

TEXTUAL GAPS

There are nine textual gaps and 89 oral alternative usages suggested by the rabbinic study of this book. I have not been solicitous to divert to comment on the oral detail except in a few cases but I have drawn the valuable lessons that we can gain from the textual gaps. I am giving a synopsis of the nine lessons here but commend the reader to the full text for a more detailed examination of the contents so that you may form your own impression.

- (1) 5.2 The first gap between the nation's recognition and that of the elders of David's rule testifies both to the widespread consent to the nature of David's leadership and heart
- (2) 5.19 "Will you cause them to be delivered into my hand" ... "And the LORD said 'go up'". The gap between these words instructs us that David waited on God and did not rush into hostilities.
- (3) 7.4 This gap tells us of the second word of God to Nathan and stops David in his tracks. Overnight David was probably sketching out the nature of the temple he would like but before morning he was out in the old tabernacle praising God that his own family was the one chosen by God from which Messiah would emerge.
- (4) 16.13 This gap gives us outstanding evidence of the compassion and forbearance of the heart of David as an aged believer. His testimony serves to bring Shimei to faith
- (5) 17.14 So the LORD determined [~~hix~~] 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 form the other side—with long adherence to David getting away with it.*
- (6) 21.1 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.*
- (7) 24.10 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.*
- (8) 24.11 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. *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. 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.

- (9) 24.23 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.**

Thus these points in the ancient text direct us not to criticise but to learn great truths which I commend to the reader.

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