


## SECOND SAMUEL

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### CHAPTER 1

#### DAVID MEETS AN AMALAKITE DEFECTOR AT ZIKLAG 1-3

Then the history went on after the death of Saul and David returned from the multiple striking of Amalek and David sat or waited at Ziklag for two days. *This city originally within the territory of Simeon where David found refuge and which as acquired Philistine land after his flight among the Philistines now became his own.* Then on the third day also look what developed. A man came as a defector from the camp of Saul and his outer garments were torn to shreds and there was red soil on his head. Then as the life story went in his approach to David he also would fall to the earth and would have kept bowing prostrate before him [*Hithpalel future of j tv*]. But David said to him “Where did you come from to here?” And he said to him “From the camp of Israel I made a quiet escape in haste [*flm*].

#### DAVID ENQUIRES OF THE BATTLE 4-10

Then David said to him “How did that thing happen?” “Please explain it to me!” Then he said “Because the people fled from the battle and so the big majority from the people fell and are dead and even Saul and Jonathan his son are dead”. But David said to the youth that informed him “How do you know personally that Saul and his son Jonathan are dead?” So the young man that informed him said “It was a hostile meeting [*arq*] or loud summons I walked into by chance [*hrq*] at Mount Gilead and behold Saul was leaning his weight on his spear. Then behold the chariot and the men who pursued him made to overtake him. But he would look behind him and he would see me and he called me and he would say “Look at me!” *The furtive backward look of a dying man and his plaintive call moved the Amalekite.* Then he said to me “Who are you?” and I said to him “I am an Amalekite!” Then he said to me “I beg you stand upon me and kill me for the terror or cramp or giddiness [*xbv* the word means “interwoven armour in Syrian usage but the Rabbis gave it the signification “cramp” and others “dizziness” whilst it is also used of “terror”- for whatever reason Saul could not go on with suicide – and doubtless his last moments were plagued with his visit to Endor] holds me back for all my life is still in me. Then I stood upon him and slew him for I knew he would not live after he had fallen and I took the diadem (*generally with stones*) that was on his head and the bracelet that was on his arm and have come hither with them to my Lord.

#### DAVID’S SORROWFUL REACTION 11-12

Then David took firm hold of his outer garments and tore them and also all the men that were with him. And they lamented and wept and fasted until the evening over Saul and over Jonathan his son and over the people of the LORD and over the house of Israel for they had fallen by the sword.

#### THE DESPATCH OF THE AMALEKITE 13-16

And David said to the youth that had informed him “From whence do you come?” And he said “I am a son of a man who is an Amalekite sojourner or nomad.” Then David said to him “How were you not afraid to send forth your hand to destroy the anointed of the LORD?” Then David called to one of the young men and said “Draw near to sacrifice, fall upon him” and he struck him and he died. Then David said to

him “Your blood be on your own head for your own mouth testified against you saying “I have killed the anointed of the LORD”. *David was well aware of the ban on the Amalekite race (Exodus 17.16) but he was also unhappy that a foreign youth would take the life of the king.*

## **THE LAMENT AND MILITARY LESSON FROM THIS SORE DEFEAT 17-27**

And David would continually strike up this lament over Saul and Jonathan his son and he would say they were to continually teach the sons of Judah to use the bow. Look up the written record in the book of Jasher.

The gazelle of Israel is slain on your heights.

How are the valiant fallen?”

*Five references to the proverbial beauty of the Gazelle are found in Solomon’s Canticles.*

*David was quite sure that courage apart the nation was poorly armed and he was well aware that it was indifferently led at times - though Jonathan did what he could to obviate his father’s failure to seek the oracle of God and unimpressive battle technique.*

Let it not be told in Gath or news in Askelon’s streets

Lest daughters of the Philistines rejoice

Lest daughters of the uncircumcised triumph.

Hills of Gilboa may neither dew nor rain fall upon you

May there not be ploughed fields of heave offerings

For there the shield of the mighty

The shield of Saul is cast away **because of want of smearing (anointing) with oil.**

*(The shield is eventually discarded as useless without the anointing as faith is not adequate to the battle without the Spirit of God – e.g. shoes, sword, breastplate and girding of the Spirit)*

From the blood of the slain from the fat of the warriors

The **bow of Jonathan did not err or linger**

And the sword of Saul did not return empty.

*From this we must conclude that David surveyed the battlefield and that he as next of kin would have given these warriors a state funeral but as we learn in v.4 the robust men of Jabesh had already performed that office.*

Saul and Jonathan **were loving** and agreeable or **pleasant** (literally “beautiful”) in their lives and in their deaths they were indivisible (literally “they did not scatter them”). *It would appear that Saul could have left the spot where Jonathan fell but he valiantly died with him. When we survey occasions when David might have slain Saul love and gentle relationship must be the glue that kept the family together in thick and thin. There was doubtless beauty also about Saul’s life as that of Jonathan.*

They were swifter and outshone the eagles.

They were more war-like than lions.

O daughters of Israel weep over Saul

Who clothed you with scarlet and soft luxury

Who exalted you with ornaments of shining gold upon your garments

Alas the valiant fell in the midst of the battle!

O Jonathan you were pierced through upon your heights.

*David knew Jonathan’s penchant for fighting from high ground. In this instance the archers who opposed were too many and Jonathan sustained a deadly wound.*

Anguish is mine on your account, my brother Jonathan.

You have been exceedingly pleasant to me.

Your love to me showed itself singular or **distinguished though difficult** (for you), beyond the love of women. *David is referring to Jonathan divesting himself of the royal prerogative on his behalf and also protecting him from Saul's rage. Michal Saul's daughter was David's wife but in a sense Jonathan went beyond his sister in his care of David. Despite the queen and his own wife who might have become queen Jonathan furthered the welfare of David.*

Alas the valiant are fallen and the weapons of war lost.

*Even the tell-tale bow of Jonathan which meant so much to David was gone; with the sword of Saul it was part of the booty of war. Only in the lines of David did these special armaments live on. Perhaps scripture is telling us something about the "weapons of our warfare" through the reference to the "shield that was not anointed". The shield of faith and the Sword of the Spirit are deemed more precious to God. (cf Ephesians 6)*

## CHAPTER 2

### DAVID ANOINTED KING AT HEBRON 1-7

*And history developed* after this basic matter and David enquired from the LORD saying "Shall I go up at this first uniting time [ *tj a*] to the cities of Judah?" and the LORD said to him "Go up!" Then David said "Where shall I go up?" So He said "To Hebron". Then David went up there and also both of his wives Ahinoam the Jezreelite and Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite. And the robust men that were with him David brought up; each man and his household and they lived in the awaking and watchful cities of Hebron. Then the robust men of Judah came and anointed him there; they anointed David as king over the house of Judah and they informed David saying "It was the men of Jabesh Gilead that buried Saul."

Then David sent ambassadors with a message to the courageous men of Jabesh Gilead and said to them "Blessed of the LORD are you who have offered this covenant affection in solidarity to your Lord - to Saul, and have buried him. So now may the LORD deal with you after covenant kindness and truth and I also will undertake this welfare because you performed this office. So now your hands will be strengthened and be sons of might for your master Saul is dead and the house of Judah has anointed me to be king over them. *From this text it becomes clear that David desired to unite the nation and was open-hearted and most considerate to the men of Jabesh who had rescued the body of the king from the field of battle and buried Saul. After Israel and Abner himself had fled from the Philistines these brave men performed a heroic deed. David's anointing was at the tomb of Abraham. Thus he is inducted where the Father of the faithful was laid to rest.*

### ABNER SOWS THE SEED OF DIVISION IN ISRAEL 8-11

But Abner the son of Ner ("a lamp") the captain of the host which was Saul's took Ish Bosheth the son of Saul and passed over with him to Mahanaim and set him up as king over Gilead and the Ashurites and Jezreel and over Ephraim and Benjamin and over all Israel. Ishbosheth son of Saul was a man of 40 years with his kingship over Israel and he was king for two years. The house of Judah was definitely followers of David. *Mahanaim was the place where Jacob met God and had lustrous memories for Israel's father figure - Jacob.* At that time David was king in Hebron over the house of Judah for seven years and six months.

## **ABNER'S DEFEAT AND COMPASSION 12-24**

And Abner son of Ner went and also the servants of Ishbosheth son of Saul from Mahanaim to Gibeon. And Joab son of Zeruiah [*“balmy” or “balsam”*] went out and they met each other **united** [*wdjy - they were far from united – rather were they united in war*] at the pool of Gibeon and they stayed one on this side of the pool and the other on that side of the pool. And Abner said to Joab “Please let the youths rise up and skirmish in our presence and Joab said “They will rise up”. Then there arose twelve youths of Benjamin and of Ishbosheth son of Saul and twelve from the servants of David. And each man held his acquaintance firmly by the head and his sword into the side of his acquaintance and they fell together so that place was called “The portions of the strong or “those who press forwards”. *And history records* that the battle on that day was severe in the extreme or vehement and Abner and the stout men of Israel were smitten in defeat before the faces of the servants of David. And there were three sons of Zeruiah there: Joab Abishai and Asahel a man as swift on his feet as one of the roes that is in the field. **And Asahel went in pursuit of Abner and did not turn away to the right or left from following Abner. (1) So Abner glanced behind him and said “Are you this Asahel?” and he said “I am”. (2) And Abner said to him “You must turn away to the left or the right and lay hold on one of the young men and take his armour for yourself” but Asahel was unwilling to deviate from following after him. (3) Then Abner added to speak again to Asahel “Stop pursuing me for why should I strike you to the ground and how could I hold up my head before Joab your brother? But he was unwilling to move off so Abner smote him with a backward thrust of his spear at the fifth rib and the spear head came out from behind him and he fell sinking on the spot and died.** *And history records* that all who come to the place where Asahel fell and died also stand and pause *in respect*. Joab and Abishai also pursued Abner and the sun set as these came to the hill Ammah which fronts Giah – the stream of the way of **the wilderness of Gibeon**.

## **AN UNEASY PEACE FOLLOWS 25-31**

But the sons of Benjamin rallied after Abner and they became one tightly knotted band of men and they stood upon the top of a single hill. *The writer is telling us that although they had high ground they were as vulnerable as Saul on Gilboa. The tactics of Abner were high ground tactics which he did not readily relinquish.*

Then Abner called to Joab and said “Shall the sword devour perpetually [*j xll*]. Are you not well aware that it will be a bitter story in the aftermath? So how long will it be till you refrain from saying to the people to return from pursuing their brothers?” And Joab said “As God lives if you had not spoken about that no doubt then from the morning light the people would have gone up every man after his brother. So Joab sounded a blast on the Shophar and the people stood still and they did not pursue after Israel any more nor did they continue to be at war. Then Abner and his stout men walked through the evening all that night in the Arabah and crossed the Jordan and went right through Bithron and came to Mahanaim. *The march was at least 80 miles and followed a defeat in which Abner had been pursued at great speed. This captain was a man of valour and one who took thought about his warfare and the sparing of lives.*

And Joab turned back from pursuing Abner and gathered all the people and there were missing from the servants of David nineteen men and Asahel. But the servants of David smote from Benjamin and from the men of Abner three hundred and sixty men

who died. And they lifted Asahel and buried him in the sepulchre of his father which is in Bethlehem.

### **THE BETHLEHEM CONNECTION 32**

And Joab and his men marched all through the night and daylight broke for them at Hebron. *They had travelled twenty five miles over mountain and valley and on the way stopped at Bethlehem to open the sepulchre of Zeruiah and bury Asahel.*

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **THE INCREASE OF DAVID BY SIX WIVES 1-5**

So *history teaches* that an extended war continued between the house of Saul and the house of David but David was going on and strengthening and the house of Saul going on and reducing or weakening. So sons were born to David in Hebron and *history teaches* his firstborn Amnon [*“faithful”*] was born to Ahinoam the Jezreelite. Then his second Chileab [*“like to the father”* - in 1 Chronicles 3.1 his name is given as *“Daniel”* LXX *“Damniel”* or *“God my judge”*] was born to Abigail wife of Nabal the Carmelite and the third Absalom [*“father of peace”*] son of Maachah daughter of Talmai [*“furrows”*] king of Geshur. [A Syrian city north east of Bashan] Then the fourth Adonijah son of Haggith and the fifth Shephatiah son of Abital were born. Then the sixth Ithream was born to Eglah a wife of David. These were born to David in Hebron.

### **ABNER GROWS STRONG IN ISRAEL 6-12**

And *history tells us* that war continued between the house of Saul and the house of David. And *history tells us* that Abner was strengthening in the house of Saul. But Saul had a concubine and her name was Rizpah [*“hot coal”* or *“flame”*] the daughter of Aiah [*“falcon”*] and he would say to Abner *“Why with full knowledge are you having a relationship with my Father’s concubine?”* Notice that the name of Ishbosheth is not given as a sign of the disapproval of the writer and indeed the Spirit of God. The text upholds the sturdy and considerate character of Abner and his very considerable ability to assess others. No doubt he had assessed Ishbosheth and told David in as many words what *“He”* (Ishbosheth) said. And Abner would grow very angry over the words of Ishbosheth and he said *“Have I the head of a dog that I should operate a covenant with the house of Saul your Father in the interest of his brothers and his friends and have not caused you to be offered to or found in the hand of David and you are visiting punishment upon me today the conjugal rights of the wife. On two counts Abner had right on his side. First he realised his foolishness to be supporting a man of mean heart. Second he was correct in that the law did not require a woman after the death of her husband to remain unmarried.* Thus may God undertake for Abner and thus may he add to do for him for according to what the LORD has sworn to David – because it is fundamental I will undertake this for him. *Abner is taking an oath in the presence of an alternative monarch that he will forward the interests of David. He shows astounding courage. I will undertake to cause the kingdom to pass over from the house of Saul and to cause the throne of David to be established over Israel and over Judah from Dan and to Beersheba. But he was not able to make Abner desist or turn back from his fear of him.*

## **ABNER CONTACTS DAVID 12**

Then Abner sent men with a message to David in his stead saying “For whom is the land?” saying “Make a covenant with me – then behold my hand will be with you to turn or transfer all Israel to you.

## **DAVID REPLIES TO ABNER AND CONTACTS ISHBOSHETH 13-16**

And he (David) said “Good, I will make an agreement with you. There is definitely one matter that I require to say from your side **that you will not see** my face unless you bring back to my presence Michal daughter of Saul at your coming to see my face”. David also sent messengers to Ishbosheth Saul’s son saying “Give me my wife Michal whom I desired constantly as my own with 100 foreskins of the Philistines. Then Ishbosheth sent and took her from the company of her husband; from being with Phaltiel [*“deliverance of God”*] son of Laish [*“lion”*]. And her husband went with her walking along and weeping after her to Bathurim and Abner said to him “Go – return” and he went back. *It appears Phaltiel lived in the environs of Jerusalem and that Abner gave the man several miles of opportunity to get used to his loss before ordering him to detach from his chariot that would carry Michal to Mahanaim.*

## **ABNER TREATS WITH THE ELDERS AND APPROACHES DAVID 17-21**

Then *history tells us* that Abner spoke with the elders of Israel saying “both yesterday and the day before you were lively in your demand for David to be king over you so now do it **for the LORD spoke to David saying “By the hand of David my servant I will save my people Israel from the hand of the Philistines and from the hand of all their enemies.** And Abner also brought the matter to the ears of Benjamin and Abner travelled also to speak in the ears of David at Hebron all that which was good in the eyes of Israel and in the eyes of all the house of Benjamin. So Abner came to David at Hebron and twenty stalwarts with him and David made Abner and his men a banquet. Then Abner said to David “I will arise and go and I will gather all Israel to my Lord the king and make a covenant with you and you shall reign over all your soul longs for” and David sent Abner away in peace.

## **JOAB SLAYS ABNER TO REVENGE ASAHHEL 22-27**

And Behold the servants of David came from a troop manoeuvre or foraging and they had great booty with them but Abner was not to be seen with David in Hebron for he had sent him away and he left in peace. Then Joab and all the host which was with him came and they informed Joab saying “Abner son of Ner came to the king and he has sent him away and he left with peace”. And Joab came to the king and said “What have you done? Look, Abner came to you. What is this about? You sent him off and as he goes to be well away. You know Abner the son of Ner that he came to open you up and to know your goings and comings and all that you are undertaking. Then Joab went out from being with David and sent messengers after Abner and brought him back from the well of **Sirah** [*“going back”*] but David did not know about it. Then Abner returned to Hebron and Joab turned him aside or lead him to the middle of the gate to speak with him quietly or in a private manner [*h/v*] and he struck him there in the fifth rib and he died for the blood of Asahel his brother.

## **DAVID’S MEEK WAYS VIS A VIS JOAB’S HARSH LIFESTYLE 28-39**

But David spoke after this action and said “I and my kingdom are innocent before the LORD for ever (*i.e. while that kingdom stands*) from the blood of Abner son of Ner.

May they **whirl** or precipitate on the head of Joab and on all the house of his father and may there not be cut off from the house of Joab one with an issue of blood and a leper or one that grips his staff tightly and one that falls on his sword and one that has deficient food. *This strange statement which is at best a wish and at worst a curse is made in the light of a set of unforgiving principles that guided Joab's life. Joab hated the house of Saul and was too fond of killing and terribly lacking in compassion which featured strongly in the life of Abner.*

Both Joab and Ahishai his brother slaughtered Abner for the reason that he killed their brother Asahel in the war at Gibeon. Then David said to Joab and to all the people who were with him "You must rend your garments and gird on sackcloth and lament [dps] before the face of Abner" and King David was himself walking after the bier. *David did not let the matter rest with a solemn public statement and an imprecation on the harsh household but he demanded genuine repentance shown by tears of the house of Joab. He showed publicly that he admired this leader whom Joab hated. And they buried Abner in Hebron and the king lifted up his voice and wept at the grave of Abner and all the people wept. That day the excellence of peace over war and love over hate and compassion over cruelty and forgiveness over vindictiveness shone very brightly in the noble heart of David.*

So the King buried Abner and said "The death of Abner is like the death of a fool, Your hands were not bound and your legs were not distressed by bronze fetters. As one falling before the faces of sons of iniquity you fell" and all the people added to weep once more over him. And all the people came to select food for David while it was still day but David swore saying "This may God do to me and thus add if I should eat or taste any bread or this or that of any kind till the sun goes down."

And all the people recognized and respected him and it seemed good in their eyes as all that the king did was good in the eyes of all the people. *This magnificent comment on the universal awareness of the fine character and deep earnestness of a spiritually attune monarch indicates that among Israel's godly scribes and spiritual writers were men who knew human character and could write with complete accuracy and command of fact.*

And all the people and all Israel were aware in that day that there was no *history or fact* linking the king to the death of Abner the son of Ner.

Then the king said to his servants "Are you not personally aware that a prince and a great man has fallen this day in Israel? And I this day am tender and contrite even though anointed king and these robust sons of Zeruiah are too harsh and stubborn **in my presence** or harder than me. May the LORD recompense the doer of this evil according to his evil deed or calamity. *David took four steps to endeavour to change the thinking of Joab. First, he prayed that God would reward him rather than that the king should act against a fellow townsman. Second, he demanded that Joab repent in rent clothes. Third, he gave Abner a state funeral and his oration was itself a lesson to Joab. Finally he made the royal entourage aware that he did not appreciate the harsh obstinacy of Joab. We begin to see the "man after God's own heart" and the legend of this second book comes into view, namely, the life of David as a token of the millennial rule of Israel's Messiah.*

#### **NOTE ON THE PERMANENT VALUE OF THE LIFE OF ABNER**

David asked the pertinent question "Died Abner as a fool dies?" It might rather read "Would Abner die the like death of a fool?" What was David saying?

*I believe David was saying that Abner was a very great compassionate and thoughtful man. The earlier story of his attitude to Asahel and his care of the lives of Israel*

*illustrates that independently but in David's assessment of Abner his heart is read incisively.*

1. David at the graveside was aware that Joab had sent young men in pursuit of Abner. He knew Abner had a trusted guard of 20 of his best fighting men.
2. Then at the well of Sirah [*Ein-Serah - one and a half miles north of Hebron where he may even have called a halt for the sake of his horses*] a lightly armed or unarmed Abner clearly avoided conflict dismissed his guard and went meekly with the young warriors of Joab whose lives he spared.
3. When greeted at the gate of Hebron by Joab with Abishai in train Abner must have feared the worst but he was walked into a trap by apparent pleasantries. In my view the great soldier returned to Hebron unarmed and certainly had no intention of taking further lives of the Zeruah family in cold blood. However the information came about the manner of Asahel's death (it probably was conveyed to David at the time of his interview with Abner) it demonstrated that Abner knew very well from the fateful moment he thrust at Asahel that Joab would never forgive him.
4. In true greatness and every inch a man Abner was conveyed to his death and offered no resistance. He took no action that might make the unity of Israel and Judah more difficult to recover. He appears never to have conveyed to David his inner concern that his life was in danger from Joab though David may well have chosen what he discerned as a window of opportunity to speak privately with Abner. Here scripture is silent and David owed Joab no explanation of his treaty with Abner.
5. Had Joab desisted the favourite to lead Israel's armed forces would have been Abner. He had skill and stamina and compassion and care of the men he commanded.
6. Abner said to Asahel before he had to slay him "How can I look upon the face of your brother?" That was a very solemn question. He did see that face and he probably could interpret it accurately enough although it was apparently friendly. The question that remains is "How could Joab look at the face of this valiant man on his bier?" Joab if he had a bone of compassion in his body was from that moment a very curious sight-rueful and hopefully tearful – who knows?
7. David continued to advise that Joab and Abishai were cruel beyond his liking.
- 8. ABNER is pivotal to the legend of the book –the development of a united kingdom under David as a foretaste of Messiah's realm. To prepare the way for such the deep covenant compassion of Christ at the cross was an essential foundation and the groundwork of Abner's overture to David together with his diplomacy and his fortitude and lack of bitterness was the starting place to bring Israel together. Without mutual greatness of heart based on love for God and one another David and Abner could not have acted in concert**

#### CHAPTER 4

##### **THE END OF ISHBOSHETH AND THE ESCAPE OF MEPHIBOSHETH 1-8**

*The sacred text changes key from describing the compassion and leadership of a mighty warrior to telling us how the boy Mephibosheth became disabled. This story sets the scene for another of David's deeply caring acts. Finally the reign of Saul's house comes to a gory end by the rude work of two rogues of the tribe of Benjamin posing as buyers of grain.*

Then the son of Saul heard that Abner was dying or dead in Hebron his strength was weakened or declined and all Israel was alarmed or agitated. And two stalwart men that were commanders *provided historical continuity* of the son of Saul. The name of first was Baanah and the name of the second was Rechab – sons of Rimmon the Beerothite from the sons of Benjamin for Beeroth reckoned itself with Benjamin or "a



cut above” Benjamin. So the Beerothites shot off or took flight to Gittaim [“*place of two winepresses*”] and they are strangers or incomers there until this day. And there belonged to Jonathan the son of Saul a son lame in both feet who was five years old when tidings of Saul and Jonathan came from Jezreel and *history tells us* that his nurse lifted him up in her starting up to flee for refuge she then fell and he became lame and his name was Mephibosheth [“*exterminating the idol*” or *my own suggestions following known Egyptian and Arabic roots “mouth of the sword” or “out of the mouth of shame”*]. And the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite Rechab and Baanah came around the heat of the day to the house of Ishbosheth and he lay on his couch in the full [literally “*double light*”] of midday. And behold they came toward the centre of the house to as those who take or merchandise wheat but they struck him at the fifth rib; then Rechab and Baanah his brother made their escape. So they came to the house and he was sleeping on his bed in the inner apartment of his bedroom [or “*bier*”]. So they struck him and killed him and **removed** his head [RWS “*as a ring from the finger*”] and took his head and travelled on the way of the wilderness all that night. And they brought the head of Ishbosheth to David at Hebron and said to the king “Behold the head of Ishbosheth son of Saul your enemy that quested your life but the LORD has rendered vengeance to my Lord the king against Saul and his seed.

#### **RECHAB AND BAANAH MEET WITH SUMMARY JUSTICE 9-12**

Then David answered Rechab and Baanah his brother sons of Rimmon the Beerothite and said to them “As the LORD lives who has redeemed or preserved my soul from all adversity when one informed me “Behold Saul is dead he was then like *a bearer of good tidings* in his own eyes but I took hold of him and slew him in Ziklag which was my gift to him for the news. Further because wicked men have slain a righteous man in his house on his bed shall I not now seek his blood at your hands and consume you from the earth?” *It appears these men were not buried but burned or else their bones eventually fell into the deep pool of Hebron.*

So David gave command to the young men and they slew them and cut off their arms and legs and hanged them over the pool of water at Hebron but the head of Ishbosheth they took and buried it in the tomb of Abner in Hebron.

### **CHAPTER 5**

#### **ISRAEL RECOGNISE DAVID AS KING 1-3**

1. The **all the tribes of Israel** came to David at Hebron and said to him with conviction “Look, we are your very flesh and bone!” Even formerly; even the day before yesterday in Saul’s history as king over us you were the one who caused Israel to go out and come in” Then the LORD said to you “You will be shepherd of my people Israel and you will be over Israel as their commander.” *A rabbinic comment reports a space in the text where more might have been said.*

#### **(1) TEXTUAL GAP 2**

*This gap draws attention to a previous occasion to which we have no independent witness when God trusted David as king and military commander. The nation in a quasi democratic style recognises David as the de facto ruler and leader—the king in waiting. Actual rule, though the gift of God, had to be affirmed by a covenant with the tribal heads of Israel and their allegiance sworn before God. In Israel the elders were sworn in besides the king. This gap testifies to the nature of the theocracy.*

## **THE ELDERS RECOGNISE DAVID 4**

2. Then **all the elders** of Israel came to the King at Hebron and **David the King** made a covenant with them at Hebron before the LORD'S face and they swore allegiance to David as king over Israel.

## **DAVID'S REIGN 5-6**

David was a man of thirty when he became king and he reigned forty years. In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months then in Jerusalem he reigned thirty three years over all Israel and Judah.

## **DAVID ESTABLISHES HIS CAPITOL AT JERUSALEM 6-10**

Then the king and his warriors went to Jerusalem against the Jebusites who lived in the land and they spoke to David saying "You will not come here because with that you must remove the blind and the lame" saying *to themselves* "David will not come here". *The city was by no means an old peoples' home but the Jebusites were being facetious. They imagined themselves impregnable and they mocked David as they said that disabled persons would be sufficient to its defence.* But David captured the fortress of Zion; that is the city of David. So David said on that day "everyone will be a smiter and everyone will toil in the cataracts for the limping and blind and naked Jebusites have long been **hated of David** [*passive of איו*] on which account **they would say "the blind and naked and lame or leaping" shall not come into the house.** *This appears to mean that David would not admit Jebusites to Jerusalem or his palace or the house of God because of their custom of leaping or dervish like dancing during sacrifice and their nakedness. A ban on worship at Jerusalem for such reasons is quite plausible—to avoid syncretism. The extension of it to physically handicapped persons during the time of Christ was unwarranted under this model.* And David lived in the **masada or fortress** and he named it in celebration **the city of David** and David built right around from Millo and the palace. *It appears that defences were bulked up on the east along the ridge of the Hinnon Valley and that David extended to the north where he incorporated the Ophel constructions of his palace and the temple and to the south where its fortifications were strengthened. David "filled up" breaches and this refers to "Millo". In 2 Kings 12.21 Beth Millo is on the road down to the village of Silla or Siloam— so it represents **the southerly defensive bulwark** that was strengthened by internal ramparts and perhaps by increasing its height. Around the circumvallium that the king created he had good ramparts and ultimately a fine palace along with God's temple in the north. Homes were built right along the walls to the east and west to link the newly extended city along the loop between its northern and southern reaches.*

So as he kept moving on David also became great and the LORD God of hosts was with him.

## **HIRAM PROPOSES A PALACE 11-12**

Then Hiram king of Tyre sent ambassadors to David and trees of cedar pine and wood cutter or carpenters and cutters of stone for the wall and they built a palace for David. But David was well aware that the LORD had appointed and established him as king over Israel and that He had raised his kingdom for the passing of his people Israel. *This expression is tantalising. It is indicative of a divine plan to enable his people to "overflow and overwhelm" or "enter a covenant" and "move on". So David knew his was a Joshua type remit to possess the land. He was aware that his task was almost priestly in leading the people spiritually to God who made a covenant with him and*

*his seed for their sake. He was aware that he was there to develop God's people in their worship and its expression as in their witness to the world.*

### **DAVID'S POLYGAMY 13-16**

But David still took concubines and wives from Jerusalem after the removal from Hebron and there were more sons and daughters born to David. So these are the names of those born to him in Jerusalem; Shammua and Shobab (and Nathan and Solomon.) also **Ibhar** and Elishua and Nepheg and Japhia and Elishama and Elyada and Eliphalet. *Of these eleven two are famous - Solomon and Nathan whose names speak of "peace" and "God's gift". The other names and characteristics the Spirit links with the life of David through these are "renowned", "rebellious"(Shobab), "whom he chooses", "my God is salvation", "sprout forth (Nepheg), "shining" or "radiant", "God has heard", "God was aware or knows well" and "my God is deliverance". From this it appears that David had two rebellious sons - one in name and one in all- too- serious reality.*

### **RENEWED PHILISTINE CONFLICT 17-19a**

Then the Philistines heard that they had anointed David king over Israel and all the Philistines came up to quest for David but David heard about it and went down to the masada or fortress. So the Philistines came and spread out or took charge [vfn] in the valley of Rephaim. So David asked in the house of or "with" the LORD saying "Shall I go up against the Philistines? Will you cause them to be given into my hand?" *Again the margin testifies to a small gap in the text. In all prayer there is much desire that is unspoken and the full story of this prayer is not given - but enough is revealed to encourage prayer.*

### **(2) TEXTUAL GAP 19**

*Between David's enquiry and the LORD'S answer there is a gap in the Hebrew text. This takes care of David's journey to seek God but also indicates a time of waiting and is suggestive of a test of faith.*

### **DIVINE DELIVERANCE AND PHILISTINE GODS DISCARDED 19b-21**

Then the LORD said to David "Go up for I will certainly give the Philistines into your hand. Then David came to Baal-Perazim and there David struck them and said "The LORD has scattered my enemies before my face as a flowing away of water" and for this basic reason he called the name of the place "Husband of dispersing waters". And there they forsook their images and David and his stalwarts carried them away [*the LXX has "captured them"*]. *The images were probably wooden with gold or silver overlay and they would be melted down. Their religious significance was as nothing and their power less than nothing.*

### **THE PHILISTINES RETURN 22-25**

Then the Philistines added to come up again and spread out in strong control [vfn] of the valley of Rephaim. So David enquired of the LORD and He said "You shall not go up. Circle them at the rear and come on them opposite the Balsam or weeping bushes". *References to the "weeping tree" are five in all and four of the five are the duplicated records of 2Samuel and 1 Chronicles recording this war whilst the fifth is that to the valley of Baca (weeping) in Psalm 84.6-7. Tel Amarna references and Lane's Arabic text and T.K.Cheyne's critical text of the Psalms all agree on "Balsam trees". Mulberry trees do not drop milky distillation. In Genesis 43.11 we have a note*

*about rx or balm of Balsam. It seems possible that long after Jacob's day Balsam or Mastic trees (Pistacia lentiscus) from whose branches balm was extracted, grew in abundance.*

And it shall happen at your hearing of the sound of **“marching”** or **“movement”** [*hd[x]*] in the tops of the balsams then be sharp and eager for then the LORD will go before your face to strike against the army of the Philistines. And David did basically according to what the LORD commanded him and he smote the Philistines from Geba to the approaches of Gazer. *The scripture is showing clearly the obedience of David on two different occasions. He did not venture to war at his own charges.*

## CHAPTER 6

### DAVID FOOLISHLY TRANSPORTS THE ARK ON A NEW CART<sup>1</sup>-5

Then David continued still to gather together all the choice *people* in Israel thirty thousand men. So David arose and went out and all the people that were with him from the inhabitants of Judah to bring up from there *that is from Judah to Jerusalem* the **ark of God** that as it should be called for it calls itself by name – the name of Yahweh of hosts dwelling with the Cherubim over it. But they cause the ark of God to ride upon the renewed cart and lifted it up from the house of Abinadab which is in Gibeah; and Uzzah and Ahio the sons of Abinadab lead or drove the spruced up [*hvd*] cart. So they would *just* lift up from the house of Abinadab whatever was in Gibeah with the ark of God and Ahio was walking before the face of the ark. *We are to observe from the Law that the priests carried the ark reverently walking at the side. No-one is a pacemaker or pathfinder for God!*

So David and all the house of Israel played and rejoiced before the face of the LORD with all wood *instruments* of fragrant fir – harps and Nabal psalteries and drums and timbrels and clanging cymbals. *The whole procession was noisy and instrumentalists were dancing about with timbrels and banging cymbals and drums with gusto. It was very like what happened when a trophy of war was captured and brought obediently to be viewed by all. It did not give God His sovereign place.*

### UZZAH SMITTEN WITH LEPROSY 6- 11

Then they came to the threshing floor of Nachon [*“established”* or *“stand erect”* – called *“Chidon”* (*“dart”* or *“destruction”* in 1 Chronicles 13.9)] Uzzah reached his hand swiftly onto the ark of God and held it firm for the oxen kicked or loosed it . And the anger of the LORD became hot against Uzzah and God struck him there because of his carelessness **negligence** [*being “unmindful” of God in the sense of “unduly relaxed” – cf Ezekiel 23.42*] and he died there alongside the ark of God. And the reason the LORD burst forth an overthrow against Uzzah grieved David and he called that place by the name *“The break down”* or *“breathing out of Uzzah”* **UNTIL THIS DAY.**

And David feared the LORD that day and said *“How shall the ark of the LORD come to me? So David was not willing to cause the ark of the LORD to draw near to him to the city of David. And David turned it away to the house of Obed Edom the Gittite. And the ark of the LORD dwelt in the house of Obed Edom three months and the LORD blessed Obed Edom and his whole household.*

### DAVID'S FEAR IS CONQUERED BY GOD'S FAVOUR 12-16

But it was told King David saying *“The LORD has blessed the house of Obed Edom the Gittite and all that belongs to him in return for [*rwbab* as “produce” or “harvest”]*

the ark of God *dwelling there*. Then David went up and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed Edom to the city of David with radiant joy.

And *history tells* that the bearers of the ark of the LORD walked or marched **six steps** [*this rule came from the distance of a priest from the ark outside the 2<sup>nd</sup> curtain*] He also sacrificed an ox and a fatted calf. And David leaped [*the rkrk action is that of a leaping dromedary.*] with all his strength before the LORD and David girded him with a linen Ephod. So David and the entire house of Israel brought up the ark of the LORD with triumphant shout and with the sound of the Shophar. *This time the LORD was conducted to His capitol as the victorious LORD and not as some sort of booty. To catch this change of atmosphere and regard is of some importance.*

But *history tells that* just as the ark of the LORD came into the city of David Michal the daughter of Saul **bent forward** [*pqv*] *threateningly? Shutting up* or behind a window and was watching King David constantly agile or continuing refined or pure and dancing before the face of the LORD and she had contempt for him or despised him in her heart. *Michal shut the window wanting to see no more—God shut her womb! She shut out her husband’s joy in God and God shut out her joy over a child.*

### **JOY ACCOMPANIES THE ARK’S HOMECOMING 17-19**

Then they brought the ark of the LORD and they established it or put it to stay [*gxy*] in its place in the midst of the tabernacle that David had spread out for it. And David offered whole burnt offerings and peace offerings before the face of the LORD. *We never see the office of King and Priest combined in a man but on this occasion David comes very close to combining the two offices.* So David prevailed or was permitted to offer the burnt offerings and peace offerings and he prevailed and blessed the people in the name of the LORD of hosts. And he dealt out portions among the people and through the entire humming throng of Israel a portion for a man and for his wife (at home) to each man a single broken or pierced portion of bread [*i.e. oven baked and so “pierced”*] and one measure [*of the “meat” offering as flour would represent more bread*] and a single cake [*hvva*] and the whole people went each to his home. *The presence of the LORD brought great delight-especially to have God so near”. This also was Moses joy—Deuteronomy 30 11-14.*

### **MICHAL’S ILL CONDUCT 20-23**

Then David returned to bless his house and Michal the daughter of Saul came out to meet or oppose him and said “How glorious the King of Israel made him today who revealed what he really is today before the eyes of the wives or handmaids of his servants like the revealing of the nakedness of one of the useless fellows”. But David said to Michal “It was for the face of the LORD who chose me in place of your father and all his house to appoint me ruler and dignitary over the people of the LORD over Israel and I will dance to music or sport as a child or skirmish as a warrior [*qj v*] before the face of the LORD. And I will cause myself to be diminished or smaller still than this and I will be more lowly and humble in my own eyes but with the maidservants of whom you spoke with them I will be honoured”. So for Michal daughter of Saul there was not to be a child born to her till the day of her death. *David is saying that his simple Ephod was indicative of the fact that he would rather be a priest to God but one who was full of joy. He was taken up by the Spirit of God in holy abandon. He certainly was not naked but he did reveal what he was in his heart. He was a worshipper and a leader of the enthusiastic worship of God’s people. His act of sacrificing as he went was a sign of the all atoning God and the six short steps were as the distance between the priest outside the curtain and his God. As to the*

*“maidservants” who would normally act as nurses they would have no office for this queen but they would respect David for he would ever act with decorum towards his staff. David could not be prevented showing before God his whole heart—his sorrow over his sin by sacrifice and his joy over God’s presence and grace by dancing. Michal, sadly, had no concept of what God was doing in the heart of her glorious husband. As she closed her window she closed out the light.*

## CHAPTER 7

### GOD IS MOVING ON NOT AT REST 1-7

And *live history with lasting effect* tells us that the king dwelt in his house or palace and the LORD had caused him to be at rest from all his encircling enemies. Then the king said to Nathan the prophet “Pleases look I am living in a house of cedar and the ark of God is dwelling in the middle of curtains”. Then Nathan said to the king “All that is in your heart bring into effect for the LORD is with you”.

And *history with lasting effect occurred* in that very night. Here typically in the books of Samuel there is another gap in the text marked by rabbinic note. I pass without further ado since the Spirit of God has not been pleased to maintain whatever datum if any lay there. The word of the LORD *at that historic point* came to Nathan saying “Go and say to my servant David “Thus says the LORD ‘Will you build me a house for my rest? For I have not taken rest in a house from the day I brought the sons of Israel out of Egypt even till this day and I have been a **tent companion** walking [Jl htm] in a tent and sacred tabernacle.” This intimate message of the LORD shows that even prior to the incarnation the LORD loved to be engaged among His people and active in their life. He was not simply resting like a king in a palace. He walked with Israel and with Enoch and we should be very aware that He wants to walk with us. His is a companionship of dynamism. God walks even in the fires & wildernesses! In the house of all the places I have continually walked with all the sons of Israel was there a word I kept saying to a single one or person of the tribes of Israel whom I commanded to feed or lead my people Israel saying “Why have you not built me a house of cedar?” The LORD is saying that He was content to walk in the open –it is His footstool by creation and house enough.

### (3) TEXTUAL GAP 4

*The most important correction of Nathan and the further revelation to him warrants a pause at verse 4. The Hebrew is curious. It reads “And in the night He....and it happened the word of the LORD came to Nathan saying.” It appears David was awake that night...but when he resumes activities at the departure of Nathan he goes directly into the house of the LORD as the first man at the tabernacle and there he sat amazed and praising God-not at all bothered about the nature of the building construction any more for his part. This gap reminds us that preachers like prophets err by self-reliance or trusting intuition or common sense overmuch. Gods timing is vital in building his house and just as there were many materials to be gathered so in the N.T. era there is much work to be done before the temple of God stands in its splendour. Conversely God is Himself the builder and Jesus Christ born of the line of David is the foundation stone—not the works of men’s hands.*

### WAYS IN WHICH GOD WILL MOVE IN DAVID’S DAY & BEYOND 8-11

So now thus you shall say to my servant David “Thus says the LORD of hosts (1)‘I have taken you from **the quiet fold where you sat** [hmm] and from going after the flock to be leader over my people over Israel (a prince with God)”. (2) I was also with you

everywhere you went and (3) I cut off all your enemies from before you and (4) I made your name great as the name of the great that are in the earth. (5) I will also set a **place that will rise or move on** [mwqm] for my people Israel and (6) plant them and they will dwell under or lowly in it and (7) they will not still move [zgr as “a box on a wagon”] and (8) the sons of iniquity shall not add to afflict them as in the earlier time. And pertaining from that day when I commanded there should be judges over my people Israel and have given you rest from all your enemies (9) the LORD is also informing you that the LORD will give you a house. *The significance of this is that there will be a hereditary monarchy in Israel quite different from the day of the judges.*

#### **AFTER DAVID 12-17**

(1) For when your days are completed and you dwell with your fathers I will also set up your seed after you that will proceed from your belly and (2) I will establish his kingdom. (3) He will build a house for my name and (4) I will establish the throne of his kingdom for a lifetime or a long era. (5) I will be a father to him and he shall be a son to me – (6) when in the house of his iniquity I will chasten him with the rod of men and with the *battle* blows of the sons of mankind.

(7) But my covenant shall not depart from him as when it removed from Saul whom I removed from before your face. (8) But your house and your kingdom **shall make itself constant or established** or faithful for an age [ml# d[]]. According to all these promises and according to this whole vision basically Nathan spoke to David. *The manner of reportage shows that there was larger content which reflects in the earlier rabbinic note.*

#### **DAVID’S INTIMATE TIME WITH GOD 18-29**

##### *1. God is a God of all grace*

So King David went and sat before the LORD and said “Who am I, O Yahweh my Lord, and what is my house that you have caused me to come this far? And still this is little in Your eyes O Lord Yahweh for You have also spoken of the house of your servant **toward the distant future** and is this **the TORAH** [David here uses the word “Torah” properly as a signal of the Christ – a pointer to Messiah. Implicit is also the larger meaning of “law” as “prophecy”] **of Adam**, O my Lord Yahweh?”

##### *2. God is sovereign and knows all about us.*

And what shall David cause to be added to You still to the word of promise for You, O Lord Yahweh, know Your servant intimately.

##### *3. God alone works by His word of promise as a God of revelation*

For the transmission or conduct [rwb[]] of Your word of promise and according to Your own heart You have done all these great things to cause your servant to be intimately aware of them. For that basic reason You are Great, O Yahweh God, for there is none like you and there is no god were You removed according to all that we have heard with our ears.

##### *4. God made Israel special as a people of redemption without idols*

And who is like Israel this one nation on earth whom God travelled to redeem to Him for his people and established for His name and to do for you great and fearful things for your land and from before the faces of your people that You redeemed to You from the Egyptian nations and their gods.

##### *5. God is king over Israel to the millennium and beyond*

For you have established Your people to be Yours to be **Your people for ever** [ml wal] *in this case is associated with the “being of God” so Israel’s life and God’s are*

*eternal but also they feature at the centre of the millennium]* and You, O Yahweh, have become God who belongs and is for them.

And now O Yahweh God the promised word which You have spoken over Your servant and over his house cause it to stand **till eternity or the age** and do according to Your word.

*6. God glorifies Him and establishes his servants*

And cause your name to be great **until the age or eternity** ever saying “Yahweh of hosts is God over Israel” and let the house of Your servant David be established before Your face.

*7. God by his promises and wealth of care makes prayer a glad vocation*

Because You, O Yahweh of hosts, God of Israel has opened the ear of your servant to say “I will build you a house”. For that basic reason Your servant has found it belongs to his heart’s desire to have supplicated or interceded *in* this prayer to You.

*8. God is implored about the eternal aspect of the kingdom*

And now Adonai Yahweh You are He that is God and Your words of promise will be faithful and You have promised this goodness to Your servant.

*9. God’s word is as good as done - David by faith accepts it has been accomplished*

And now you must be willing or intent and bless the house of Your servant **to go on for ever** before Your face for You, O Adonai Yahweh, have spoken and from Your blessing the house of Your servant will have continually blessed for ever.

## CHAPTER 8

### HIGH IMPACT CAMPAIGN SUBDUES THE PHILISTINES 1-8

History lives on to testify that after this (1) David struck the Philistines and caused them to be subdued and David captured Methegamah [*“the bridle of the mother city” or metropolis*] from the hands of the Philistines. (2) Then he smote Moab and measured them with a staff or line laying them down on the earth and he measured two lines for death and the whole of the line to preserve *captives* alive. So history records Moab became servants who brought presents *or paid taxes* to David. (3) Then David smote Hadadezer son of Rehob king of Zobah as he went to retrieve his power base at the river. [*The word “Euphrates” is missing but the LXX supplies this missing word*] Hadadezer ruled lands east of Hamath and he was intent on recovering land on the west bank of the Euphrates River from the Assyrians

(4) Then David captured from him 1000 chariots (LXX) and seven hundred horsemen and 20,000 foot soldiers and David hamstringed all the chariot horses [*bkr*] except a remainder of 100 chariot horses. (5) But Aram of Damascus came to help Hadadezer king of Zobab and David slew 22,000 of the Syrian soldiers. (6) So David set up military garrisons in Aram of Damascus and the history is that Aram became servants of David and brought gifts *or paid taxes* to David and the LORD “saved David in all the places where he went. And David captured shields of gold which belonged to the servants of Hadadezer and brought them to Jerusalem. Also from Betan and Berothai cities of Hadadezer King David captured an exceeding great *booty* of brass.

### TOI BLESSES DAVID 9-13

Then Toi [*“error”*] King of Hamath heard that David had struck all the military might of Hadadezer. So Toi he sent Joram his son to King David to request peace [*i.e. a treaty*] and to bless him because of his war with Hadadezer and because he conquered him because Hadadezer was a man who *historically* made wars with Toi and in his (*Joram’s*) hands there were vessels of silver gold and brass. These also King David dedicated to the LORD with the silver and gold which he had dedicated from



all the nations that he made subject [*literally his “footstool” vbk*]. Vessels came from Syria and Moab and the sons of Ammon and from the Philistines and Amalek and from the trophy of Hadedezer son of Rehob King of Zobah. Then David made him a reputation when he returned from outright victory over Syria in the valley of Salt smiting **eighteen thousand men**. *The LXX has “Idumea in Gebelem” suggesting a nation native to the plain of Sodom. In 2 Kings 14.7 David is recorded as smiting 10,000 Edomites and in 1 Chronicles 18 11&13 we read that David took booty from Edom and set garrisons there. In Chronicles David’s victory over Syria records the slaughter of 22,000 men (1Chronicles18.5). The different numbers may come from separate estimates of casualties whereas scholars see an undisguised discrepancy in the confusion of Edom and Aram and the alternative to this literary error is the following defence. That an Aramean army should fight in the plain of Sodom is not impossible though how it could present as support for Hadadezer is hard to imagine except that it might draw off troops in a second front and might prejudice David’s forces and strategy and involve further entanglement with Edom. Since wars on both fronts occurred a respectful silence is wise. **The great lesson of this section is that David gave God the silver and gold-he set them aside for the “house of the LORD”***

#### **DAVID’S RULE AND LEADERSHIP 14-18**

Then David placed standing garrisons throughout all Edom. Everywhere in Edom there were garrisons established and historically the entirety of Edom became servant of David and the LORD would cause David to be spared everywhere he went *to war*. *There is a lesson for the believer in this aspect of David’s life. The LORD is equally zealous that we shall be victorious day after day in our living as we meet the adversary and strive with the world the flesh and the devil.*

So David ruled over all Israel and *it was historical and living reality* that David executed judgment and righteousness for all his people.

And Joab the son of Zeruiah was over the host and **Jehoshaphat son of Ahimelech** was the recorder [Superintending the annals of the kingdom]. *We need to give a little thought to this man whom David appointed. He would have accuracy and background and be skilled both to remember and in recounting and accurately registering account of the kingdom. His position would have been held for life and probably during the thirty years of David’s rule in Jerusalem.*

#### **A NOTE ON JEHOSEPHAT THE HITTITE**

*The Chronicler calls himself the son of Ahilud in 1Chronicles 18.15 and it is not impossible for one man to be known by these two different names. [The name Ahilud begins with “My brother or “My ally”” and means “My ally is **born**”] His praenomen is without dispute Jehoshaphat which means “(one whom) the LORD judges”. This man features strongly behind the records of David and I have to be persuaded in the light of no other contender that this godly Hittite is the recorder. There is no hindrance to Hittite service to David. Abraham himself was familiar with Zohar Hittite father of Ephron the Hittite who lived at Mamre and land was bought for burial purposes from him. Also Esau married into a Hittite family (Genesis 27.46)*

*The Hittites were an Indo-European race whose western fringe peopled Asia Minor and formed a sophisticated civilisation using iron and forming a strong kingdom with troglodyte (underground and cave)defences in eastern Turkey.*

*The Hittite Mursilis I who ruled in the west and yet was strong enough to raid Babylon had a mass of archives at Boghaz Koi in Eastern Turkey and Telepinus who*

*lived in the time of Jacob formulated a law code based on recompense so that the name of David's recorder Jehoshaphat is very suited. A man with his background would have appreciated the fair manner in which David executed justice. The Hittite had a deep alliance of soul with David who was his true born friend and doubtless taught him the ways of Yahweh which he has written into the whole history of Israel's exploits under David.*

### **THE WORK OF SERAIAH**

And Zadok son of Ahitub and Ahimelech son of Abiathar were priests and Seraiah the scribe. *The religious aspect of recorded history was under the hand of Seraiah.*

*Seraiah is called "Sheva" "Shisha" and "Shavsha" in 2 Samuel 20, 1 Kings 4 and 1 Chronicles 18 respectively. The Revised Version calls him "the secretary" which is indicative of his office in writing formal diplomatic letters.*

*According to 1 Chronicles 2.55 the scribes were a very ancient family solidarity of writers but Seraiah though derived from them would be used to a semi political setting as a writer. This would not prevent but rather facilitate his religious-style record of the exploits of David and especially his office as a bastion of Israel's faith and worship.*

*The fact that David's officials were well known the one to the other and that scribes would interrelate readily and converse familiarly probably renders both the early records of Kings and Chronicles an admixture of material from both the above sources.*

### **CHERETHITE AND PELETHITE BODYGUARD**

*Like the loyal ghurkas soldiers drawn from the southern nations close to where David lived became established as trusty servants and lived in full support of his throne and became supporters of his realm radiant in faith enjoying the full glare of his religion Scripture tells us they became COHENIM which does mean "ministering priests" as well as "civil officials". There is no reason to suppose that they shirked either religious duties or responsibilities of their state office. These are as near as we can approach to "priests to God" in the New Testament sense. Theirs was a glad and full surrender of self to David and his LORD.*

And Benaiah son of Jehoiada and the Cherethites and the Pelethites and the sons of David were the "establishment" or "ministers of civil matters". The two races mentioned lived generally in Southern parts of Palestine and on the southern fringes of the Philistine area. David may have formed strong ties with them at Ziklag and they were plainly involved as his bodyguard. *The exact relationship of Benaiah to the bodyguard is given in 1 Chronicles 18.17. In the case of what is written in 2 Samuel the joint and shared responsibility for David and his kingdom is being outlined without stressing the role of Benaiah although that goes without saying.*

## **CHAPTER 9**

### **THE TOUCHING STORY OF MEPHIBOSHETH1-6**

Then David said "Is it so that yet *there exists by deliverance* [vj] anyone that remains belonging to the house of Saul then I may create kindness or a covenant for him on account of Jonathan? And there belonged to the house of Saul a servant whose name was Ziba and they called him to David and the king said to him "Are you Ziba?" and he said "Your servant!" Then the king said "Is there not still the ankle of a man of the house of Saul [*literally spa "an extreme end" or "the sole" or "ankle" of a*

*foot”]...so that I may do with him the covenant kindness of God? And Ziba said to the king “There is still a son belonging to Jonathan smitten by calamity as to the feet. Then the king said to him “Where is he?” Ziba [Syriac & Arabic for “plant”] said to the king “Behold he is in the house of Machir [“sold”] son of Ammiel [“the people of God”] in Lodebar [“no word of promise”]. To draw conclusion from these names is popular though an uncertain science. Ziba is not a Jewish name and this man who was probably a foreign settler had fifteen sons and ten servants. He had no concern for Mephibosheth. Machir, with whom he stayed was possibly from the house Manasseh the boy nursed on the knees of Joseph. Ammiel his father took his lineage from Joseph and was a Macherite (cf Numbers 26.29) whose Josephite family had not forgotten their great history and so Ammiel’s son Machir gave refuge to the little disabled boy. This part of the story of Mephibosheth is not insignificant. The land where he lived was 70 miles from the capitol and in the territory of Manasseh or Gilead east of Jordan. It was on the edge of the Jordan flood plain close to one of the feed streams and in a heavily afforested area. The location was hardly more than 5 miles south west of Gadara and but 15 miles north of Pella. In Matthew 24.16 our LORD advised the Christians to flee Jerusalem toward the mountains. They moved north along the Jordan valley to the edge of the Golan or Gilead mountains at Pella. Thus the area that became a refuge for Mephibosheth after the death of Jonathan became a refuge for the believers after the death of Jesus.*

#### **DAVID CONSOLES MEPHIBOSHETH 7-8**

Then David said to him “Have no fear for I am making a covenant with you on account of Jonathan your father and **I will return to you all the land of Saul** your grand-father and you shall eat bread at my table continually.

#### **DAVID’S OLD SHEEP-DOG 8**

*This reference of Mephiboseth appears to be derives from what he was watching—namely the old sheepdog of the king possibly lying at David’s feet or being caressed by the king or walking uneasily nearby. The Syro-Phoenician woman of the NT made a similar give-away reference to puppies round the table though in that instance it is not known if there were any such animals playing around during her time with the Master.*

Then he bowed him and said “What is your servant that you look on the dying dog that is just like me. *Mephibosheth had a lowly opinion of himself. He felt he was like a dog slowly doing less and less hardly able to bark and on the way to death. The young man was overwhelmed by the thought of the land and his incapacity. The overwhelming peace of Mephiboseth is ours in Christ; we too feast at His table; we too disappoint him but He remains faithful.*

#### **DAVID PROVIDES FOR THE LAND TO BE WORKED 9-13**

Then the king called Ziba the servant of Saul and said to him “All that was Saul’s and all that belonged to his house I have given to the son of your master. You shall serve him and you your sons and servants shall bring in the fruit of the earth for the son of your master and he shall eat bread but Mephibosheth son of your master will eat bread continually at my table. Now Ziba had fifteen sons and ten servants. Then Ziba said to the king “In accordance with all that my lord the king has commanded his servant thy servant will do exactly” **“But Mephiboseth shall eat at my table as one of the king’s sons!”** *The sacred scribe or recorder did not miss the emphasis of the king set out a second time that the disabled and disenfranchised boy whom Ziba failed to help*

would live on the best and Ziba who had lived like a monarch would be reduced to a farm worker with his sizeable family and from that there was no escape clause. And Mephibosheth had a small son named Micah “Who is like the LORD”. But all who lived in the house of Ziba became servants of Mephibosheth. So Mephibosheth continued daily **living** in Jerusalem for he was **eating and loving** being at the table of the king and he continued **limping** on both feet. *The sacred writer uses three participles of Mephibosheth which sum up his life. He lived at the centre of faith and he enjoyed the best of food and yet he lived with weakened feet which had been dislocated in infancy. He did not blame God but called his son a “God exalting name.” It had not been long since the birth of that boy and his testimony to God’s greatness and grace that he was brought to Jerusalem.*

## CHAPTER 10

### DAVID’S KINDNESS SPURNED 1-5

And *the historical fact* with basic implications after this was that the King of the sons of Ammon died and Hanun [“favoured”] his son became king in his place. Then David said “I will do kindness” or “make a covenant” with Hanun son of Nahash like that kindness that his father did for me so David sent to console him over his father by the hand of his servants and the servants of David came to the land of the sons of Ammon. ***The significant lesson is that “kindness spurned” is ruin invited***. David was set to continue to spread joy and kind relationships in the region and this was a wholly positive approach to Ammon. But the princes of the sons of Ammon said to Hanun their master “Is David rendering your father glorious in your eyes when he sends comforters to you? Has not David sent his servants to you to search the city and to spy and to overthrow it? So Hanun took hold of David’s servants and made bare the half of their beard and cut their clothes through the centre to the bottom of their back and expelled them. Then they got information to David and he sent to meet them because the men were terribly put to shame. And he said “Return to Jericho until your beards grow; then come back.” *The intimate care of David for his ambassadors is typical of a man after God’s heart. The royal scribe and military recorder recognised the glorious leader they had and the account portrays it. Our LORD too cares for His ambassadors and knows every pang and ignominy that his servants pass through.*

### AMMON & SYRIA ASSAULT ISRAEL 6-14

Then the sons of Ammon saw that they had made them stink to David and the sons of Ammon sent and hired Aram of the house of Rehob and Aram of Zobab twenty thousand foot soldiers and from King Maachah a thousand men and from Ishtob twelve thousand men. *Ammon paid dearly for her perfidy and assumed that 33,000 mercenaries would extract them from defeat.*

Then David heard of it and he sent Joab and the whole host of the valiant men. Then the sons of Ammon came out to war and extended the battle line from the opening of the gate but Aram Zobab and Rehob and Ishtob and Maachah were on their own in the field. So Joab saw that the faces of the battle were approaching him from in front and from the rear and he selected from all the choice soldiers of Israel and drew out a battle line to encounter Aram. But the remainder of the people he gave to the command of Abishai his brother and he drew near in battle to meet the sons of Ammon. And he (Joab) said “If Aram are stronger than I am then you will be there to rescue but if the sons of Ammon are too strong for you I will go to rescue you. **Be strong and we will have been strengthened on behalf of our people and on behalf of the city of our God and the LORD will do that which is good in His eyes.**” *It*

would appear from this statement that Joab had truly benefited from the rebuke of David and was certainly a man who looked to God in his warfare. And Joab drew near and the people with him to battle with Aram and they fled before his face. Then the sons of Ammon saw that Aram was routed they also fled before the face of Abishai and came to the city. And Joab returned from the children of Ammon and came to Jerusalem. *Joab did not follow up his defeat but it is probable that he did not have the chariot power that David brought into play in the second phase of this war.*

### **THE ROUT OF SYRIA AND SHOBACH 15-19**

But when the Syrians saw that they were defeated before the face of Israel they gathered themselves as one. And Hadadezer sent and brought out Aram that had men across the river and they came to Helam and Shobach the commander of the host of **Hadadezer led from the front**. But David was informed and gathered all Israel together and crossed Jordan and came to Helam. And Aram drew out a battle order to encounter David and they fought with him. But Aram fled from the face of Israel and David slaughtered seven thousand charioteers and forty thousand horsemen and **smote Shobach [“pouring out”] the commander of their host** and he died there. And all the kings who served Hadadezer saw that they were smitten before Israel they surrendered to Israel or made peace and served them and Aram were frightened to rescue the sons of Ammon ever again. *As a man after God’s own heart David took on the heat of the battle and himself despatched the leading soldier of Aram whose lifeblood poured out ironically on the field. The huge capability of David and his prowess appears to have been unmatched during the years of his warfare. An event that was intended for good in the bringing of comfort to Ammon turned out most gross simply because the Ammonite king allowed himself to be swayed by ill counsel and by fear.*

## **CHAPTER 11**

*Its live history* when the year had turned around again and at the time kings go out to war David sent Joab and his servants with him and all Israel and they vanquished the sons of Ammon and besieged Rabbah but David just settled down at Jerusalem.

*Scripture teaches the danger of resting on laurels*

*Its live history* at the moment evening came, David rose from his bed and he had a walk in the garden of the house of the king and he caught sight of a woman bathing her from the upper part of the garden and the woman was very beautiful to look at. Then David sent and searched for the woman and he (*a conveniently unnamed messenger*) said “Is this not Bathsheba daughter of Eliam [“God’s people” LXX Eliab “God is Father” A.V. margin Ammiel “people of God”] wife of Uriah the Hittite?

*Together with the military recorder this leading soldier also was among David’s top brass and clearly had married a Jewess and was a righteous gentile.*

Then David sent messengers and took her and she was brought to him and he lay down with her for she was a companion of purity from her period but she returned to her house. So the woman conceived and she sent and informed David and she said “I have conceived”. *The swift incubation of sin is taught both by David and Paul.*

### **DAVID ACTS SHREWDLY 6-13**

Then David sent to Joab saying “Send me Uriah the Hittite!” and Joab sent Uriah to David. So Uriah came to him and David asked him concerning the wellbeing of Jab and the welfare of the people and the prosperous nature of the war. Then David said to Joab “Go down to your house and wash your feet” and Uriah went out of the house

of the king and there followed him an offering [a lifting up like the “celebratory portions Joseph offered his brothers and like the gifts accompanying the banquet of Ahasuerus at his marriage to Esther] of the king. But Uriah slept at the door of the house of the king along with all the servants of his lord and he did not go down to his house. Then it was told David saying “Uriah did not go down home and David said to Uriah “Why, being aware as you are you had come a way or gone on your way did you not go down to your house?” Then Uriah said to David “The ark and Israel and Judah are dwelling in tents or Succoth and my master Joab and the servants of my lord are camping upon the open field. Should I then go to my house to eat and to drink and to lie with my wife? As You live and your soul lives should I do this thing – *I will not.*

And David said “Remain here today and also tomorrow and I will send you away and it will be departure.” *The Hebrew “it will depart” or “be departure day” is not a 2<sup>nd</sup> but 3<sup>rd</sup> person verb suggesting something sinister.* Uriah was in Jerusalem that day and the next. Then David called him and he ate and drank before his face and he(David) would keep him drinking [Piel future] but in the evening he went out to lie on his bed with the servants of his lord but he did not go down to his house.

#### **THE DEATH OF URIAH 14-17**

*Its live history* in the morning that David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it by the hand of Uriah and he wrote in the letter saying “Place Uriah at the front faces of the strength of battle and withdraw from him and he will be smitten and die.

*And its live history* through Joab’s observing of the city he delivered Uriah to a place where he knew that elite soldiers were. Then the stout men of the city issued out and engaged Joab in battle and some of the people and servants of David fell and also Uriah the Hittite died.

#### **JOAB REPORTS URIAH’S DEATH USING CIPER 18-21**

Then Joab sent and informed David all the details of the battle. He also commanded the messengers saying “As you finish speaking of all the battle detail to the king and it happens that the king’s wrath grows and he says to you “Why, aware as you were, did you approach so close to the city for battle? Surely you would know that they would shoot from the wall? Who smote Abimelech son of Jerrub Besheth? Was it not a woman who caused an upper millstone [bkr j l p] to fall from the wall above and he died in Thebes? Why did you go near the wall?” Then you shall say “Your servant Uriah is dead – finished. [“that’s me finished”] *The Hittite war scribe gives us the exact detail of this incident which is a major blot on the life of David and in the divine providence an acute and honest reporter was on hand to paint in for us the veriest details of the incident and retail the entire story from start to finish.*

#### **DAVID COUNTS URIAH’S LIFE CHEAP 22-25**

Then the messenger went and arrived and apprised David of all that Joab sent. And the messenger said to David “When the men prevailed over us and came out against us in the field we were right on top of them to the entrance of the gate but the archers shot from above on the wall against your servants and some of the servants of the king are dead and even Uriah the Hittite is dead.” Then David said to the messenger “This is what you shall say to Joab ‘Let this matter not be distressful in your eyes for the sword swallows up this one and that one alike. Cause your battle to take firm hold upon the city and pull it down and you continue to press it.’ *Under the guise of continued deep concern for state of the military and the success of the campaign*

*David hid his own wickedness and showed callous disregard for the loss of a great and good man.*

### **URIAH'S WIFE TRAUMATISED 26-27**

Then his wife heard that Uriah her husband was dead and she lamented for her husband. Then the mourning passed and David sent and added her to his household and wedded her and she bore him a son but the thing that David had done distressed the LORD. *Bathsheba was full of tears and clothed in dark sackcloth and walking with her head bowed for days. After such sadness David took her and married her forthwith. The matter made God tremble like a curtain in a breeze. The Spirit of God was with David but on this occasion almost forsook him. David was well aware of this divine aspect for in his famous 22<sup>nd</sup> psalm he writes "Take not Your Holy Spirit from me". This story rumbles on for a further chapter in scripture and the sacred writer as I have suggested is himself a Hittite believer and will have all the truth come to view. The LORD taught through this callous and unequivocally sinful month in the life of David that we must never cease to battle for righteousness and that the sins of the flesh are most likely to molest us when we lay aside any of the weapons of the Holy Spirit which are set at our disposal in Ephesians 6.*

## **CHAPTER 12**

### **NATHAN'S PARABLE 1-5**

Then the LORD sent Nathan to David and he came to him and said to him "There were two men in one city and one was rich and one was in need. The rich man had a very large flock and herd and the poor man had nothing at all except one little ewe lamb which he bought and it lived and was growing big – the darling [*ʾdʿj*] with a family bond to him and his growing family. And it ate his special delicacy and it drank from his cup and it lay in his lap and it was like a daughter to him. Then the rich man came to the man and he thought it a pity to take from his flock and herd to offer *food* to a man on a journey that came to him but he took the ewe-lamb of the poor man and offered it to the man who had come on his journey to him. And the anger of David was raised greatly and he said to Nathan "As the LORD lives because he did this he should die". He shall recompense the ewe lamb four times over as reward because he had done this thing and above that because he has had no pity [*lʾmj*].

### **YOU ARE THE MAN 6-14**

Then Nathan said to David "You are the man". Thus says the LORD God of Israel 'I anointed you to be king over Israel and I delivered you from Saul's hand and I gave you the house of your lord and the wives of your lord into your bosom and I gave you the house of Israel and Judah and if that were small I would have caused to add to you similarly here and there. Why when aware of it you made contemptible the word of the LORD'S promise to do evil in his sight? You struck Uriah the Hittite with the sword and took his wife for your wife and you slaughtered him with the sword of the sons of Ammon. But now the sword shall not depart from your house for its duration... *The A.V. interestingly uses "never" for mlʾā for "eternity" is not in view but rather the dynasty of David ...on account of the fact that you have been in contempt of me and taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife. Thus says the LORD "Behold me as I raise against you a calamity from your house and I will take away your wives before your eyes and give them to your companion and he will sleep*

with your wives in the open before this very sun” for you acted in secret and I will enact this matter before all Israel and before the sun.

Then David said to Nathan I have sinned before the LORD. And Nathan said to David “The LORD will also cause a passing over of your sin –you will not die!” Except because you have clearly given occasion for blasphemy or reproach [*xan*] to the enemies of the LORD in this matter the son that will be born to you will also die.

### **DAVID ON PRAYER AND FASTING 15-23**

Then Nathan walked to his house and the LORD struck or “defeated” the child of the wife of Uriah born to David and he was very ill. But David sought God on behalf of the child and David fasted a fast and came and sojourned overnight lying on the earth. Then the elders of his house arose to cause him to rise from the earth but he was unwilling and he would not cut or eat bread [*mhl arb*] with them.

*And history tells us* that on the seventh day the child died and the servants of David feared to announce to him that the child had died for they said “While the child’s life was in him we spoke with him and he would not listen to our voice and how will we say to him that the child is dead – and he produce a calamity. But David saw that his servants were a company of whisperers and David understood that the child was dead and David said to his servants “Is the child dead?” and they said “He is dead”. So David arose from the earth and washed and anointed him and changed his outer garment and went to the house of the LORD and worshipped Him. Then he came to his own house and made request and they set bread before him and he ate.

*This is most instructive on facing trauma. David gained understanding by enquiry and then abandoned his hope of life but prepared for the society of others and first frequented the presence of God. Then he resumed normal life. The lesson remains recorded in the psalms “If I regard sin in my heart the LORD will not hear me”*

Then the servants said to him “Why did you take the action you have done because during the life of the child you fasted and wept and as soon as the child died you arose and ate bread?” Then he said, “While the child was alive I fasted and wept because I said ‘who knows if the LORD will give me the life of the child?’” *This is of interest for it flies in the face of the distinct word of the prophet Nathan. David tested if God would favour him in spite of His revealed word! He believed **divine mercy exults against judgment** (cf Psalm 52.8, 89 24-8, 101.1, 103.8 and was prepared to pray in accordance with his faith. “But now that he is dead what reason is there that I should fast? Am I able to cause him to return again? I shall go to him but he shall not return to me!” David is stating quite clearly his belief in the life of those who pass into eternity.*

### **SOLOMON BORN TO BATHSHEBA 24-25**

Then David comforted Bathsheba his wife and he went in to her and she conceived a son and he called his name “Solomon” [*recompense*] and the LORD loved him. But he sent by the hand of Nathan the prophet and called his name Jedidah [*“beloved”*] because of the “passing over” [*rwb[b]*] of the LORD. *The significance of involving Nathan again is to recognise the grace of God in forgiveness and that the “ewe lamb” story triggers something deep – that the Lamb of God in Passover enables peace and forgiveness in depth.*

### **JOAB’S DOGGED FIGHT IS REWARDED–DAVID TAKES THE CITY 26-31**

But Joab fought the sons of Ammon at Rabbah and captured the royal city. Then Joab sent messengers to David and said “I have battled on my own in Rabbah; I have also



taken the city of rivers or waters so now gather the rest of the people and camp against the city and capture it lest I should capture the city and my name gets proclaimed over it". So David gathered all the people and marched to Rabbah and encamped against it and captured it. Then he took the crown of their king off his head and in weight it was about a Cor of Gold and precious stones and it was placed on the head of David and he caused very great booty to be taken from the city. *There is a little pun here in that "Great" and the city name "Rabbah" pronounce the same. So David took Rabbah out of Rabbah – he took the greatness from the Great.* And the people that he evacuated he also appointed for the saw [*hrqm*] and threshing harrows [*xrj*] of iron and iron axes [*rzgm*] and he caused them to pass over as workers in the brick-kilns [*nblm*] and he did so to all the cities of the sons of Ammon and David returned and all Israel to Jerusalem.

### CHAPTER 13

#### AMNON'S DESIRE FOR TAMAR FED BY JONADAB'S ENCOURAGEMENT 1-5

*How often the greatest defeat follows the greatest victory–Absalom's rebellion immediately followed the defeat of Rabbah*

And *history tells that* after **this fundamental conquest** [*nk* suggesting a new established reality] that Absalom the son of David had a beautiful sister and her name was Tamar ["palm tree"] and Amnon the son of David loved her. And Amnon was distressed to the point of having become ill through the transition of Tamar his sister for she was a virgin and it was difficult in the eyes of Amnon to fulfil [*Literally "to execute"*] his love for her in any way whatever. **But Amnon had a companion named Jonadab son of Shimeah, David's brother and Jonadab was a very clever man.** [*mcj* "shrewd" or "practically wise" in the bad sense "spiritually wise" in the good sense. And he said "Is it known that for some reason or other that you the son of a king are weakened morning after morning. Would you not explain it to me?" And Amnon said to him "I am in love with Tamar, the sister of Absalom my brother." Then Jonadab said to him "Lie down on you bed and you be constantly sick and your father will come to see you and you will say to him 'Will you please let Tamar my sister come and select food for me and prepare her choice food before me so that what I enjoy seeing I may be able to eat from her hand.'"]

#### AMNON'S INCEST AGAINST TAMAR 6-14

Then Amnon lay down and was constantly ill and the king came to see him and Amnon said to the king "Please let Tamar my sister come and keep up baking a couple of pancakes in my sight for I would eat from her hand." So David sent to Tamar's home saying "Please go to the house of Amnon your brother and make him select food." So Tamar went to the house of Amnon her brother and he was lying down and she took dough and she would knead it and baked pancakes in his sight and browned off the pancakes. Then she took the hot frying pan [*trv*] and would toss them down [*qxy* "cast what hardens from liquid"] before him but he was unwilling to eat and Amnon said "Cause all the men to go out from standing over me" and the men went out from *watching* over him. And Amnon said to Tamar "Bring the choice food to the room and I will eat from your hand." So Tamar took the pancakes that she had made and brought them to Amnon her brother to the bedroom. And she came close to him for feeding *him* and he took firm hold on her and said to her "Come my sister lie with me". And she said "No, my brother, for you should not humble me, for such *fundamental wrong* as this [*nk*] should not be done throughout Israel. Do not do this

foolishness” For I –where will I cause my exposure lead me? And you will become as one of the fools in Israel so now please speak to the king for he will not hold me back from you” But he was not willing to listen to her voice and he was stronger than her and sexually assaulted her and lay with her.

### **TAMAR**

*This lady who obeyed her father though she fell foul of an evil stratagem sought to bring help to her half-brother by her baking. He took advantage of her and yet she gave him two excellent advices. First she said “Don’t do this” and urged that he and she would suffer for life. Second, she advised him to ask her father that he would give her in marriage so the union would be honourable though like the union of Cain with his sister not regular. In that instance any child of the union would have a father. The words of Tamar tell us that it was out of order and unheard of in Israel for a sister to be humbled in this manner. Marriage bonds were respected. That this should disgrace the royal family hurt David deeply.*

### **AMNON DISPENSES WITH TAMAR HARSHLY 15-18**

Then Amnon hated her with a great hatred for the great hatred with which he hated her was beyond the love with which he loved her and Amnon said to her “Arise and go”. Then she said to him “There is no cause to change” [dwa] “This sending me away is a great evil after what you have done to me” but he would not hear her. *The rendering I have chosen does not yield a second comparison but argues that separation after such intimacy is callous in the extreme which appears to be the point thought indeed the “sending away” was indeed more terrible and frightening for her than “the humbling”.* Then he called his servant that cooked for him and said “Please hurry this one outside from upon me and bolt the door after her.” And there was a cotton garment with “long sleeves” or “many colours” upon her for that was the basic dress with which daughters of the king were clothed. And the cook caused her to go outside and bolted the door behind her.

### **ABSALOM REACTS WITH BURNING HATRED 19-20**

Then Tamar cast dust on her head and tore the cotton long-sleeved garment upon her and set her arm on her head and as she went around she also cried out for help. And Absalom said to her “Has Amnon your brother been with you? There now, my sister, quieten yourself for he is your brother. Do not get your heart set on this affair.” Then Tamar stayed and was desolate or solitary at the house of Absalom her brother. But King David heard all these words and he was very angry. But Absalom did not remark to his brother Amnon either bad or good **but Absalom hated Amnon** for the affair because he humbled his sister over and over.

### **HISTORY TEACHES US THAT MEN WAIT LONG TO SETTLE OLD SCORES**

#### **THE EVENT WHERE AMNON’S FATE WAS SEALED 23-25**

And *history tells* after two years that there were sheep-shearers of Absalom’s at Baal Hazor that is by Ephraim and Absalom called all the sons of the king *there*. *Such times were festival times. A similar occasion prompted David to ask a favour of provision from Nabal.* Then Absalom came to the king and said “Behold now it is the sheep-shearing of your servant. Let the king come and his servants with your servant” But the king said to Absalom “No, my son, please may we not all go and there will be no heavy expense for you.” But he pressed him but he was not willing to go yet he

blessed him. Then Absalom said “Since you will not go please give me Amnon my brother. But the king said to him “Why should he go with you?” But Absalom pressured him and he sent Amnon and all the sons of the king with him.

### **ABSALOM’S PLOT SUCCEEDS 27-29**

But Absalom would keep giving orders to his young servants saying “Please watch as Amnon gets merry with wine then I will say to you ‘Smite Amnon and cause him to die.’ Do not fear; for is it not I who gives the order to you; be strong and as sons of valour.” So the servants of Absalom did to Amnon as Absalom commanded; then all the sons of the king mounted every man his mule and fled.

### **DAVID’S SORROW– JONADAB TRIVIALISES AGAIN 30-36**

And *history records* as these were on the way *home* that tidings came to David saying “Absalom has slain all the sons of the king and not one remains.” *Jesus also taught that a good man’s adversity may come from his home.* So the king arose and tore his robe and lay on the earth and all his servants stood guard with rent clothes. Then Jonadab the son of Shimeah David’s brother answered and said “Let not my Lord say that they have killed all the young men – the king’s sons—for Amnon alone is dead for by the mouth of Absalom this was in place from the day he sexually assaulted his sister Tamar. So now my Lord the king should not lay this matter to heart saying “All the king’s sons are dead for **truly** [*ma where al* “and not” is the supposed earliest written text] they say ‘only Amnon is dead.’” But Absalom shot away and the youth that kept guard lifted his eyes and looked and behold a big army marched on the road behind him on the side of the hill. And Jonadab said “Behold the sons of the king are coming. It is just what your servant said”. And it happened as he had concluded speaking behold also the sons of the king came and they lifted up their voice and wept and the king and all his servants also wept greatly with great crying.

### **ABSALOM’S FLIGHT TO GESHUR 37-39**

*Absalom now flees to his mother’s brother’s city state of Heshur that lay North- East of Bashan in Syria.* But Absalom sped away and went to Talmai the son of Amihud the king of Geshur but David mourned his son daily. So Absalom fled and went to Geshur and was there three years. And David pined in his secret affections to go to Absalom for he was comforted over Amnon because he was dead. *The ongoing life of Tamar was easier and the passions of Amnon would no longer tarnish the royal name or unnerve Jewish ladies. However David was never the friend of revengeful action but in this case a grave wrong was visited with reciprocal justice.*

## **CHAPTER 14**

*The incident which follows gives pause and helps us to see the wonder of saving grace in bringing back the lost. The roundabout & prolonged conversation tends to obfuscate the purpose in hand but once declared it is a shining example of the difficulty of reconciliation, the value of a mediator and the presentation of the critical loss that its absence entails.*

### **JOAB STAGES A HOAZ TO RETURN ABSALOM TO FAVOUR 1-3**

*Joab would not have dared to act if David had not a great love for Absalom and a desire to bring him into the family again. It is God’s love in Christ that lies back of our redemption*

And Joab son of Zeruah was **aware that the heart of the king was toward Absalom**. Then Joab send hastily to Tekoa and took a wise woman from there and said to her “Please be one who has been mourning and please dress in the clothes of mourning (sackcloth) and do not anoint yourself with oil and be as the wife of this one—an adult mourner of one dead for many days. Then go to the king and you will speak to him in these words; and Joab put the words in her mouth.

#### **THE WOMAN DRAMATISES THE HOAX BUT DAVID SPOTS JOAB’S COMPLICITY4-20**

*Disregarding the hoax one has to rejoice in the example of the jeopardy of the soul and human lives – the question of crass sin and the will to save even the dire and patently woeful sinner characterised in this murderous son. The NT finds a scintillating OT echo in the woman’s story of the apostle’s words “Whilst we were yet sinners Christ died for us”.*

So the woman of Tekoa spoke to the king and she fell on her face to the ground and did reverence to him and said “Save O king!” And the king said “What is it about in your case?” And she said “I am a widowed wife mourning my husband and your handmaid had two sons and they two flew into contention in a field and there was no one to separate them and one struck the other and he killed him. And behold the entire family has risen against your handmaid and they are saying ‘Give up the one who struck his brother and we will put him to death for the life of his brother whom he slaughtered and we will also destroy the heritage [*literally “root”*] of the family’ and as by him is my coal for lighting the fire I shall have nothing that remains to establish the name of my husband and a residue on the face of the earth.” Then the king said to the woman “Go to your house and I will constantly direct your care.” Then the woman of Tekoa said “On me, my Lord O King, be the iniquity and upon the house of my father and the king and his throne shall be innocent.” And the king said “He who indicts you, bring him to me and he will not add to touch you again”. And she said “Let the king please remind the LORD your God of the growth of the avenger of blood to destroy so that they may not cause my son to be destroyed and he said “As LORD lives not a hair of your son shall fall to the earth.” Then the woman said “Please may your handmaid speak a word to my Lord the king” and he said “Speak.” And the woman said “Why have you considered like this against the people of God and the king has spoken this word as one who is guilty for the king does not cause his own that is thrust out to be brought back. For we die and are as water poured out and running [*run*] on the ground that cannot be collected up and God does not raise up a life but He plans schemes for preventing his casting out of the one removed.” [*jd this feminine must refer to the first woman and her sin and Adamic sin and a means of reconciliation. This woman though perhaps a medium knew her bible history too- she had a general grasp of redemptive purpose*] “Now because I have come to speak to my lord the king on this matter because the people have made me afraid and thy handmaid said ‘I will now speak to the king; perhaps the king will act on the word I speak for the king will hear to deliver his handmaid from the hand of the man who purposes to cut off myself and my son unitedly from the inheritance of God.’ Then your family handmaid said ‘The word of my Lord the king will now be for rest for thus is my Lord the king as a message bearer of God to listen with understanding to good and evil and the Yahweh your God will be with you.’”

Then the king answered and said to the woman “Please do not conceal a matter of which I am enquiring from you” and the woman said “Please speak my Lord O king!”

Then the king said “Is the hand of Joab with you in all this?” Then the woman answered, “As your soul lives, my Lord O king is there any who can deviate to the right or left from all that my Lord the king has to say for your servant Joab directed me and he put all these words in the mouth of your family handmaid. Your servant Joab has made up this conversation [“*this word*” or “*matter*”] this to move across to this point by turning the direction [*literally “the faces of”*] of the subject talked about. But my Lord has wisdom as the wisdom of an angel of God to discern all that is in the earth or the land.

#### **DAVID CONFRONTS JOAB 21-27**

*As we watch the worship of Joab we see him rejoicing in the Saviour of the murderer and the chief of sinners of the period—Absalom whom we associate with outright revolt against the king. We too should reel over with joy that God so loved us and our lives alike ought to be at his feet.*

So the King said to Joab “Please look; behold I have done this thing so go and bring back the young man—Absalom.” Then Joab fell on his face to the earth and did reverence and blessed the king and said “Today your servant knows that I have found grace in your eyes my Lord O king that the king has undertaken this matter of his servant.” *In the context of reconciliation like respect and worship is owed to our master and king for His utter willingness by grace to go to extreme lengths to bring back the lost sons of men.*

Then Joab arose and went to Geshur and brought Absalom to Jerusalem. But the king said “Let him go round to his own house but he shall not see my face” and Absalom turned back round to his own house and did not see the face of the king.

#### **ABSALOM –THE MAN WHO LOOKED GOOD 25-27**

But throughout all Israel there was no man so lovely as Absalom—so highly praised. From the sole of his foot to the crown of his head there was no blemish in him. And when he cut the hair of his head close it was at the end of the *days of the year*—the days when he regularly would cut it because of its weight on him and they would cut it and the weight of hair was 200 shekels weight by standard royal weight. And there were born to Absalom three sons and one daughter and her name was Tamar; she was a woman of fair looks.

#### **ABSALOM PLEADS TO SEE HIS FATHER 28-33**

So Absalom lived in Jerusalem for two years and he did not see the face of the king. But Absalom sent Joab to bring him quickly to the king but he (Joab) would not come. So he sent a second time yet he would not come. Then he said to his servants “See the parcel of Joab’s land is by the side of mine and there is barley there. Go and **kindle** [*txj*] it with fire.” And the servants of Absalom kindled the holding with fire. So Joab arose and went to Absalom – to his house and said to him “Why have your servants kindled the lot belonging to me with fire?” But Absalom said to Joab “Behold I sent post haste to you saying ‘Come I have to send you to the king saying ‘Why bring me from Geshur? It would be better for me that I should still be there!’ Now I shall see the face of the king. If there is iniquity in me let him kill me.” So Joab came to the king and explained to him and he called Absalom and he came to the king and did him reverence upon his face to the ground before the king and the king kissed Absalom.

*The matter of reconciliation is not complete with forgiveness for the past but must reach into relationship with God in the present. The Christian at times craves a*

*“closer walk with God” but our king daily desires the continuing conversation of the saints whom He loves.*

## CHAPTER 15

*History teaches us that some hearts harden by kindness mistaking it for weakness*

*History also teaches that ill intentioned men court popularity*

But *the fact of the matter* was after re-establishment of relations Absalom made and commissioned chariots and horsemen and fifty soldiers to run before him. Then Absalom rose early and took position by the side of the gate and *it was a fact* that each man who had an issue or conflict to bring to the king for righteous judgment – Absalom called for him and said “From which city are you? And he would say “From one of the tribes of Israel?” Then Absalom said to him “Your issues of dispute are fair and straight but there is no hearing for you from the king. *It is quite obvious that the stone-walling of David in respect of meeting Absalom had resulted in a bitter reaction in which he sought to point out failures in the judiciary and undermine the authority of the king.*

Then Absalom said “Who will make me the justice through the land and each man would come to me who had a righteous cause and I would gain him just issue.” So *historically in fact* when any man came close to do him reverence he put out his hand and held on to him and kissed him. So Absalom acted in accordance with this word toward all Israel that came for judgment to the king and Absalom carried away [*bnq* “blew away” as the wind or “took secretly” as a thief] the heart of the strong men of Israel.

### THE FAKE VOW 7-9

*History teaches that men use religion as a cloak*

And *it was a fact* at the end or harvest of forty years that Absalom said to the king “Please may I go and recompense my vow that I have vowed to the LORD in Hebron? It is because your servant made a vow when he lived in Geshur in Syria saying ‘If the LORD causes me to return to Jerusalem I will serve the LORD’”. Then the king said to him “Go in peace” so he arose and travelled to Hebron.

### THE PLANNED COUP AFTER 40 YEARS OF DAVID’S REIGN 10-12

*History teaches that evil increases when good men do nothing*

Then Absalom sent spies to all the tribes of Israel saying “As soon as you hear the Shophar trumpet call you shall also say “Absalom is king in Hebron”. And 200 soldiers who were called left Jerusalem with Absalom but they were sincere and not aware of the whole affair. But Absalom sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite an adviser of David from his city of Giloh while he offered sacrifices and *history tells that* the bonds of conspiracy were encouraged and strengthened [*xma*] and the people going over to Absalom were many.

### DAVID EVACUATES THE CAPITOL 13-18

***WE NOW MEET A SERIES OF COMPANIONS WHO LIKE THE DISCIPLES OF JESUS WOULD HOLD WITH THE KING OR TURN TRAITOR AT THIS PERILOUS TIME OF HIS FLIGHT-WHICH PARALLELS THE TIME OF JESUS’ RETREAT TO OLIVES BEFORE HIS DEATH RESURRECTION AND ASCENSION***

*History teaches that men follow a leader who gives them what they want*

But the informant [*dgn* a term like our “whistleblower”] came to David saying “*the story is* that the heart of the men of Israel is following Absalom”. Then David said to all his servants that were with him in Jerusalem “Rise and we will shoot away smartly for there will be no escape from the face of Absalom. Be quick to get away lest he will keep moving fast and they will follow us hard, thrust calamity upon us and strike the city with the sword.”

- (1) **Then the servants of the king said to the king “All that my lord the king chooses to do, behold your servants will do”** and the king left and his whole house at his feet. So the king left ten concubines to watch over the palace or household. Thus the king left and all the people at his feet and they took position at a house well distant.
- (2) And all his servants crossed over by his side and all the Cherithites and all the Pelethites and all the Gittites—six hundred warriors that he had brought at his feet or command from Gath and they passed on ahead of the king.

### **ITTAI – A LESSON ON CHARACTERED FAITHFULNESS 19-23**

- (3) Then the king said to Ittai the Gittite “Why are you also going with us? Return, but stay with the king, for you are a stranger and also an exile with your own place. For you to come just yesterday, should I cause you to wander about to go with us for I am going along where I can go. Return and take your brothers; covenant mercy and faithfulness be with you.” But Ittai answered “As the LORD lives and my lord the king lives yet surely at the place where my lord the king is whether for death or life nevertheless there your servant will be.” So David said to Ittai “Go and cross over”. And Ittai the Gittite crossed over and all his trusty men and little ones with him. And all those of the land were weeping—a great voice—and the entire people crossed over and the king crossed the stream Kidron [*“black” with blood*] and the whole people passed on the way to the wilderness. *My comment would be that this is almost like the Exodus in reverse. There is no joy but rather sorrow. This seemed to be the end of David’s kingdom—his fate seemed sealed in a next day report “monarch ends ousted by an in-house coup.” But this was not to be for God’s covenant mercies never failed David and will not fail his saints.*
- (4) **And behold even Zadok and all the Levites with him carrying the ark of the covenant of the LORD.** And they laid out the ark of God and Abiathar went up until the entire people had crossed over from the city. But the king said to Zadok “Bring back the ark of God to the city. If I shall find grace in the eyes of the LORD He will also cause me to return and he will cause me to see it and its resting place. And if He says thus ‘I am not pleased with you’ behold me, let Him do to me as seems best in His eyes.” *The sight of the Levites led by Zadok and the ark of glory leaving the city quite overwhelmed David. His good sense directed that the presence of God should abide whatever happened to him.*

Then the king said to Zadok the priest “Are you not the seer? Return to the city in peace with your two sons with you (plural) Ahimaaz your son and Jonathan son of Abiathar.” *The command is to Zadok but the son of Zadok and the son of Abiathar are both implicated.*

“Look, I will be somewhere in the Arabah of the wilderness until word comes from you to bring me news.” So Zadok returned and Abiathar with the ark of God to Jerusalem and they stayed there.

### **THE SAD WITHDRAWAL OF DAVID 30**

But David went up through the elevation of the Mount of Olives climbing and weeping and his head covered and he was walking barefoot and all the people with him covered each his head and they went up weeping as they climbed. *This statement draws the mind forward to the night of the betrayal of our LORD. Christ also wept in Gethsemane on the slopes of Olivet. Gloom and sorrow was very real in both instances but victory was assured. The divine covenant was “ordered in all things and sure” 2 Samuel 23.5*

### **THE BETRAYER 31**

Then an informant of David said “Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom” and David said “O LORD continually render foolish the counsel of Ahithophel.”

### **THE PRIESTS REMAIN AND LOYAL INFORMANTS AND ABSALOM ARRIVES IN JERUSALEM 32-37**

- (5) And *History teaches us* that David reached the top where he worshipped God. *The top of the mountain puts Jerusalem out of sight and for the aged king to scale it was an achievement. His feet stood near where the ascending Christ – the object of his worship – later stood. Never was Christ as sure as then of his empire – never was David so unsure. And behold Hushai the Archite approached him with his mantle torn and red earth on his head. The top from where the risen LORD ascended. And David said to him “If you go over with me you will be a burden upon me. But if you go back to the city and say to Absalom ‘I will be your servant O king. I was servant of your father until this but now I will serve you then you will shatter or defeat by lot the counsel of Ahithophel for me.’” The existence of another mature opinion in court would occasionally come to the casting of lots or simply event in a discussion where Hushai might well prevail through august seniority and on account of his repute as an adviser.*

“And are not Zadok and Abiathar the priests there with you and it shall be that any word you hear from the house of the king give the information to Zadok and Abiathar the priests. Behold with you there are the two sons; Ahimaaz son of Zadok and Jonathan Abiathar’s so send by their hand to me every word that you may hear.” So Hushai the friend of David went to the city and Absalom came to Jerusalem. *The finishing touches of a network of intelligence gathering stood complete with the counsellor turned spy Hushai turning informer and feeding information to the priests who in turn would post it to David by the youthful priests Ahimaaz and Jonathan who had become runners.*

## **CHAPTER 16**

- (6) **KINDNESS MISINTERPRETED 1-4** And David passed a short distance over the top of Olives and behold Ziba the young servant of Mephiboseth came to meet him and a pair of donkeys bound with saddles and upon them two hundred loaves and a hundred lots of dried raisins and a hundred fresh picked fruit and a leather bottle of wine. Then the king said to Ziba “What are these you have?” and Ziba said “The asses are for the house of the king to mount and the purpose of the bread and summer fruit is for the young servants to eat and the wine is for those that are wearied in the wilderness to drink.” Then the king said “And where is the son of your master?” And Ziba said to



the king “Behold he remains in Jerusalem for he said ‘Today the house of Israel will return to me the kingdom of my father!’” *The evidence of the heavily laden donkeys beautifully saddled spoke for itself but its message was not exactly clear to the king in that it seemed possible Mephibosheth could have ridden another himself. On the other hand the story Ziba concocted might seem plausible if he were himself the benefactor or the present was a compassionate parting gift to David for his kindness to Mephibosheth. The king readily assumed that Ziba had prepared the present without the direction of his master. Then **the king** said to Ziba “Look, all that belonged to Mephibosheth is yours” and Ziba said “I humbly submit, may I find grace in the eyes of my lord O king.” *The reader should note that the sacred writer is careful to use the definite article of King David and emphatically in v.5 we are told “**And the king David came to Bathurim**”. There is no doubt in the recorder’s mind that David is the rightful king and this fact the Spirit of God emphasised.**

- (7) And David “**the king**” came to Bathurim and behold there a man coming out of the family of the house of Saul and his name was Shimei son of Gera— he kept coming out and he had to continually curse. And he stoned David and all the servants of “**the king**” David with stones and all the people and the mighty warriors were on his right and left. And Shimei talked in this way as he kept on cursing “Get out, get out, you man of blood, you man of Belial: the LORD has brought back on you all the blood of the house of Saul where you reigned as king instead of him. The LORD has also given your kingdom into the hand of Absalom your son and look at you in your calamity for you are a man of blood.”

#### **DAVID’S GREAT HUMILITY GRACE AND MAGNANIMITY 9-14**

Then Abishai son of Zeruiah said to **the king** “Why should this dead dog continue to curse my lord the king? Please let me go across and remove his head”. But the king said “What is there in common between me and you, O sons of Zeruiah? For he will continue to curse and it is because the LORD is speaking to him ‘You must curse David’ and who will say ‘What have you known that you are acting thus?’” *This is a rare response and it tells us three things. First, it distances David from the military response linked with cruelty. Second, it notes that the LORD allowed this extraordinary exhibition and David allows the protest which made his mighties seem childish and yet showed he was a man after God’s heart not a man of blood by reaching with grace and allowing his testimony to shine through. Third, it cites the fact that Shimei in using stones and cursing is bringing to David’s mind the very real remembrance of Uriah and Bathsheba and something of a belated but due punishment. On the very same mount Jesus said to Peter “Put away your sword”. Then David said to Abishai and all his servants “Look, my son that came out of my own genitals is seeking my life so perhaps *well might* now this Benjamite. Let him rest and curse away for the LORD is speaking to him. Perhaps or maybe not the LORD will look at my evil and return me good for his cursing today.” And David and his mighty men marched on the path or road...*

#### **(4) TEXTUAL GAP 16.13**

*As so often in the books of Samuel the text presents a gap but the sense presents no textual problem—rather it gives pause so that we can contemplate a very remarkable occurrence—in this case the grace of David. David simply decided to move on and*

*Shimei decided it would be best to withdraw get some height had resume throwing stones more plentifully found on the scarp. But Shimei went along the side of the hill within range of him moving along and cursing and threw stones opposite him and kept showering them with dust. So **the king** and all those that came with him were tired and regained their breath there. To understand the fatigue the whole party had just climbed about 500 feet and endured stones raining on them and showers of dust besides the vitriol of the bad-mouthed Shimei. Older ones and the young would be in need of a breather. The grace of David as a later segment of the story in this book shows is a major factor in the repentance and loyal faith of Shimei.*

### **ABSALOM OCCUPIES THE CITY AND PALACE 15-19**

So Absalom and all the people of the men of Israel came to Jerusalem and Ahithophel in his company.

And *history tells* that when Hushai the Archite –the friend of David –came to Absalom Hushai then said to Absalom “Long live the king! Long live the king!” But Absalom said to Hushai “Is this your covenant kindness to your friend? Why not go with your friend?” Then Hushai said to Absalom “No, but whoever the LORD and this people and every man of Israel chooses should I not be? And with him I will stay.” This is a very clever expression indeed for it reflects his undying loyalty to David but in the context is understood to be his unflinching undertaking to Absalom. And looking at it a second way “Whom should I serve? Should I not serve before the face of his son as when I served before the face of your father? I will be just like that in your presence!”

### **AHITHOPHEL’S COUNSEL 20-23**

Then Absalom said to Ahithophel “You must come up with advice between you as to what I should do!” And Ahithophel said to Absalom “Go in to your fathers’ concubines which he made to stay to watch over the house and all Israel will hear that you have shamed your father and the hands of all who are for you will be strongly urged on.” Then they stretched out the tent for Absalom upon the roof and Absalom went in to the concubines of his father before the eyes of all Israel. *This was a surly thing—and immoral thing—an abominable thing in the sight of God and it was done publicly so that the women were utterly disgraced. The advice was geared to establish the power of Absalom firmly in place of that of his father.*

So the counsel of Ahithophel that he counselled in those days was as or like enquiring at the oracle of God; thus was all the advice of Ahithophel both to David and to Absalom. *The next piece of advice is excellent military counsel and in such matters this advisor was doubtless outstanding. It is to be hoped that David did not trust too much to this man in his later days and demur on seeking the LORD. The wisdom of God is greater than that of men and however Ahithophel was viewed at that juncture “those days” the affairs of David had become complex and it maybe that Ahithophel was advising both camps. The 23rd verse would lend credence to such equivocal advice. Both father and son trusted this man but after the coup David showed a higher confidence in Hushai—whom David already recognised was closer to David than Ahithophel.*

## **CHAPTER 17**

### **TWO SETS OF COUNSEL 1-14**

Again Ahithophel spoke to Absalom “Please let me select 12,000 men and I will rise and follow hard after David tonight. So I will come upon him and he will be weary

and feeble or slack of hand and I will cause him to be terrified and the whole people that are with the king will flee and I will strike only the king himself. Then I will bring back all the people to you as the return of the whole manpower is what you seek –the whole people will be prosperous or at peace.” And the saying was right in the eyes of Absalom and of all the elders of Israel. But Absalom said “Please now also call Hushai the Archite and we will listen to him also –to what is in his mouth. So Hushai came to Absalom and Absalom spoke to him saying “Ahithophel spoke in these terms; should we act on his words? If not you speak!” And Hushai said to Absalom “It is not the best counsel that Ahithophel has advised on this occasion. Then Hushai said “You know that you father and his stout men that they are warriors and bitter of soul as a bear deprived of her cubs in the field and your father is a man of war and he will not stay overnight with the people. Behold by now he will have hidden himself in one of the dug-outs or in one of a number of known *haunts* or places and there are likely to be some among them who fall among the wounded and he will hear the report and say there has been a calamitous strike among the people that follow Absalom and he also that is a man of valour who has the heart of a lion will completely melt for all Israel knows that your father is a warrior and they who are with him are men of valour. Therefore my counsel is to gather together– **all Israel** should be gathered to you from Dan and to Beersheba as the sand by the seashore for mass and that you are the *inspirational* presence of those going to battle. So we will come on him in a well-known place where he shall be found and we shall be lead to him as the dew falls on the warm earth and there shall be no remainder left to him or all the men who are with him–not even one. And if he gathers *strength* at a city **all Israel** will lift that city with ropes and drag it to the river until there is not even one small stone found there. *This counsel is the biggest spiel of spin to be found anywhere in the Old Testament. It starts modestly suggesting a “better alternative” and immediately plays on the fears of Absalom concerning his father’s capability as a military strategist. It makes the most of the power of rumour by warning that news would travel through channels David has in place that Absalom is routed even though battle was only just joined and initial casualties only involved. It makes an appeal for national unity. It feeds Absalom’s pride insisting that he lead from the front as the man he is. It insists that an immediate chase would end up abortive for David would already be lying low. Its finishing touch is that it suggests David might rally to a defensive position in a city as he did at Ziklag or Keilah and then by sheer numbers Absalom would overcome in fine style. The literary flourishes in the spin statement are the by-product of years of court experience. The very finest example of this practiced genius is “pulling the city into the river with ropes” –which is to sell a picture rather than a strategy. That not even a sling-stone would remain suggests an ignominious final defeat and grand reversal of the classic victory of David.* And Absalom and all the men of Israel said “The counsel of Hushai the Arkite is better than that of Ahithophel.

##### (5) TEXTUAL GAP - 17.14

So the LORD determined [*hwx*] to annul or void the better counsel of Ahithophel for the LORD’S purpose of transitioning to bring calamity upon Absalom. *This statement standing in the textual gap is the writer’s assessment and it interrupts the history. From whatever hand it is part of Holy Scripture. This gap draws attention to the sovereignty of God as Theocratic monarch over His people and so in ultimate command. The word has “constitutional” overtones and this gap gives us pause as we*

*survey the unlikely taking place—the foreign counsellor in from the other side—with long adherence to David getting away with it.*

### **THE ADVENTURE OF GETTING THE NEWS TO DAVID 15-20**

Then Hushai said to Zadok and Abiathar the priests “according to these things and these things Ahithophel gave counsel to Absalom and the elders of Israel; but I counselled according to these and these.” So now send quickly and inform David saying “Do not spend the night in the plains of the wilderness but even crossing *Jordan* you should make the crossing lest there is a swallowing up or destruction for the king and all the people that are with him”. But Jonathan and Ahimaaz stopped short in the well Regel for they were not capable of being seen coming into the city so the family servant girl went and informed them and they went and told the king David. Still a young man saw them and informed Absalom. But they both went fast and they came to the house of a man of Bathurim and he had a well in his courtyard and they went down there and the wife got a woven cover and spread it over the mouth of the well and scattered bruised corn [*pwr*] over it and the act was not known. But the servants of Absalom came to the woman of Bathurim and said to her “Where are Ahimaaz and Jonathan and the woman said “They have passed over the stream of water” and they searched for them but could not find them so they returned to Jerusalem.

### *History records many a near escape 21-22*

So *history tells us* that when they (*the scouts of Absalom*) had gone that they (*the runners*) climbed up out of the well and went and informed King David and said to David “Rise and go over the water quickly for Ahithophel has counselled like this against you.” Then David arose and all the people with him and they crossed Jordan; by first light of morning there was no one missing that had not crossed the Jordan. *Historically this subterfuge mirrored the hiding of the spies of Joshua*

### **THE DEATH OF AHITHOPHEL 25-26**

So Ahithophel saw that his counsel was not executed or even thought about and he clothed his donkey and rose and went home to his city and gave directions about his house and strangled himself and died and was buried in the sepulchre of his father. But David came to Mahanaim while Absalom crossed Jordan –he and all the men of Israel with him. And Absalom made Amasa commander of the host in place of Joab and Amasa was son of a man by the name of Jithra the Israelite that went in to Abigail daughter of **Nahash** brother of Zeruah mother of Joab. *Thus the niece of Joab’s mother or his cousin was humbled by Amasa.* Then Israel and Absalom set up camp in the land of Gilead.

### **KINDNESS AT MAHANAIM 27-29**

And it was a fact that as David came to Mahanaim that **Shobi** son of **Nahash** of Rabbah of the children of Ammon [*David had clearly cordial relations with this Ammonite*] and **Machir** son of Ammiel from Lodebar [*“where Mephiboseth had been kindly received– 2 Samuel 9.4– a place where David had clearly both contact and great credit*] and **Barzillai** the Gileadite from Rogelim [*“the fuller’s place” where garments were washed by the Jabbok*] approached to offer beds and cups and pottery vessels and wheat, barley and ground flour and roast corn and beans and also cooked lentils. Also they offered honey and cheese [*amj as in Proverbs 30.33 means “cheese” –it is thought that “butter” as we understand it was not known to the*

*orientalists]* and sheep and of the herd to David and the people that were with him to eat for they said “The people will be famished and languishing and thirsty in the wilderness.” *Mahanaim is fully 15-20 miles North East of the point where the Jabbok enters Jordan making its way through a channel that narrows to a ravine in places. There Jacob encountered the pre-incarnate Christ and also the angels of God and there David found Shobi Machir and Barzillai—good friends— who between them fed a host. There can be no doubt but that emissaries had gone before because these people prepared victuals and well understood the state David’s band of men would be in on arrival.*

## **CHAPTER 18**

### **DAVID CAUTIONS HIS COMMAND TO RESPECT THE LIFE OF ABSALOM 1-5**

And David visited the people with him in counting and placed over them commanders of thousands and of hundreds. And David sent a third of the people under the authority of Joab and a third under that of Abishai the brother of Joab son of Zeruiah and a third under the authority of Ittai the Gittite and the king said to the people “I will keep going with you myself”. But the people said “You are not going for if we flee in retreat they will not set their heart on us and if the half of us die they will not set their heart on it for you are like ten thousand of us and now it is better if you are in the city to help us from there.” And the king said “I will do what is good in your eyes and the king stood to minister at the side of the gate and all the people went to war and in thousands. But the king commanded Joab and Abishai and Ittai saying “**Gently**, for my sake, for the sake of the youth, for Absalom’s sake.” And all the people and commanders heard about the command of the king on the matter of Absalom. *The long association of David with Joab saw a turning from savagery towards humbler ways in the sons of Zeruiah with the cruel death of Abner but now at length this cruelty re-emerges.*

### **ABSALOM TRAPPED AND SLAIN DIED IN A TREE 6-17**

Then the people went in to the field to encounter Israel and the battle was in the wood of Ephraim. And there the people of Israel were defeated with a twenty thousand loss. And the battle was dispersed over the face of all the land and the wood would be a greater eater of the people than the devouring appetite of the sword that day. And Absalom shouted in the face of the servants of David and Absalom rode upon a mule and the mule went under the thick branch of a great oak and his head was held fast in the oak and he would have been yielded or suffered between heaven and earth. *The position of Absalom was critical. In another sense he was between life in eternity and life on earth. For the love of his soul David had cautioned kindness—but even if a disabled Absalom had survived it would have pleased David—but that was not to be. For us men and women and our salvation another—in the Christ—suffered between heaven and earth as Salvador Dali depicts so graphically in his modern art piece. Christ suffered that we might find safe passage to Glory.* But the mule which was under him passed on. But one soldier saw it and told Joab and said “Behold I saw Absalom suspended in an oak.” Then Joab said to the man that told him “So you saw him and were aware and did not smite him to the ground and I would have given you ten silver shekels and a girdle. But the man said to Joab “Not if I had 1000 shekels of silver in my hand!” I would not put forth my hand against the son of the king for in our hearing the king commanded you and Abishai and Ittai saying “Watch the young man Absalom for my sake”. Or I would have acted emptily and regardless of my soul

and all action is not concealed from the king and you would have been placed or appointed against me. Then Joab said “I will not take time to wait expectantly with you and he took three spears in his hand and struck them through the heart of Absalom whilst he remained alive in the midst of the oak. And ten young men that carried Joab’s armour turned and struck Absalom and he died. *If ever there was overkill this was it. Any one of 13 deadly thrusts would have killed the youth but it appears he had to endure mass torture of a bestial nature while his life was still in him.* So Joab blew with the trumpet and turned the people round and they pursued after Israel for Joab restrained the people. Then they took Absalom and threw him with despise into the great open pit *a war grave* in the wood and they set up over him a very great heap of stones. Then all Israel fled—every man to his tent.

### **ABSALOM’S MEMORIAL 18**

But Absalom had taken and raised for himself in his lifetime a standing monument which is in the valley of the king for he said “I have no son to remember my name and he called the monument by his own name and he called it the handiwork of Absalom **TO THIS DAY**. *We might add that in the valley today that memorial still stands. It is strange that a prince with such charm had such premonition that his life would be childless.*

### **THE RACE TO REPORT ABSALOM’S DEATH 19 (19-32)**

And Ahimaaz the son of Zadok said “Please may I run and announce tidings to the king for the LORD has given righteous judgment against the hand of his enemies”. And Joab said to him “You are not the man to report the tidings this day. You will bring tidings on another day. This day you will not go on reporting for upon.....”

### **TEXTUAL PROVENANCE 18.20**

The Qere or **oral** text supplies three words which fill out the sense after “upon” namely “The kings’ son (is) dead”. There should be words such as “on this day” and there may have been other reason supplied which was not in the providence of God and provenance of text preserved historically.

### **THE COMMANDER’S PREFERRED RUNNER CUSHI IS OUTFRONT 20-32**

Then Joab said to Cushie “Go, tell the king what you have seen” and Cushie bowed reverently to Joab and ran off. Ahimaaz son of Zadok still kept on and said to Joab “Whatever happens please may I also run after Cushie and Joab said “For what purpose are you running, my son, and travelling not having enough information.” *The verb axm “to find” has the nuance “to find sufficient or enough”.* “That may be, however let me run” and he said to him “Run”. And Ahimaaz ran the circle [*rrk the stem is as our syllable “circ”*] road or circumjacent tract and he passed Cushie. And David was sitting between the two city gates and the look-out went up on the roof of the gate upon the wall and lifted up his eyes and looked and behold a man running alone. Then the look-out called out and told the king and the king said “If he is alone there is news he can tell” *David was reasoning from experience that this man was fresh from action and had a first-hand report.* And he was really going and approaching close. Then the look-out saw another man running and the look-out called the door-keeper and said “Look, a man running alone” and the king said “This man also has a report”. Then the look-out said “I am catching sight of the first runner— it’s like the running of Ahimaaz the son of Zadok” and the king said “This is a good man and the news he brings is better”. Then Ahimaaz called and said to the king “Shalom” and he bowed

reverently to the king with his face to the ground and said “The LORD God who has closed up or delivered up the men who lifted up their hands against my lord the king bless you.” And the king said “Is it Shalom concerning the young man Absalom?” Then Ahimaaz said “I saw a great tumult connected to the despatch of a servant of the king and Joab sent your servant but I don’t know what...!” And the king said “Turn round, you must take position here as a guard. And he turned round and stood to attention. And behold Cushy came and Cushy said “There has been news, my lord O king, for the LORD has defended you from the hand of those who rose against you” And the king said to Cushy “What of the Shalom (well-being) of the young man Absalom?” And Cushy said “The enemies of my lord the king and all that rose up against you for ill are as the young man!” *The Hebrew text reserved the lament for the following section that focuses on the mourning of the king. The English bible puts the immediate response of the king in this chapter. I have chosen to stay with the Hebrew text optionally.*

*The matter of how vital it is to “have a message” stands out starkly in this story. The matter of how important it is to prepare people to receive a message also comes out. One should ask “Why Ahimaaz ran?” Did he just want to be first and realise he could win the race? David said he was “a good man”. He had not been at the scene-but that was no crime. He had seen it as important to prepare the aged king for bad news-that appears to have been his purpose of which Joab enquired expressly. David felt sure Ahimaaz had first-hand news and he had news of the victory which was important but the news about Absalom was in this instance more fundamental to the king. In gospel terms the Father heart of God in the matter of the atonement was more wrapped up with the pains of soul and spirit and body endured by His Son than even the thought of victory over Satan. **The problem of evil is a big issue but the provision of Redemption is the critical issue and wrapped up in it were the obedience of the Son who need not have died but for the hard and sinful hearts of men and the eternal well-being of those rebellious ones who could not be redeemed had not the Son of God atoned for sin on the cross.** This chapter has its Ahimaaz who is kinder than Cushy in that he enters the Father heart of David and is deeply concerned for his “shalom”. Cushy has important news and it is “The justification of the king”. In our salvation Paul stresses the need for God to be justified and also for sinners to be justified. The story of Absalom stops short of the gospel in that the father desired through his kindness and covenant with his commanders to pardon the rebel whatever it meant for him but the concept of free and gracious pardon at the kings expense had no echoing chord. The need for **a message** is obvious and the best message Ahimaaz could bring was that of victory entailing the safety of the people and the priests. The need for integrity in the messenger is also vital and David appreciated Ahimaaz for that reason. One of these two messengers ran back to the camp. I think that messenger was Cushy. When Cushy had left the king Ahimaaz still stood with him. Ahimaaz’ experience of the father heart of God in this instance takes us nearer to the cross than the scene of Absalom’s expiry. It tells of God’s love for his Son and it tells of God’s love for the sinner at one and the same time. So all the lessons are from Ahimaaz!*

- (1) We need to have a message of victory
- (2) We need to have the character & enthusiasm that commends our message
- (3) We need to understand the Father’s covenant relationship with the Son
- (4) We need to understand the great love of God for the sinner.

## CHAPTER 19

### DAVID LAMENTS & IS ADVISED BY JOAB TO CONSOLE OTHERS 1-10

And the king trembled or was perturbed [*zgr* “with grief” mingled with “anger”] and went up to the loft over the gate and wept and thus he spoke through his tears “My son Absalom, my son my son; O Absalom who would provide (or allow) me to die in place of you, Absalom my son my son.” *This lament which is quite the most notable of all scripture outside of Christ’s Gethsemane and Calvary cries tells us that the nation would not have allowed the son to defeat the father. The commanders would not permit the rebellion to raise its head again. There was no way out for David. He could save himself but not the rebel.*

So it was reported to Joab “Behold the king is weeping and he has been mourning over Absalom”. And the salvation on that day became mourning for all the people because the people heard that day saying “The king travails for his son.” *David was going through all the pain and pain that touched his dear son whilst hanging on the tree though the gruesome detail of the onslaught of his killers may not have been made known to him as yet.* And all the people would have been stealing like thieves to come in to the city as people give up or finish and steal away in their flight in battle. And the king veiled his face and the king cried with a great voice “My son Absalom; O Absalom my son my son”. Then Joab came to the king and said “You have brought shame today to the faces of all your servants who have saved your life today and the life of your sons and daughters and the life of your wife and the life of your concubines because you have loved your enemies and hated your friends for you have given the message today that commanders and servants are nothing to you **for** I am very well aware today—**for** is it **NOT** Absalom alive and all of us dead **for** then it would be right in your eyes.” *The “not” in verse 7 is very difficult and the Qere or oral Hebrew reads “For I am well aware concerning Absalom himself were he living today then we would all be dead for then all would be right in your eyes”. There is little difference. The Hebrew is manageable but awkward when translated as the Kethibh lies but the Qere remedies the cumbersome stylistic expression.*

“And now rise, go out, and speak comfortably [*literally* “to the heart of”] your servants for I swear by the LORD that if you are not going out then not a man will lodge the night with you and this calamity will be worse than all the ill that came upon you from your youth till now.”

Then the king arose and sat in the gate and they informed the entire people saying “Behold the king is sitting in the gate” and all the people came before the face of the king and Israel that fled every man to his tent. And all the people were in contention through all the tribes of Israel saying “the king brought us deliverance from the hand of our enemies and caused us to slip out of the hand of the Philistines and now he has shot away from the land over Absalom. But Absalom whom we anointed over us is dead in battle and now why are you keeping silent [*vrj*] concerning the return of **the king?**”

### THE PRIESTS RECALL THE PEOPLE TO THEIR KING 11-15

Then **the king** David sent Zadok and Abiathar the priests saying “Speak to the elders of Judah saying “Why are you way behind on the return of the king to his house when the word of all Israel has come to the king and his house?”

“You are my brothers; you are my flesh and bone and why are you delaying to bring back the king? And tell Amasa “Are you not my flesh and bone? Thus may God do to me and thus may He add if you do not become commander of the host before me all my life in place of Joab.” And he turned or led to him the [*hfn*] heart of all the men of



Judah and as one man they sent to the king “You must come back and all your servants!” So the king returned and came to the Jordan and Judah came to Gilgal to walk to meet the king to bring the king across the Jordan.

### **GRACE WINS ADVERSARIES TO DAVID’S SIDE 16-23**

And Shimei the son of Gera the son of Yemini of Bathurim was in a hurry and went down to meet **the king David**.

And there were 1000 men with him from Benjamin and Ziba the servant of the house of Saul and his 15 sons and 20 servants with him and they succeeded to cross Jordan before the king. *The glorious vanguard of David was two men who had been very equivocal in time gone by. Shimei had amassed a force of a thousand men and they were all pledged to the man who had been so gracious to him when previously he had stoned David on his departure. Grace wins hearts. Then Ziba who had prevaricated was there to show his loyalty and that of his master. The success of David was that at last he had won the hearts of the house of Saul and he had won back the hearts of Judah.*

And the ferry [hrb/] crossed to take the house of the king across. And to do what was best in his eyes. And Shimei son of Gera fell on his face before the king at his crossing through the Jordan. And he said to the king “Do not return upon me my iniquity on the day when my Lord the King left Jerusalem –that the king should place it on his heart. For your servant knows very well that I have sinned and look I have come today as the first of the house of Joseph to go down to meet my lord the king. And Abishai son of Zeruah answered and said “Shall not Shimei die for this for he kept cursing the anointed of the LORD. But David said “What is there in common between me and you, O sons of Zeruah, for you have been Satan to me today”. *One is reminded of Jesus sharp rebuke of Peter (Matthew 16.23) and also his rebuke of the demon that distressed the men of Gadara and his gentle reply to his concerned mother–Luke 8.28 & John 2.4. This O.T. context supplies language which the LORD himself knew from reading these stories and applied to situations in His life.* “Shall a man die today in Israel for do I not know very well that today I am king over Israel?” Then the king said to Shimei “You shall not die” and the king gave him his oath.

### **THE QUESTION OF MEPHIBOSETH’S LOYALTY RESOLVED 24-30**

Then Mephiboseth the son of Saul came down to meet the king and had not attended to his feet or shave his beard and not washed his clothes from the day the king left until the day he came in peace. And *history tells us* when he came to Jerusalem to meet the king the king said to him “Why did you not come with me Mephiboseth?” So he said “My lord O king my servant trod me under foot like clay or oppressed me for your servant said “I will saddle an ass for myself and ride upon it and go to the king but your servant is lame!” But he slandered your servant to my lord the king for my lord the king is as an angel of God. So do what seems good in your eyes for there was not any of the house of my father for when they were dead men to my lord the king you placed your servant among those who ate at your table so what just cause is there for me to continue to cry to the king. Then the king said to him “Why talk further about your affairs? I have said that you and Ziba shall allot the land between you. And Mephiboseth said to the king “Let him also take the whole after my lord the king is come in peace to his house. “

### **THE AGED BARZILLAI COMMENDED 31-40**

And Barzillai the Gileadite came down from Rogelim and crossed over the Jordan with the king. But Barzillai was very old— a man of eighty and he continually sustained [l/wk] the king throughout his removal or interrupted reign [tbv] in Mahanaim for he was a very great man. Then the king said to Barzillai “You cross over with me and I will sustain you with me at Jerusalem” *Barzillai was being offered retirement accommodation at the palace and nursing care if necessary for the remainder of his life but he politely refused.* But Barzillai said to the king “According to the days of years of life that are mine why would I go up to the king to Jerusalem?” I am eighty years today and can I distinguish between good and poor *food*-will your servant taste what he eats or what he drinks? Or can I still hear the voice of men and women singing? So what will your servant be but a burden for my lord the king? Your servant will cross a little way beyond Jordan with the king and for what reason should the king load me with this camel load of benefit? Please may your servant return and die in my city close to the tomb of my father and mother but behold my servant Chimham he will cross with my lord the king and do for him what is good in your sight.” Then the king said “Chimham shall cross over with me and I will do for him what seems good to you! And anything you choose from me I will do for you!” And all the people crossed over Jordan and the king crossed over and the king kissed Barzillai and blessed him and he returned to his wonderful home. *Barzillai got across Jordan and stepped on to the land over against Jericho stepping on to the land of Benjamin.* And the king crossed over to Gilgal and Chimham went across with him and all the people of Judah also brought the king over and also half the people of Israel.

### **THE DEBATE ABOUT LOYALTY BETWEEN JUDAH AND ISRAEL 41-43**

And behold all the men of Israel came to the king and said to the king “**Is it known** why our brothers the men of Judah have stolen you and brought the king and his household and all the trusty men of David with him across the Jordan?” Then all the men of Judah answered the men of Israel “Because the king is nearly *related* to us. So why then are you getting heated over this matter? Have we eaten the food from the king or has he given us a gift?” So the men of Israel answered the men of Judah and said “We have ten parts in the kingdom and also more in the David than you! Why knowing this do you belittle us? And was my word not a first for me to bring back the king?” So the words of the men (or man) of Judah was more stubborn or unyielding than the word of the men (or man) of Israel. *The comment probably centres round military representatives of both sections of the nation hence the reference to “a single warrior or representative man. In a sense this dispute about loyalty was pleasant to hear instead of talk of division.*

## **CHAPTER 20**

### **SHEBA’S INEFFECTIVE COUNTER-COUP IN ISRAEL 1-3**

And there was a man of Belial called Sheba son of Bichri – a Benjamite – and he blew the Shophar and said “We have no lot in David and no inheritance in the son of Jesse; O Israel every man to the tent where he belongs.” And every man of Israel rose up from following David and followed Sheba son of Bichri but the men of Judah stuck to their king from the Jordan to Jerusalem. *Judah was faithful “all the way”. During the American election of president Johnson a slogan was coined “All the way with FBJ” – our LORD Jesus once asked “Will you now also leave me?” Peter replied “To whom shall we go –You have the words of eternal life”. Peter saw his inheritance in*

*Christ. A nation and a church are identical in this “they are motivated by future hope”.*

### **THE FATE OF THE TEN CONCUBINES 3**

Then David came to his house at Jerusalem and the king took the ten concubine wives that remained to keep the palace and he gave them house-keeping duties and all their days and they were anguished or straitened [*though not perhaps “shut up” in the sense of imprisonment though clearly under house-arrest*] and widows for life till the day of their death.

### **AMASA ‘S FATEFUL BRIEF COMMAND OF JUDAH’S ARMY 4-14**

Then the king said to Amasa “Call to you the men of Judah within three days and then be here.” Then Amasa went to call **Judah** together but he delayed beyond the planned meeting time he appointed him. And David said to Abishai “Now Cushai son of Bichri will do us more hurt than Absalom. You take the servants of your lord and go after him lest he find shielding cities for him and save himself from our view.” And after him the men of Joab and the Cherethites and Pelethites and all the valiant men went out after him and left Jerusalem to go after Sheba son of Bichri. These were beside the great stone which is at Gibeon and Amasa came in sight and Joab had been girding his clothing on his side and upon it he had been girding a sword coupled upon his loins in its scabbard and he set forth but it fell out. *Joab’s strides unseated the sword. He was possibly walking fast to approach Amasa.*

Then Joab said to Amasa “You are prospering my brother” and Joab held Amasa in his grip with right hand to kiss him. But Amasa did not take care of the sword that was in the hand of Joab and he (Joab) struck him under the fifth rib with it and emptied his intestines on the earth and there was no second (thrust) in his case and he died. *Joab’s greeting was the nearest he could come to congratulating Amasa on his appointment as supreme commander but it was tongue in cheek. The sword that had fallen Joab was carrying in his left hand as he approached Amasa. Amasa saw the incident and considered it a normal problem in harnessing on armour. The incident whether contrived or not lent ease to the execution of Amasa*

And Abishai his brother chased after Sheba son of Bichri and Joab also *joined in the pursuit*. Then a man from the young servants of Joab standing by him said “Who is pleased and wants Joab and who that is for David will follow Joab’s command?” And Amasa was a man rolling in blood in the middle of the raised roadway. But when the man saw that all the people were at a standstill he rolled Amasa from the highway into a field and threw a garment over him as when all that saw came to him he stood to attention. *At the time the men of Judah each showed his respect to their fallen commander. They did not break into open strife since they were shocked and also probably facing the cream of the army.* But when he was taken away from the highway all the men (of Judah) passed over after Joab to chase after Sheba son of Bichri.

### **THE WOMAN WHO SAVED A CITY AND BETRAYED SHEBA 14-15**

So they went and passed through all the tribes of Israel and laid siege to him at Abel and Beth Maachahah and all the Beerites [*possibly “fugitives” or those in “cities of refuge*] also **gathered together as a unit** and also went after him. So they came and hemmed him in by siege at Abel Beth Maachahah and threw up a mound against the city and took up position in the fortified outwork [*l/j*]. And all the people that were with Joab laid waste the wall to tumble it.

### **THE WISE WOMAN 16-22**

Then **the wise woman** proclaimed from the city “Listen, listen please tell Joab ‘come close here and I will talk with you’” And when he came close the woman said “Are you Joab?” And he said “I am” and she said to him “Listen to the words I say” and he said “I am listening”. Then she spoke saying “In former times there was a word they used saying ‘They should ask counsel at Abel and thus they must conclude or prosper or come to an end’ **I am of the peaceful ones and faithful ones of Israel.** You are seeking to destroy the city **and a mother in Israel.** Why should you devour the inheritance of the LORD?” Then Joab replied and said “Abominable to God, cursed of the LORD may I be if I would devour and destroy. This is not the basics of the matter for a man from Mount Ephraim, Sheba the son of Bichri by name, has lifted up his hand against the King— against David. Hand him over alone and I will leave the city and the woman said to Joab “Behold his head shall be thrown down to you at the back of the wall. So the woman went to the entire population in her wisdom and they cut off the head of Sheba son of Bichri and threw it down to Joab and he blew the Shophar and they dispersed from the city each man to his tent and Joab returned to Jerusalem to the king.

### **THE RELIGIOUS CIVIL AND MILITARY LEADERSHIP ESTABLISHED UNDER DAVID 23-24**

So **Joab** was over the entire army host of Israel and **Benaiah** son of Jehoiada was over the Cherethites and Pelethites. And **Adoram** was over the poll tax and **Jehoshaphat** son of Ahilud was the recorder of historical annals. And **Shiva** was the scribe (in charge of writing legal and regal documentation) and **Zadok and Abiathar** were the priests. And Also **Ira** the Jairite was the prince or prime-minister of David. *These were eight outstanding leaders though Joab held his post by calculating cruelty. Jehoshaphat and Shiva may have had input into at least five books of scripture. Ira was descended from one of Israel’s great judges and may well have been related to the man whose son slew Goliath’s brother in 1 Chronicles 20.5.*

## **CHAPTER 21**

*History teaches that natural disasters have spiritual linkage- today the attempts to divide Israel appear to be being visited on Gentile nations in terms of floods hurricanes etc.*

### **THE GIBEONITES JUSTIFIED BY GOD AND AVENGED BY DAVID 1**

And *history tells us* that there was famine in the days of David for three years year on year and David would continually seek (*Hebrew Piel future*) the face of the LORD.

### **(6)TEXTUAL GAP 1**

And the LORD said “It is on account of Saul and his bloody house on account of his killing of the Gibeonites.” *This gap suggests to us that there was a three year long prayer of David persisting in looking to the LORD for a solution to this long famine.*

### **DAVID USES RETRIBUTIVE JUSTICE TO JUSTIFY GIBEON 2-9**

So the king called the Gibeonites and spoke to them (But the Gibeonites were not from the sons of Israel but with the remainder of Amorites and the sons of Israel swore to them but Saul sought to slay them in his zeal for the children of Israel and Judah.) And David said to the Gibeonites “what shall I do for you and with what shall I atone so that you bless the heritage of the LORD”. *This explanation shows that God*

*defended a foreign people against the misplaced zeal of Saul which was nothing less than genocide—an adequate reason for the nation feeling God’s rebuke though it was delayed. And the Gibeonites said to him “We will not have silver or gold besides Saul and his house nor any man to die through Israel” but he said “What are you saying I should do for you?” And they said to the king “The man that finished us and who meditated against us and set himself against us in all the borders of Israel let seven men from his sons be given to us and we will hang them up [ [qj] to the LORD in Gibeah of Saul whom the LORD shall choose”. And the king said “I will grant it”. But the king had mercy on Mephiboseth, son of Jonathan, son of Saul on account of the oath which existed between David and Jonathan son of Saul. But the king took the two sons of Rizpah daughter of Aiah that she bore to Saul –also Armoni and Mephiboseth and the five sons of Michal daughter of Saul that she bore to Adriel son of Barzillai the Meholathite. **Scripture and prophecy predicted that Michal would have no child at the day of her death and because of the untimely death of these five this prophecy was realised (cf. 2 Samuel 6.23). Scripture does not say she would bare no child- it simply says none would be alive till the time of her own death.** And he gave them into the hand of the Gibeonites and they hanged them up before the face of the LORD and they fell all seven together and died in the days of harvest-in the first days of **the beginning** of the barley harvest. *As the barley harvest was the earliest and the Tehillah is “the opening” this judicial event occurred immediately after Passover that year—so there were atoning deaths of the seven were at Passover. The death of our LORD can be related to satisfaction. The comparison between this event and Christ’s atonement comes at the point of broken covenant. Adam by sin broke the covenant of life and Christ died to restore man to covenant relationship with God.**

#### **THE ACT OF RIZPAH 10-12**

And Rizpah the daughter of Aiah took sackcloth and she would cause it to be spread out for herself on the rock from the opening of harvest until water poured upon them from heaven and it was not given (Qere “the multitude of”) the birds of heaven to rest upon them by day and the beasts of the field by night. *The brave act of Rizpah covering the bones until she could get permission to bury them promoted a humanitarian and religious act on David’s part toward Jonathan and Saul.* And David was informed of what Rizpah the concubine of Saul did. So David went and took the bones of Saul and the bones of Jonathan from the leaders of Jebesh Gilead who had stolen them from the square of Bethshan. Where the Philistines had hanged them on the day the Philistines struck Saul at Gilboa. And he took up the bones of Saul and the bones of Jonathan his son from there—so he gathered the bones of the hanged and he buried the bones of Saul and the bones of Jonathan his son in Benjamin in Zelah (*or by the side*) in the tomb of Kish his father. So they did all that the king commanded and after that the LORD was entreated for the land. *David’s righteous act of atonement at Passover and his performance of the associated duty of burying the dead turned famine into plentiful harvest.*

#### **THE DEATH OF REMAINING GIANTS 15-22**

(1)And *history tells us* that war continued of Israel with the Philistines and David went down and his servants with him and they fought with the Philistines *and David was wearied and fatigued.* And **Ishbi Nob** [*“whose seat is Nob” –curiously one originally connected to where the priests later lived and where God’s presence was centred*] who was of those born of Rapha [*the giant*] the weight of whose spear was 300 shekels of brass and he had girded on a new sword to strike David [*the A.V. text*

suggests he actually did succeed to strike David. The LXX speaks of his bearing a “club” which he carried because he thought of it as the means of finally clubbing David to death. “The Message” has Ishbi announcing that he will kill David. This is perfectly possible—but before the stroke fell Ishbi was slain by Abishai. ] But Abishai son of Zeruiah helped him and struck the Philistine and slew him. Then the men of David swore *an undertaking* to him “You shall not go out any more with us to battle and you shall not quench the light of Israel.”

(2) And *history tells us* that there was still war with the Philistines at Gob. There Sibbechai the Hushathite struck **Saph** who was among those born of Rapha. *Hushai was the original warrior and adviser that defeated the tactics of Ahithophel. He won his laurels by picking off the third of the five famous giants of the time.*

(3) And *history tells us* there was war again with the Philistines in Gob where *history tells us* that El-Nathan the son of Jaari Oregim a **Bethlehemite** struck “*the brother of*” [these words do not exist in the Hebrew text] **Goliath the Gittite** the shaft of whose spear was as a weaver’s wall-beam. *There is no Qere note to explain the “two Goliaths” and the LXX reads exactly as the Hebrew text. “The Message” simply and correctly reads “Goliath” without introducing what I call a Gentile Qere or oral eisegesis “the brother of” (a total assumption) into the text. The spear shaft of the Goliath we know so well in 1 Samuel 17. 7 is described identically. In 1 Samuel 17 “the Philistine” is so named 22 times and once only called Goliath. The battle David first engaged to fight and these four terminal battles of his reign are space by at least 50 years by which time the “Goliath” referred to in 1 Samuel 17 had he or his brothers survived being at that time “a man of war” would have been eighty years of age-which I consider impossible. It follows plainly that Goliath that David slew was not a brother of these four but, I submit, most probably their father and as men of over 50 years themselves they would be much less athletic than impressive. One was despatched by Abishai the fourth soldier in order of greatness and the longest surviving leader in the army of David (1 Chronicles 11.20 Syriac)*

(4) And *history tells us* there was yet a battle in Gath and *history tells us* a very tall man with six fingers on his hands and six toes on his feet—twenty four digits by count and he also was born to **the Rapha the giant**. And he scorned Israel and Jonathan son of Shimea brother to David struck him. These four were born to **the Rapha** in Gath and they fell by the hand of David and by the hand of his servants. *The fact is David was injured at this his final battle and another Goliath was slain. The story of David and Goliath is without doubt authentic and these four giants were the next generation of Rephaim from the country of Gath—Gittites indeed. The last one to die was the six-fingered unnamed mountain of a man whom Jonathan, David’s nephew, slew. Thus ends a chapter in Philistine power that marks the termination of the Philistine threat and promised well for the rule of Solomon. David was not a lone ranger. His commander and his mighties and not least his family rose to his support in this two generation struggle.*

## CHAPTER 22

### INTRODUCTION TO THE BIOGRAPHICAL SONG 1

*The song that now follows is appended to the final battles of David’s life. Prima Facie it might seem to be composed following the death of Saul but it was certainly talked over with God on the much later occasion of the end of the wars of David. And David spoke to the LORD the words of this song on the day the LORD delivered him from the hand of all his enemies and from Saul’s hand saying...*

## DIVISION OF THE SONG

1. 1-7 *The times of enquiry in God's house*
2. 8-18 *The significant divine interventions*
3. 19-29 *God upholds the righteous and keeps His "lamp" burning*
4. 30-43 *David's war memories*
5. 44-46 *Israel's strife and stranger's conversion*
6. 47-51 *God the Rock –the tower of his strength– the covenant LORD*

### (1) THE KEY OF ENQUIRING PRAYER

The LORD is my Petra rock and my Masada fortress and the one who slides me out of danger. *Yahweh who was eternally present was ever present before David hit danger and gave him covert and standing and protection. Yahweh set him above his enemies; Yahweh flushed him out of deadly danger again and again in his contest with Goliath; in the cave where Saul covered his feet; amid the animosity of friends at Keilah; and finally when pitted against Ishbi Benob.*

O God of my rock I will trust [hsj "take refuge"] in him

*Hiding in Thee, hiding in Thee*

*O Rock of Ages I'm hiding in thee*

*This for David and for any saint is a primary experience. Our salvation and security are in the LORD.*

He is my shield and horn of my salvation, my inaccessible high place [bgv] and "my flight" [smm] my Saviour, you save me from violence [smj]

*Like Paul David enjoys triads of truth. In Psalm 7.11 David writes "My shield is with God" – so Yahweh holds his shield and bears his armour supplying him exactly the implements he needs in the contest for right. The LORD'S inaccessibility means that David has a source of help out of his ungodly enemies' reach. Like modern Israel David faced the ultimate enemy "Hamas" or **the violent** one Ishbi Benob. In this also he was delivered as Israel may also expect to be saved by divine intervention.*

I will call on Yahweh who is the one that has continued to be glorified and praised and I will be saved from my enemies.

*David talked this song over with the LORD when he was delivered and had to fight no more yet others fought on and he continued to be delivered. Even when we cannot defend ourselves the LORD undertakes our defence.*

For the mighty breaking waves of death were **surrounding** [ppa poetic usage for bbs] me –the torrents of liars would come upon me suddenly. The twisting ropes of Sheol surround me. The fowler's snares of death anticipated me. In my adversity I would call "Yahweh!" and I would call to my God of power. And He heard my voice from his holy temple and my cry for help came right to his ears.

### (2) DIVINE DIRECTION OF THE ELEMENTS 8-18

Then the earth staggered and shook [c[g] and would quake or rattle [c[r] When Jonathan glorified God and said "It is nothing to the LORD to save by few or many" and earthquake discomfited the enemy. David also experienced the physical support of the LORD just like Moses. This is one of the classic ways in which the LORD directs history. It was seen in modern times in the defeat of Napoleon and the most favourable weather for the Normandy landings in 1944 when the king of England called the nation to pray for divine help. The settled or established things of heaven moved or raged. David was aware that the "elements raged" to protect him against his adversaries. And they have been shaking or trembling because of His hot wrath. Smoke arose through His anger and fire from His mouth devoured. Coals were set on

fire by it. He made the heaven cascade down as rivers and gloomy cloud was under His feet. He also rode upon a cherub and went apace. He will show Himself on the wings of the Wind or Spirit. He made the dark his booth or tabernacle; the clouds of the sky releasers of water. From His presence coals of fire were set alight. *This imagery tells of the Sinai like power of God to shake mountains and stir quakes and fire upon earth.* Yahweh roared or thundered from heaven and Elyon gave his voice. He also sent out his arrows and broke them down and scattered them; He sent His lightning and defeated them. The channels or force of the sea were seen and the foundations of the round world laid bare at the rebuke of Yahweh— from the life and spirit of the Power or Spirit of his breathing or anger. He sent from on high or Merom and captured me; from great waters He will feel his way or grope for me [*vvm*]. He will snatch me from my strong enemy; from those that hated me because they were stronger than me.

### **(3) GOD KEEPS DAVID AS THE LAMP OF WITNESS BURNING 19-29**

They would anticipate me in the day of straits or difficult turning of events but the fact was Yahweh was my support [*n[v]*]. He brought me to a big place—a place of freedom. *David after being cooped up for years came to live as a free man and enjoyed the experience.* He delivered me because He desired and favoured me. *It is patent that David is reminiscing on the divine choice of his throne for which reason he was constantly favoured by safe passage.*

Yahweh would give me huge benefits according to my righteousness. **According** to the purity of my hands he has paid me back. For I have watched and guarded the ways of Yahweh and have not impiously departed from my God for all His righteous judgments are manifest to me and lead me. Also I would not go away from his ordinances. And I would be perfect before Him and I will cause myself to be vigilant on my iniquity. *David states his desire to “walk perfect” like Abraham and he also though a man of maturity will watch the distressful area of his relationships with women.* So Yahweh has given me return **according** to my righteousness, **according** to my chastity or purification that belongs to the presence of His eyes. *David’s justification was assured by the vicarious atonement of Christ but his godly walk attracted divine support and he is speaking especially of Yahweh’s support to the saint.*

1. With the one who continues merciful You will have shown yourself merciful!
2. With the warrior of perfections or completeness You will have been perfect.
3. With the one separated one as corn from chaff You will have been clean or choice
4. But with the perverse or deceitful [*vq[]*] You will have struggled or wrestled
5. But the people who are afflicted and humbled You will save.
6. But Your eyes are over the high and proud to bring them low as fallen walls.
7. For You are my lamp O Yahweh and Yahweh will cause light to shine in my darkness. *The motto of the Reformation was “Light after darkness”. David was saying that in a dark world David’s “lamp” of prophecy would shine in his time and through the long ages.*

### **DAVID’S WAR MEMOIRS 30-43**

For though You I will run upon an army detachment or troop. By my strong God I will scale a wall. The strong El—His way is complete. The enlightening word of Yahweh is pure [*prx as refined metal*] He is a shield to all those that confide and shelter in Him. For who is El but Yahweh alone? And who is a rock but our God alone? *David speaks of two types of rock. This one [*rwx*] compares to the rock of Tyre.*



*Tyre was a highly defensible city and Petra –the other kind of rock –was a mighty stronghold [l s]*

The El is my strength of military force. **He searches out or directs the perfections of my way of life.** He causes my feet to be like hinds' feet and causes me to take my stand on high places. He keeps on teaching my hands to battle. *The use of the sword is a practiced art and so is the use of the bible. God directs and keeps us on the highway of holiness and enables us move with increasing deftness in His word.* So the bow of bronze is broken again and again by my arm. Then You give or provide for me the shield of salvation and You use humbling or affliction to cause me to be great. *As it is through affliction that David's character grew strong so it is through the affliction of Christ and our own humbling that we grow in grace.* You have made long my steps as I march [d[x] under me and my ankles do not totter [d[m]. I pursued my enemies and destroyed them. I did not turn back till I had finished them off. I also have consumed them and crushed them [xj m] and they will not rise. They are fallen under my feet. So You girded me with military power for battle. Those that rose from below me You caused to kneel. *This work of grace was repeated in the life of Shimei and Ziba.* Also enemies put down their neck under me that I might cut off for ever [tmx] those that hate me. They looked in dismay for help at one another [h[v]but no-one brought salvation–to Yahweh but he did not answer. I bruised them as dust of the earth as mire [awf] or the street I caused them to be beaten small – I spread them around. *The utter despair of forces opposing David is seen in their eyes and mutual impotence. The complete and utter disarray and disconnect of soldiers languishing on the ground and armies scattering to the four winds is depicted vividly. Often and often David stood amid the vanquished and wondered at the providences of Yahweh.*

#### **(6) GOD THE ROCK 47-51**

Yahweh is alive and blessed has been my rock. *The antiquity of the rock mass and the eternity of God are laced together.* And the God of the rock of my salvation will be high. *David demurs from the historic to the prophetic and shows that the LORD will rise to the supernal in future time and eternity.* He is the God of strength that gives me requital for injury or avenging and brings the people flowing down under me. **David shows that he believes the retrieval of his monarchy was of God.** He caused me to go forth from my enemies and higher than those who rose against me. You caused me to be delivered from the man of oppression or violence. For that reason I will praise you O LORD among the nations and sing to your name. *This is a song which was talked over with God much as we are thinking it through in commenting-but it also is rhythmic and sings well in Hebrew.* He is the cause of **greatness** [lygm where the **Qere** (oral text) is lwdgm “tower”] of His king. *The existing written text makes more sense.* So He **creates covenant mercy** for His anointed, for David and for **His seed** for ever or until an age or until the seed. *David finished his song by reference to the “greatness” of David as being through association with the LORD and by a further reference to the covenant he enjoys with God and a final reference to the linkage of that with the age and eternal rule of Messiah.*

### **CHAPTER 23**

#### **DAVID'S STATEMENT ON PROPHETIC REVELATION & TEACHING 1-5**

Then David spoke these concluding words [*literally “words behind” or “afterward”*]. David, son of Jesse, spoke in a whisper [san] the warrior who was raised up high, the anointed of the God of Jacob and the sweet harp singer [*“plucker”*] of Israel. **The Spirit of Yahweh constantly spoke** in and through me

and his pure nurturing word [hlm – the term matches that used by Peter’s “sincere milk of the word” in 1 Peter 2.1] was on my tongue. The strong God of Israel spoke to illumine me; the Rock of Israel constantly spoke in promise of righteous character ruling over man and **teaching** righteous life throughout mankind **teaching** reverence for God. *David uses the dual purpose term MOSHEL which tells of God’s rule of mankind through doctrine. This whole idea of God ruling over Israel by that which is taught was transferred to the church and arrives through prophetic revelation that we call scripture. In the case of David this fresh revelation came as he sang spiritual songs—we could truly say that he sang “in the Spirit” as he himself insists was the case (v.2)*

So like the first light of morning the morning sun will rise; there will be no clouds when it becomes bright; after the rain there is the tender grass of the earth. Though my house is not thus established with God yet the long lasting covenant is there for me arranged or set out and arrayed [as a table for a feast or a battle plan to be put into action] in everything and being watched or guarded (**for it is my entire salvation and my complete delight**) yet He does not cause it to sprout **the branch**. *David is content to have the absolute promise of what is going to be delivered in later time. He sees a beautiful morning coming. He sees the end of the early and latter rains and a final harvest on earth. He sees an age-long covenant stretching afar. He sees the “branch” the “sprout from the root” one day emerging and meantime he is happy because he has a solid salvation and fullness of joy. These concluding words of David are a postscript to be treasured.*

#### **SONS OF BELIAL 6-7**

Then Belial will be as thorns or bulk summer fruit [xwq] going off [dmm “cast out” or removed like unwanted birds—even “abominable” – which concept speaks of latter day judgment of nations] for it cannot be handpicked or held in the hand. But the man or warrior that touches them has to be complete with iron and the staff of the spear but they shall be completely burned with fire with the Sabbath. *David appears to be speaking in riddles but for those who adopt the Jewish linear view of history leading through turmoil and an arraignment of nations to the Messianic rule or **Sabbath rest** for God’s people this is not at all enigmatic. The fact that there will abide in latter days those who live by deceit and doctrines of devils or false prophecy are so adamant that they require to be dealt with by force of arms and because they do not respond to grace their resolute apostasy finally necessitates the divine judgment.*

#### **THE MILITARY ESCHUTCHEON OF DAVID’S VALIANT MEN 8-39**

*The record now switches from the postscript of David to something quite different and less significant spiritually in the long-term view, namely the role of David’s heroes. The NIV rendering represent better Manuscript research than the AV and its translation of vv9-10 is much clearer.*

These are the names of the warriors that David had.

(1) **Yosheb Bashemeth** [“Jashobeam” 1Chronicles 11.11] the Tahchemonite [or preferably “the Tahchemonite that sat on the Sabbath” – suggesting he never fought on a Sabbath] chief of three– he was Edino –**the spear** against 800 slain in a single hammering or action [m[p].

(2) And after or following him was **Eleazer the son of Dodi** [Qere “dodo” – “my beloved”] son of Ahohi [a patronymic testifying “I will live on forever”] who was among the three valiants with David reproaching the Philistines that gathered them to battle [cf 1Chron 11.13] when the men of Israel went away. He arose and made a

strike against the Philistines until his arm was struck [*q̄n smitten in battle*] and his hand held firm to his sword and Yahweh effected a great salvation that day and the people (who had fled) came back after him only or definitely for the plunder.

(3) **And after him was Shammah** [*“Amazing”*] son of Agee [*“fugitive”*] **the Hararite** or mountaineer. This time the Philistines were gathered to get their livelihood and exist there on a portion of the land or ground full of lentils and the people of the land or soldier-farmers fled from the presence of the Philistines. But he had set up a military post in the midst of the parcel of ground and enabled it to be rescued and he struck the Philistines and Yahweh created a great salvation.

And the three chief men of the thirty came at harvest time to David to the cave of Adullam and there were Philistines camping in the valley of Rephaim [*AV “Bethlehem” –Epes Dammim “the extremity or end of blood” 1Samuel17.1 which is a battle area rather than a location extending between Socoh and Azekah places almost 50 miles apart suggesting they covered a massive swathe of ground from Samaria to south of Jerusalem and their insurgency included a Bethlehem garrison.*]

But David was then in a stronghold and there was then a military garrison of the Philistines was then in Bethlehem. And David has a longing and said “Who will arrange for me or battle for water for me from the well that is at the gate of Bethlehem?” And the three mighty warriors tore through or ripped through the host of the Philistine army and drew water [*bav*] from the well of Bethlehem which is by the gate and lifted it and brought it to David but he was not willing to drink it but poured it out as a libation to the LORD. And he said “God forbid that I should do this *i.e. drink it*. This is the blood of the trusty men who travelled with their lives *endangered*. So he would have nothing to do with their *provided* drink. These things the three warriors did.

(4) **And Abishai brother of Joab** son of Zeruah was head over the three, and he continually raised his spear among 300 and slew them and he had a reputation among the three. This man because he gained himself honour or respect among the three became their recognised leader and yet he was not leading or in regular contact with the three.

(5) **And Benaiah son of Jehoiada** son of a living legend of a soldier from Kabzeel—one of huge undertakings—he struck **two progeny of the father (lion)** [*I prefer this reading of Klostermann’s which clarifies the text and improves on the curious “lions of God from Moab” idea*] and he went down and slew the lion in the middle of the pit on a day of the snowfall. And he killed an Egyptian soldier—a soldier of outstanding appearance and with a spear in his hand but he went down to him with a staff and snatched the spear from the hand of the Egyptian and killed him with his own spear. These things Benaiah son of Jehoaida did and he had no reputation among the three warriors. He gained himself repute **apart from the thirty and did not come among the three** but David placed him over his guard.

1. Asahel the brother of Joab was among the thirty 2. El-hanan the son of Dodo of **Bethlehem** 3. Shammah the Harodite (additional to Shammah above) 4. Elikah the Harodite (2) 5. Helez the Paltite 6. Ira the son of Ikkesh the Tekoite 7. Abiezer the Anethothite 8. Mebunnai the Hushathite 9. Zalmon the Aholite 10. Maharai the Netophathite 11. Heleb the son of Baanah a Netophathite(2) 12. Ittai the son of Ribai from the sons of Benjamin 13. Benaiah the Pirathonite(prince) 14. Hiddai of the streaming wadis of Gaash 15. Abialbon the Arbathite (Hebron) 16. Azmaveth the Barhumite (son of tender compassion) 17. Eliahba the Shaalbonite (fox) 18. And of the sons of Jashen, Jonathan 19. Shammah the Hararite (mountaineer) 20. Ahiam the son of Sharar the Hararite (2) 21. Eliphelet the son of Ahasbai, son of the Maachathite

(“oppression”) 22. Eliam the son of Ahithophet the Gilonite (south of Jerusalem) 23. Hezrai the Carmelite (fruitful) 24. Paarai the Arbite (Iyer in wait) 27 Igal the son of Nathan of Zobah 28 Bani the Gadite 29 Zelek the Ammonite 30 Naharai the Beerothite (children of Jaakan), bearer of the arms of Joab son of Zeruah 31 Ira an Ithrite 32 Gareb and Ithrite (excellent men from the woods of Kirjath-Jearim) (2) 33 Uriah the Hittite All **thirty -seven**

*Scholars see a numerical conflict in the record but it is really a failure to do the sums right. Counting the 33 above along with the **three mighties** **Yosheb, Eleazar, and Shammah their commander Abishai**— but without reckoning **Benaiah** who was neither in the thirty or the three—we arrive at the total of 37.*

## CHAPTER 24

### THE FAITHLESS CENSUS 1-4

Then the anger of the LORD added to be hot against **Israel and it** excited [ *tws* ] David amid or against and through them saying “Go on number Israel and Judah. *God cannot be tempted with evil nor does He tempt so we need to take care in understanding this context. God was acting against David who was keen to know the comparative numbers of Israel and Judah but God was angry specifically with Israel. Excitement was strong on the King’s part and conveyed to the nation to find out its strength – God who was its strength was angry with the nation’s pride or hubris. I believe the king became excited and as the story unfolds we see the factors more clearly.*

And the King said to Joab commander of the forces who was with him “Whip around [ *fiw* ] please among all the tribes of Israel from Dan to Beersheba and review or count the people and I will know the exact number of the people. But Joab said to the king “May the LORD your God add to the nation this and that alike a hundred times more than the eyes of my LORD the king will keep looking *expectantly* for what pleasure will this act give my lord the king?” But the word of the king prevailed against Joab and against the commanders of the people and Joab and the commanders of the people set out from the presence of the king to review the nation – Israel. *The ironic expression “the people Israel” meaning “People of the prince with God” describes their natural strength when faithful or full of faith and looking to God – but with this act they were instantly weakened as the king induced them to look to their self-sufficiency. It is to be borne in mind that the review is essentially military and was triggered as the commanders were consulting with the king.*

### TEN REVIEW CENTRES AND 5-9

So they crossed the Jordan and (1) set up a temporary base in Aroer to the right of the city that is in the centre of the river-valley of Gad and near Jazer. (2) Then they came to Gilead and (3) to the land under resettlement or renewal. [ *yvdj mytj t* ] Then they went (4) to Danah Jaan (*humble purpose*) and right round (5) to Sidon. (6) Then they went to the fortress of Tyre and (7) all the cities of the Hivites and (8) Canaanites. Then (9) they went out to the Negev of Judah to Beersheba and when they had gone to and fro through the entire land they came (10) at the end or from the harvest of nine months and twenty days to Jerusalem. Then Joab gave the number of the visitation of the people to the king and there were of Israel 800,000 men of war that drew the sword and 500,000 such men of Judah.

### **(7) TEXTUAL GAP 10**

But **the heart of David struck** him like a sword after he had established the number of the people or count of the army. Then David said to Yahweh “I have sinned seriously because of what I have undertaken so now O LORD please pass over the iniquity of your servant for I have shown myself very foolish.” Then David arose in the morning. *A similar expression “the heart smote” is used of Nabal but it is a physical touch [pqn] with Nabal– here it is a touching of the conscience [hky]. It was not just a momentary thing–this experience in all likelihood immediately followed his conversation with Joab and remained with him till the LORD corrected him. He essentially did nothing in that time to halt the census and probably it was going on under its own momentum anyway. This should remind us to act promptly on conscience and warn us of the critical problem of events taking their own inexorable course if we do not.*

### **(8) TEXTUAL GAP 11**

But the word of the LORD came to the prophet Gad the seer or visionary of David saying... *The verb “to sin grievously” is repeated in 2 Chronicles 16.9 when Asa becomes self-reliant and as a result is punished by having to endure wars life-long while he reigns. David’s prayer was for a “passing over grievous sin” and in the divine mercy he met the “angel of the LORD” and at that time arguably saw the one that acted on his behalf at Calvary. This was one of the most terrible experiences of David’s life but one of the most prophetic. To the terror and grandeur of the episode the gap is glowing testimony.*

### **THE THREE ALTERNATIVE PUNISHMENTS –DAVID PLEADS A FOURTH OPTION OF MERCY 12-14**

“Go and speak to David “Thus or it is appointed says the LORD “I am lifting up over you three burdens –choose one of them and I will undertake it on account of you.” Then Gad went to David and explained to him saying (1) ‘Seven years of famine in the land will come for you (2) or would you rather flee three months before the face of your enemies and he continue to pursue you? (3) Or shall there be three days of plague in your land? Now let me know for I must see what answer I shall give back to Him that sent me the command!’” Then David said to Gad “It is an exceeding distress or adversity for me!” (4) “I will please fall into the hand of the LORD for his mercy is great and I will not fall into the hand of man.”

### **THE PLAGUE -70,000 DEATHS AND A COMING TOGETHER 15-17**

So the LORD gave a **soldering plague** [rbd] throughout Israel from the morning till the festival or assembly time and there died from Dan to Beersheba seventy thousand men or soldiers. *This statistic was very soon gathered from the accounts of the tribal leaders about deaths in their ranks. The time appointed suggests God’s determination to halt the plague. It may well be that the plague ceased at the time of the evening sacrifice. The plague is described as a “soldering” DEBER and it no doubt brought the nation together in bonds of suffering.*

Then the angel spread his hand over Jerusalem to destroy it but the LORD grieved over the calamity and said to the angel that destroyed the people “It is big– it is opportune; You must abate or relax your hand” and **the angel of the LORD** was alongside the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite. Then David spoke to the LORD in seeing the angel that struck the people and he said “Look I have sinned; I have done grave iniquity but these sheep what have they been doing? Please let your hand

be against me and the house of my father!” *The LORD gave him sight of His action and David spoke to the angel as to the LORD delivering himself as propitiation instead of the people. Thus David at the end of his life embodies in his compassion for the flock a principle that Messiah enacted. It may be that there stood there on the threshing floor of Mount Moriah the king who would die instead of his people when he saw the enormity of his folly and the LORD who would die for sinners on the cross –great David’s greater Son.*

Then Gad came to David that day and said to him “Raise up an altar to the LORD at the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite. So David put it up according to the word of Gad as the LORD commanded. And Araunah **bent over** the lintel and saw the king and his servants passing over up towards him and Araunah went out and paid homage to the king with his face to the ground. And **Araunah** (1Chron3.21 expounds the meaning for us in **Ornan** “pine-tree”. *This appears to be in line with the action of Araunah who bends over on sight of the king coming and falls to the ground as if his life is ended like that of a tree when the king arrives.*

Then Araunah said “May I know why my lord the king has come to your servant?”

And David said “To buy the threshing floor from you to build an altar to the LORD that the strike or defeat of battle may be restrained from over the people.” *As ever God’s justice is reciprocal. David thought to proudly affirm his army power but God acted as if in battle against him. His terrible sin was that he was fighting God.*

Then Araunah said to David “My lord the king may take and offer up what is good in his eyes. Look there is the oxen to offer and the threshing sledge of the oxen for wood.”

And Araunah the king gave the whole lot to the king.

### **(9) FINAL TEXTUAL GAP 23**

And Araunah said to the king “May Yahweh your God favour you or be conciliated.” *This is the last gap in the Hebrew text of the book and it tells us that Araunah who heard of the terrible effects of the divine judgment wanted nothing more than its cessation and certainly desired that it should not touch the city. The awareness of being in the hand of an angry God was wedded to Araunah’s heart. His willingness to prejudice his own work and harvest was nothing. Further than that his prayer was that David’s God would hear him. This matter became a noble testimony to the Jebusite King for that is what he was. He had been allowed to remain in his possession but David bought from him the threshing floor which significantly became the temple area of later time. This gap serves to show that Israel has rights to the sacrum extending from 1000 BC and a proper purchase between the original Jebusite owner and King David. The spiritual lesson for Araunah is that atonement is indeed costly and there must be a sin offering to effect reconciliation.*

### **RECONCILIATION ACCOMPANIED BY ABUNDANCE OF GRACE 24-25**

Then the king said to Araunah “No for I am definitely going to buy it from you at its value for I will not offer up to the LORD my God offerings free and without cost. So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen for fifty shekels. Then David built there an altar to the LORD and offered up burnt offerings and peace or reconciliation offerings and the LORD became propitious or rich and abundant... [[rt] *God’s removal of penalty does not just put us into neutral with our maker but yields us abundance of grace and favour*]... to the land and the plague was overruled or closed off from over Israel. *Thus the great prophetic book ends with a Jewish ruler and a Gentile king facing judgment before the court of the king of kings and praying the one*

*for the other. At the advent of Christ which is often in view in this book all rulers will stand before the international judgment of Christ as he draws the nations before Him.*

## THE END

### HEBREW NOTE ENTITLED "REPAIR" OR "RESTORE"

**There are 1560 preserved spoken exchanges of the lips that have been discovered is the booty or bonanza of the book of Samuel... BLESSED is the churning of butter that separates and the offering of the bound bullock of covenant(Jeremiah 34 18-19) but three or four assembled sittings, deliberations, consultations with God or revelations opens YOUR HAND. *The statement reminds us that men's words teach us even when they are gone– and the verbal exchanges of God's word are for our profit. The observations on the benefit of turning over and over the milk and of the sin offering (Leviticus9.2) but it also shows the blessing that comes from thoroughly sorting out one's life with God. The Prophet consulted David twice, the Lord spoke to Gad twice, Araunah took considerable thought and David deliberated on the plague with Gad, with the angel and with Araunah. God offered David three choices but after deliberation he found a fourth!***

**Bob Coffey  
A BIBLE COMPANION**