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David's Officials
Second Samuel 8:15-18
and First Chronicles 18:14-17

When we get to this point in the narrative, the writer of the books of **Samuel** signals that he is closing off a major section of his scroll. He uses summaries like this in **First Samuel 7:15-17** (closing off the **Samuel** section), **First Samuel 14:49-52** (closing off the **Sha'ul** section), and now **Second Samuel 8:15-18** (closing off the history of **David's** rise). Later, he will summarize **Second Samuel 9:1** to **20:26** (closing off the history of **David** as the ousted king) in anticipation of **David's** restoration to the throne and **his** final days.

David reigned over all Isra'el and beyond**, doing what was just (Second Samuel 8:15a). The Ruach ha-Kodesh** is saying that, on the whole, **David** exercised **his** royal office in the proper way. **He** asserts the general tone, not the near perfection of **David's** rule. **David** was doing what a godly king was supposed to do **(Psalms 72** and **101)**.[310]



David was not only **king**, but **he** also kept **his** own hands in the judiciary. **He** was the final court of appeal, so that **he** made sure that **justice** (Hebrew: *misphpat*) and **equality** (Hebrew: *tsdaqah*) were available **for all his people** without prejudice or discrimination **(Second Samuel 8:15b)**. The pattern for the judge was the goodness and reliability of **YHVH Himself (Deuteronomy 32:4; Psalm 37:27-29)**, and presumed godliness in the one administering **justice**. The judiciary up to and including the time of **Samuel** had been in the hands of **the judges**

(Hebrew: *ha'shofetim*, a word similar to *misphpat*), and therefore it was to be expected that **David** would take over the office of supreme **judge**, just as **Samuel himself** had held, with its overtones of deliverer and savior **(Judges 2:16)**. It was to be the sphere in which **his son Absalom** was to question **David's** effectiveness (**to see link click Do – Absalom's Conspiracy**) and set up as a rival.[311]

Joab son of Zeruiah, **David's** nephew **(First Chron 2:16)**, **was over the army (Second Samuel 8:16a). He** killed Abner **(Second Samuel 3:27)** who might have been in competition for the post. Although **the Kerethites and the Pelethites**, mercenary soldiers, were under the separate command of **Benaiah the son of Jehoiada** (see **Ej – David's Mighty Warriors**), **Joab** protected **the king**. The employment of foreign guards ensured **David's** safety because it would minimize the possibility of becoming the victim of tribal loyalties and because these mercenaries were **from Crete** they could give **David** their whole-hearted allegiance **(Second Samuel 15:18, 20:7).**

Jehoshaphat son of Ahilud was the recorder (Hebrew: *mazlir*), whose title comes from the Hebrew word *to remember*, had a most important role in the court with responsibility for keeping **the king** informed, advising **him**, and communicating **his** commands **(Second Samuel 8:16b)**. It was **the recorder** who was ordered by King Ahasuerus to bring in **the book of chronicles, the record of his reign,** which was a turning point in the book of **Esther** (see the commentary on **Esther Be – That Night the King Could Not Sleep**). It is interesting that **ADONAI** is also depicted, like the human king, as having **watchmen on the walls of Jerusalem** (see the commentary on **Isaiah Ke – I Have Posted Watchman on Your Walls, They Will Never Be Silent Day or Night**) to keep reminding **Him** of **His** stated intentions until they are fulfilled.

This is an aspect of prayer that is easily overlooked, though is implicit in **the Lord's** prayer: **Your Kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven (Matthew 6:10). Jesus** instructs **His** disciples to focus on the coming Messianic **Kingdom**. We are **to pray** that this same **Kingdom** will be established **on earth** during our lifetime. In the Great Kaddish, the leader says, ". . . in the world that **He** will create anew, when **He** will raise the dead, and give them eternal life, will rebuild the city of **Jerusalem**, and establish **His** Temple in the middle of it; and will uproot all pagan worship from **the earth**, and restore the worship of the true **God**." The liturgy of the Torah service also elaborates on this and quotes **First Chronicles 29:11-12** when it says, "**The Kingdom is Yours, ADONAI**." All true believers desire for **God's** Messianic **Kingdom** to come to this **earth** because that means

that **Yeshua ha-Meshiach** will have returned. When **He** rules and reigns from **Jerusalem** (see the commentary on **Isaiah Jg – In Righteousness You Will Be Established, Terror Will Be Far Removed**), **His** desire **will be done on earth as it** currently **is in heaven.**

Two chief **priests** were appointed to work side-by-side **(Second Samuel 8:17a)**. **Ahimelek son of Abiathar** had been at **David's** side since death at the hand of Sha'ul **(First Samuel 22:20)**, so **his** appointment was no surprise, but **Zadok son of Ahitub**, who was responsible for **the ark of the Covenant (Second Samuel 15:24-29)**, appears here for the first time. **His** genealogy in **First Chronicles 6:50-53** is traced back to Aaron through Eleazar. **Zadok's** genealogy is very important because after **Abiathar** supported Adonijah's rebellion (see **En – Adoniyah Sets Himself Up as King**), **Zadok** became the high priest of Solomon and was the first in a line of priests that controlled Temple worship up to the time of the exile (see the commentary on **Jeremiah Gu – Seventy Years of Imperial Babylonian Rule**) and beyond.

The royal secretary, Seraiah, who kept state records, corresponded with foreign kings and acted as the royal historian, is named here **(Second Samuel 8:17b)**. In **Second Chronicles 18:16, David's secretary** is called **Shavasha**. Although this may have been an alternative name for **Seraiah** in **Samuel**, it is equally possible that **he** served as **royal secretary** in **Seraiah's** absence for whatever reason.[312]

And finally **David's sons were** described as **priests** (Hebrew: *kohamim*) in **Second Samuel 8:18**, but designated as **chief officials** (Hebrew: *harishonim*) **at the king's side** in **First Chronicles 18:17.** Since **David** and his sons belonged to the tribe of **Y'hudah**, neither **he** nor **his sons** could enter the holy courts of the Tabernacle and minister as **priests**. The probable meaning was that **David's sons** assisted or were sworn in for those **priestly** functions for which **the king** was qualified to act **(Second Samuel 6:13)**. In support of this view, one recalls that **Moses** had performed priestly functions **(Exodus 19:22-24)**, as had **Samuel (First Samuel 10:8)**. Both **David** and **Solomon** surely had a priestly dimension to **their** reign and were not rebuked by **YHVH** for exercising the lead in sacrifices and worship. At that time the division of roles between **the king** and **the priests** was still being worked out, even though the guidelines had already been laid down.[313]