and David wanted to build a permanent Temple to the Lord to house the Ark instead of the tent in which it had been

placed, but God through Nathan the prophet told David NO and that his son would be the one to build the Temple:

“**2** he said to Nathan the prophet, "Here I am, living in a palace of cedar, while the ark of God remains in a tent." **3** Nathan replied to the king, "Whatever you have in mind, go ahead and do it, for the LORD is with you." **4** ¶ That night the word of the LORD came to Nathan, saying: **5** "Go and tell my servant David, ‘This is what the LORD says: Are you the one to build me a house to dwell in? **6** I have not dwelt in a house from the day I brought the Israelites up out of Egypt to this day. I have been moving from place to place with a tent as my dwelling. **7** Wherever I have moved with all the Israelites, did I ever say to any of their rulers whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, "Why have you not built me a house of cedar?"' **8** "Now then, tell my servant David, ‘This is what the LORD Almighty says: I took you from the pasture and from following the flock to be ruler over my people Israel. **9** I have been with you wherever you have gone, and I have cut off all your enemies from before you. Now I will make your name great, like the names of the greatest men of the earth. **10** And I will provide a place for my people Israel and will plant them so that they can have a home of their own and no longer be disturbed. Wicked people shall not oppress them any more, as they did at the beginning **11** and have done ever since the time I appointed leaders over my people Israel. I will also give you rest from all your enemies. "‘The LORD declares to you that the LORD himself will establish a house for you: **12** When your days are over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom. **13** He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever.” (2Sa 7:2-13 NIV)

The book of Chronicles tells us that David was not allowed to build the temple because he was a man of war with blood on his hands and instead it was built by his son Solomon:

“**1** ¶ David summoned all the officials of Israel to assemble at Jerusalem: the officers over the tribes, the commanders of the divisions in the service of the king, the commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds, and the officials in charge of all the property and livestock belonging to the king and his sons, together with the palace officials, the mighty men and all the brave warriors. **2** King David rose to his feet and said: "Listen to me, my brothers and my people. I had it in my heart to build a house as a place of rest for the ark of the covenant of the LORD, for the footstool of our God, and I made plans to build it. **3** But God said to me, ‘You are not to build a house for my Name, because you are a warrior and have shed blood.’” (1Ch 28:1-3 NIV)

David was an extremely good military leader over Israel:

“**1** ¶ In the course of time, David defeated the Philistines and subdued them, and he took Metheg Ammah from the control of the Philistines. **2** David also defeated the Moabites. He made them lie down on the ground and measured them off with a length of cord. Every two lengths of them were put to death, and the third length was allowed to live. So the Moabites became subject to David and brought tribute. **3** Moreover, David fought Hadadezer son of Rehob, king of Zobah, when he went to restore his control along the Euphrates River. **4** David captured a thousand of his chariots, seven thousand charioteers and twenty thousand foot soldiers. He hamstringed all but a hundred of the chariot horses. **5** When the Arameans of Damascus came to help Hadadezer king of Zobah, David struck down twenty-two thousand of them. **6** He put garrisons in the Aramean kingdom of Damascus, and the Arameans became subject to him and brought tribute. The LORD gave David victory wherever he went.” (2Sa 8:1-6 NIV)

and he ruled the country well:

“David reigned over all Israel, doing what was just and right for all his people.” (2Sa 8:15 NIV)

David even had compassion on what remained of Saul’s family:

“David asked, "Is there anyone still left of the house of Saul to whom I can show kindness for Jonathan’s sake?"” (2Sa 9:1 NIV)

and he effectively adopted a son of Jonathan, Mephibosheth, who was crippled in both feet, even giving him back the family estate:

““Don’t be afraid," David said to him, "for I will surely show you kindness for the sake of your father Jonathan. I will restore to you all the land that belonged to your grandfather Saul, and you will always eat at my table.”” (2Sa 9:7 NIV)

David won further victories against the Ammonites and the Arameans, but then he sent the army out against the Ammonites whilst remaining behind in Jerusalem – which was to lead to his greatest sinfulness and huge problems for his family and indeed all Israel. Whilst he remained idle in Jerusalem David saw a beautiful woman and, not caring that she was married, slept with her:

1 ¶ In the spring, at the time when kings go off to war, David sent Joab out with the king’s men and the whole Israelite army. They destroyed the Ammonites and besieged Rabbah. But David remained in Jerusalem. **2** One evening David got up from his bed and walked around on the roof of the palace. From the roof he saw a woman bathing. The woman was very beautiful, **3** and David sent someone to find out about her. The man said, "Isn’t this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam and the wife of Uriah the Hittite?" **4** Then David sent messengers to get her. She came to him, and he slept with her. (She had purified herself from her uncleanness.) Then she went back home.” (2Sa 11:1-4 NIV)

But she became pregnant from this encounter, so David tried to bring her husband back to sleep with her hoping to cover up this sordid affair:

5 The woman conceived and sent word to David, saying, "I am pregnant." **6 ¶** So David sent this word to Joab: "Send me Uriah the Hittite." And Joab sent him to David. **7** When Uriah came to him, David asked him how Joab was, how the soldiers were and how the war was going. **8** Then David said to Uriah, "Go down to your house and wash your feet." So Uriah left the palace, and a gift from the king was sent after him. **9** But Uriah slept at the entrance to the palace with all his master’s servants and did not go down to his house. **10** When David was told, "Uriah did not go home," he asked him, "Haven’t you just come from a distance? Why didn’t you go home?" **11** Uriah said to David, "The ark and Israel and Judah are staying in tents, and my master Joab and my lord’s men are camped in the open fields. How could I go to my house to eat and drink and lie with my wife? As surely as you live, I will not do such a thing!" **12** Then David said to him, "Stay here one more day, and tomorrow I will send you back." So Uriah remained in Jerusalem that day and the next. **13** At David’s invitation, he ate and drank with him, and David made him drunk. But in the evening Uriah went out to sleep on his mat among his master’s servants; he did not go home.” (2Sa 11:5-13 NIV)

But, David’s plan was thwarted and so to protect himself for what was a capital crime already he had her husband murdered:

14 ¶ In the morning David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it with Uriah. **15** In it he wrote, "Put Uriah in the front line where the fighting is fiercest. Then withdraw from him so that he will be struck down and die." **16** So while Joab had the city under siege, he put Uriah at a

place where he knew the strongest defenders were. **17** When the men of the city came out and fought against Joab, some of the men in David's army fell; moreover, Uriah the Hittite died." (2Sa 11:14-17 NIV)

David then married Bathsheba as soon as possible, but what he had done displeased God: **"26** When Uriah's wife heard that her husband was dead, she mourned for him. **27** After the time of mourning was over, David had her brought to his house, and she became his wife and bore him a son. But the thing David had done displeased the LORD." (2Sa 11:26-27 NIV)

and God sent the prophet Nathan to David to rebuke him:

"1 ¶ The LORD sent Nathan to David. When he came to him, he said, "There were two men in a certain town, one rich and the other poor. **2** The rich man had a very large number of sheep and cattle, **3** but the poor man had nothing except one little ewe lamb that he had bought. He raised it, and it grew up with him and his children. It shared his food, drank from his cup and even slept in his arms. It was like a daughter to him. **4** "Now a traveller came to the rich man, but the rich man refrained from taking one of his own sheep or cattle to prepare a meal for the traveller who had come to him. Instead, he took the ewe lamb that belonged to the poor man and prepared it for the one who had come to him." **5** David burned with anger against the man and said to Nathan, "As surely as the LORD lives, the man who did this deserves to die! **6** He must pay for that lamb four times over, because he did such a thing and had no pity." **7** Then Nathan said to David, "You are the man! This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you from the hand of Saul. **8** I gave your master's house to you, and your master's wives into your arms. I gave you the house of Israel and Judah. And if all this had been too little, I would have given you even more. **9** Why did you despise the word of the LORD by doing what is evil in his eyes? You struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword and took his wife to be your own. You killed him with the sword of the Ammonites. **10** Now, therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house, because you despised me and took the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your own.' **11** "This is what the LORD says: 'Out of your own household I am going to bring calamity upon you. Before your very eyes I will take your wives and give them to one who is close to you, and he will lie with your wives in broad daylight. **12** You did it in secret, but I will do this thing in broad daylight before all Israel.'"" (2Sa 12:1-12 NIV)

This was a strong rebuke. David repented, but this was not to completely save him and his family and indeed all Israel:

"13 Then David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD." Nathan replied, "The LORD has taken away your sin. You are not going to die. **14** But because by doing this you have made the enemies of the LORD show utter contempt, the son born to you will die."" (2Sa 12:13-14 NIV)

and the son did indeed die:

"15 ¶ After Nathan had gone home, the LORD struck the child that Uriah's wife had borne to David, and he became ill. **16** David pleaded with God for the child. He fasted and went into his house and spent the nights lying on the ground. **17** The elders of his household stood beside him to get him up from the ground, but he refused, and he would not eat any food with them. **18** On the seventh day the child died. David's servants were afraid to tell him that the child was dead, for they thought, "While the child was still living, we spoke to David but he would not listen to us. How can we tell him the child is dead? He may do something desperate." **19** David noticed that his servants were whispering among themselves and he realised that the child was dead. "Is the child dead?" he asked. "Yes," they replied, "he is

dead." **20** Then David got up from the ground. After he had washed, put on lotions and changed his clothes, he went into the house of the LORD and worshipped. Then he went to his own house, and at his request they served him food, and he ate. **21** His servants asked him, "Why are you acting in this way? While the child was alive, you fasted and wept, but now that the child is dead, you get up and eat!" **22** He answered, "While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept. I thought, 'Who knows? The LORD may be gracious to me and let the child live.' **23** But now that he is dead, why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I will go to him, but he will not return to me.'" (2Sa 12:15-23 NIV)

God forgives us our sins but he doesn't necessarily save us from their consequences in this life. We see from verse 23 that David believed firmly in resurrection and life after death.

David and Bathsheba then conceived another son, Solomon, who was to become king after David.

David continued his run of military victories capturing the royal citadel of the Ammonites – Rabbah – although there are indications that David was beginning to become careless in his rule:

“26 ¶ Meanwhile Joab fought against Rabbah of the Ammonites and captured the royal citadel. **27** Joab then sent messengers to David, saying, "I have fought against Rabbah and taken its water supply. **28** Now muster the rest of the troops and besiege the city and capture it. Otherwise I shall take the city, and it will be named after me."” (2Sa 12:26-28 NIV)

and the Ammonites were made into slave labour:

“and brought out the people who were there, consigning them to labour with saws and with iron picks and axes, and he made them work at brickmaking. He did this to all the Ammonite towns. Then David and his entire army returned to Jerusalem.” (2Sa 12:31 NIV)

Then one of David's sons Amnon fell in love – or more correctly lust – for his half sister Tamar (sister of Absalom) and he raped her, even though she expressed willingness to become his wife and afterwards completely rejected her and threw her out. This was clearly a crime which should have received the severest punishment for that was the Law of Moses (Deut 27:22). This rape completely destroyed Tamar and obviously upset her brother Absalom:

“Her brother Absalom said to her, "Has that Amnon, your brother, been with you? Be quiet now, my sister; he is your brother. Don't take this thing to heart." And Tamar lived in her brother Absalom's house, a desolate woman.” (2Sa 13:20 NIV)

Although King David was said to be furious:

“When King David heard all this, he was furious.” (2Sa 13:21 NIV)

he did nothing about this incident. This is a further indication of his losing control – first of the kingdom and now of his family – and it was to lead to great trouble in both his family and the kingdom as it would culminate in the rebellion of Absalom and civil war.

Two years later Absalom had his revenge by murdering his brother Amnon:

“23 Two years later, when Absalom's sheep-shearers were at Baal Hazor near the border of Ephraim, he invited all the king's sons to come there. **24** Absalom went to the king and said, "Your servant has had shearers come. Will the king and his officials please join me?" **25** "No, my son," the king replied. "All of us should not go; we would only be a burden to you." Although Absalom urged him, he still refused to go, but gave him his blessing. **26** Then

Absalom said, "If not, please let my brother Amnon come with us." The king asked him, "Why should he go with you?" **27** But Absalom urged him, so he sent with him Amnon and the rest of the king's sons. **28** Absalom ordered his men, "Listen! When Amnon is in high spirits from drinking wine and I say to you, 'Strike Amnon down,' then kill him. Don't be afraid. Have not I given you this order? Be strong and brave." **29** So Absalom's men did to Amnon what Absalom had ordered. Then all the king's sons got up, mounted their mules and fled." (2Sa 13:23-29 NIV)

It was reported to David that all his sons had been murdered:

"**30** ¶ While they were on their way, the report came to David: "Absalom has struck down all the king's sons; not one of them is left." **31** The king stood up, tore his clothes and lay down on the ground; and all his servants stood by with their clothes torn." (2Sa 13:30-31 NIV)

although he soon learned the truth:

"**32** But Jonadab son of Shimeah, David's brother, said, "My lord should not think that they killed all the princes; only Amnon is dead. This has been Absalom's expressed intention ever since the day that Amnon raped his sister Tamar. **33** My lord the king should not be concerned about the report that all the king's sons are dead. Only Amnon is dead.'" (2Sa 13:32-33 NIV)

Meanwhile, Absalom had of course fled and he stayed away for three years. However, David longed to be reconciled to Absalom and in effect simply forgave him for murdering Amnon. Of course, this all stems from David's weakness in the face of Amnon's original crime. As leader one has to act to enforce justice fairly and impartially. Eventually Joab the commander of the army arranged for Absalom to be brought back to Jerusalem through an elaborate subterfuge – although he wasn't fully reconciled to David, because David wouldn't see him for more than two years. Eventually Absalom persuaded Joab to intercede for him with David and David did agree to see him.

Absalom now started to go out of Jerusalem meeting those on the way to see the king and alleging unfairly that there was no representative of the king to hear their case. In this way Absalom gained great sympathy and following in the land and after four years he asked David for permission to go to Hebron – although his real purpose was to start a rebellion against David:

"**7** ¶ At the end of four years, Absalom said to the king, "Let me go to Hebron and fulfil a vow I made to the LORD. **8** While your servant was living at Geshur in Aram, I made this vow: 'If the LORD takes me back to Jerusalem, I will worship the LORD in Hebron.'" **9** The king said to him, "Go in peace." So he went to Hebron. **10** Then Absalom sent secret messengers throughout the tribes of Israel to say, "As soon as you hear the sound of the trumpets, then say, 'Absalom is king in Hebron.'" (2Sa 15:7-10 NIV)

Absalom's conspiracy gained strength and when David heard about it he decided to flee rather than fight:

"**13** ¶ A messenger came and told David, "The hearts of the men of Israel are with Absalom." **14** Then David said to all his officials who were with him in Jerusalem, "Come! We must flee, or none of us will escape from Absalom. We must leave immediately, or he will move quickly to overtake us and bring ruin upon us and put the city to the sword.'" (2Sa 15:13-14 NIV)

and David took his whole household with him apart from ten concubines.

On his way David met Zadok the priest with the Ark of the Covenant, but David told him to go back to Jerusalem and send him news of whatever God might reveal to him:

“**25** Then the king said to Zadok, "Take the ark of God back into the city. If I find favour in the LORD's eyes, he will bring me back and let me see it and his dwelling-place again. **26** But if he says, 'I am not pleased with you,' then I am ready; let him do to me whatever seems good to him." **27** The king also said to Zadok the priest, "Aren't you a seer? Go back to the city in peace, with your son Ahimaaz and Jonathan son of Abiathar. You and Abiathar take your two sons with you. **28** I will wait at the fords in the desert until word comes from you to inform me."” (2Sa 15:25-28 NIV)

We haven't heard of David praying or asking God's help and advice for some time – no doubt that's a large part of what's been going wrong in the kingdom – but now in his affliction David turns back to God:

“**30** But David continued up the Mount of Olives, weeping as he went; his head was covered and he was barefoot. All the people with him covered their heads too and were weeping as they went up. **31** ¶ Now David had been told, "Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom." So David prayed, "O LORD, turn Ahithophel's counsel into foolishness."” (2Sa 15:30-31 NIV)

and we see an answer to prayer starting to appear:

“**32** When David arrived at the summit, where people used to worship God, Hushai the Arkite was there to meet him, his robe torn and dust on his head. **33** David said to him, "If you go with me, you will be a burden to me. **34** But if you return to the city and say to Absalom, 'I will be your servant, O king; I was your father's servant in the past, but now I will be your servant,' then you can help me by frustrating Ahithophel's advice. **35** Won't the priests Zadok and Abiathar be there with you? Tell them anything you hear in the king's palace.” (2Sa 15:32-35 NIV)

As soon as Absalom arrived in Jerusalem he was advised by Ahithophel to sleep with his father's concubines so as to enforce his estrangement from his father David. Ahithophel further advised Absalom to take twelve thousand men and set out in immediate pursuit of David with the object of killing David alone – and Absalom thought this was a good plan. But Hushai the Arkite advised Absalom to wait and gather more troops to go up against David and eventually Absalom followed this plan – which was to David's benefit. Hushai arranged for the news to be sent to David and David and his men duly crossed over the Jordan river, but Ahithophel saw disaster coming and hanged himself when he saw his advice was not being followed.

Absalom then pursued David with the Israelite army. David reached the city of Mahanaim and sent his troops out to fight Absalom and his men – David stayed in the city because his men told him he was too valuable to risk in battle, but he commanded his troops to spare Absalom's life:

“The king commanded Joab, Abishai and Ittai, "Be gentle with the young man Absalom for my sake." And all the troops heard the king giving orders concerning Absalom to each of the commanders.” (2Sa 18:5 NIV)

The two armies met in the forest of Ephraim and David's men were victorious, Absalom was caught in a tree in the forest and was killed by Joab in defiance of David's command:

“The army marched into the field to fight Israel, and the battle took place in the forest of Ephraim. There the army of Israel was defeated by David's men, and the casualties that day

were great—twenty thousand men. The battle spread out over the whole countryside, and the forest claimed more lives that day than the sword. Now Absalom happened to meet David's men. He was riding his mule, and as the mule went under the thick branches of a large oak, Absalom's head got caught in the tree. He was left hanging in mid-air, while the mule he was riding kept on going. When one of the men saw this, he told Joab, "I have just seen Absalom hanging in an oak tree." Joab said to the man who had told him this, "What! You saw him? Why didn't you strike him to the ground right there? Then I would have had to give you ten shekels of silver and a warrior's belt." But the man replied, "Even if a thousand shekels were weighed out into my hands, I would not lift my hand against the king's son. In our hearing the king commanded you and Abishai and Ittai, 'Protect the young man Absalom for my sake.' And if I had put my life in jeopardy—and nothing is hidden from the king—you would have kept your distance from me." Joab said, "I am not going to wait like this for you." So he took three javelins in his hand and plunged them into Absalom's heart while Absalom was still alive in the oak tree." (2Sa 18:6-14 NIV)

When king David received the news of Absalom's death he was shaken: "The king asked the Cushite, "Is the young man Absalom safe?" The Cushite replied, "May the enemies of my lord the king and all who rise up to harm you be like that young man." The king was shaken. He went up to the room over the gateway and wept. As he went, he said: "O my son Absalom! My son, my son Absalom! If only I had died instead of you—O Absalom, my son, my son!" (2Sa 18:32-33 NIV)

When Joab heard that David was mourning for Absalom he told him that he must pull himself together and go out and encourage the troops who had fought for him and saved him, otherwise they would desert him – and David did so. Then all the Israelites (many of whom had been supporting Absalom) fled to their homes and David returned to Jerusalem appointing Amasa as head over his army in place of Joab.

But rebellion against David was in the air and a Benjaminite, Bicri son of Sheba, threatened another rebellion against David. David ordered Amasa to raise an army from Judah to pursue Bicri, but he took too long in doing this and David sent men under the command of Abishai (Joab's brother) to pursue and kill Bicri. As they went Amasa caught up with them but Joab killed him and Abishai and Joab continued in the pursuit of Bicri. Bicri took refuge in Sheba and Joab besieged the city and started to demolish its walls. A woman inhabitant asked him why he was besieging an important city of Israel and he explained that he was pursuing Bicri who had rebelled against the king and that he just wanted this one man. The woman said that they would throw out his head to Joab and the people of the city listened to her advice and threw Bicri's head to Joab. So, Joab then went back to Jerusalem and was again commander of the army.

Famine then struck Israel and when David consulted the Lord – he'd obviously learned his lesson about not consulting God – he was told it was because of Saul's having put the Gibeonites to death. So David summoned the Gibeonites made peace with them and the famine ended.

Having been delivered from all his enemies David sang a song to the Lord in words reminiscent of Psalm 18:

"He said: "The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation. He is my stronghold, my refuge and my saviour—from violent men you save me. I call to the LORD, who is worthy of praise,

and I am saved from my enemies. "The waves of death swirled about me; the torrents of destruction overwhelmed me. The cords of the grave coiled around me; the snares of death confronted me. In my distress I called to the LORD; I called out to my God. From his temple he heard my voice; my cry came to his ears. "The earth trembled and quaked, the foundations of the heavens shook; they trembled because he was angry. Smoke rose from his nostrils; consuming fire came from his mouth, burning coals blazed out of it. He parted the heavens and came down; dark clouds were under his feet. He mounted the cherubim and flew; he soared on the wings of the wind. He made darkness his canopy around him—the dark rain clouds of the sky. Out of the brightness of his presence bolts of lightning blazed forth. The LORD thundered from heaven; the voice of the Most High resounded. He shot arrows and scattered the enemies, bolts of lightning and routed them. The valleys of the sea were exposed and the foundations of the earth laid bare at the rebuke of the LORD, at the blast of breath from his nostrils. "He reached down from on high and took hold of me; he drew me out of deep waters. He rescued me from my powerful enemy, from my foes, who were too strong for me. They confronted me in the day of my disaster, but the LORD was my support. He brought me out into a spacious place; he rescued me because he delighted in me. "The LORD has dealt with me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands he has rewarded me. For I have kept the ways of the LORD; I have not done evil by turning from my God. All his laws are before me; I have not turned away from his decrees. I have been blameless before him and have kept myself from sin. The LORD has rewarded me according to my righteousness, according to my cleanness in his sight. "To the faithful you show yourself faithful, to the blameless you show yourself blameless, to the pure you show yourself pure, but to the crooked you show yourself shrewd. You save the humble, but your eyes are on the haughty to bring them low. You are my lamp, O LORD; the LORD turns my darkness into light. With your help I can advance against a troop; with my God I can scale a wall. "As for God, his way is perfect; the word of the LORD is flawless. He is a shield for all who take refuge in him. For who is God besides the LORD? And who is the Rock except our God? It is God who arms me with strength and makes my way perfect. He makes my feet like the feet of a deer; he enables me to stand on the heights. He trains my hands for battle; my arms can bend a bow of bronze. You give me your shield of victory; you stoop down to make me great. You broaden the path beneath me, so that my ankles do not turn over. "I pursued my enemies and crushed them; I did not turn back till they were destroyed. I crushed them completely, and they could not rise; they fell beneath my feet. You armed me with strength for battle; you made my adversaries bow at my feet. You made my enemies turn their backs in flight, and I destroyed my foes. They cried for help, but there was no-one to save them—to the LORD, but he did not answer. I beat them as fine as the dust of the earth; I pounded and trampled them like mud in the streets. "You have delivered me from the attacks of my people; you have preserved me as the head of nations. People I did not know are subject to me, and foreigners come cringing to me; as soon as they hear me, they obey me. They all lose heart; they come trembling from their strongholds. "The LORD lives! Praise be to my Rock! Exalted be God, the Rock, my Saviour! He is the God who avenges me, who puts the nations under me, who sets me free from my enemies. You exalted me above my foes; from violent men you rescued me. Therefore I will praise you, O LORD, among the nations; I will sing praises to your name. He gives his king great victories; he shows unfailing kindness to his anointed, to David and his descendants for ever." (2Sa 22:2-51 NIV)

In his old age David sinned by taking a census of all the fighting men of Israel (we're not told exactly what the sin was, but I think the sin was probably the action was prompted by Satan (1 Chronicles 21:1), that the Israelites were not David's to count as if he owned them and that it showed a lack of trust in the Lord). As soon as the census was over David realised his sin

and repented, but God offered David a choice of three punishments for this sin (i) three years of famine, (ii) three months of fleeing from your enemies or (iii) three days of plague. David chose option (iii) as he said he preferred to fall into the hands of a merciful God rather than the hands of men. Seventy thousand people died from Dan to Beersheba, but God spared Jerusalem and David built an altar at Araunah's threshing floor, where he had seen an angel of the Lord in thanks to God for his mercy. Even when he rebukes us God still shows his love and mercy. This threshing floor later became the site for the Temple.

In his advanced years the book of Chronicles tells us that even though David had not been allowed by God to build the Temple, he did begin extensive preparations for its construction (1 Chronicles 22-29) assembling men and materials so that the work could go ahead without delay.

Apparently David was cold in his old age and they brought a young girl to lie with him to keep him warm. Although they were taking care of David he wasn't taking care of the kingdom and hadn't appointed a successor, although he wanted his son by Bathsheba, Solomon, to be king. This led to another son Adonijah declaring himself king – largely because David had failed to discipline his family:

"Now Adonijah, whose mother was Haggith, put himself forward and said, "I will be king." So he got chariots and horses ready, with fifty men to run ahead of him. (His father had never interfered with him by asking, "Why do you behave as you do?" He was also very handsome and was born next after Absalom.)" (1Ki 1:5-6 NIV)

and Adonijah enlisted support from some powerful figures (although not Zadok the priest or Nathan the prophet) and went and sacrificed at En Rogel. Nathan now persuaded Bathsheba to go to David and ask him to declare Solomon king. David did this:

"King David said, "Call in Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet and Benaiah son of Jehoiada." When they came before the king, he said to them: "Take your lord's servants with you and set Solomon my son on my own mule and take him down to Gihon. There shall Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anoint him king over Israel. Blow the trumpet and shout, 'Long live King Solomon!' Then you are to go up with him, and he is to come and sit on my throne and reign in my place. I have appointed him ruler over Israel and Judah." (1Ki 1:32-35 NIV)

This was done and when Adonijah heard about it all his guests fled and he went and held on to the horns of the altar hoping that his life would be spared and for the moment Solomon did spare him. David then gave some wise and Godly counsel to Solomon:

"When the time drew near for David to die, he gave a charge to Solomon his son. "I am about to go the way of all the earth," he said. "So be strong, show yourself a man, and observe what the LORD your God requires: Walk in his ways, and keep his decrees and commands, his laws and requirements, as written in the Law of Moses, so that you may prosper in all you do and wherever you go, and that the LORD may keep his promise to me: 'If your descendants watch how they live, and if they walk faithfully before me with all their heart and soul, you will never fail to have a man on the throne of Israel.' "Now you yourself know what Joab son of Zeruiah did to me— what he did to the two commanders of Israel's armies, Abner son of Ner and Amasa son of Jether. He killed them, shedding their blood in peacetime as if in battle, and with that blood stained the belt round his waist and the sandals on his feet. Deal with him according to your wisdom, but do not let his grey head go down to the grave in peace. "But show kindness to the sons of Barzillai of Gilead and let them be among those who eat at your table. They stood by me when I fled from your brother Absalom. "And

remember, you have with you Shimei son of Gera, the Benjamite from Bahurim, who called down bitter curses on me the day I went to Mahanaim. When he came down to meet me at the Jordan, I swore to him by the LORD: 'I will not put you to death by the sword.' But now, do not consider him innocent. You are a man of wisdom; you will know what to do to him. Bring his grey head down to the grave in blood.'" (1Ki 2:1-9 NIV)

David then died having ruled over Israel for 40 years and the throne was safely handed on to Solomon.

David was a great figure. He was both a man of individual valour (after all he slew Goliath) and a great military leader who finally established Israel's security from its enemies. He was also the first king of Israel to set up administration and establish civil authority. He was a man of God, said to be a man after God's own heart – no doubt because of his sure faith and exuberant worship. Yet he was also very sinful as we see from the episode with Bathsheba where David became an adulterer and a murderer. About that time, perhaps because of that sin, he seems to have ceased to seek the counsel of God and lost control of his family. These things led to Absalom's rebellion and civil war. His family seems to have been generally rebellious as we see another son Adonijah setting himself up as king in David's old age. Apart from the sin of the census we looked at, David seems to have turned back to God in his old age and eventually did the right thing for Israel by securing the succession to the throne. So, a man after God's own heart and yet a murderer – that gives us all hope doesn't it.