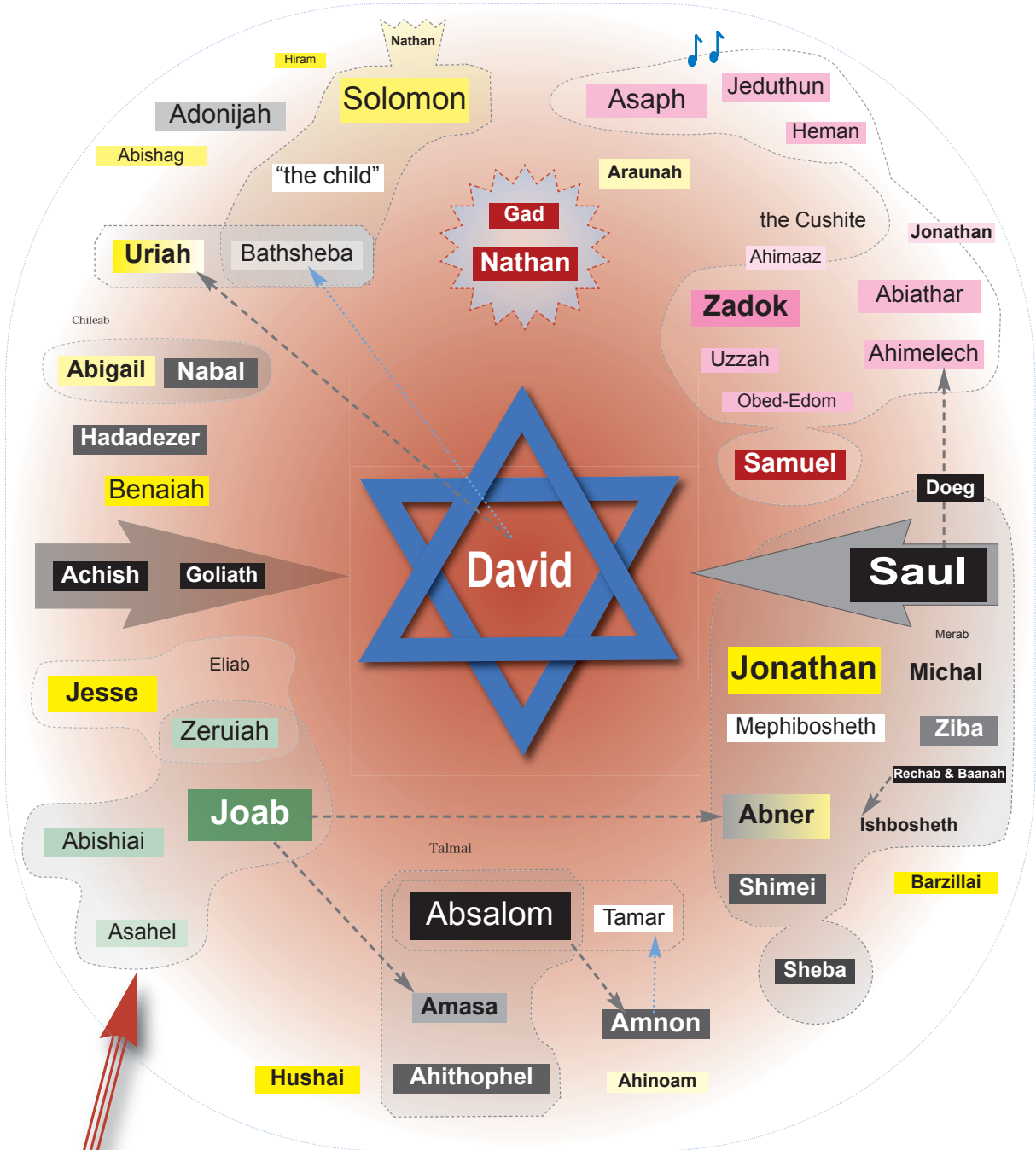


surrounded



people in the life of David

## about Asahel

1. Little is recorded in Scripture about Asahel, other than on how he came to be killed by Abner in 2 Sam. 2:18-23. Though Asahel was a military leader according to 2 Sam. 23:24 and 1 Chr. 27:7, nothing is said about this in the longest passage about him. Rather he is portrayed as an individual warrior.

2. Yet, Asahel was not an isolated individual, for he was a son of Zeruah, (David's sister) and a younger brother of Joab, David's general (2:18). Abner also spoke about this in 2:22. So there is a paradox. Asahel faced Abner alone; yet he was not alone. Perhaps Asahel didn't like being called Joab's brother.

3. Asahel and Abner were both warriors, but they were also different. Beyond physical differences and differences in rank, Abner was concerned about dealing with Joab, but Asahel showed no interest in trying to end the war between Judah and Benjamin through diplomacy.

4. It's important to remember that the fighting in Second Samuel ch. two was part of a civil war. Asahel was on the right side (on David's side), but that does not mean that his personal attempt to kill Abner was wise or proper. In a way Asahel was like David when he faced Goliath (1 Sam. ch. 17), but in other ways he was not.

5. Perhaps the most important thing to do in this study is to compare oneself, as an individual and as a team member, to Asahel. There is much to learn from his death. He was a gifted individual and on the right side; yet he was needlessly killed without accomplishing a thing.

## descriptive terms

The list below will help you describe Asahel as seen in 2 Sam. 2:18-23. Some terms fit him well, while others do not; so mark them as correct, incorrect or partly correct. You may also wish to put a question mark beside some phrases and terms because there is insufficient information to decide. Then use the list below to help fill out the worksheet on the opposite page. Comparing yourself to Asahel will help you apply the passage properly.

---

a fast runner (2:18)

---

Joab's younger brother

---

a minor character in Samuel

---

on the right side

---

a godly man

---

brave, courageous

---

unwilling to change his mind

---

out ranked by Abner

---

stronger than Abner

---

killed needlessly

---

over confident

---

overly ambitious

---

seeking a trophy (2:21)

---

unwilling to listen to reason

---

a warning to others (2:23)

---

too independent

---

a tragic failure

---

like Saul

---

like Joab

---

like me

---

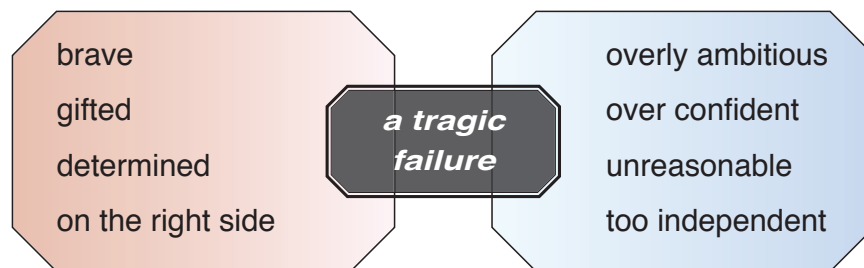


## Asahel

Although Asahel is included in the list of David's valiant men and military leaders in Second Samuel ch. 23, the account of his death in ch. two shows that he was also a tragic failure. If he had been wiser and less single-minded in his attempt to kill Abner, he probably would have lived to serve King David for many more years.

In the diagram below his better qualities, which could have been key to his success, are shown on the left and his corresponding character flaws which led to his death are shown on the right.

### *Asahel was...*



Some may argue that we don't know enough about Asahel to come to such broad negative conclusions about him. This, indeed, may be true regarding his life as a whole, for he probably would not have been chosen as one of the nation's military leaders (1 Chr. 27:7) if he was always unreasonable and overly ambitious. That said, it's still clear that Asahel was a tragic failure at the end of his life, in 2 Sam. 2:18-23, the passage on which the diagram above is based.

Asahel was not nearly as great a failure as King Saul, since there are no specific sins reported that he committed against God and others. For the same reason he was less of a failure than his older brother, Joab, who was a successful general and lived much longer than Asahel but was guilty of killing two prominent innocent people (1 Kings 2:5-6). Perhaps, then, we should think of Asahel as a mini failure and more like many of us than like Saul or Joab.

The greatest piece of missing data regarding Joab's younger brother is the lack of any direct statement about his spiritual life. There is little to indicate that he was a godly man. Thus, his being "on the right side" may have been based on family loyalty more than on godly trust. His ability to run faster than others says nothing about his spiritual status. In fact, the events in 2 Sam. 2:18-23 imply that he may have trusted his physical ability more than he trusted God.

Today, as well, many promising individuals fail in this way, even within our churches. So let's each trust God, and pray that we may live and end our lives better than Asa-