

The Ideal United Kingdom (1 Chronicles 9:35 – 2 Chronicles 9:31)

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David Prepares for the Temple, part 5: David Secures the Nation and Collects Temple Materials, part 3 (1 Chronicles 20:1-8)

David Conquers King of Ammon (20:1-3)

The record of David's response to the Ammonites remains unresolved until 20:1-3. The Ammonites still remained safe within their city (see 19:15), but in this passage David defeated them.

The record of this battle divides into four balanced steps (see figure 16). Joab leads the army into battle (20:1a) and the army returns (20:3b). The middle portions of the episode balance as Joab destroys (20:1b) and David receives the spoils (20:2-3a).

David waited for spring weather before mounting a large offensive strike against **Rabbah**, the capital of the Ammonites (20:1 see Deut 3:11). The information of 2 Sam 11:1a is repeated in 1 Chr 20:1a nearly verbatim, but the new context changes its meaning. 2 Sam 11:1a introduces the story of David, Bathsheba and Uriah, as well as Nathan's rebuke (see 2 Sam 11:1b-12:25). The Chronicler omitted this negative material and used 2 Sam 11:1a to introduce the positive story of David's final victory over the Ammonites (20:1-3).

The positive mood of this portion of Chronicles becomes evident in another omission. In 20:1b the Chronicler picked up the language of 2 Sam 12:26 only to omit 2 Sam 12:27-29. In 2 Sam 12:27-29 David participated in the Ammonite defeat after Joab had nearly won the city without him. David came when Joab warned the king that he had better come if he wished to have any part in the victory. The Chronicler did not hide Joab's role, but he avoided raising the question of David's ineptitude as it appears in Samuel.

This closing section (20:1-3) brings the readers back to motifs in the opening phase (19:1-5). There the king of the Ammonites insulted David. At this point, David took revenge directly on **their king** (20:2). He took the king's **crown** with its **gold** and **precious stones** and put it on his own head (20:2). By this means, the insult against David was repaid.

The king's crown was of great value, but David also received a **great quantity of plunder** (20:2) and captured laborers (20:3). David's successes were repeated in **all Ammonite towns** (20:3). This stress on David's achievements points once again to the central

purpose of this section of Chronicles. David collected much from his battles which he dedicated for use in Solomon's temple (see 18:11).

David's Victories over the Philistines (20:4-8)

The Chronicler filled out his record of David's victories by referring to several battles with the Philistines. He omitted 2 Sam 13:1-20:26 (see figure 18) to draw this material into close relation with other battles in this context (18:1-20:3 // 2 Sam 21:15-22). Once again, 18:11 holds the key for understanding why the Chronicler chose to place this passage here. 18:11 specifically mentions the **Philistines** as one of those groups whose plunder was used in temple construction.

Comparison of 20:4-8 with 2 Sam 13:1-21:14

The following table compares Samuel and Chronicles on a large scale (see figure 19). As this comparison indicates, the Chronicler omitted large portions of Samuel. He did not repeat the troubles within David's kingdom following his sin with Bathsheba (2 Sam 13:1-20:26). He also omitted David's severe treatment of Saul's descendants (2 Sam 21:1-14). These omissions followed his usual practice of focusing on the positive features of David's reign.

The account of Philistine defeats is nearly a third longer in Samuel (see 2 Sam 21:15-22). The Chronicler left out 2 Sam 21:15-17 probably because it reflected poorly on David's ability to wage war. There David "became exhausted" (2 Sam 21:15) and was rescued by his men (2 Sam 21:17). In fact, David's own men insisted that he never go to battle again (2 Sam 21:17). Apparently, the Chronicler did not repeat these verses because they did not fit with his emphasis on David's accomplishments as the great warrior who gained much plunder to be used in the temple.

Several smaller differences deserve comment. First, the Chronicler substituted **Gezer** (20:4) for the lesser known designation "Gob" (2 Sam 21:19). This anachronism demonstrates the Chronicler's interest in helping his readers' understand. Second, he also added **and the Philistines** (Hebrew = "they") **were subjugated** (20:4 // 2 Sam 21:19). This terminology recalls the promise to David in 17:10 that God would subdue his enemies. Third, corruption of Samuel through textual transmission explains the differences between Elhanon killing "Goliath the Gittite" (2 Sam 21:19) and **Lahmi the brother of Goliath the Gittite** (20:5) (*Introduction: Translation and Transmission*). Fourth, the Chronicler acknowledged the omission of 2 Sam 21:15-17 by also omitting the reference to "four" Philistines in Gath (2 Sam 21:22 // 20:8).

1 Chr		2 Sam
-----	David's Trouble (omitted)	13:1-20:26
-----	Saulides Executed (omitted)	21:1-14
-----	David Fights Philistines (omitted)	21:15-17
20:4-8	David Defeats Philistines (abbreviated)	21:18-22

Comparison of 1 Chr 20:4-8 with 2 Sam 13:1-21:22 (figure 19)

Structure of 20:4-8

This short passage divides into three sections, each containing a vignette of battle with the Philistines (see figure 16). These battles are marked off by the phrases "in another battle" (20:5) and "in still another battle" (20:6).

Victory in a Battle with Philistines (20:4)

In these closing records of David's wars, the Chronicler described three battles in which David was victorious over the Philistines. The first battle took place **at Gezer** (20:4), a city located between the hill country of Judah and the Philistine territory. When Joshua was distributing the land, Gezer was given to Ephraim (see 1 Chr 7:28). Ephraim, however, never succeeded in driving out the Canaanites from the area (see Josh 16:10). During the early stages of David's conflicts with the Philistines, he drove the Philistines back as far as Gezer (see 1 Chr 14:16). It is only here that David drove them back beyond Gezer.

Victory in a Second Battle with Philistines (20:5)

The second battle focuses on the death of **the brother of Goliath** (20:5). As noted above, this passage is probably corrupted through textual transmission, but it is still clear that the man killed here was a great warrior (see *Introduction: Translation and Transmission*).

Victory in a Third Battle with Philistines (20:6-8)

The third conflict in this series of battles involved another giant warrior. Although this man **taunted Israel** (20:7 compare 1 Sam 17:10ff; 2 Kgs 18:19-37; 2 Chr 32:9-19), David's nephew killed him (20:7). Finally, the **descendants of Rapha in Gath** also appeared among those killed by David and his family (20:8).

These records of David's various victories in war held at least two implications for the Chronicler's readers. First, David secured the land against enemies on all sides. This accomplishment encouraged the post-exilic community to remain faithful to God in hope of military security against their enemies (see *Introduction: 23) Victory and Defeat*). Second, David devoted the spoils of these battles to the temple. The Chronicler's readers should have learned from David's example what priority they had to give to supporting the temple and its service in their day (see *Introduction: 9) Temple Contributions*).