

*David's Later Years*

READ 2 SAMUEL 19–24

*The LORD lives! Blessed be my rock.*

2 SAMUEL 22:47

David's troubles do not end with Absalom's death. Most of Absalom's supporters are from the northern tribes in Israel. Defeated with Absalom, they realize that they have to return to David but are hesitant. As the two southern tribes in Judah show their support of David, the ten northern tribes complain bitterly.

“Why have our kindred the people of Judah stolen you away, and brought the king and his household over the Jordan, and all David's men with him?” All the people of Judah answered the people of Israel, “Because the king is near of kin to us. Why then are you angry over this matter? Have we eaten at all at the king's expense? Or has he given us any gift?” But the people of Israel answered the people of Judah, “We have ten shares in the

king, and in David also we have more than you. Why then did you despise us? Were we not the first to speak of bringing back our king?" But the words of the people of Judah were fiercer than the words of the people of Israel. (2 Samuel 19:41–43)

The bitter differences between North and South smolder under the strong central authority of David—and, later, Solomon—and will eventually divide the kingdom.

David's last years are troubling. He fights against the remnants of the rebellious tribes of the North. God sends a plague on Israel because David conducts a census to know the strength of his kingdom, a knowledge that belongs to God alone.

David was a great poet and a person of deep, yet flawed, spirituality. He is credited with a heartfelt song of faith in God for his continued protection (2 Samuel 22). In this song, David describes God as a rock, fortress, deliverer, shield, horn, stronghold, and refuge. God's actions in David's life are like the mighty forces of nature aiding him: breakers surge and floods overwhelm; the earth sways and shakes, trembles and quakes. David's enemies flee and are destroyed, ground into the dust and trampled. God's commitment to David will not end, though David is unfaithful in many ways. God's covenant love is steadfast and enduring.

*CCC, 2578–80: The prayer of the king*