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THE SECOND BOOK OF SAMUEL BY Arno Clement Gaebelein 1861-1942

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THE SECOND BOOK OF SAMUEL

The Division of Second Samuel

The second book of Samuel contains the history of David after Saul's death, his reign over Judah and over all Israel, as well as the great events which transpired during his reign. The center of the book is the record of his fall, the chastisements which he had to pass through as a result of his sin and his subsequent restoration after the rebellion of his son Absalom. The last four chapters form an appendix in which various episodes in David's life are recorded; it tells us of the victories of the King. Much in this book, even more so than in the previous history, has a typical meaning, which we shall follow as far as the purpose of our annotations permits. We make the following division:

I. DAVID KING OF JUDAH AND THE EVENTS OF HIS REIGN

1. David's Lamentation for Saul and Jonathan (1:1-2)
2. David Anointed King over Judah (2:1-7)
3. Abner's Revolt and the War which Followed (2:8-32)
4. Abner's Deeds and End (3:1-39)
5. The Death of Ish-bosheth (4:1-12)

II. DAVID KING OVER ALL ISRAEL AND THE EVENTS OF HIS REIGN

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2. David's Conquest of Zion and Victory Over the Philistines (5:6-25)
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Analysis and Annotations

I. DAVID KING OF JUDAH AND THE EVENTS OF HIS REIGN

1. David's Lamentation for Saul and Jonathan

CHAPTER 1

1. The Death of Saul and Jonathan announced to David (1:1-10)
2. David's great Grief (1:11-12)
3. The Amalekite slain (1:13-16)
4. David's Lamentation (1:17-27)

David heard of the death of Saul and Jonathan from the lips of the Amalekite, who also brought him the crown and the bracelet of the dead king. The story of this young man has been branded by some as a falsehood, invented to gain favor from David. It is not necessary to reconcile the supposed contradiction of the Amalekite's story with the account of Saul's death in the last chapter of the preceding book, by saying the Amalekite lied to David. We have explained this in the annotations of chapter 31. When the Amalekite said to David, "So I stood upon him, and slew him, because I was sure that he could not live after that he was fallen," he referred to the fact that Saul had fallen upon his own sword, in committing suicide and was in great suffering. And great was David's grief when he hears the sad news. He and his companions wept and fasted in mourning over Saul, Jonathan and the people of the Lord. Then he commanded the Amalekite to be slain because he had smitten the Lord's anointed; thus he honored Saul in his death, while the Amalekite received the punishment for his

deed. Then David broke out in his great lamentation over Saul and Jonathan. The eighteenth verse as given in the authorized version is unintelligible. The Hebrew reads "and he bade them teach the children of Judah the bow;" the words "the use of" are supplied. Others read instead "the song of the bow" and claim it has reference to this lamentation, which David taught Judah. (See verse 22.) The book of Jasher (the upright) is never mentioned again (Joshua 10:12-14). The lamentation of David is a wonderful outpouring of soul. First he speaks of the calamity which has come to Israel in the death of Saul and Jonathan (verses 19-22); then he extols the virtues of both. What grace this manifests if we consider that Saul had hunted David and put upon him so many afflictions! He does not refer to it in a single word. Beautiful beyond description are his loving words on Jonathan.

I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan:
Very pleasant hast thou been unto me.
Thy love to me was wonderful,
Passing the love of women.

But there is one whose love is greater than David's love for Jonathan, even our Lord Jesus Christ.

2. David Anointed King over Judah

CHAPTER 2:1-7

1. David's inquiry of the Lord (2:1-3)
2. Anointed king over Judah (2:4)
3. His message to the men of Jabesh-gilead (2:5-7)

The first thing mentioned of David after his lamentation over Saul and Jonathan is that he inquired of the Lord. He would not do a single step towards claiming the rights which belonged to him without consulting the Lord. It shows how David, with all his faults, was in submission to the Lord. He waits on the Lord ready to follow His guidance and in this David acknowledged his complete dependence on Him who had chosen him as His King over His people. In this he is a type also of our Lord Jesus. The answer came to him at once that he was to go up into the cities of Judah. Then the men of Judah came and anointed him king over the house of Judah. There is nothing ostentatious about it nor does he take any steps whatever to extend his God-given rights beyond the tribe of Judah. His first act as king was to thank the men of Jabesh-gilead for the kindness they had done in the burial of Saul. He also exhorted them to be strong and announced his kingship over Judah.

3. Abner's Revolt and the War which Followed

CHAPTER 2:8-32

1. Abner makes Ish-bosheth king over Israel (2:8-11)
2. The defeat of Abner (2:12-17)
3. Abner and Joab and Joab's victory (2:18-32)

God's king began his reign in quietness, and opposition and open revolt followed at once. Abner, who had been the captain of Saul's host, took a son of Saul by the name of Ish-bosheth and made him king in Gilead.

The original name of this son was "Esh-baal," which means "the fire of Baal" (1 Chronicles 8:33). "Ish-bosheth" was his other name; it means "man of shame." He seems to have been a weakling and a tool in Abner's hand. Ish-bosheth's influence was soon extended over all Israel and the false King ruled, while David was only acknowledged by the faithful men of Judah. David's reign over Judah was seven years and six months. Here are faint hints of what will be repeated in the future history of Israel. Another Ish-bosheth, a pretender to the throne of Israel, the false king, will be in the earth. He comes in his own name, with no claim whatever to the throne. And the true King, like David, will only be acknowledged by a faithful remnant of his people. The seven years and a half remind us of the last period of Israel's history when these things come to pass. However, Ish-bosheth's weakness and especially his end makes a fuller application on these lines impossible.

The other prominent person is Joab, the son of Zeruah, who went out with the servants of David. (Joab was David's nephew. See 1 Sam. 26:6; 1 Chronicles 2:16.) They met Abner's force about six miles northwest of Jerusalem by the pool of Gibeon. Then followed at Abner's suggestion a conflict between twelve young men of Benjamin, the subjects of Ish-bosheth, and twelve of David's servants. A wicked scene followed. They slaughtered each other at Helkathazzurim, "the field of sharp swords," after which there was a severe battle which ended with the defeat of Abner. All this shows the sorrowful conditions which existed among Israel, foreshadowing again the worse conditions throughout this age and especially at the close of it. Then follows the record of the three sons of Zeruah, Joab, Abishai and Asahel. Asahel followed hard after Abner and though repeatedly warned by Abner, continued in his pursuit till Abner in self-defense slew him. The battle ended with the loss of nineteen servants of David and Asahel, while Abner lost 360 men. "Shall the sword devour forever?" was Abner's question. As long as God's true King does not occupy the throne, ruling in righteousness and in peace, wars and bloodshed will continue. The sword cannot be stopped till He reigns. In His coming kingdom nations will learn war no more and beat their swords into plowshares.

4. Abner's Deeds and End

CHAPTER 3

1. The long war and its results (3:1)
2. David's family (3:2-5)
3. Abner's defiant deed (3:6-7)
4. Abner and Ish-bosheth (3:8-11)
5. Abner's defection to David (3:12)
6. David's request (3:13-16)
7. Abner with David (3:17-22)
8. Abner's end (3:23-30)
9. David's lamentation over Abner (3:31-39)

The first verse speaks of the long war between the house of Saul and the house of David. And David waxed stronger and stronger. The weakness of the king in giving way to the flesh is next faithfully recorded; his self-indulgence in his different marriages. Alas! he began his sowing in the flesh from which later he was to reap such a sad harvest. Six sons are mentioned, born to David by his six wives. Three of these sons became a source of sorrow and grief to him. Ammon's vile deed is found in chapter

13. Absalom was a still greater trial to him, Adonijah became the rival of Solomon (1 Kings 1:5). In this record of taking these different women as wives, in this gross indulgence of the flesh, he prepared himself for the great sin of his life. Disorder and much confusion followed. Abner's deed in taking Rizpah insulted Saul's house and Ish-bosheth protested and Abner's fury came upon the weakling whom he had made king. Then suddenly Abner professed belief in David's God-given kingdom. His arrogant pride is seen in verse 10; as if it was in his power to set up the throne of David over all Israel, from Dan to Beer-sheba. The poor counterfeit king was silenced. Then we see Abner entering negotiations with David. Had David again relapsed that he fell in with Abner? We do not hear a word that he inquired of the Lord. He makes a condition under which Abner is to see his face. Michal, Saul's daughter, the first wife he had, who was now the wife of Phaltiell is to be brought to him. He then received her after his request to Ish-bosheth, while her husband accompanied her as far as the border of Judah. The subsequent history, Michal's mockery, shows that it was a mistake for David to take her back. How different all would have been if David had inquired of the Lord.

Abner, the shrewd schemer, was then entertained by David in a great banquet at which occasion he offered to make David ruler over all Israel. And David listened and sent him away in peace. But was it God's way and God's plan to have His anointed made king through such an instrument? Abner's death frustrating his plans gives the answer. Joab, moved by envy, jealousy and bitter hatred, slew Abner in the same way as he had slain his brother Asahel. He died for the blood of Asahel he had shed. An insinuation is made as if Joab's deed was justified as the avenger. This however could not be sustained by the law for Abner's death in slaying Asahel was in self-defence. But David cleared himself from so abominable a deed. "I and my kingdom are guiltless before the LORD forever from the blood of Abner." A public mourning is instituted in which Joab is forced to partake and the king lamented over Abner. "And all the people took notice of it, and it pleased them, as whatsoever the king did pleased all the people." The king's wise behaviour had its effect upon the people and thus his kingdom was strengthened.

5. The Death of Ish-bosheth

CHAPTER 4

1. Ish-bosheth in despair (4:1-3)
2. Mephibosheth, the lame son (4:4)
3. The end of Ish-bosheth (4:5-8)
4. The punishment of the murderers (4:9-12)

Abner's death meant the speedy end of Ish-bosheth's pretentious reign. Baanah and Rechab were his captains and became his murderers. While Ish-bosheth was resting in the heat of the day they sneaked in and murdered the sleeping son of Saul, then brought the head to David. They claimed to be instruments of God in the execution of the wicked deed, expecting approval and a reward from David. But the king received them in a different way. Here David's trust in Jehovah breaks through the dark clouds and the King's heart is revealed. "As the LORD liveth, who hath redeemed my soul out of all adversity." He acknowledges the Lord's gracious help in the past and his present confidence in Him. His case had rested in Jehovah's hands and in the ghastly deed of the two captains the King did not see Jehovah's

intervention in his behalf, but he looked upon them as murderers. Swift judgment was executed upon them. David is now through these circumstances the sole and undisputed claimant of the throne of Israel and his anointing as king over all Israel must speedily follow. Through all the sad occurrences since Abner had made Ish-bosheth king, David had maintained his integrity. In all the evil deeds, the bloodshed and cold-blooded murders he had no part. He acted in justice. In this at least he is a type of Him who will reign over the earth in righteousness.

We must not overlook verse 4 in which Jonathan's son Mephibosheth is mentioned for the first time. He was the only representative of Saul's line, a helpless cripple. His story and David's kindness to him we shall soon follow.

II. DAVID KING OVER ALL ISRAEL AND THE EVENTS OF HIS REIGN

1. David Anointed King over all Israel

CHAPTER 5:1-5

1. David anointed king over all Israel (5:1-3)
2. Duration of his reign (5:4-5)

The events of the reign of David over Judah had a beneficial effect upon all Israel. After Ish-bosheth's death all the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron. It is a blessed scene when they appear to anoint him King over all Israel. 1 Chronicles 12 should here be consulted. In that chapter the names of those are given who stood by David. In verse 38 we read: "All these men of war, that could keep rank, came with a perfect heart to Hebron, to make David king over all Israel; and all the rest also of Israel were of one heart to make David king." The coming of all Israel to Hebron was one of the most magnificent spectacles in the history of the nation. One only needs to take a pencil and add the numbers mentioned in 1 Chron. 12:24- 37 to find what a great army had gathered to make David king. There were 1222 chiefs and 339,600 men. Here we see a united Israel swept by a tremendous enthusiasm. Now they own him as their own bone and flesh; the victories of the past are remembered as well as the divine promise that he, David the Bethlehemite, should be the shepherd of Israel as well as their captain.

But there is coming for Israel a greater day than the day in Hebron, when they anointed David king. It foreshadows but faintly the glorious day when their long rejected King-Messiah, the Son of David, comes again. Then they will own Him and He will own them. They will also know and remember all God has done through Him. He will then indeed be the Shepherd and King of Israel. All this and much more is foreshadowed in David's coronation and his reign. David is the type of the coming reign of our Lord as "King of Righteousness" while Solomon and his reign typify Him as "King of Peace." And David made a covenant with them in Hebron as the Lord Jesus will enter into covenant with the nation in the day of His return.

Then the duration of David's reign is given. Seven years and six months he reigned over Judah and over all Israel and Judah 33 years. The record here does not speak of the great feast which was made at Hebron. We find this also mentioned in 1 Chronicles 12:39-40. It is typical of the time of joy and rejoicing in Israel and throughout the world, when the true

King has come. Then the great feast of which Isaiah speaks will take place (Is. 25:6-10).

2. David's Conquest of Zion and Victory over the Philistines

CHAPTER 5:6-25

1. David's conquest of Zion (5:6-10)
2. Hiram King of Tyre (5:11-12)
3. David's additional concubines and wives (5:13-15)
4. The victory over the Philistines (5:17-25)

Zion is closely linked with David's anointing as king over all Israel. Here 1 Chronicles 11 must be read for a more complete account of what took place. Jerusalem is now to become the capital of the great kingdom. The oldest name was Salem; the name of Jebus was given to it by the Jebusites (Judges 19:10). After David's conquest the ancient name was restored and it became known as Jerusalem ("habitation of peace"). The town had previously been taken (Judges 1:8) but the stronghold of the upper city, Mount Zion, remained in the hands of the Jebusites. David took the stronghold. Jebusite means "the one who treads down." It reminds us of the words of our Lord, "Jerusalem shall be trodden down by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled" (Luke 21:24). Jerusalem and Zion are still trodden down by the Gentiles. The day is coming when the King will end all this. Jerusalem is yet to be "the city of the great King." (Ps. 48). Here we have once more a prophetic foreshadowing of what will take place, only on a larger scale, when He, who is greater than David, begins His long promised reign in the midst of His people. After this we shall find much more about Zion, especially in the prophets and in the psalms. It is the place Jehovah has chosen (Ps. 132:13-14). To this place, where his throne was, David also brought the ark. When our Lord establishes His kingdom, Zion will be the glorious and the beautiful Place. "This is my rest forever; here will I dwell; I have desired it" (Ps. 132:14). Then He will bless out of Zion (Ps. 128:5); and out of Zion shall go forth the law (Is. 2:3). He will be enthroned upon the holy hill of Zion (Ps. 2:6); the rod of His strength cometh out of Zion (Ps. 110:2); Zion will be the joy of the whole earth (Ps 48:2).

Then Hiram, the King of Tyre, is mentioned. He sent messengers to David, as well as cedar trees, carpenters and masons, and they built David a house. It must be understood that we have in this and the events which follow not a strict chronology. The children mentioned here were born at a later period. All is put in here to show how David grew great and that the Lord was with him. Hiram, the Gentile king, and the messengers he sent, are typical of that day, when our Lord reigns in Zion and "the Kings of Tarshish and the isles shall bring presents"--when all nations shall serve Him (Ps. 72:10-11).

The Hebrew names of the eleven sons of David are of deep significance. It seems the story of the redemption which is in Him, whom David foreshadows, is made known in these names. Shammuah (heard); Shobab (returning); Nathan (he is given); Solomon (peace); Ibhar (the Lord chooses); Elishua (my God is salvation); Nepheg (budding); Japhia (glorious); Elishama (God heareth); Eliada (whom God knoweth); Eliphalet (my God is escape). This is a most blessed revelation contained in those names; and some Christians can say there is no meaning in names! Read them

in their meaning and ponder over each as telling forth the very gospel story from start to finish.

Twice David enquired of the Lord concerning the Philistines. Once he is told to go up and the Lord gave him the victory and he burned the images of the Philistines. It is another picture of how the coming King will make an end of idolatry. Again he asked the Lord and was told not to go up. Then the Lord smote the Philistines Himself. In all David was obedient.

3. The Ark Brought to Zion

CHAPTER 6

1. The ark fetched by David (6:1-5)
2. Uzzah: his error and death (6:6-9)
3. The ark in the house of Obed-edom (6:10-11)
4. The ark brought into David's city (6:12-19)
5. Michal's mockery of David (6:20-23)

It is of importance to read 1 Chronicles 13 for a better understanding of how the ark was brought from Kirjathjearim to David's city. The book of Chronicles contains these larger records because in that book these events are described in their theocratic character, while in Samuel the outward aspect of David's kingdom is followed. David issued the call that the people with the priests and the Levites should gather to bring again the ark of God (1 Chron. 12:2-3). However we do not read anything more about the Levites, who alone were commissioned to carry the ark. It is evident that David neglected to follow the divine instructions given in the law concerning the handling of the ark. (See Numbers 4.) This neglect may be traced to the fact that David did not inquire of the Lord. The way they transported the ark was the way of the Philistines (1 Sam. 6:7). When Uzzah put forth his hand to steady the ark, he was smitten for his error and died. God had spoken to His people and taught them the lesson that the ways of the Philistines and disobedience to His Word in holy things demands His judgment. How many in the past and more so today act like Uzzah when in service for God they employ the methods of the world and disregard entirely His Word. Godly fear and faithful submission to the Word of God are essentials in true service for God. Service without these is often a snare and results in dishonour.

Then the progress of the ark was arrested, because David filled with fear would not remove it to his city. The ark found a resting place for three months in the house of Obed-edom (servant of Edom); he was a Levite and therefore authorized to care for the ark (1 Chron. 26:1-5). Blessing rested upon his house. The judgment of Uzzah and the blessing of Obed-edom had a great effect upon David. "So David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-edom into the city of David with gladness." This is all we find in our chapter. But how did he bring the ark up? 1 Chronicles 15 gives the answer. "Then David said, none ought to carry the ark of God but the Levites; for them hath the LORD chosen to carry the ark of God, and to minister unto Him for ever." The sons of Kohath, Merari, Gershom, etc., are given there. All is now done in accordance with the Word of God and blessing follows. And David filled with divine joy danced, girded with a linen ephod, before the Lord. After the ark had been set in its proper place in the tabernacle which David had pitched and the burnt offerings and peace offerings had been brought, he blessed the people in the name of the

Lord. In his dancing the king had taken a place amidst the people. And Michal, who is called here not the wife of the king, but "the daughter of Saul," despised David. She looked upon David's holy joy as an indecent humiliation, while the king declared he would even be more vile than thus and base in his own sight. What a contrast with the pride of Saul which is now manifested in his daughter Michal. And what happened when the ark had been put into the tabernacle? 1 Chronicles 16:4-36 tells us how David appointed Levites to minister and then he delivered into the hands of Asaph and his brethren a great Psalm of praise. And that sublime utterance looks forward to a far more glorious day, when the Lord dwells in Zion in the midst of an obedient people. Then the heavens will be glad and the earth rejoice and among all the nations it will be said "Jehovah reigneth"; and even nature will sing in the presence of the Lord (1 Chron. 16:31-36).

4. The Lord's Promise to David and the Covenant

CHAPTER 7

1. David's desire (7:1-3)
2. Nathan receives the message for David (7:4-17)
3. David in the presence of Jehovah (7:18-29)

We reach now a climax. The Lord speaks and reveals His great purposes He had in His eternal councils for David, the king after His own heart. We behold the king in peace sitting in his own house; he had rest from all his enemies. In pious meditation the heart of the king had but one great thought, one great ambition. The prophet Nathan is in his presence and to him he speaks. "See now, I dwell in an house of cedar, but the ark of God dwelleth within curtains." And Nathan told him to do all that was in his heart. But he had spoken without divine authority. God knew all David planned and what was in his heart. While His prophet encouraged David to carry out his wishes, God meant otherwise.

That night Nathan received an important message. The Lord told Nathan that David thought of building Him a house, but that the Lord would build David a house. Then He promises him a son. "He shall build an house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever." Solomon is first in view, but he is only a type of Him, who said while on earth "a greater than Solomon is here." In Christ alone this great covenant-promise is to be fulfilled. Chastening for his offspring is announced, but a disannulment of the covenant is impossible, for God's gifts and calling are without repentance. "But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee. And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established forever before thee, thy throne shall be established forever." More than that, this great covenant was confirmed by the oath of Jehovah. "Once I have sworn by My holiness that I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure forever, and his throne as the sun before Me" (Ps. 89:35-36). And when He was about to come, the Son of David according to the flesh, but also David's Lord, He who spoke these words to Nathan, it was divinely announced "the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David. And He shall reign forever and of His kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke 1:32-33). That throne and that kingdom He has not yet received. He fills the Father's throne in the highest heaven, but all heaven and earth wait for the appointed time when He will come again to claim His crown-rights and receive the world-wide kingdom, which David in inspired songs of praise so often beheld (Ps. 72).

"And this prophecy refers neither only to Solomon nor only to Christ; nor has it a twofold application, but it is a covenant-promise which, extending along the whole line, culminates in the Son of David, and in all its fulness applies only to Him. These three things did God join in it, of which one necessarily implies the other, alike in the promise and in the fulfilment: a unique relationship, a unique kingdom, and a unique fellowship and service resulting from both. The unique relationship was that of Father and Son, which in all its fulness only came true in Christ (Heb. 1:5). The unique kingdom was that of Christ, which would have no end (Luke 1:32, 33; John 3:35). And the unique sequence of it was that brought about through the temple of His body (John 2:19), which will appear in its full proportions when the New Jerusalem comes down out of heaven (Rev. 21:1-3).

"Such was the glorious hope opening up wider and wider, till at its termination David could see 'afar off' the dawn of the bright morning of eternal glory; such was the destiny and the mission which, in His infinite goodness, God assigned to His chosen servant. Much there was still in him that was weak, faltering, and even sinful; nor was he, whose was the inheritance of such promises, even to build an earthly temple. Many were his failings and sins, and those of his successors; and heavy rods and sore stripes were to fall upon them. But that promise never failed." (A. Edersheim, Bible History)

And to this we add, nor will the promise ever fail in the future. Even now all is preparing for Him who alone is the Hope of the world. "Thy Kingdom come" is still the prayer, nor will it ever come till the King's coronation day arrives. And Nathan delivered faithfully the great covenant message. David's response is beautiful, yea it measures up to the fullness of grace the gracious Lord had bestowed upon him. He does not seek the fellowship of Nathan to talk over this unspeakably Wonderful promise. He sat before the Lord. All the thoughts in him, planning to work and to build the Lord a house, were forever hushed. He is in His presence as a worshipper, pouring out his grateful heart. Jehovah's grace has touched the innermost cords of his soul; they give forth their sweet vibrations, which ascend in a holy melody to the courts above. He is humbled, bowed in the dust. "Who am I, Lord God? and what is my house that thou hast brought me hitherto?"--He believes all he has heard; he trusts in every word. His prayer is "do as thou hast said." What an hour it was when the king with the message of grace and mercy was in the presence of the Lord! May we who are the Recipients of even greater grace in our Lord Jesus Christ respond to that grace as David did.

5. The Extension of His Kingdom

CHAPTER 8

1. The Philistines and Moab smitten (8:1-2)
2. Hadadezer overthrown (8:3-8)
3. Further conquests and triumphs (8:9-14)
4. David's reign and his associates (8:15-18)

Great conquests and victories follow. David arose from the presence of the Lord to go forth to conquer. With such a message he had heard, assuring him of the Lord's presence and power, of the success of his kingdom, he

began to extend his kingdom over the different nations which surrounded the land. The Lord was with him and preserved him withersoever he went. The history of these wars for the enlargement of the kingdom of David we shall have occasion to follow a little closer in our annotations of the first book of Chronicles. The extension of the kingdom of our Lord when He comes and begins His kingly work among the nations, to rule them with a rod of iron, is foreshadowed in these events.

When we read in verse 15 of David's reign executing judgment and justice we have another faint picture of the rule of the coming King. The leading officers of the kingdom are mentioned. Joab was the general over his army; Jehosaphat the recorder. Zadok and Ahimelech were the priests; Seraiah the scribe. Benaiah had charge of the Cherethites and Pelethites; these two names mean "executioners and runners, while David's sons were also ruling with him. Order prevailed in all things. When that true kingdom will be established on earth there will also be those who rule under the King, who have charge over five or ten cities (Luke 19:17- 18). David's sons who ruled with him may represent typically believers who are sons of God in Christ and fellow heirs with Him.

6. David and Mephibosheth

CHAPTER 9

1. Mephibosheth brought to David (9:1-6)
2. Grace and mercy shown to him (9:7-13)

The story of Mephibosheth is the first thing mentioned after the government of David had been fully established. Typically it reveals the gospel in a beautiful way, and dispensationally the kindness of God which will be manifested in the coming kingdom. Mephibosheth is a type of the sinner and the condition which he is in. He was helpless, being lame of both feet. How he became lame is found in chapter 4:4. He fell and became lame, a helpless cripple. It reminds us of the fall of man and the helpless condition into which sin has put man. Therefore he could not come to David. He had to be carried into the king's presence. The sinner cannot come of himself to the Saviour; He has to seek him out. And David wanted to show him "the kindness of God" for Jonathan's sake. "Thus the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man hath appeared" (Titus 3:4). God for Christ's sake shows His great kindness to sinful man. Mephibosheth means "shame out of the mouth"; when he hears from David's lips what kindness was prepared for him he confessed with his mouth his own shame and nothingness. "What is thy servant that thou shouldst look upon such a dead dog as I am?" And what words of grace came from David's lips! Surely the kindness of God is here fully made known. He is lifted from his low place of shame to take a place at the King's table "as one of the King's sons." It is the kindness of God as made known in the gospel of His Son our Lord Jesus Christ. He takes us out of our shame and makes us one of His sons. "So Mephibosheth dwelt in Jerusalem; for he did eat continually at the king's table; and was lame on both feet." When the kingdom has come the King will show such grace and kindness to the poor and needy (Isaiah 11:1-5; Ps. 72:1-4).

7. The War with Ammon and the Syrians

CHAPTER 10

1. David and Hanun (10:1-5)
2. Ammon and the Syrians smitten (10:6-19)

The chapter with the war against Ammon and the Syrians is the prelude to the great sin of David. While Joab is carrying on the siege of Rabbah, the last city of the Ammonites, David, no doubt flushed with the great victory and prosperity, remained in his house and committed his awful sin. The war with Ammon originated through the insults which Hanun the King of Ammon had heaped upon David's ambassadors. David wanted to show kindness also to Hanun as his father Nahash had shown kindness to David. We have no record of this kindness. In this endeavour David did certainly not follow the right course, for Ammon was an enemy, and while Nahash showed some kindness to David during his exile, he also had reproached Israel and was ready to thrust out the right eyes of the men of Jabesh-gilead (1 Sam. 11:1-3). Hanun's deed in treating David's peaceful messengers in so shameful a way showed that he was a wicked man like his father and not worthy of David's kindness. Had he inquired of the Lord the messengers would have been spared these indignities. Ammon then formed an alliance with the Syrians, but Joab smote them. The greatest victory is recorded in verses 15-19. The king appeared himself to lead his hosts against the mighty foe and their overthrow followed. It foreshadows the day of final victory over the rebellious nations, led by the beast (Rev. 19:19-20) when the true King comes to fight against those nations.

III. DAVID'S SIN, CHASTISEMENT AND RESTORATION

1. David's Great Sin

CHAPTER 11

1. David's great sin (11:1-5)
2. David sends for Uriah (11:6-13)
3. The murder of Uriah (11:14-25)
4. David makes Bath-sheba his wife (11:26-27)

We see the king once more in his house. He sent Joab, his servants and all Israel to battle again against Ammon. Was it not his business as king to go forth with Israel as he had done before? Instead he remains in ease and comfort at home. Evidently he rested all day on his couch, during the heat of the day, and when the cool evening came he walked upon the roof of his house. He had been in self-indulgence and was self-satisfied with his great achievements. The spirit which characterized later Nebuchadnezzar when he walked in his palace (Dan 4:4) puffed up with pride, which preceded his great humiliation, was no doubt David's spirit also. Had he remained in the presence of the Lord, humble and depending on Him, as we saw him after the Lord had spoken through Nathan (7:18) this awful sin would not have happened. How often it has been repeated in the experiences of God's people! Nor did this great sin like a mighty giant ensnare him suddenly. The way for it had been prepared. He had given way to the flesh before in taking wives and concubines. We read nothing of self-restraint or self-judgment in his life up to his fall. And had he not disobeyed the law in multiplying wives unto himself? It is written: "Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away" (Deut. 17:17). Had he really walked constantly in the presence of the Lord he would have heeded the warning of His law. What warning there is for all believers! The

flesh is the same today as it ever was; it does not change. We are told "to make no provision for the flesh" (Rom. 13:14). Paraphrased this means, do not nourish the flesh by the indulgence of it; flee fleshly, youthful lusts. And now the culmination is reached. "I made a covenant with mine eyes; How then should I look upon a maid;" thus spake job (job 31:1). David knew no such covenant. He looks where he should not have looked and sin soon follows. It is a solemn illustration of James 1:14-15. "But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin, and sin when it is finished, bringeth forth death." The king of all Israel had become another Achan. "I saw--I coveted--I took" (Joshua 7:20.)

"It need scarcely be pointed out, how this truthful account of the sins of Biblical heroes evinces the authenticity and credibility of the Scriptural narratives. Far different are the legendary accounts which seek to palliate the sins of Biblical personages, or even to deny their guilt. Thus the Talmud denies the adultery of David on the ground that every warrior had, before going to the field, to give his wife a divorce, so that Bathsheba was free. We should, however, add, that this view was controverted" (A. Edersheim.)

And sin follows sin. The offspring of sin is sin. What cunningness and deception followed. But honest Uriah frustrates his wicked plan. Did not David's conscience smart under it? No doubt it was deadened. Then he becomes actually the murderer of Uriah the Hittite. When the news of the death of Uriah is announced to David, hypocrisy is crowned in the words of the King, "Let not this thing displease thee, for the sword devoureth one as another." And here we read still the dreadful record, the sin of David and how God dealt with it.

"David, too, has faced that ever since, and faces it still: he will face it ever. It is put away, that sin, yet it remains, and will remain, type of all sins of his people, and of God's dealing with them: out of the holy light of eternity they will never pass,--out of our memories never! Here is man, here is his condemnation,--redeemed, saved, justified man! Thyself, reader; myself Cease ye from man forever!--from ourselves, sinner or saint! Turn we to God forever, and let us ascribe greatness and salvation to Him alone.

"This is what an unexercised conscience can bring a David to. This is what lack of self-judgment, with temptation and opportunity, may make a saint! Shall we not cry afresh, with David himself, 'Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting'?" (Numerical Bible)

And seven days later the equally guilty woman becomes David's wife. And she became the mother of Solomon. We find her mentioned in the genealogy of Matthew 1. Surely grace and mercy covered their sin. Yet what a trail of sorrow, misery and unrest follows, We shall find in chapters which follow the awful results. Incest, fratricide, rebellion, civil war and the king a fugitive! What a man soweth that he will also reap.

2. The Message of God and David's Confession and the Beginning of the Chastisement

1. The Lord's message through Nathan (12:1-4)
2. David's anger (12:5-6)
3. Thou art the man! (12:7-9)
4. The chastisement (12:10-12)
5. David's confession (12:13)
6. The death of the child announced (12:14)
7. The death of the child and David's grief (12:15-23)
8. Solomon born (12:24-25)
9. Rabbah taken (12:26-31)

The Lord was displeased with what David had done. Nathan comes with his message in the form of a parable. His outburst of anger and condemnation of the injustice done to the poor man shows that he did not think of his own case. Yet sorrow and unrest were his portion; he tried to cover up his sin and as a result was in the deepest agony. Psalms like the sixth, the thirty-eighth, the thirty-second and others tell us of the deep soul exercise through which he passed. Then Nathan pointed at him with his soul piercing, "Thou art the man!" First the prophet tells him all the Lord had done for him; he reminds him of all God's kindness. What had David done? He had despised the Lord's commandment; had killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword and taken his wife. Then the chastisement is announced. He had slain Uriah with the sword of the children of Ammon--the sword should now never depart from his house. He had taken Uriah's wife--others should take his wives. He had done it secretly--but, said Jehovah, I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun. We shall find the sentence executed in chapters 13:28-39; 16:21-22; 18:14.

Then the King's heart broke. "I have sinned against the LORD." It was at that time that, his soul filled with deepest sorrow, and yet illumined with the light from above, he uttered that wonderful penitential Psalm, the fifty-first. "Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight, that Thou mightest be justified when Thou speakest, and be clear when Thou judgest." All the inward corruption now is revealed to him, as many a saint after him has found out by bitter experience that in our flesh there dwelleth no good thing. "Behold I was shapen in iniquity and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Ps. 51:5). And when he prayed "take not Thy Holy Spirit from me"--he must have had a vision of Saul, the mad King, when the Spirit had left him and an evil one possessed his heart. But David knew God and God knew David. He is in the light and uncovers all in His presence. Then Nathan announced the divine mercy, "the LORD hath also taken away thy sin." And Nathan added "because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die." That was the bitterness of it. Up to the present time infidels and rejectors of the Word of God point to David's sin and blaspheme, though the very things they sneer at are the things which they practice. The child died and David's grief was great. All his fasting and night long prayer did not change the divine sentence. But he also knew the comfort of hope and expresses it beautifully. "I shall go to him, but he shall not return unto me."

And has it no meaning that Solomon's birth is recorded immediately after these sad and solemn incidents? Solomon means "peaceful." Peace had come to his heart; the divine favour was restored unto him, yet the chastisement grievous and sore would follow him in the future. And then the Lord named also Solomon. He called him "Jedediah." This means "beloved of Jehovah." He is the blessed type of God's own Son. For us He is "peace"--He

who hath made peace and our sin is covered by His precious blood. To God He is "the Beloved." The record of the fall of Rabbah closes this chapter. What is recorded in verse 31 was cruel and barbarous. (However, there is a doubt about the translation. It has been rendered in the following way: "And he set them to saws and iron picks and iron axes and made them labor at the brick kiln.") Ammon did horrible things to the women of Israel. (See Amos 1:13.) A fearful retribution came upon them. How often it has been repeated in history, even down to the 20th century with all its boasted civilization, now collapsed in the greatest and most awful war the world has ever witnessed. And thus it will continue to the end, till the true King comes.

3. Further Chastisement: Amnon, Tamar, and Absalom

CHAPTER 13

1. Amnon's wicked desire (13:1-5)
2. The incest (13:6-14)
3. His hatred (13:15-18)
4. Amnon murdered (13:19-36)
5. Absalom's flight (13:37-39)

"Behold I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house." This was Jehovah's sentence and it is now carried out. The evil which he had nourished in his heart, the passion which he had fed now breaks out in his own family. His oldest sons and Tamar, a daughter of David, half sister to Amnon, are the chief actors in the first tragedy. Ammon means "faithful." Thus he should have been, but he is the very opposite. Brought up in the midst of scenes of license, as it must have been in David's harem, the lust of the flesh gets the upper hand and the awful deed, a positive transgression of the law (Lev. 20:17) is committed. The deed had been precipitated by a satanic adviser, Jonadab, a subtle man, and when it was done violent hate gave way to the violent passion of Amnon. Unhappy Tamar, outraged, insulted and hated, appears with her virgin-princess gown torn, ashes on her head, her hand on top of her head (the oriental way of expressing a heavy burden) and crying, and her brother Absalom discovers the reason of her sorrow. He then hated his brother Amnon. David heard of it also and was very wroth, but he made no attempt to deal with his son. We do not read a word that he even rebuked him. "The gloss of the Septuagint is likely to be correct, that David left unpunished the incest of Amnon with Tamar, although committed under peculiarly aggravating circumstances, on account of his partiality to him as being his first born son. This indulgence on the part of his father may also account for the daring recklessness which marked Amnon's crime. But a doting father, smitten with moral weakness, might find in the remembrance of his own past sin an excuse for delay, if not a barrier to action; for it is difficult to wield a heavy sword with a maimed arm" (History of Judah and Israel).

After two years the reckoning day comes. Absalom (the father of peace) becomes the murderer of his brother. It was an awful deed. In the midst of merrymaking, Amnon filled with wine, with no chance to repent, is cruelly slain. The sword is unsheathed and fell upon David's house. The harvest is on. What a man soweth that he will reap-murder for murder. It was an awful blow to David, for Amnon, his beloved first-born, the son of Ahinoam, was dead. Exaggerated tidings reach the court of David. "Absalom hath slain all the King's sons and there is not one of them left." And wicked Jonadab, the

instigator of Amnon's crime, appears again and acts as comforter of the king. Jonadab is one of the most abominable characters in Bible history. We do not read of him again. Absalom, the fratricide, fled to Talmai, his maternal grandfather. He remained there three years; so this chapter covers a period of five years. Alas! who was responsible for it all? The scenes of lust and murder, outrage and bloodshed, revolt and rebellion, sorrow upon sorrow, grief upon grief, start with David's great sin. Pardoned he was, restored in every sense of the word, yet God maintains His holiness and chastised His servant.

4. David and Absalom

CHAPTER 14

1. Joab's scheme (14:1-3)
2. The woman of Tekoah before the king (14:4-20)
3. Joab brings Absalom to Jerusalem (14:21-24)
4. Absalom's beauty (14:25-27)
5. Absalom sees his father (14:28-33)

In all these records of those sad events we hear not a word that David inquired of the Lord. Joab now appears upon the scene again and that for evil, though he did not mean to do evil to the king. He concocts a scheme by which Absalom is to be brought back into the favor of the king. This he must have tried many times before, for verses 19 and 22 indicate this. It seems almost as if Joab imitated Nathan, when he came with his message to David. But God had not sent him and David's conscience was not touched. The wisdom he used was not the wisdom from above, but the wisdom of a cunning man. The whole story was deception and "the wise woman" of Tekoah lent herself as a willing instrument. And David finds out that it is all a plot and, blinded by a mere love for Absalom, without thinking of the claims of God in this case, he becomes a willing victim to the scheme of Joab. And so Absalom was brought back. The King commands, "Let him turn to his own house, and let him not see my face." It was an evil hour when it happened. Absalom's rebellion and the king's exile were the fruit of the unscrupulous plot of Joab.

Absalom's physical beauty was great with magnificent hair. (The statement that his hair weighed 200 shekels is undoubtedly the error of a scribe who copied the manuscript. The Hebrew letters which stand for 20 and for 200 are similar. It should no doubt be 20 shekels.) He was thus fitted to do the work of winning the people to himself and became the leader of a rebellion. The deed he had done in avenging the crime against his sister was most likely looked upon by the mass of the people as a noble and heroic deed. That behind the beautiful exterior there was a proud, violent and evil spirit may be seen in his deed, when after Joab's refusal to come to him, he set the barley field of Joab on fire. Then a reconciliation between David and Absalom followed: "Once more we notice here the consequences of David's fatal weakness, as manifested in his irresolution and half measures. Morally paralysed, so to speak, in consequence of his own guilt, his position sensibly and increasingly weakened in popular estimation, that series of disasters, which had formed the burden of God's predicted judgments, now followed in the natural sequence of events. If ever before his return from Geshur Absalom had been a kind of popular hero, his presence in Jerusalem for two years in semi-banishment must have increased the general sympathy."

5. Absalom's Conspiracy and David's Flight

CHAPTER 15

1. Absalom steals the hearts of the men of Israel (15:1-6)
2. His conspiracy (15:7-12)
3. The flight of the king (15:13-37)

The beautiful prince gradually prepared for the great conspiracy of which we read now and which made of his own father the Lord's anointed, an exile. Chariots and horses with fifty men to run before him won no doubt the admiration of the people. His evident interest in their welfare, kissing those who sought his presence and advice, endeared him still more to the men of Israel. To this must be added his open words, which must have quickly circulated among the people, "Oh, that I were made judge in the land, that every man which hath any suit or cause might come unto me, and I would do him justice."

This continued for about four years. ("Forty" is incorrect. Ancient versions have "four years" which we take is the correct number. Others have suggested that the 40 years should be reckoned from David's anointing (1 Sam. 16:13). This, however, is unlikely.) During this time he stole the hearts of the men of Israel. All is now ripe for the great rebellion. He lies to his father about an alleged vow he had made at Geshur. The unsuspecting King said, "Go in peace." So he arose and went to Hebron. The signal is given at which all the tribes of Israel were to say, "Absalom reigneth in Hebron." Then he sent for David's counsellor, Ahitophel. He was away from Jerusalem at Giloh, a short distance from Hebron, which would seem that he also was in league with Absalom. Ahitophel (the brother of folly) was the grandfather of Bath-sheba. As his name so was his deed in joining the revolution, through which he may have thought of avenging the shame which had been put upon his family by David's sin.

When David hears the news he said to his servants who were with him in Jerusalem, "Arise and let us flee." Fear now takes hold on him. He feared for himself and for his city. Yet he passed through the deepest soul-exercise and clung to the Lord in all the chastisement which followed, stroke after stroke, upon him. The third Psalm gives the culmination of this. It bears the inscription, "A Psalm of David when he fled from Absalom his son." In spite of his fears he trusted the Lord. "But Thou, Oh LORD, art a shield for me; my glory and the lifter up of mine head" (Ps. 3:3). It is claimed that Psalm 49 also refers to this period of his life. If that is correct then David was sick at the time of Absalom's rebellion. Verse 9 in that Psalm would have a meaning in connection with Ahitophel, the traitor. John 13:18 makes it clear that Judas Iscariot is predicted; but Ahitophel is a type of Judas, like him he was a suicide. Another Psalm which was probably written during the rebellion of Absalom and which speaks of Ahitophel's treachery is Psalm 55. The king and his household left the city and all the people after him. All the Cherethites and Pelethites (executioners and runners) and six hundred which came after him from Gath accompanied the King. And not all was bitterness. Ittai (with Jehovah) the Gittite, and his devotion to the King, must have greatly comforted David's heart. He was a stranger and an exile, who had come but yesterday to David. He told him to return to abide with the king (that is, Absalom). Beautiful is his answer, which strongly reminds us of the blessed words of Ruth, the

Moabitess (Ruth 1:16). What noble purpose he expresses! He wants to be with the king in life or in death. Grace has linked us even closer with our Lord. Ittai in his devotion and attachment to the king is a blessed type of those who are true to the Lord in the days of His rejection.

And there was much weeping as David passed over Kidron. Our Lord passed over that brook also to enter the garden (John 18:1) where He offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears. The ark had been carried along, but now the king directed Zadok to carry it back to the city. "if I shall find favour in the eyes of the LORD, He will bring me again, and show me both it and his habitation." Beautiful it is to see that in all his great sorrow, conscious that it was the hand of the Lord which chastised him, in all his affliction he does not forget the Lord. He trusts in His mercy. Deep submission breathes in these words.

What a sight the weeping king, barefooted, his head covered, ascending Olivet! A type of Him who also ascended Olivet and wept (Luke 19:41). Then Hushai (hasty) met David. Alas! for the evidence of unbelief in the king, in planning to have Hushai return to the city and feign friendship for Absalom so as to defeat the counsel of Ahitophel.

6. The Sorrows and Testings of the King

CHAPTER 16

1. Lying Ziba (16:1-4)
2. Shimei curses and stones David (16:5-14)
3. Absalom enters Jerusalem (16:15-19)
4. Ahitophel's wicked counsel (16:20-23)

Ziba in great craftiness meets the exiled king with provisions and acts as the false accuser of Mephibosheth. And David hastily puts all that belongs to Mephibosheth into his hands. Strange that David could believe in the falsehood of Ziba. How could one who was a helpless cripple aspire to possess a kingdom? Mephibosheth had been deceived (19:26) by Ziba and David readily believed the lying story.

Shimei (my fame) appeared, cursing David, stoning him and his servants. His accusation that he was responsible for "all the blood of the house of Saul" was unfounded and unjust. He was not responsible for the death of Saul and Jonathan, and equally guiltless of the death of Abner and Ish-bosheth. And yet David saw something else in the curses of Shimei and in calling him a bloody man. The blood of Uriah which he had shed must have suddenly come to his mind. And when Abishai offers to kill Shimei, David rebuked him. (See Luke 9:52-56.) "Let him curse, because the LORD hath said to him, Curse David"--"Let him alone, and let him curse; for the LORD hath bidden him." He realizes Shimei is but an instrument in the Lord's hands; He had permitted it and David acknowledges thus that he had deserved the curses. "It may be that the LORD will look on mine affliction, and that the LORD will requite me good for his cursing this day." His eyes now look to the Lord whose chastening hand rested so heavily upon him.

Absalom is now in Jerusalem and Hushai succeeds in his commission given to him by David. He deceives Absalom. Whom did Hushai mean, when he said, "Whom the LORD and this people, and all the men of Israel choose, his will I be, and with him will I be"? They can only be applied to David; most

likely in his heart he meant David. But it was flattery which wicked Absalom gladly accepted. Absalom followed the vile counsel of Ahitophel and committed the unnatural crime to show to all Israel that the breach between him and his father David was beyond remedy. God's predicted judgment upon David had come literally true. (See chapter 12:11-12.) The world will yet find out that God's judgments, though long delayed, will find ultimately their literal fulfilment.

7. Absalom, Ahitophel, and Hushai

CHAPTER 17

1. The counsel of Ahitophel and Hushai (17:1-14)
2. The counsel made known to David (17:15-22)
3. Ahitophel commits suicide (17:23)
4. Absalom pitched in Gilead (17:24-26)
5. The kindness of Shobi, Machir and Barzillai (17:27-29)

Ahitophel's counsel was aimed at the person of David only. He wanted to have him killed and thus by the death of the one man bring all Israel back. But Ahitophel had not reckoned with David's Lord, who loved him and in all the chastisement through which he had to pass, was still his Lord and his Keeper. It was not Hushai who defeated the counsel of Ahitophel, but the Lord. "For the LORD had appointed to defeat the good counsel of Ahitophel, to the intent that the LORD might bring evil upon Absalom." Hushai was evidently not present when Ahitophel spoke. When he came to Absalom and he asked his opinion he gave a different advice which Absalom and all the men of Israel adopted. The Lord gave the counsel through Hushai and then made Absalom and his men to follow the advice of Hushai. Hushai then communicated with Zadok and Abiathar as David had advised him. We do not follow the interesting story in its details. David heard of the counsel and the uncertainty of Absalom's movement and passed over Jordan into safety. Thus through Hushai's conspiracy, acting as a spy for David, the king had been saved. But would he have been lost if Hushai had not been acting the spy? The Lord would not have forsaken the king and though He used Hushai's counsel yet David was the loser after all. He lost the opportunity of seeing the Lord's power and intervention in his behalf. And how much we also lose by want of faith in Him, with whom nothing is too hard.

Ahitophel seeing his counsel defeated and unable to slay the king set his house in order and committed suicide. As stated before he is a type of Judas Iscariot, the betrayer of our Lord, as Ahitophel was the betrayer of David. Like Ahitophel Judas hanged himself (Matt. 27:5).

8. The Civil War and Absalom's Death

CHAPTER 18

1. The battle in the forest of Ephraim (18:1-8)
2. The death of Absalom (18:9-18)
3. The tidings of his death and David's grief (18:19-33)

And now everything is ready for the battle and the victory. The army of David consisted of three divisions, Joab, Abishai and the faithful Ittai

had the command. David was ready to go forth with his warriors, but the people refused to let him go. What a testimony they gave concerning him! "Thou art worth ten thousand of us. But of Him, who according to the flesh is the Son of David, we say, "He alone is worthy." The king then stood by the gate of Mahanaim to see the departure of his troops. As his generals Joab, Abishai and Ittai left him he gave them the message, "Deal gently with the young man, even with Absalom." The battle took place in a wild jungle forest, most likely with many steep rocks and gulches. Absalom lost 20,000 men "and the forest (on account of rocks and gulches) devoured more people that day than the sword devoured."

Absalom fled, but his flight was arrested when his head caught in the bough of an oak, as Josephus states, entangled by his hair. "And he was taken up between the heaven and the earth and the mule that was under him went away." The first one who saw him would not smite him, not for a thousand shekels of silver, for he had heard the king's request. Then Joab, unscrupulous Joab, whose scheme had brought Absalom back into the presence of the king, took three darts (literally "staves") and thrust them through the heart of Absalom while he was yet alive. Most likely the unfortunate rebel son was unconscious through the impact with the tree. The armour bearers made a complete end of him. Joab's deed was unjustifiable in view of the king's command to deal gently with Absalom. Absalom's body was cast into a pit and covered with a very great heap of stones, a criminal's monument. He had looked for a more honorable death, for he had reared a pillar in his lifetime, which he called after his own name, "for he said, I have no son to keep my name in remembrance." Those who claim that the books of Samuel are a patchwork of a number of writers who made use of different sources, refer us to chapter 14:27 and point out the discrepancy. But why should there be? Absalom may have put up this monument before he had any sons, or he may have lost his two sons.

And then comes the record of how the tidings were carried to David. The watchman announces that he recognizeth in the swift runner Ahimaaz the son of Zadok. "And the King said, He is a good man, and cometh with good tidings." All is well--is his message, while the anxious father-heart but paying little attention to the victory won, inquired for the young man Absalom. Cushai the second runner makes his appearance and he carries the tidings of Absalom's death, which he transmits to David in a tender and cautious manner. And then that grief. How pathetic! The weeping King, crying out over and over again: "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!"

"The conduct of David in reference to his profligate son, is certainly extraordinary, but is not occasioned by weakness of character, which would be inconsistent with the judicial severity with which he banished him from his presence during five years. The shameful and sinful conduct of Absalom may be viewed in two aspects: it exhibits, on the one hand, the operation of the curse which David's sin brought upon his house (2 Sam. 12:10), and the influence of the iniquity of the fathers, which is visited upon the children (Exod. 20:5); it exhibits, on the other hand, Absalom's own degeneracy and profligacy, which fit him to be the bearer of the family-curse. It was not in the latter, but in the former aspect, that David regarded the conduct of Absalom, for his own guilt is so grievous in his eyes, that, in comparison with it, he deems Absalom's wickedness to be inconsiderable. Hence arises the deep and boundless compassion with which he surveys his reprobate son. David's treatment of Shimei may be regarded in the same light; his consciousness of his own great guilt causes him to

overlook the guilt of that criminal." (J.H. Kurtz, Sacred History.)

9. The Return of the King

CHAPTER 19

1. The continued grief of the king (19:1-8)
2. The return of the king (19:9-16)
3. Mercy shown to Shimei (19:17-23)
4. Mephibosheth's joy (19:24-30)
5. Barzillai and Chimham (19:31-40)
6. Strife between Judah and Israel (19:41-43)

What grief must have been David's that "the victory of that day was turned into mourning"? And the people went about on tip-toe, like people ashamed after defeat. A great stillness pervaded everything, only broken by the loud and wailing voice of David: "O, my son Absalom, O, Absalom my son, my son!" All mourned with him. But what a man must this David have been to endear himself to his men, that his personal grief became so completely theirs?

Then Joab acted. He speaks as a wise statesman. It was a bold rebuke, but well deserved, for David's continued mourning was more than weakness; it was selfishness. That he greatly resented the words of condemnation of Joab may be learned from the fact that immediately after he appointed Amasa as commander in chief of his army instead of Joab. The word was also spoken to bring the king back to Jerusalem from exile and he returned.

Once more Shimei appears upon the scene; he brings with him a thousand men of Benjamin and Ziba also. Shimei fell down before the King and implored his forgiveness. Though Abishai suggested his death, the mercy Shimei craved was readily granted and the King swore unto him. But the mercy shown was at the expense of righteousness. The ultimate fate of Shimei we shall find recorded in 1 Kings 2.

Mephibosheth appears next with undressed feet, untrimmed hair and unwashed clothes; he had been thus since the flight of the King. Ziba's deception practised on the King is now discovered. But David's conduct towards lame Mephibosheth cannot be justified. The impatience David showed when Mephibosheth speaks is proof that he felt guilty at the rash word he spoke to Ziba. Then he tells Mephibosheth that he and Ziba should divide the land. This was injustice. The deception of Ziba had deserved punishment. Beautiful is Mephibosheth's answer. It shows a love and devotion which is almost unsurpassed in the Bible. "Yea, let him take all, forasmuch as my lord the King is come again in peace to his own house." It was a sweet echo of Jonathan's love for David. It hardly needs to be pointed out that in all this David still acts as a natural man and not as guided by Jehovah and His Spirit. His object was to make himself still more attractive with the people and conciliate the different factions. If he had acted in faith, remembering that the Lord had called him into the kingdom and that He was able to keep him, he would not have tried to gain his end by such means. The bright picture in this chapter is aged and unselfish Barzillai. And the strife between Judah and Israel on account of the King is the first indication of the great division and the internal strifes, which many years later broke out among the people. Thus failure is seen on all sides.

10. The Revolt of Sheba

CHAPTER 20

1. Sheba's revolt (20:1-2)
2. The ten concubines shut up (20:3)
3. Amasa's failure (20:4-6)
4. Joab and the death of Amasa (20:7-13)
5. Joab, the wise woman and the death of Sheba (20:14-22)
6. David's officials (20:23-26)

The final revolt in David's reign was headed by a wicked man, whose name was Sheba. Israel sided with him, probably as the result of the dissension recorded at the close of the previous chapter. Judah remained loyal to David. The act of David in shutting up unto the day of their death the ten concubines to live in widowhood was necessitated on account of what had taken place (16:21). Amasa being now the leader of the hosts of David (19:13) is called to subdue the revolt; but he proves a failure and could not mobilize the army. Abishai is commissioned then and with him is also Joab. All the mighty men, including the executioners and runners (Cherethites and Pelethites) pursued after Sheba. Then Amasa appeared on the scene. Joab was girded around his loins with a sword which was in the scabbard and the sword fell out. Joab picked up the sword but Amasa did not see the sword in his hand. Then Joab took Amasa by the beard with his right hand, while he held the sword in his left. Then he smote Amasa deliberately so that he died. He might have lied himself out of the accusation that he murdered Amasa by saying he fell into the sword and that it was an accident. But 1 Kings 2:32 gives the reckoning with unscrupulous Joab for the innocent blood he had shed. Jealousy had led Joab to murder Amasa. And Sheba was killed in Abel, the city in which he sought shelter. On the advice of the woman mentioned in the story, he was beheaded. The revolt ended.

IV. THE APPENDIX TO THE HISTORY OF DAVID

1. The Famines and the Wars with the Philistines

CHAPTER 21

1. The Famine and the Gibeonites (21:1-14)
2. The Wars with the Philistines (21:15-22)

The fourth section of the second book of Samuel is an appendix to the history of David. When the great famine happened in the days of David we do not know. After the famine had returned year after year, for three years, David inquired of the Lord. Why did he not inquire in the first year? It is an evidence of the low spiritual state which prevailed at that time. The answer which David received revealed the cause of the judgment which rested upon the land. It was Saul and the blood-guilt in having slain the Gibeonites. The story of the Gibeonites is recorded in Joshua 9. They got in among Israel through deception and Joshua had made peace and a league with them. Though they belonged to the nations doomed to death they were permitted to live and became the hewers of wood and the drawers of water (josh. 9:26-27). Jehovah's name and an oath assured them of their safety.

Saul had violated this covenant and slain some of them. This wrong is now to be righted--David did not inquire again of the Lord what he should do but consulted the Gibeonites instead. And the Gibeonites demand not silver nor gold of Saul and of his house, "neither for us shalt thou kill any man in Israel." After that they asked that seven men of his sons be delivered unto them and they would hang them up unto the Lord in Gibeah. And again in haste the king promised to do so. Their demand, though piously worded, was not according to the law of God. Children were not to be put to death for the sins of their fathers (Deut. 24:16). Saul was the guilty one and he had died. How atonement for the broken covenant and the blood guilt was to be made remained for the Lord to say. David, not asking direction from Him, but turning to the Gibeonites, had failed again. And still the Gibeonites in their awful demand shared the bloodthirsty cruel character of the Canaanites. David carried out the awful request. He spared Mephibosheth. Two sons of Rizpah, a concubine of Saul, and five sons of Merab (Michal in the Authorized Version is incorrect), Saul's eldest daughter, are the victims. They were hanged by the Gibeonites and then left hanging. Sad it is to think that the horrible deed might have been averted if but David had again turned to the Lord and inquired of Him. And another law is broken, when these bodies were kept hanging for months. "And if a man have committed a sin worthy of death, and he be put to death, and thou hang him on a tree, his body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day." Surely the Lord could not sanction the deed so opposite to His own law. One of the most terrible scenes recorded in the Bible follows. Rizpah, the concubine of Saul, watched by her dead from April till fall, when it began to rain again. Six months she abode there, the only resting place the coarse sackcloth, above her the putrefying corpses of the seven men, including her two sons. While the hot oriental summer lasted she kept her awful watch and chased away by day the screeching birds of prey, while her nights were disturbed by the hungry howls of wolves and jackals. Could there be a more pathetic picture! And she gained something by it. When David hears of it he is stirred to action. The bones of Saul and Jonathan and the seven men who had been hanged were buried. And after that God was entreated for the land. It seems then that David turned to God and He was favorable to the land.

In the record of the battles with the Philistines four giants are mentioned. They represent the power of darkness, which the people of God must overcome. (For a full typical application we refer the reader to the Numerical Bible.)

2. David's Song of Deliverance

CHAPTER 22

1. The praise of Jehovah (22:1-4)
2. The sorrows of the past (22:5-7)
3. God's presence and intervention (22:8-20)
4. Reward and approval (22:21-28)
5. The judgment of the enemies (22:29-43)
6. The exaltation above the adversaries (22:44-49)
7. The praise of Jehovah (22:50-51)

It would take many pages to give an exposition of this great song which in the Book of Psalms, with a few changes, is known as Psalm 18. He uttered these words through the Spirit of the Lord. "The Spirit of the LORD

spake by me and His word was in my tongue" (23:2). It is therefore a great prophetic utterance. The song takes us beyond David and his experience. His sufferings and deliverances are indicated, but they are but prophetic of Him, whose sufferings and whose victory are foreshadowed in David's life and experience. The great deliverance psalm includes therefore prophetically the story of David's greater Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. In verses 5-7 we have David's suffering when an exile, persecuted by Saul; prophetically the suffering of Christ, who was compassed by the waves of death and who was plunged beneath these dark waves and saved out of death. Verses 8-20 describe the intervention. Nothing in the life of David could be made to fit this; but being a prophetic utterance there is no difficulty to trace here the resurrection of Christ, who was brought forth into a large place (verse 20). "He delivered me, for He delighted in Me" can only be truthfully applied to Christ. And all looks forward to a still greater intervention and manifestation of God. Verses 21-28 equally can only be true of our Lord. "For I have kept the ways of the Lord, and have not wickedly departed from my God." It is impossible to say that David spoke of himself. The history we have traced gives a far different story. But every word is true if we think of David's Son, our Lord. And the judgment and exaltation described in the closing stanzas of this song will be realized in Him into whose hands the Father has committed all judgment. He will be "the head of the nations" and a people will serve Him (verses 44-45). That David had before his heart the great covenant-promise (chapter 7) and that his vision was enlarged so that he beheld "His Anointed" and His coming manifestation and kingdom becomes sufficiently clear in the last two verses of the song.

3. The Last Words of David and the Record of the Mighty Men

CHAPTER 23

1. His last words (23:1-7)
2. The names and records of David's mighty men (23:8-39)

In his last words an even greater and clearer vision is given to King David. "If Psalm 18 was a grand Hallelujah, with which David quitted the scene of life, these 'his last words' are the divine attestation of all that he had sung and prophesied in the Psalms concerning the spiritual import of the kingdom which he was to found in accordance with the divine message that Nathan had been commissioned to bring to him. Hence these 'last words' must be regarded as an inspired prophetic utterance by David, before his death, about the King and kingdom of God in their full and real meaning" (History of Judah and Israel). And this King is Christ and the kingdom that which will be set up with the second coming of Christ. As the translation in the authorized version is weak we give here a corrected translation:

David the son of Jesse saith,
And the man who was raised on high saith,
The anointed of the God of Jacob,
And the sweet Psalmist in Israel:
The Spirit of the Lord spake by me,
And His word was on my tongue.
The God of Israel said,
The Rock of Israel spake to me:
A righteous ruler over men.

A Ruler in the fear of God,
Like the light of the morning when the sun riseth,
A morning without clouds;
When the tender grass cometh forth out of the earth,
Through the clear shining after the rain.
But my house is not so with God.
Yet He has made me an everlasting covenant
Ordered in all and sure;
For this is all my salvation--all my delight,
Although He maketh it not to grow.
But the wicked shall be all of them as thorns thrust away,
For they cannot be taken with the hand;
And the man that toucheth them,
Must have iron and the staff of a spear
And they shall be utterly burned with fire in their dwelling.

Little comment is needed; just a little help to open up the words of the dying King. The righteous ruler over men, a ruler in the fear of God is our Lord. Thus He will yet rule over the earth in righteousness. And when He comes to rule, there cometh the morning without clouds when the earth will be refreshed, through the clear shining, the brightness of His glory, after the rain; after judgment is passed. Then David confesseth that his house is not so with God. His hope, his salvation, all his delight is in the covenant made with him; it centers in the fulfilment of the Davidic covenant. And the wicked will suffer the fire of His wrath.

In blessed keeping with this last great prophetic utterance of the King are the records and the names of the mighty men of David. They were the men who loved David, stood by him, showed their loyalty and devotion to the King. And others are given, of whom we read no definite deeds. The last name is Uriah the Hittite. The spiritual meaning is not hard to find. Before the judgment seat of Christ all will be made manifest. When He comes to be the righteous Ruler, to usher in the morning without clouds, those will be remembered who were loyal and devoted to Him in His rejection. No name and no deed, even the smallest, will then be forgotten. What an incentive this should be, especially in the solemn days in which we live, when we see the day approaching, to serve Him and be as devoted to our absent, but coming Lord, as David's mighty men were to him. In our annotation on 1 Chronicles where we find these records also we hope to point out some of the details of the deeds of David's mighty men (1 Chronicles 11).

4. David's Failure: the Altar on the Threshing Floor of Araunah

CHAPTER 24

1. The numbering of the people (24:1-9)
2. The sin acknowledged and Gad's message (24:10-14)
3. The pestilence (24:15-17)
4. The altar on the threshing floor of Araunah (24:18-25)

The final chapter of the books of Samuel is of much interest and importance. "And again the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and He moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel and Judah." In 1 Chronicles 21:1 we read "And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel." This has often been pointed out as a discrepancy

and contradiction. Criticism has explained it in the following way: "Of surpassing interest for the study of the progressiveness of revelation in the Old Testament period is the form which the chronicler has given to this verse. To his more developed religious sense the idea was abhorrent that God could be subject to moods, and incite men to a course of action for which He afterwards calls them to account. Accordingly he writes: 'And Satan stood up against Israel and moved David to number Israel.'" There is no contradiction here nor do the two accounts need an explanation as the above. Israel had committed some sin which brought upon them the displeasure of Jehovah. Satan the accuser was then permitted to influence David. The statement, "He (God) moved David," also means in Hebrew, "He suffered him to be moved." He permitted Satan to do his work. In 1 Tim. 3:6 we read that pride is the condemnation (or as it is literally "the crime") of the devil. And Satan the accuser moves David with national pride to number the people. It is significant that preceding this record are the names and achievements of the mighty men of David. No doubt his heart swelled with much elation over his victories and great achievements. While David's eyes were blinded by Satan, Joab saw the danger. In 1 Chron. 21:3 we read that he said to David: "The LORD make His people an hundred times so many more as they be; but, my lord the King, are they not all my lord's servants? Why doth my lord require this thing? Why will he be a cause of guilt to Israel?" The King's word prevailed and reluctantly Joab and the captains went forth to carry out the King's command. It was altogether a military census. But the census was not completed (1 Chronicles 27:24).

David's heart then smote him and we see him coming to the Lord and confessing his sin. "I have sinned greatly in that I have done; and now I beseech thee, LORD, take away the iniquity of Thy servant; for I have done very foolishly." It was a true confession he made that night. Then the Lord sent the answer through the prophet Gad. The Lord leaves the choice to David. Either three years of famine, three months of flight or three days of pestilence. (This is according to 1 Chron. 21:12; 2 Sam. 24:13 records seven years, which must be the error of some copyist.) And here the man of faith asserts himself "Let us now fall into the hand of the LORD; for His mercies are great, and let me not fall into the hand of man." And the Lord did not disappoint His servant's faith in His mercy. When the angel stretched out his hand upon Jerusalem to destroy it the Lord said, It is enough; stay now thine hand. And the angel of the Lord, the same who appeared to the patriarchs, to Moses, Joshua and others, was by the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite. Once more David's voice is heard in confession. "I have sinned, and I have done wickedly; but these sheep, what have they done? Let Thy hand, I pray thee, be against me, and against my father's house." He was willing to be the one sufferer for his people; in this he is a type again of our Lord, the sinbearer. He is commanded to rear an altar upon the threshing floor of Araunah. "It was a fitting spot for mercy upon Israel, this place where of old faithful Abraham had been ready to offer his only son unto God; fitting also as still outside the city; but chiefly in order that the pardoning and sparing mercy now shown, might indicate the site where, on the great altar of burnt-offering, abundant mercy in pardon and acceptance would in the future be dispensed to Israel" (A. Edersheim). It was the place upon which the temple was built (1 Chron. 21:28-22:1). And Araunah the Jebusite offered willingly the threshing floor and the sacrificial animals. But David would not consent. "Neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the LORD my God of that which doth cost me nothing." For fifty shekels of silver he bought the oxen and the threshing floor. Then the burnt offerings and peace offerings ascended unto Jehovah as a sweet savour. And Jehovah answered by fire (1 Chron.

21:26). And David before that altar, who buys and offers, thus meeting the claim of God, is a type of our Lord who bought us with the great price and offered Himself And even so as this book closes with the Lord being merciful to His land and people, the plague stayed, so will Israel in the future receive and enjoy His mercy. It will be the result of the one sacrifice.

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