

The Second Book of Samuel

¹ Now after the death of Saul, when David, having come back from the destruction of the Amalekites, had been in Ziklag for two days; ² On the third day a man came from Saul's tents, with his clothing out of order and earth on his head: and when he came to David, he went down on the earth and gave him honour. ³ And David said to him, Where have you come from? And he said, I have come in flight from the tents of Israel. ⁴ And David said to him, How did things go? Give me the news. And in answer he said, The people have gone in flight from the fight, and a great number of them are dead; and Saul and his son Jonathan are dead. ⁵ And David said to the young man who gave him the news, Why are you certain that Saul and his son Jonathan are dead? ⁶ And the young man said, I came by chance to Mount Gilboa, and I saw Saul supporting himself on his spear; and the war-carriages and horsemen overtook him. ⁷ And looking back, he saw me and gave a cry to me. And answering him I said, Here am I. ⁸ And he said to me, Who are you? And I said, I am an Amalekite. ⁹ Then he said to me, Come here to my side, and put me to death, for the pain of death has me in its grip but my life is still strong in me. ¹⁰ So I put my foot on him and gave him his death-blow, because I was certain that he would not go on living after his fall: and I took the crown from his head and the band from his arm, and I have them here for

my lord. ¹¹ Then David gave way to bitter grief, and so did all the men who were with him: ¹² And till evening they gave themselves to sorrow and weeping, and took no food, weeping for Saul and for Jonathan, his son, and for the people of the Lord and for the men of Israel; because they had come to their end by the sword. ¹³ And David said to the young man who had given him the news, Where do you come from? And he said, I am the son of a man from a strange land; I am an Amalekite. ¹⁴ And David said to him, Had you no fear of stretching out your hand to put to death the one marked with the holy oil? ¹⁵ And David sent for one of his young men and said, Go near and put an end to him. And he put him to death. ¹⁶ And David said to him, May your blood be on your head; for your mouth has given witness against you, saying, I have put to death the man marked with the holy oil. ¹⁷ Then David made this song of grief for Saul and Jonathan, his son: ¹⁸ (It is recorded in the book of Jashar for teaching to the sons of Judah) and he said: ¹⁹ The glory, O Israel, is dead on your high places! How have the great ones been made low! ²⁰ Give no news of it in Gath, let it not be said in the streets of Ashkelon; or the daughters of the Philistines will be glad, the daughters of men without circumcision will be uplifted in joy. ²¹ O mountains of Gilboa, let there be no dew or rain on you, you fields of death: for there the arms of the strong have been shamed, the arms of Saul, as if he had not been marked with the holy oil. ²² From the blood of the dead, from the fat of the strong, the bow of

Jonathan was not turned back, the sword of Saul did not come back unused. ²³ Saul and Jonathan were loved and pleasing; in their lives and in their death they were not parted; they went more quickly than eagles, they were stronger than lions. ²⁴ O daughters of Israel, have sorrow for Saul, by whom you were delicately clothed in robes of red, with ornaments of gold on your dresses. ²⁵ How have the great ones been made low in the fight! Jonathan is dead on your high places. ²⁶ I am full of grief for you, my brother Jonathan: very dear have you been to me: your love for me was a wonder, greater than the love of women. ²⁷ How have the great ones been made low, and the arms of war broken!

2

¹ Now after this, David, questioning the Lord, said, Am I to go up into any of the towns of Judah? And the Lord said to him, Go up. And David said, Where am I to go? And he said, To Hebron. ² So David went there, taking with him his two wives, Ahinoam of Jezreel, and Abigail, the wife of Nabal of Carmel. ³ And David took all his men with him, every man with his family: and they were living in the towns round Hebron. ⁴ And the men of Judah came there, and with the holy oil made David king over the people of Judah. And word came to David that it was the men of Jabesh-gilead who put Saul's body in its last resting-place. ⁵ And David sent to the men of Jabesh-gilead and said to them, May the Lord give you his blessing, because you have done this kind act to Saul your

lord, and have put his body to rest! ⁶ May the Lord be good and true to you: and I myself will see that your kind act is rewarded, because you have done this thing. ⁷ Then let your hands be strong, and have no fear: though Saul your lord is dead, the people of Judah have made me their king. ⁸ Now Abner, the son of Ner, captain of Saul's army, had taken Saul's son Ish-bosheth over to Mahanaim, ⁹ And made him king over Gilead and the Asherites and over Jezreel and Ephraim and Benjamin, that is, over all Israel. ¹⁰ (Saul's son Ish-bosheth was forty years old when he became king over Israel, and he was ruler for two years.) But Judah was on the side of David. ¹¹ And the time when David was king in Hebron over the people of Judah was seven years and six months. ¹² And Abner, the son of Ner, with the servants of Saul's son Ish-bosheth, went out from Mahanaim to Gibeon. ¹³ And Joab, the son of Zeruah, and the servants of David, went out and came face to face with them by the pool of Gibeon; and they took up their position, facing one another on opposite sides of the pool. ¹⁴ And Abner said to Joab, Let the young men give a test of their strength before us. And Joab said, Let them do so. ¹⁵ So they got up and went over by number: twelve for Benjamin and Ish-bosheth and twelve of the servants of David. ¹⁶ And every one got the other by the head, driving his sword into the other's side, so they all went down together: and that place was named the Field of Sides, and it is in Gibeon. ¹⁷ And there was hard fighting that day; and Abner and the men of Israel gave way before

the servants of David. ¹⁸ There were three sons of Zeruah there, Joab and Abishai and Asahel: and Asahel was as quick-footed as a roe of the fields. ¹⁹ Asahel went running after Abner, not turning to the right or to the left. ²⁰ Then Abner, looking back, said, Is it you, Asahel? And he said, It is I. ²¹ And Abner said, Then go to the right or to the left and put your hands on one of the fighting-men and take his arms. But Asahel would not be turned away from going after Abner. ²² Then again Abner said to Asahel, Go to one side, do not keep on coming after me: why will you make me put an end to you? for then I will be shamed before your brother Joab. ²³ But still he did not go to one side: so Abner gave him a back blow in the stomach with his spear, so that the spear came out at his back; and he went down on the earth, wounded to death: and all those who came to the place where Asahel went down dead, came to a stop. ²⁴ But Joab and Abishai went after Abner: and the sun went down when they came to the hill of Ammah, which is to the east of the road through the waste land of Geba. ²⁵ And the men of Benjamin came together after Abner in one band, and took their places on the top of a hill. ²⁶ Then crying out to Joab, Abner said, Are fighting and destruction to go on for ever? do you not see that the end will only be bitter? how long will it be before you send the people back and make them give up attacking their countrymen? ²⁷ And Joab said, By the living God, if you had not given the word, the people would have gone on attacking their countrymen till the morning. ²⁸ So Joab had a horn sounded,

and all the people came to a stop, and gave up going after Israel and fighting them. ²⁹ And all that night Abner and his men went through the Arabah; they went over Jordan and through all Bithron and came to Mahanaim. ³⁰ And Joab came back from fighting Abner: and when he had got all his men together, it was seen that nineteen of David's men, in addition to Asahel, were not with them. ³¹ But David's men had put to death three hundred and sixty of the men of Benjamin and of Abner's men ³² And they took Asahel's body and put it in the last resting-place of his father in Bethlehem. And Joab and his men, travelling all night, came to Hebron at dawn.

3

¹ Now there was a long war between Saul's people and David's people; and David became stronger and stronger, but those on Saul's side became more and more feeble. ² While David was in Hebron he became the father of sons: the oldest was Amnon, son of Ahinoam of Jezreel; ³ And the second, Chileab, whose mother was Abigail, the wife of Nabal the Carmelite; and the third, Absalom, son of Maacah, the daughter of Talmai, king of Geshur; ⁴ And the fourth, Adonijah, the son of Haggith; and the fifth, Shephatiah, the son of Abital; ⁵ And the sixth, Ithream, whose mother was David's wife Eglah. These were the sons of David, whose birth took place in Hebron. ⁶ Now while there was war between Saul's people and David's people, Abner was making himself strong among the supporters of Saul. ⁷ Now Saul had

among his wives a woman named Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah: and Ish-bosheth said to Abner, Why have you taken my father's wife? ⁸ And Abner was very angry at the words of Ish-bosheth, and he said, Am I a dog's head of Judah? I am this day doing all in my power for the cause of your father Saul and for his brothers and his friends, and have not given you up into the hands of David, and now you say I have done wrong with a woman. ⁹ May God's punishment be on Abner, if I do not for David as the Lord in his oath has said, ¹⁰ And if I do not take away the kingdom from the family of Saul and make David ruler over Israel and Judah from Dan as far as Beer-sheba! ¹¹ And so great was Ish-bosheth's fear of Abner that he was not able to say a word in answer. ¹² And Abner sent men to David at Hebron, saying, Make an agreement with me, and I will give you my support in getting all Israel on your side. ¹³ And he said, It is well; I will make an agreement with you, but on one condition, which is, that when you come before me, Saul's daughter Michal is to come with you; till she comes you will not see my face. ¹⁴ And David sent men to Saul's son Ish-bosheth, saying, Give me back Michal, my wife, whom I made mine for the price of the private parts of a hundred Philistines. ¹⁵ So Ish-bosheth sent and took her from her husband Paltiel, the son of Laish. ¹⁶ And her husband went with her as far as Bahurim, weeping while he went. Then Abner said to him, Go back. And he went back. ¹⁷ Then Abner had a talk with the chief men of Israel, saying, In the past it was your desire to

make David your king: so now, do it: ¹⁸ For the Lord has said of David, By the hand of my servant David I will make my people Israel safe from the Philistines, and from all who are against them. ¹⁹ And Abner said the same things to Benjamin: and he went to David in Hebron to make clear to him what seemed good to Israel and to all the people of Benjamin. ²⁰ So Abner, with twenty men, came to Hebron, to David. And David made a feast for Abner and the men who were with him. ²¹ And Abner said to David, Now I will go, and make all Israel come to my lord the king, so that they may make an agreement with you, and your kingdom may be as wide as your heart's desire. Then David sent Abner away and he went in peace. ²² Now the servants of David and Joab had been out attacking a band of armed men, and they came back with a great store of goods taken in the fight: but Abner was no longer in Hebron with David, for he had sent him away and he had gone in peace. ²³ When Joab and his men came, news was given them that Abner, the son of Ner, had come to the king, who had let him go away again in peace. ²⁴ Then Joab came to the king, and said, What have you done? when Abner came to you why did you send him away and let him go? ²⁵ Is it not clear to you that Abner, the son of Ner, came with deceit to get knowledge of your going out and your coming in and of all you are doing? ²⁶ And when Joab had come out from David, he sent men after Abner, and they overtook him at the water-spring of Sirah, and made him come back with them: but David had no knowledge

of it. ²⁷ And when Abner was back in Hebron, Joab took him on one side by the doorway of the town to have a word with him quietly, and there he gave him a wound in the stomach, causing his death in payment for the death of his brother Asahel. ²⁸ And when David had word of it he said, May I and my kingdom be clear for ever in the eyes of the Lord from the blood of Abner, the son of Ner: ²⁹ May it come on the head of Joab and all his father's family: among the men of Joab's family may there ever be some who are diseased or lepers, or who do the work of women, or are put to the sword, or are wasted from need of food! ³⁰ So Joab and Abishai his brother put Abner to death, because he had put to death their brother Asahel in the fight at Gibeon. ³¹ And David said to Joab and all the people who were with him, Go in grief and put haircloth about you, in sorrow for Abner. And King David went after the dead body. ³² And they put Abner's body to rest in Hebron; and the king and all the people were weeping loudly by the resting-place of Abner's body. ³³ And the king made a song of grief for Abner and said, Was the death of Abner to be like the death of a foolish man? ³⁴ Your hands were free, your feet were not chained: like the downfall of a man before evil men, so was your fall. And the weeping of the people over him went on again. ³⁵ And the people came to make David take food, while it was still day, but David with an oath said, May God's punishment be on me if I take a taste of bread or any other thing till the sun has gone down! ³⁶ And all the people took note of it and

were pleased: like everything the king did, it was pleasing to the people. ³⁷ So it was clear to Israel and to all the people on that day that the king was not responsible for the death of Abner, the son of Ner. ³⁸ And the king said to his servants, Do you not see that a chief and a great man has come to his end today in Israel? ³⁹ While I, though I am crowned king, have little strength, and these men, the sons of Zeruah, are out of my control: may the Lord give to the evil-doer the reward of his evil-doing!

4

¹ And when Saul's son Ish-bosheth had news that Abner was dead in Hebron, his hands became feeble, and all the Israelites were troubled. ² And Saul's son had two men, captains of bands, one named Baanah and the other Rechab, sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, of the tribe of Benjamin; (for Beeroth was at one time taken to be part of Benjamin: ³ But the people of Beeroth had gone in flight to Gittaim, where they have been living to this day.) ⁴ Now Jonathan, Saul's son, had a son whose feet were damaged. He was five years old when news of the death of Saul and Jonathan came from Jezreel, and the woman who took care of him took him up and went in flight: and while she was getting him away as quickly as she was able, he had a fall and his feet were damaged. His name was Mephibosheth. ⁵ And Rechab and Baanah, the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, went out and came to the house of Ish-bosheth in the heat of the day, when he was resting in the middle

of the day. Now the woman who kept the door was cleaning grain, and sleep overcame her. ⁶ And Rechab and his brother Baanah got in without being seen. ⁷ And when they came into the house, Ish-bosheth was stretched on his bed in his bedroom; and they made an attack on him and put him to death, and, cutting off his head, they took it with them and went by the road through the Arabah all night. ⁸ And they took the head of Ish-bosheth to David in Hebron, and said to the king, Here is the head of Ish-bosheth, the son of Saul your hater, who would have taken your life; the Lord has taken payment for the wrongs of my lord the king from Saul and his seed today. ⁹ And David made answer to Rechab and his brother Baanah, the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, and said to them, By the living Lord, who has kept me safe from all my trouble, ¹⁰ When one came to me with the news of Saul's death, in the belief that it would be good news, I took him and put him to death in Ziklag, which was the reward I gave him for his news: ¹¹ How much more, when evil men have put an upright person to death, in his house, sleeping on his bed, will I take payment from you for his blood, and have you cut off from the earth? ¹² And David gave orders to his young men and they put them to death, cutting off their hands and their feet and hanging them up by the side of the pool in Hebron. But they took the head of Ish-bosheth and put it in its last resting-place with Abner's body in Hebron.

5

¹ Then all the tribes of Israel came to David in Hebron and said, Truly, we are your bone and your flesh. ² In the past when Saul was king over us, it was you who went at the head of Israel when they went out or came in: and the Lord said to you, You are to be the keeper of my people Israel and their ruler. ³ So all the responsible men of Israel came to the king at Hebron; and King David made an agreement with them in Hebron before the Lord: and they put the holy oil on David and made him king over Israel. ⁴ David was thirty years old when he became king, and he was king for forty years, ⁵ Ruling over Judah in Hebron for seven years and six months, and in Jerusalem, over all Israel and Judah, for thirty-three years. ⁶ And the king and his men went to Jerusalem against the Jebusites, the people of the land: and they said to David, You will not come in here, but the blind and the feeble-footed will keep you out; for they said, David will not be able to come in here. ⁷ But David took the strong place of Zion, which is the town of David. ⁸ And that day David said, Whoever makes an attack on the Jebusites, let him go up by the water-pipe, and put to death all the blind and feeble-footed who are hated by David. And this is why they say, The blind and feeble-footed may not come into the house. ⁹ So David took the strong tower for his living-place, naming it the town of David. And David took in hand the building of the town all round, starting from the Millo. ¹⁰ And David became greater and greater; for the Lord, the God

of armies, was with him. ¹¹ And Hiram, king of Tyre, sent men to David, with cedar-trees and woodworkers and stoneworkers: and they made David a house. ¹² And David saw that the Lord had made his position safe as king over Israel, and that he had made his kingdom great because of his people Israel. ¹³ And David took more women and wives in Jerusalem, after he had come from Hebron: and he had more sons and daughters. ¹⁴ These are the names of those whose birth took place in Jerusalem: Shammua and Shobab and Nathan and Solomon. ¹⁵ And Ibhar and Elishua and Nepheg and Japhia. ¹⁶ And Elishama and Eliada and Eliphelet. ¹⁷ And when the Philistines had news that David had been made king over Israel, they all went up in search of David; and David, hearing of it, went down to the strong place. ¹⁸ And when the Philistines came, they went in every direction in the valley of Rephaim. ¹⁹ And David, desiring directions from the Lord, said, Am I to go up against the Philistines? will you give them up into my hands? And the Lord said, Go up, for I will certainly give up the Philistines into your hands. ²⁰ And David went to Baal-perazim, and overcame them there; and he said, The Lord has let the forces fighting against me be broken before me as a wall is broken by rushing waters. So that place was named Baal-perazim. ²¹ And the Philistines, when they went in flight, did not take their images with them, and David and his men took them away. ²² And the Philistines came up again, and went in every direction in the valley of Rephaim. ²³ And when David went for directions

to the Lord, he said, You are not to go up against them in front; but make a circle round them from the back and come on them opposite the spice-trees. ²⁴ Then at the sound of footsteps in the tops of the trees, go forward quickly, for the Lord has gone out before you to overcome the army of the Philistines. ²⁵ And David did as the Lord had said; and he overcame the Philistines, attacking them from Gibeon to near Gezer.

6

¹ And David got together all the fighting-men of Israel to the number of thirty thousand; ² And David, and all the people who were with him, went to Baal of Judah to get the ark of God, over which the holy name is named, the name of the Lord of armies, whose place is between the winged ones. ³ And they put the ark of God on a new cart and took it out of the house of Abinadab which was on the hill: and Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, were the drivers of the cart. ⁴ And Uzzah went by the side of the ark, while Ahio went before it. ⁵ And David and all the men of Israel made melody before the Lord with all their power, with songs and with corded instruments and instruments of brass. ⁶ And when they came to Nacon's grain-floor, Uzzah put his hand on the ark of God to keep it safe in its place, for the oxen were out of control. ⁷ And the wrath of the Lord, burning against Uzzah, sent destruction on him because he had put his hand on the ark, and death came to him there by the ark of God. ⁸ And David was angry because of the Lord's outburst of wrath against Uzzah: and he gave that place the name

Perez-uzzah, which is its name to this day. ⁹ And such was David's fear of the Lord that day, that he said, How may I let the ark of God come to me? ¹⁰ So David did not let the ark of the Lord come back to him to the town of David: but had it turned away and put into the house of Obed-edom the Gittite. ¹¹ And the ark of the Lord was in the house of Obed-edom the Gittite for three months: and the Lord sent a blessing on Obed-edom and all his family. ¹² And they said to King David, The blessing of the Lord is on the family of Obed-edom and on all he has, because of the ark of God. And David went and took the ark of God from the house of Obed-edom into the town of David with joy. ¹³ And when those who were lifting the ark of the Lord had gone six steps, he made an offering of an ox and a fat young beast. ¹⁴ And David, clothed in a linen ephod, was dancing before the Lord with all his strength. ¹⁵ So David and all the men of Israel took up the ark of the Lord with cries of joy and sounding of horns. ¹⁶ And when the ark of the Lord came into the town of David, Michal, Saul's daughter, looking out of the window, saw King David dancing and jumping before the Lord; and to her mind he seemed foolish. ¹⁷ And they took in the ark of the Lord, and put it in its place inside the tent which David had put up for it: and David made burned offerings and peace-offerings to the Lord. ¹⁸ And after David had made the burned offerings and the peace-offerings, he gave the people a blessing in the name of the Lord of armies. ¹⁹ And he gave to every man and woman among all the people, among all the masses of Israel, a cake of bread and a measure of wine and

a cake of dry grapes. Then all the people went away, every man to his house. ²⁰ Then David came back to give a blessing to his family. And Michal, Saul's daughter, came out to him and said, How full of glory was the king of Israel today, who let himself be seen uncovered by his servant-girls like a foolish person uncovering himself without shame! ²¹ And David said to Michal, I was dancing before the Lord, who put me over your father and all his sons, to make me a ruler over the people of the Lord, over his people Israel: and I will go on playing before the Lord; ²² And I will do even worse than this, and make myself even lower in your eyes: but the servant-girls of whom you were talking will give me honour. ²³ And Michal, Saul's daughter, had no child till the day of her death.

7

¹ Now when the king was living in his house, and the Lord had given him rest from war on every side; ² The king said to Nathan the prophet, See now, I am living in a house of cedar, but the ark of God is housed inside the curtains of a tent. ³ And Nathan said to the king, Go and do whatever is in your heart; for the Lord is with you. ⁴ Now that night the word of the Lord came to Nathan, saying, ⁵ Go and say to my servant David, The Lord says, Are you to be the builder of a house, a living-place for me? ⁶ For from the day when I took the children of Israel up out of Egypt till this day, I have had no house, but have gone from place to place in a tent. ⁷ In all the places where I went with all the children of Israel, did I ever

say to any of the judges of Israel, to whom I gave the care of my people Israel, Why have you not made me a house of cedar? ⁸ Then say these words to my servant David, The Lord of armies says, I took you from the fields, from keeping the sheep, so that you might be a ruler over my people, over my people Israel: ⁹ And I have been with you wherever you went, cutting off before you all those who were against you; and I will make your name great, like the name of the greatest ones of the earth. ¹⁰ And I will make a resting-place for my people Israel, planting them there, so that they may be living in the place which is theirs, and never again be moved; and never again will they be troubled by evil men as they were at the first, ¹¹ From the time when I put judges over my people Israel; and I will give you peace from all who are against you. And the Lord says to you that he will make you the head of a line of kings. ¹² And when the time comes for you to go to rest with your fathers, I will put in your place your seed after you, the offspring of your body, and I will make his kingdom strong. ¹³ He will be the builder of a house for my name, and I will make the seat of his authority certain for ever. ¹⁴ I will be to him a father and he will be to me a son: if he does wrong, I will give him punishment with the rod of men and with the blows of the children of men; ¹⁵ But my mercy will not be taken away from him, as I took it from him who was before you. ¹⁶ And your family and your kingdom will keep their place before me for ever: the seat of your authority will never be overturned. ¹⁷ So

Nathan gave David an account of all these words and this vision. ¹⁸ Then David the king went in and took his seat before the Lord, and said, Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my family, that you have been my guide till now? ¹⁹ And this was only a small thing to you, O Lord God; but your words have even been about the far-off future of your servant's family, O Lord God! ²⁰ What more may David say to you? for you have knowledge of your servant, O Lord God. ²¹ Because of your word and from your heart, you have done all this great work, and let your servant see it. ²² Truly you are great, O Lord God: there is no one like you and no other God but you, as is clear from everything which has come to our ears. ²³ And what other nation in the earth, like your people Israel, did a god go out to take for himself, to be his people, and to make a name for himself, and to do great and strange things for them, driving out a nation and its gods from before his people? ²⁴ But you took and made strong for yourself your people Israel, to be your people for ever; and you, Lord, became their God. ²⁵ And now, O Lord God, may the word which you have said about your servant and about his family, be made certain for ever, and may you do as you have said! ²⁶ And let your name be made great for ever, and let men say, The Lord of armies is God over Israel: and let the family of David your servant be made strong before you! ²⁷ For you, O Lord of armies, the God of Israel, have clearly said to your servant, I will make you the head of a family of kings: and so it has come into your servant's heart to make this

prayer to you. ²⁸ And now, O Lord God, you are God and your words are true and you have said you will give your servant this good thing; ²⁹ So may it be your pleasure to give your blessing to the family of your servant, so that it may go on for ever before you: (for you, O Lord God, have said it,) and may your blessing be on your servant's family line for ever!

8

¹ And it came about after this that David made an attack on the Philistines and overcame them; and David took the authority of the mother-town from the hands of the Philistines. ² And he overcame the Moabites, and he had them measured with a line when they were stretched out on the earth; marking out two lines for death and one full line for life. So the Moabites became servants to David and gave him offerings. ³ And David overcame Hadadezer, the son of Rehob, king of Zobah, when he went to make his power seen by the River. ⁴ And David took from him one thousand, seven hundred horsemen and twenty thousand footmen: and David had the leg-muscles of the horses cut, only keeping enough of them for a hundred war-carriages. ⁵ And when the Aramaeans of Damascus came to the help of Hadadezer, king of Zobah, David put to the sword twenty-two thousand of the Aramaeans. ⁶ And David put armed forces in Aram of Damascus: and the Aramaeans became servants to David and gave him offerings. And the Lord made David overcome wherever he went. ⁷ And David took their gold body-covers from the servants of Hadadezer and took them

to Jerusalem. ⁸ And from Tebah and Berothai, towns of Hadadezer, King David took a great store of brass. ⁹ And when Tou, king of Hamath, had news that David had overcome all the army of Hadadezer, ¹⁰ He sent his son Hadoram to David, with words of peace and blessing, because he had overcome Hadadezer in the fight, for Hadadezer had wars with Tou; and Hadoram took with him vessels of silver and gold and brass: ¹¹ These King David made holy to the Lord, together with the silver and gold which he had taken from the nations he had overcome — ¹² The nations of Edom and Moab, and the children of Ammon and the Philistines and the Amalekites and the goods he had taken from Hadadezer, the son of Rehob, king of Zobah. ¹³ And David got great honour for himself, when he came back, by the destruction of Edom in the valley of Salt, to the number of eighteen thousand men. ¹⁴ And he put armed forces in Edom; all through Edom he had armed forces stationed, and all the Edomites became servants to David. And the Lord made David overcome wherever he went. ¹⁵ And David was king over all Israel, judging and giving right decisions for all his people. ¹⁶ And Joab, the son of Zeruah, was chief of the army; and Jehoshaphat, the son of Ahilud, was keeper of the records; ¹⁷ And Zadok and Abiathar, the son of Ahimelech, the son of Ahitub, were priests; and Seraiah was the scribe; ¹⁸ And Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada, was over the Cherethites and the Pelethites; and David's sons were priests.

9

¹ And David said, Is there still anyone of Saul's family living, so that I may be a friend to him, because of Jonathan? ² Now there was of Saul's people a servant named Ziba, and they sent him to David; and the king said to him, Are you Ziba? And he said, I am. ³ And the king said, Is there anyone of Saul's family still living, to whom I may be a friend in God's name? And Ziba said, There is a son of Jonathan, whose feet are damaged. ⁴ And the king said to him, Where is he? And Ziba said to the king, He is in the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel, in Lo-debar. ⁵ Then King David sent, and had him taken from Lo-debar, from the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel. ⁶ And Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, came to David, and falling down on his face, gave him honour. And David said, Mephibosheth. And answering he said, Your servant is here. ⁷ And David said to him, Have no fear: for truly I will be good to you, because of your father Jonathan, and I will give back to you all the land which was Saul's; and you will have a place at my table at all times. ⁸ And he went down on his face before the king, and said, What is your servant, for you to take note of a dead dog such as I am? ⁹ Then the king sent for Ziba, Saul's servant, and said to him, All the property of Saul and of his family I have given to your master's son. ¹⁰ And you and your sons and your servants are to take care of the land for him, and get in the fruit of it, so that your master's son may have food: but Mephibosheth, your master's son, will have a place at my table at all times. Now Ziba had

fifteen sons and twenty servants. ¹¹ Then Ziba said to the king, Every order which you have given to your servant will be done. As for Mephibosheth, he had a place at David's table, like one of the king's sons. ¹² And Mephibosheth had a young son named Mica. And all the people living in the house of Ziba were servants to Mephibosheth. ¹³ So Mephibosheth went on living in Jerusalem; for he took all his meals at the king's table; and he had not the use of his feet.

10

¹ Now after this, death came to the king of the children of Ammon, and Hanun, his son, became king in his place. ² And David said, I will be a friend to Hanun, the son of Nahash, as his father was a friend to me. So David sent his servants, to give him words of comfort on account of his father. And David's servants came into the land of the children of Ammon. ³ But the chiefs of the children of Ammon said to Hanun their lord, Does it seem to you that David is honouring your father by sending comforters to you? has he not sent his servants to go through the town and make secret observation of it, and overcome it? ⁴ So Hanun took David's servants, and after cutting off half the hair on their chins, and cutting off the skirts of their robes up to the middle, he sent them away. ⁵ When David had news of it, he sent men out with the purpose of meeting them on their way, for the men were greatly shamed: and the king said, Go to Jericho till your hair is long again, and then come back. ⁶ And when the children of Ammon saw that they had made themselves hated

by David, they sent to the Aramaeans of Beth-rehob and Zobah, and got for payment twenty thousand footmen, and they got from the king of Maacah a thousand men, and from Tob twelve thousand. ⁷ And hearing of this, David sent Joab and all the army and the best fighting-men. ⁸ And the children of Ammon came out and put their forces in position at the way into the town: and the Aramaeans of Zobah and of Rehob, with the men of Tob and Maacah, were by themselves in the field. ⁹ Now when Joab saw that their forces were in position against him in front and at his back, he took the best of the men of Israel and put them in line against the Aramaeans; ¹⁰ And the rest of the people he put in position against the children of Ammon, with Abishai, his brother, at their head. ¹¹ And he said, If the Aramaeans are stronger and get the better of me, then you are to come to my help; but if the children of Ammon get the better of you, I will come to your help. ¹² Take heart, and let us be strong for our people and for the towns of our God, and may the Lord do what seems good to him. ¹³ Then Joab and the people with him went forward to the fight against the Aramaeans, and they went in flight before him. ¹⁴ And when the children of Ammon saw the flight of the Aramaeans, they themselves went in flight from Abishai, and came into the town. So Joab went back from fighting the children of Ammon and came to Jerusalem. ¹⁵ And when the Aramaeans saw that Israel had overcome them, they got themselves together. ¹⁶ And Hadadezer sent for the Aramaeans who were on the other side of

the River: and they came to Helam, with Shobach, the captain of Hadadezer's army, at their head. ¹⁷ And word of this was given to David: and he got all Israel together and went over Jordan and came to Helam. And the Aramaeans put their forces in position against David, and made an attack on him. ¹⁸ And the Aramaeans went in flight before Israel; and David put to the sword the men of seven hundred Aramaean war-carriages and forty thousand footmen, and Shobach, the captain of the army, was wounded, and came to his death there. ¹⁹ And when all the kings who were servants of Hadadezer saw that they were overcome by Israel, they made peace with Israel and became their servants. So the Aramaeans, in fear, gave no more help to the children of Ammon.

11

¹ Now in the spring, at the time when kings go out to war, David sent Joab and his servants and all Israel with him; and they made waste the land of the children of Ammon, and took up their position before Rabbah, shutting it in. But David was still at Jerusalem. ² Now one evening, David got up from his bed, and while he was walking on the roof of the king's house, he saw from there a woman bathing; and the woman was very beautiful. ³ And David sent to get knowledge who the woman was. And one said, Is this not Bath-sheba, the daughter of Eliam and wife of Uriah the Hittite? ⁴ And David sent and took her; and she came to him, and he took her to his bed: (for she had been made clean;) then she went

back to her house. ⁵ And the woman became with child; and she sent word to David that she was with child. ⁶ And David sent to Joab saying, Send Uriah the Hittite to me. And Joab sent Uriah to David. ⁷ And when Uriah came to him, David put questions to him about how Joab and the people were, and how the war was going. ⁸ And David said to Uriah, Go down to your house and let your feet be washed. And Uriah went away from the king's house, and an offering from the king was sent after him. ⁹ But Uriah took his rest at the door of the king's house, with all the servants of his lord, and did not go down to his house. ¹⁰ And when word was given to David that Uriah had not gone down to his house, David said to Uriah, Have you not come from a journey? why did you not go down to your house? ¹¹ And Uriah said to David, Israel and Judah with the ark are living in tents, and my lord Joab and the other servants of my lord are sleeping in the open field; and am I to go to my house and take food and drink, and go to bed with my wife? By the living Lord, and by the life of your soul, I will not do such a thing. ¹² And David said to Uriah, Be here today, and after that I will let you go. So Uriah was in Jerusalem that day and the day after. ¹³ And when David sent for him, he took meat and drink with him, and David made him the worse for drink: and when evening came, he went to rest on his bed with the servants of his lord, but he did not go down to his house. ¹⁴ Now in the morning, David gave Uriah a letter to take to Joab. ¹⁵ And in the letter he said, Take care to put Uriah in the very front of the line, where the

fighting is most violent, and go back from him, so that he may be overcome and put to death. ¹⁶ So while Joab was watching the town, he put Uriah in the place where it was clear to him the best fighters were. ¹⁷ And the men of the town went out and had a fight with Joab: and a number of David's men came to their death in the fight, and with them Uriah the Hittite. ¹⁸ Then Joab sent David news of everything which had taken place in the war: ¹⁹ And he gave orders to the man who took the news, saying, After you have given the king all the news about the war, ²⁰ If the king is angry and says, Why did you go so near the town for the fight? was it not certain that their archers would be on the wall? ²¹ Who put Abimelech, the son of Jerubbaal, to death? did not a woman send a great stone down on him from the wall, putting him to death at Thebez? why did you go so near the wall? Then say to him, Your servant Uriah the Hittite is among the dead. ²² So the man went, and came to David, and gave him all the news which Joab had sent him to give; then David was angry with Joab and said, Why did you go so near the town for the fight? was it not certain that their archers would be on the wall? who put Abimelech, the son of Jerubbaal, to death? did not a woman send a great stone down on him from the wall, putting him to death at Thebez? why did you go so near the wall? ²³ And the man said to David, Truly the men got the better of us, and came out against us into the open country, but we sent them back to the very doors of the town. ²⁴ And the archers sent their arrows at your servants from the wall, and some

of the king's servants are dead, and among them is your servant Uriah the Hittite. ²⁵ Then David said to the man, Go and say to Joab, Do not let this be a grief to you; for one man may come to his death by the sword like another: put up an even stronger fight against the town, and take it: and do you put heart into him. ²⁶ And when the wife of Uriah had news that her husband was dead, she gave herself up to weeping for him. ²⁷ And when the days of weeping were past, David sent for her, and took her into his house, and she became his wife and gave him a son. But the Lord was not pleased with the thing David had done.

12

¹ And the Lord sent Nathan to David. And Nathan came to him and said, There were two men in the same town: one a man of great wealth, and the other a poor man. ² The man of wealth had great numbers of flocks and herds; ³ But the poor man had only one little she-lamb, which he had got and taken care of: from its birth it had been with him like one of his children; his meat was its food, and from his cup it took its drink, resting in his arms, and it was like a daughter to him. ⁴ Now a traveller came to the house of the man of wealth, but he would not take anything from his flock or his herd to make a meal for the traveller who had come to him, but he took the poor man's lamb and made it ready for the man who had come. ⁵ And David was full of wrath against that man; and he said to Nathan, By the living Lord, death is the right punishment for the man who has done

this: ⁶ And he will have to give back four times the value of the lamb, because he has done this and because he had no pity. ⁷ And Nathan said to David, You are that man. The Lord God of Israel says, I made you king over Israel, putting holy oil on you, and I kept you safe from the hands of Saul; ⁸ I gave you your master's daughter and your master's wives for yourself, and I gave you the daughters of Israel and Judah; and if that had not been enough, I would have given you such and such things. ⁹ Why then have you had no respect for the word of the Lord, doing what is evil in his eyes? You have put Uriah the Hittite to death with the sword, and have taken his wife to be your wife; you have put him to death with the sword of the children of Ammon. ¹⁰ So now the sword will never be turned away from your family; because you have had no respect for me, and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife. ¹¹ The Lord says, From those of your family I will send evil against you, and before your very eyes I will take your wives and give them to your neighbour, and he will take your wives to his bed by the light of this sun. ¹² You did it secretly; but I will do this thing before all Israel and in the light of the sun. ¹³ And David said to Nathan, Great is my sin against the Lord. And Nathan said to David, The Lord has put away your sin; death will not come on you. ¹⁴ But still, because you have had no respect for the Lord, death will certainly overtake the child who has newly come to birth. ¹⁵ Then Nathan went back to his house. And the hand of the Lord was on David's son, the child of Uriah's

wife, and it became very ill. ¹⁶ So David made prayer to God for the child; and he took no food day after day, and went in and, stretching himself out on the earth, was there all night. ¹⁷ And the chief men of his house got up and went to his side to make him get up from the earth, but he would not; and he would not take food with them. ¹⁸ And then on the seventh day the child's death took place. And David's servants were in fear of giving him the news of the child's death: for they said, Truly, while the child was still living he gave no attention when we said anything to him: what will he do to himself if we give him word that the child is dead? ¹⁹ But when David saw that his servants were talking together quietly, he was certain that the child was dead: and he said to his servants, Is the child dead? and they said, He is. ²⁰ Then David got up from the earth, and after washing and rubbing himself with oil and changing his clothing, he went into the house of the Lord and gave worship: then he went back to his house, and at his order they put food before him and he had a meal. ²¹ Then his servants said to him, Why have you been acting in this way? you were weeping and going without food while the child was still living; but when the child was dead, you got up and had a meal. ²² And he said, While the child was still living I went without food and gave myself up to weeping: for I said, Who is able to say that the Lord will not have mercy on me and give the child life? ²³ But now that the child is dead there is no reason for me to go without food; am I able to make him come back to life?

I will go to him, but he will never come back to me. ²⁴ And David gave comfort to his wife Bathsheba, and he went in to her and had connection with her: and she had a son to whom she gave the name Solomon. And he was dear to the Lord. ²⁵ And he sent word by Nathan the prophet, who gave him the name Jedidiah, by the word of the Lord. ²⁶ Now Joab was fighting against Rabbah, in the land of the children of Ammon, and he took the water-town. ²⁷ And Joab sent men to David, saying, I have made war against Rabbah and have taken the water-town. ²⁸ So now, get the rest of the people together, and put them in position against the town and take it, for if I take it, it will be named after my name. ²⁹ Then David got all the people together and went to Rabbah and made war on it and took it. ³⁰ And he took the crown of Milcom from his head; the weight of it was a talent of gold, and in it were stones of great price; and it was put on David's head. And he took a great store of goods from the town. ³¹ And he took the people out of the town and put them to work with wood-cutting instruments, and iron grain-crushers, and iron axes, and at brick-making: this he did to all the towns of the children of Ammon. Then David and all the people went back to Jerusalem.

13

¹ Now after this, it came about that Absalom, David's son, had a beautiful sister, whose name was Tamar; and David's son Amnon was in love with her. ² And he was so deeply in love that he became ill because of his sister Tamar; for she was a virgin, and so it seemed hard to Amnon to do

anything to her. ³ But Amnon had a friend whose name was Jonadab, the son of Shimeah, David's brother: and Jonadab was a very wise man. ⁴ And he said to him, O son of the king, why are you getting thinner day by day? will you not say what your trouble is? And Amnon said to him, I am in love with Tamar, my brother Absalom's sister. ⁵ Then Jonadab said to him, Go to your bed, and let it seem that you are ill: and when your father comes to see you, say to him, Let my sister Tamar come and give me bread, and get the food ready before my eyes, so that I may see it and take it from her hand. ⁶ So Amnon went to bed and made himself seem ill: and when the king came to see him, Amnon said to the king, Please let my sister Tamar come and make me one or two cakes before my eyes, so that I may take food from her hand. ⁷ Then David sent to the house for Tamar and said, Go now to your brother Amnon's house and get a meal for him. ⁸ So Tamar went to her brother Amnon's house; and he was in bed. And she took paste and made cakes before his eyes, cooking them over the fire. ⁹ And she took the cooking-pot, and put the cakes before him, but he would not take them. And Amnon said, Let everyone go away from me. So they all went out. ¹⁰ Then Amnon said to Tamar, Take the food and come into my bedroom, so that I may take it from your hand. So Tamar took the cakes she had made and went with them into her brother Amnon's bedroom. ¹¹ And when she took them to give them to him, he put his arms round her and said, Come to bed, my sister. ¹² And answering him, she said,

O my brother, do not put shame on me; it is not right for such a thing to be done in Israel: do not this evil thing. ¹³ What will become of me in my shame? and as for you, you will be looked down on with disgust by all Israel. Now then, go and make your request to the king, for he will not keep me from you. ¹⁴ But he would not give attention to what she said: but being stronger than she, he took her by force, and had connection with her. ¹⁵ Then Amnon was full of hate for her, hating her with a hate greater than his earlier love for her. And he said to her, Get up and be gone. ¹⁶ And she said to him, Not so, my brother, for this great wrong in sending me away is worse than what you did to me before. But he gave no attention to her. ¹⁷ Then he gave a cry to the servant who was waiting on him and said, Put this woman out, and let the door be locked after her. ¹⁸ Now she had on a long robe, such as in past times the king's virgin daughters were dressed in. Then the servant put her out, locking the door after her. ¹⁹ And Tamar, in her grief, put dust on her head; and she put her hand on her head and went away crying loudly. ²⁰ And her brother Absalom said to her, Has your brother Amnon been with you? but now, let there be an end to your crying, my sister: he is your brother, do not take this thing to heart. So Tamar went on living uncomforted in her brother's house. ²¹ But when King David had news of all these things he was very angry; but he did not make trouble for Amnon his son, for he was dear to David, being his oldest son. ²² But Absalom said nothing to his brother Amnon, good

or bad: for he was full of hate for him, because he had taken his sister Tamar by force. ²³ Now after two full years, Absalom had men cutting the wool of his sheep in Baal-hazor, which is near Ephraim: and he sent for all the king's sons to come to his feast. ²⁴ And Absalom came to the king and said, See now, your servant is cutting the wool of his sheep; will the king and his servants be pleased to come? ²⁵ And the king said to Absalom, No, my son, let us not all go, or the number will be over-great for you. And he made his request again, but he would not go, but he gave him his blessing. ²⁶ Then Absalom said, If you will not go, then let my brother Amnon go with us. And the king said to him, Is there any reason for him to go with you? ²⁷ But Absalom went on requesting him till he let Amnon and all the king's sons go with him. And Absalom made a great feast like a feast for a king. ²⁸ Now Absalom had given orders to his servants, saying, Now take note when Amnon's heart is glad with wine; and when I say to you, Make an attack on Amnon, then put him to death without fear: have I not given you orders? be strong and without fear. ²⁹ So Absalom's servants did to Amnon as Absalom had given them orders. Then all the king's sons got up, and every man got on his beast and went in flight. ³⁰ Now while they were on their way, news was given to David that Absalom had put to death all the sons of the king and that not one of them was still living. ³¹ Then the king got up in great grief, stretching himself out on the earth: and all his servants were by his

side, with their clothing parted. ³² And Jonadab, the son of Shimeah, David's brother, said, Let not my lord have the idea that all the sons of the king have been put to death; for only Amnon is dead: this has been purposed by Absalom from the day when he took his sister Tamar by force. ³³ So now, let not my lord the king take this thing to heart, with the idea that all the king's sons are dead: for only Amnon is dead. ³⁴ But Absalom went in flight. And the young man who kept the watch, lifting up his eyes, saw that a great band of people was coming down the slope by the way of the Horons; and the watchman came and gave word to the king, saying, I saw men coming down by the way of the Horons, from the hillside. ³⁵ And Jonadab said to the king, See, the king's sons are coming; as your servant said, so it is. ³⁶ And while he was talking, the king's sons came, with weeping and loud cries: and the king and all his servants were weeping bitterly. ³⁷ So Absalom went in flight and came to Talmai, the son of Ammihud, the king of Geshur, where he was for three years. ³⁸ And the king was sorrowing for his son all the time. ³⁹ And the heart of David was wasted with desire for Absalom: for he was comforted for the death of Amnon.

14

¹ Now it was clear to Joab, the son of Zeruah, that the king's heart was turning to Absalom. ² And Joab sent to Tekoa and got from there a wise woman, and said to her, Now make yourself seem like one given up to grief, and put on the clothing

of sorrow, not using any sweet oil for your body, but looking like one who for a long time has been weeping for the dead: ³ And come to the king and say these words to him. So Joab gave her words to say. ⁴ And the woman of Tekoa came to the king, and falling on her face, gave him honour and said, Give me help, O king. ⁵ And the king said to her, What is your trouble? And her answer was, Truly I am a widow, and my husband is dead. ⁶ And I had two sons, and the two of them had a fight in the field, and there was no one to come between them, and one with a blow put the other to death. ⁷ And now all the family is turned against me, your servant, saying, Give up him who was the cause of his brother's death, so that we may put him to death in payment for the life of his brother, whose life he took; and we will put an end to the one who will get the heritage: so they will put out my last burning coal, and my husband will have no name or offspring on the face of the earth. ⁸ And the king said to the woman, Go to your house and I will give orders about this. ⁹ And the woman of Tekoa said to the king, My lord, O king, may the sin be on me and on my family, and may the king and the seat of his kingdom be clear of sin! ¹⁰ And the king said, If anyone says anything to you, make him come to me, and he will do you no more damage. ¹¹ Then she said, Let the king keep in mind the Lord your God, so that he who gives punishment for blood may be kept back from further destruction and that no one may send death on my son. And he said, By the

living Lord, not a hair of your son's head will come to the earth. ¹² Then the woman said, Will the king let his servant say one word more? And he said, Say on. ¹³ And the woman said, Why have you had such a thought about the people of God? (for in saying these very words the king has put himself in the wrong because he has not taken back the one whom he sent far away.) ¹⁴ For death comes to us all, and we are like water drained out on the earth, which it is not possible to take up again; and God will not take away the life of the man whose purpose is that he who has been sent away may not be completely cut off from him. ¹⁵ And now it is my fear of the people which has made me come to say these words to my lord the king: and your servant said, I will put my cause before the king, and it may be that he will give effect to my request. ¹⁶ For the king will give ear, and take his servant out of the power of the man whose purpose is the destruction of me and my son together from the heritage of God. ¹⁷ Then your servant said, May the word of my lord the king give me peace! for my lord the king is as the angel of God in his hearing of good and bad: and may the Lord your God be with you! ¹⁸ Then the king said to the woman, Now give me an answer to the question I am going to put to you; keep nothing back. And the woman said, Let my lord the king say on. ¹⁹ And the king said, Is not the hand of Joab with you in all this? And the woman in answer said, By the life of your soul, my lord the king, it is not possible for anyone to go to the right hand or to the left from anything said

by the king: your servant Joab gave me orders, and put all these words in my mouth: ²⁰ This he did, hoping that the face of this business might be changed: and my lord is wise, with the wisdom of the angel of God, having knowledge of everything on earth. ²¹ And the king said to Joab, See now, I will do this thing: go then and Come back with the young man Absalom. ²² Then Joab, falling down on his face on the earth, gave the king honour and blessing; and Joab said, Today it is clear to your servant that I have grace in your eyes, my lord king, because the king has given effect to the request of his servant. ²³ So Joab got up and went to Geshur and came back again to Jerusalem with Absalom. ²⁴ And the king said, Let him go to his house, but let him not see my face. So Absalom went back to his house and did not see the face of the king. ²⁵ Now in all Israel there was no one so greatly to be praised for his beautiful form as Absalom: from his feet to the crown of his head he was completely beautiful. ²⁶ And when he had his hair cut, (which he did at the end of every year, because of the weight of his hair;) the weight of the hair was two hundred shekels by the king's weight. ²⁷ And Absalom was the father of three sons and of one daughter named Tamar, who was very beautiful. ²⁸ For two full years Absalom was living in Jerusalem without ever seeing the face of the king. ²⁹ Then Absalom sent for Joab to send him to the king, but he would not come to him: and he sent again a second time, but he would not come. ³⁰ So he said to his servants, See, Joab's field is near mine, and he has barley in it; go and put

it on fire. And Absalom's servants put the field on fire. ³¹ Then Joab came to Absalom in his house and said to him, Why have your servants put my field on fire? ³² And Absalom's answer was, See, I sent to you saying, Come here, so that I may send you to the king to say, Why have I come back from Geshur? it would be better for me to be there still: let me now see the king's face, and if there is any sin in me, let him put me to death. ³³ So Joab went to the king and said these words to him: and when the king had sent for him, Absalom came, and went down on his face on the earth before the king: and the king gave him a kiss.

15

¹ Now after this, Absalom got for himself a carriage and horses, and fifty runners to go before him. ² And Absalom got up early, morning after morning, and took his place at the side of the public meeting-place: and when any man had a cause which had to come to the king to be judged, then Absalom, crying out to him, said, What is your town? and he would say, Your servant is of one of the tribes of Israel. ³ And Absalom would say to him, See, your cause is true and right; but no man has been named by the king to give you a hearing. ⁴ And more than this, Absalom said, If only I was made judge in the land, so that every man who has any cause or question might come to me, and I would give a right decision for him! ⁵ And if any man came near to give him honour, he took him by the hand and gave him a kiss. ⁶ And this Absalom did to everyone in Israel who came

to the king to have his cause judged: so Absalom, like a thief, took away the hearts of the men of Israel. ⁷ Now at the end of four years, Absalom said to the king, Let me go to Hebron and give effect to the oath which I made to the Lord: ⁸ For while I was living in Geshur in Aram, your servant made an oath, saying, If ever the Lord lets me come back to Jerusalem, I will give him worship in Hebron. ⁹ And the king said to him, Go in peace. So he got up and went to Hebron. ¹⁰ But Absalom at the same time sent watchers through all the tribes of Israel to say, At the sound of the horn you are to say, Absalom is king in Hebron. ¹¹ And with Absalom, at his request, went two hundred men from Jerusalem, who were completely unconscious of his designs. ¹² And Absalom sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, one of David's helpers, from Giloh his town, while he was making the offerings. And the design against David became strong, for more and more people were joined to Absalom. ¹³ And one came to David and said, The hearts of the men of Israel have gone after Absalom. ¹⁴ And David said to all his servants who were with him at Jerusalem, Come, let us go in flight, or not one of us will be safe from Absalom: let us go without loss of time, or he will overtake us quickly and send evil on us, and put the town to the sword. ¹⁵ And the king's servants said to the king, See, your servants are ready to do whatever the king says is to be done. ¹⁶ So the king went out, taking with him all the people of his house, but for ten of his women, who were to take care of the house. ¹⁷ And the king went out, and all his servants went after him,

and made a stop at the Far House. ¹⁸ And all the people went on by his side; and all the Cherethites and all the Pelethites and all the men of Ittai of Gath, six hundred men who came after him from Gath, went on before the king. ¹⁹ Then the king said to Ittai the Gittite, Why are you coming with us? go back and keep with the king: for you are a man of another country, you are far from the land of your birth. ²⁰ It was only yesterday you came to us; why then am I to make you go up and down with us? for I have to go where I may; go back then, and take your countrymen with you, and may the Lord's mercy and good faith be with you. ²¹ And Ittai the Gittite in answer said, By the living Lord, and by the life of my lord the king, in whatever place my lord the king may be, for life or death, there will your servant be. ²² And David said to Ittai, Go forward, then. And Ittai the Gittite went on, with all his men and all the little ones he had with him. ²³ And there was great weeping in all the country when all the people went through; and the king himself was waiting in the Kidron valley and all the people went by him in the direction of the olive-tree on the edge of the waste land. ²⁴ Then Zadok came, and Abiathar, and with them the ark of God's agreement: and they put down the ark of God, till all the people from the town had gone by. ²⁵ And the king said to Zadok, Take the ark of God back into the town: if I have grace in the eyes of the Lord, he will let me come back and see it and his House again: ²⁶ But if he says, I have no delight in you: then, here I am; let him do to me what seems good to

him. ²⁷ The king said further to Zadok the priest, See, you and Abiathar are to go back to the town in peace, with your two sons, Ahimaaz, your son, and Jonathan, the son of Abiathar. ²⁸ See, I will be waiting at the way across the river, in the waste land, till I get news from you. ²⁹ So Zadok and Abiathar took the ark of God back to Jerusalem, and did not go away from there. ³⁰ And David went up the slopes of the Mount of Olives weeping all the way, with his head covered and no shoes on his feet: and all the people who were with him, covering their heads, went up weeping. ³¹ And word came to David, saying, Ahithophel is among those who are joined to Absalom. And David said, O Lord, let the wisdom of Ahithophel be made foolish. ³² Now when David had come to the top of the slope, where they gave worship to God, Hushai the Archite came to him in great grief with dust on his head: ³³ David said to him, If you go on with me, you will be a trouble to me: ³⁴ But if you go back to the town and say to Absalom, I will be your servant, O king; as in the past I have been your father's servant, so now I will be yours: then you will be able to keep Ahithophel's designs against me from being put into effect. ³⁵ And have you not there Zadok and Abiathar the priests? so whatever comes to your ears from the king's house, give word of it to Zadok and Abiathar the priests. ³⁶ See, they have with them their two sons, Ahimaaz, Zadok's son, and Jonathan, the son of Abiathar; by them you may send word to me of everything which comes to your ears. ³⁷ So

Hushai, David's friend, went into the town, and Absalom came to Jerusalem.

16

¹ And when David had gone a little way past the top of the slope, Ziba, the servant of Mephibosheth, came to him, with two asses on which were two hundred cakes of bread and a hundred stems of dry grapes and a hundred summer fruits and a skin of wine. ² And David said to Ziba, What is your reason for this? And Ziba said, The asses are for the use of the king's people, and the bread and the fruit are food for the young men; and the wine is for drink for those who are overcome by weariness in the waste land. ³ And the king said, And where is your master's son? And Ziba said, He is still at Jerusalem: for he said, Today Israel will give back to me the kingdom of my father. ⁴ Then the king said to Ziba, Truly everything which was Mephibosheth's is yours. And Ziba said, I give honour to my lord, may I have grace in your eyes, my lord, O king! ⁵ And when King David came to Bahurim, a man of Saul's family named Shimei, the son of Gera, came out from there, calling curses after him. ⁶ And he sent stones at David and at all the king's servants and at all the people and at all the men of war by his side, on the right hand and on the left. ⁷ And Shimei said, with curses, Be gone, be gone, you man of blood, you good-for-nothing: ⁸ The Lord has sent punishment on you for all the blood of the family of Saul, whose kingdom you have taken; and the Lord has given the kingdom to Absalom, your son:

now you yourself are taken in your evil, because you are a man of blood. ⁹ Then Abishai, the son of Zeruah, said to the king, Is this dead dog to go on cursing my lord the king? let me go over and take off his head. ¹⁰ And the king said, What have I to do with you, you sons of Zeruah? Let him go on cursing, for the Lord has said, Put a curse on David, and who then may say, Why have you done so? ¹¹ And David said to Abishai and to all his servants, You see how my son, the offspring of my body, has made designs against my life: how much more then may this Benjamite do so? Let him be, and let him go on cursing; for the Lord has given him orders. ¹² It may be that the Lord will take note of my wrongs, and give me back good in answer to his cursing of me today. ¹³ So David and his men went on their way: and Shimei went by the hillside parallel with them, cursing and sending stones and dust at him. ¹⁴ And the king and his people came tired to Jordan, and took their rest there. ¹⁵ And Absalom and the men of Israel came to Jerusalem, and Ahithophel was with him. ¹⁶ Then Hushai the Archite, David's friend, came to Absalom and said, Long life to the king, long life to the king! ¹⁷ And Absalom said, Is this your love for your friend? why did you not go with your friend? ¹⁸ And Hushai said to Absalom, Not so; I am for that man whom the Lord and this people and all the men of Israel have taken as king, and I will take my place with him. ¹⁹ And more than this! where is my place as a servant? is it not before his son? as I have been your father's servant, so will I be yours. ²⁰ Then Absalom said

to Ahithophel, Give your opinion now, what are we to do? ²¹ And Ahithophel said to Absalom, Go in to your father's women who are here looking after his house; then all Israel will have the news that you are hated by your father, and the hands of your supporters will be strong. ²² So they put up the tent for Absalom on the top of the house, and Absalom went in to his father's women before the eyes of all Israel. ²³ In those days the opinions of Ahithophel were valued as highly as if through him a man might get direction from God; so were they valued by David as much as by Absalom.

17

¹ Then Ahithophel said to Absalom, Let me take out twelve thousand men and this very night I will go after David: ² And I will come up with him when he is tired and feeble, and make him full of fear: and all the people with him will go in flight; and I will make an attack on the king only: ³ And I will make all the people come back to you as a bride comes back to her husband: it is the life of only one man you are going after; so all the people will be at peace. ⁴ And the saying was pleasing to Absalom and to the responsible men of Israel. ⁵ Then Absalom said, Now send for Hushai the Archite, and let us give ear to what he has to say. ⁶ And when Hushai came, Absalom said to him, This is what Ahithophel has said: are we to do as he says? if not, what is your suggestion? ⁷ And Hushai said to Absalom, Ahithophel's idea is not a good one at this time. ⁸ Hushai said further, You have knowledge of your father and his men, that

they are men of war, and that their feelings are bitter, like those of a bear in the field whose young ones have been taken from her: and your father is a man of war, and will not take his night's rest with the people; ⁹ But he will certainly have taken cover now in some hole or secret place; and if some of our people, at the first attack, are overcome, then any hearing of it will say, There is destruction among the people who are on Absalom's side. ¹⁰ Then even the strongest, whose heart is like the heart of a lion, will become like water; for all Israel is conscious that your father is a man of war, and those who are with him are strong and without fear. ¹¹ But my suggestion is that all Israel, from Dan as far as Beer-sheba, comes together to you, a great army like the sands of the sea in number; and that you yourself go out among them. ¹² Then we will come on him in some place, wherever he may be, falling on him as the dew comes on the earth: and of him and all the men who are with him not one will get away with his life. ¹³ And if he has gone into some town, then let all Israel take strong cords to that town, and we will have it pulled into the valley, till not one small stone is to be seen there. ¹⁴ Then Absalom and all the men of Israel said, Hushai's suggestion is better than that of Ahithophel. For it was the purpose of the Lord to make the wise designs of Ahithophel without effect, so that the Lord might send evil on Absalom. ¹⁵ Then Hushai said to Zadok and Abiathar, the priests, This is the suggestion made by Ahithophel to Absalom and the responsible men of Israel, and this is what I

said to them. ¹⁶ So now send the news quickly to David, and say, Do not take your night's rest by the way across the river to the waste land, but be certain to go over; or the king and all the people with him will come to destruction. ¹⁷ Now Jonathan and Ahimaaz were waiting by En-rogel; and a servant-girl went from time to time and gave them news and they went with the news to King David, for it was not wise for them to let themselves be seen coming into the town. ¹⁸ But a boy saw them, and gave word of it to Absalom: so the two of them went away quickly, and came to the house of a man in Bahurim who had a water-hole in his garden, and they went down into it. ¹⁹ And a woman put a cover over the hole, and put crushed grain on top of it, and no one had any knowledge of it. ²⁰ And Absalom's servants came to the woman at the house and said, Where are Ahimaaz and Jonathan? And the woman said to them, They have gone from here to the stream. And after searching for them, and seeing nothing of them, they went back to Jerusalem. ²¹ Then after the servants had gone away, they came up out of the water-hole and went to give King David the news; and they said, Get up and go quickly over the water, for such and such are Ahithophel's designs against you. ²² So David and all the people who were with him went up over Jordan: when dawn came, every one of them had gone over Jordan. ²³ Now when Ahithophel saw that his suggestion was not acted on, he got his ass ready, and went back to his house, to the town where he came from, and

having put his house in order, he put himself to death by hanging; so he came to his end and was put in the resting-place of his father. ²⁴ And David came to Mahanaim. And Absalom, with all the men of Israel, went over Jordan. ²⁵ And Absalom put Amasa at the head of the army in place of Joab. Now Amasa was the son of a man named Ithra the Ishmaelite, who had been the lover of Abigail, the daughter of Jesse, sister of Zeruiah, Joab's mother. ²⁶ And Israel and Absalom put up their tents in the land of Gilead. ²⁷ Now when David had come to Mahanaim, Shobi, the son of Nahash of Rabbah, the Ammonite, and Machir, the son of Ammiel of Lo-debar, and Barzillai the Gileadite of Rogelim, ²⁸ Came with beds and basins and pots, and grain and meal, and all sorts of dry foods, ²⁹ And honey and butter and sheep and milk-cheeses, for David and his people: for they said, This people is in the waste land, needing food and drink and rest.

18

¹ And David had the people who were with him numbered, and he put over them captains of thousands and captains of hundreds. ² And David sent the people out, a third of them under the orders of Joab, and a third under the orders of Abishai, son of Zeruiah, Joab's brother, and a third under Ittai the Gittite. And the king said to the people, And I myself will certainly go out with you. ³ But the people said, It is better for you not to go out: for if we are put to flight, they will not give a thought to us, and if death overtakes half of us, it will be nothing to them: but you are

of more value than ten thousand of us: so it is better for you to be ready to come to our help from this town. ⁴ And the king said to them, I will do whatever seems best to you. So the king took his place by the door of the town, and all the people went out by hundreds and by thousands. ⁵ And the king gave orders to Joab and Abishai and Ittai, saying, Because of me, be gentle to the young man Absalom. And this order about Absalom was given in the hearing of all the people. ⁶ So the people went out into the field against Israel, and the fight took place in the woods of Ephraim. ⁷ And the people of Israel were overcome there by the servants of David, and there was a great destruction that day, and twenty thousand men were put to the sword. ⁸ And the fighting went on over all the face of the country: and the woods were responsible for more deaths than the sword. ⁹ And Absalom came across some of David's men. And Absalom was seated on his mule, and the mule went under the thick branches of a great tree, and his head became fixed in the tree and he was lifted up between earth and heaven, and the beast under him went on. ¹⁰ And a certain man saw it and said to Joab, I saw Absalom hanging in a tree. ¹¹ And Joab said to the man who had given him the news, If you saw this, why did you not put your sword through him, and I would have given you ten bits of silver and a band for your robe? ¹² And the man said to Joab, Even if you gave me a thousand bits of silver, I would not put out my hand against the king's son: for in our hearing the king gave orders to you and Abishai

and Ittai, saying, Take care that the young man Absalom is not touched. ¹³ And if I had falsely put him to death (and nothing may be kept secret from the king), you would have had nothing to do with me. ¹⁴ Then Joab said, I would have made it safe for you. And he took three spears in his hand, and put them through Absalom's heart, while he was still living, in the branches of the tree. ¹⁵ And ten young men, servants of Joab, came round Absalom and put an end to him. ¹⁶ And Joab had the horn sounded, and the people came back from going after Israel, for Joab kept them back. ¹⁷ And they took Absalom's body and put it into a great hole in the wood, and put a great mass of stones over it: and every man of Israel went in flight to his tent. ¹⁸ Now Absalom, before his death, had put up for himself a pillar in the king's valley, naming it after himself; for he said, I have no son to keep my name in memory: and to this day it is named Absalom's pillar. ¹⁹ Then Ahimaaz, the son of Zadok, said, Let me go and give the king news of how the Lord has done right in his cause against those who took up arms against him. ²⁰ And Joab said, You will take no news today; another day you may give him the news, but you will take no news today, because the king's son is dead. ²¹ Then Joab said to the Cushite, Go and give the king word of what you have seen. And the Cushite, making a sign of respect to Joab, went off running. ²² Then Ahimaaz, the son of Zadok, said to Joab again, Whatever may come of it, let me go after the Cushite. And Joab said, Why have you a desire to

go, my son, seeing that you will get no reward for your news? ²³ Whatever may come of it, he said, I will go. Then he said to him, Go. So Ahimaaz went running by the lowland road and overtook the Cushite. ²⁴ Now David was seated between the two town doors; and the watchman went up to the roof of the doorways, on the wall, and, lifting up his eyes, saw a man running by himself. ²⁵ And the watchman gave news of it to the king. And the king said, If he is coming by himself, then he has news. And the man was travelling quickly, and came near. ²⁶ Then the watchman saw another man running: and crying out in the direction of the door he said, Here is another man running by himself. And the king said, He, like the other, comes with news. ²⁷ And the watchman said, It seems to me that the running of the first is like the running of Ahimaaz, the son of Zadok. And the king said, He is a good man, and his news will be good. ²⁸ And Ahimaaz, crying out to the king, said, It is well. And falling down before the king, with his face to the earth, he said, May the Lord your God be praised, who has given up the men who took up arms against my lord the king! ²⁹ And the king said, Is it well with the young man Absalom? And Ahimaaz said in answer, When Joab sent me, your servant, I saw a great outcry going on, but I had no knowledge of what it was. ³⁰ And the king said, Get back and take your place here. So turning to one side, he took his place there. ³¹ And then the Cushite came and said, I have news for my lord the king: today the Lord has done right in your cause against all those who took up arms

against you. ³² And the king said to the Cushite, Is the young man Absalom safe? And the Cushite said in answer, May all the king's haters and those who do evil against the king, be as that young man is! ³³ Then the king was much moved, and went up into the room over the door, weeping, and saying, O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! if only my life might have been given for yours, O Absalom, my son, my son!

19

¹ And word was given to Joab that the king was weeping and sorrowing for Absalom. ² And the salvation of that day was changed to sorrow for all the people: for it was said to the people, The king is in bitter grief for his son. ³ And the people made their way back to the town quietly and secretly, as those who are shamed go secretly when they go in flight from the war. ⁴ But the king, covering his face, gave a great cry, O my son Absalom, O Absalom, my son, my son! ⁵ And Joab came into the house to the king and said, Today you have put to shame the faces of all your servants who even now have kept you and your sons and your daughters and your wives and all your women safe from death; ⁶ For your haters, it seems, are dear to you, and your friends are hated. For you have made it clear that captains and servants are nothing to you: and now I see that if Absalom was living and we had all been dead today, it would have been right in your eyes. ⁷ So get up now, and go out and say some kind words to your servants; for, by the Lord, I give you my oath, that

if you do not go out, not one of them will keep with you tonight; and that will be worse for you than all the evil which has overtaken you from your earliest years. ⁸ Then the king got up and took his seat near the town-door. And word was given to all the people that the king was in the public place: and all the people came before the king. Now all the men of Israel had gone back in flight to their tents. ⁹ And through all the tribes of Israel the people were having arguments, saying, The king made us safe from the hands of those who were against us and made us free from the hands of the Philistines; and now he has gone in flight from the land, because of Absalom. ¹⁰ And Absalom, whom we made a ruler over us, is dead in the fight. So now why do you say nothing about getting the king back? And word of what all Israel was saying came to the king. ¹¹ And King David sent word to Zadok and Abiathar, the priests, Say to the responsible men of Judah, Why are you the last to take steps to get the king back to his house? ¹² You are my brothers, my bone and my flesh; why are you the last to get the king back again? ¹³ And say to Amasa, Are you not my bone and my flesh? May God's punishment be on me, if I do not make you chief of the army before me at all times in place of Joab! ¹⁴ And the hearts of the men of Judah were moved like one man; so that they sent to the king, saying, Come back, with all your servants. ¹⁵ So the king came back, and came as far as Jordan. And Judah came to Gilgal, meeting the king there, to take him back with them over Jordan. ¹⁶ And Shimei, the son of

Gera, the Benjamite from Bahurim, got up quickly and went down with the men of Judah for the purpose of meeting King David; ¹⁷ And with him a thousand men of Benjamin, and Ziba, the servant of Saul, with his fifteen sons and twenty servants, came rushing to Jordan before the king, ¹⁸ And kept going across the river to take the people of the king's house over, and to do whatever was desired by the king. And Shimei, the son of Gera, went down on his face in the dust before the king, when he was about to go over Jordan, ¹⁹ And said to him, Let me not be judged as a sinner in your eyes, O my lord, and do not keep in mind the wrong I did on the day when my lord the king went out of Jerusalem, or take it to heart. ²⁰ For your servant is conscious of his sin: and so, as you see, I have come today, the first of all the sons of Joseph, for the purpose of meeting my lord the king. ²¹ But Abishai, the son of Zeruiah, said, Is not death the right fate for Shimei, because he has been cursing the one marked by the holy oil? ²² And David said, What have I to do with you, you sons of Zeruiah, that you put yourselves against me today? is it right for any man in Israel to be put to death today? for I am certain today that I am king in Israel. ²³ So the king said to Shimei, You will not be put to death. And the king gave him his oath. ²⁴ And Mephibosheth, the son of Saul's son, came down for the purpose of meeting the king; his feet had not been cared for or his hair cut or his clothing washed from the day when the king went away till the day when he came back in

peace. ²⁵ Now when he had come from Jerusalem to see the king, the king said to him, Why did you not come with me, Mephibosheth? ²⁶ And he said in answer, Because of the deceit of my servant, my lord king: for I, your servant, said to him, You are to make ready an ass and on it I will go with the king, for your servant has not the use of his feet. ²⁷ He has given you a false account of me: but my lord the king is like the angel of God: do then whatever seems good to you. ²⁸ For all my father's family were only dead men before my lord the king: and still you put your servant among those whose place is at the king's table. What right then have I to say anything more to the king? ²⁹ And the king said, Say nothing more about these things. I say, Let there be a division of the land between Ziba and you. ³⁰ And Mephibosheth said, Let him take it all, now that my lord the king has come back to his house in peace! ³¹ And Barzillai the Gileadite came down from Rogelim; and he went on as far as Jordan with the king to take him across Jordan. ³² Now Barzillai was a very old man, as much as eighty years old: and he had given the king everything he had need of, while he was at Mahanaim, for he was a very great man. ³³ And the king said to Barzillai, Come over with me, and I will take care of you in Jerusalem. ³⁴ And Barzillai said to the king, How much of my life is still before me, for me to go up to Jerusalem with the king? ³⁵ I am now eighty years old: good and bad are the same to me; have meat and drink any taste for me now? am I able to take pleasure in the voices

of men or women in song? why then am I to be a trouble to my lord the king? ³⁶ Your servant's desire was only to take the king over Jordan; why is the king to give me such a reward? ³⁷ Let your servant now go back again, so that when death comes to me, it may be in my town and by the resting-place of my father and mother. But here is your servant Chimham: let him go with my lord the king, and do for him what seems good to you. ³⁸ And the king said in answer, Let Chimham go over with me, and I will do for him whatever seems good to you: and whatever your desire is, I will do it for you. ³⁹ Then all the people went over Jordan, and the king went over: and the king gave Barzillai a kiss, with his blessing; and he went back to his place. ⁴⁰ So the king went over to Gilgal, and Chimham went with him: and all the people of Judah, as well as half the people of Israel, took the king on his way. ⁴¹ Then the men of Israel came to the king and said, Why have our countrymen of Judah taken you away in secret and come over Jordan with the king and all his family, because all his people are David's men? ⁴² And all the men of Judah gave this answer to the men of Israel, Because the king is our near relation: why then are you angry about this? have we taken any of the king's food, or has he given us any offering? ⁴³ And in answer to the men of Judah, the men of Israel said, We have ten parts in the king, and we are the first in order of birth: why did you make nothing of us? and were we not the first to make suggestions for getting the king back? And the

words of the men of Judah were more violent than the words of the men of Israel.

20

¹ Now by chance there was present a good-for-nothing person named Sheba, the son of Bichri, a Benjamite: and he, sounding the horn, said, We have no part in David, or any interest in the son of Jesse: let every man go to his tent, O Israel. ² So all the men of Israel, turning away from David, went after Sheba, the son of Bichri: but the men of Judah were true to their king, going with him from Jordan as far as Jerusalem. ³ And David came to his house at Jerusalem: and the king took the ten women to whom he had given the care of the house, and had them shut up, and gave them the necessaries of life, but did not go near them. So they were shut up till the day of their death, living as widows. ⁴ Then the king said to Amasa, Get all the men of Judah together, and in three days be here yourself. ⁵ So Amasa went to get all the men of Judah together, but he took longer than the time David had given him. ⁶ And David said to Abishai, Sheba, the son of Bichri, will do us more damage than Absalom did; so take some of your lord's servants and go after him, before he makes himself safe in the walled towns, and gets away before our eyes. ⁷ So there went after Abishai, Joab and the Cherethites and the Pelethites and all the fighting-men; they went out of Jerusalem to overtake Sheba, the son of Bichri. ⁸ When they were at the great stone which is in Gibeon, Amasa came face to face with them. Now Joab had on his

war-dress, and round him a band from which his sword was hanging in its cover; and while he was walking, it came out, falling to the earth. ⁹ And Joab said to Amasa, Is it well, my brother? And with his right hand he took him by the hair of his chin to give him a kiss. ¹⁰ But Amasa did not see danger from the sword which was now in Joab's left hand, and Joab put it through his stomach so that his inside came out on to the earth, and he did not give him another blow. So Joab and his brother Abishai went on after Sheba, the son of Bichri. ¹¹ And one of Joab's young men, taking his place at Amasa's side, said, Whoever is for Joab and for David, let him go after Joab! ¹² And Amasa was stretched out in a pool of blood in the middle of the highway. And when the man saw that all the people were stopping, he took Amasa out of the highway and put him in a field, with a cloth over him, when he saw that everyone who went by came to a stop. ¹³ When he had been taken off the road, all the people went on after Joab in search of Sheba, the son of Bichri. ¹⁴ And Sheba went through all the tribes of Israel, to Abel of Beth-maacah; and all the Bichrites came together and went in after him. ¹⁵ And Joab and his men got him shut up in Abel of Beth-maacah, and put up an earthwork against the town: and all Joab's men did their best to get the wall broken down. ¹⁶ Then a wise woman got up on the wall, and crying out from the town, said, Give ear, give ear; say now to Joab, Come near, so that I may have talk with you. ¹⁷ And he came near, and the woman said, Are you Joab? And he said in answer,

I am. Then she said, Give ear to your servant's words. And he said, I am giving ear. ¹⁸ Then she said, In the old days, there was a saying, Let them put the question in Abel and in Dan, saying, Has what was ordered by men of good faith in Israel ever come to an end? ¹⁹ Your purpose is the destruction of a mother-town in Israel: why would you put an end to the heritage of the Lord? ²⁰ And Joab, answering her, said, Far, far be it from me to be a cause of death or destruction; ²¹ Not so: but a man of the hill-country of Ephraim, Sheba, son of Bichri, by name, has taken up arms against the king, against David: give up this man only, and I will go away from the town. And the woman said to Joab, His head will be dropped over the wall to you. ²² Then the woman in her wisdom had talk with all the town. And they had Sheba's head cut off and sent out to Joab. And he had the horn sounded, and sent them all away from the town, every man to his tent. And Joab went back to Jerusalem to the king. ²³ Now Joab was over all the army; and Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada, was at the head of the Cherethites and the Pelethites; ²⁴ And Adoram was overseer of the forced work; and Jehoshaphat, the son of Ahilud, was the recorder; ²⁵ And Sheva was the scribe, and Zadok and Abiathar were priests; ²⁶ And in addition, Ira the Jairite was a priest to David.

21

¹ In the days of David they were short of food for three years, year after year; and David went before the Lord for directions. And the Lord said,

On Saul and on his family there is blood, because he put the Gibeonites to death. ² Then the king sent for the Gibeonites; (now the Gibeonites were not of the children of Israel, but were the last of the Amorites, to whom the children of Israel had given an oath; but Saul, in his passion for the children of Israel and Judah, had made an attempt on their lives:)³ So David said to the Gibeonites, What may I do for you? how am I to make up to you for your wrongs, so that you may give a blessing to the heritage of the Lord? ⁴ And the Gibeonites said to him, It is not a question of silver and gold between us and Saul or his family; and it is not in our power to put to death any man in Israel. And he said, Say, then, what am I to do for you? ⁵ And they said to the king, As for the man by whom we were wasted, and who made designs against us to have us completely cut off from the land of Israel, ⁶ Let seven men of his family be given up to us and we will put an end to them by hanging them before the Lord in Gibeon, on the hill of the Lord. And the king said, I will give them. ⁷ But the king did not give up Mephibosheth, the son of Saul's son Jonathan, because of the Lord's oath made between David and Jonathan, the son of Saul. ⁸ But the king took Armoni and Mephibosheth, the two sons of Saul to whom Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah, had given birth; and the five sons of Saul's daughter Merab, whose father was Adriel, the son of Barzillai the Meholathite: ⁹ And he gave them up to the Gibeonites, and they put them to death, hanging them on the mountain before the Lord; all seven came to their end together in the first

days of the grain-cutting, at the start of the cutting of the barley. ¹⁰ And Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah, took haircloth, placing it on the rock as a bed for herself, from the start of the grain-cutting till rain came down on them from heaven; and she did not let the birds of the air come near them by day, or the beasts of the field by night. ¹¹ And news was given to David of what Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah, one of Saul's wives, had done. ¹² And David went and took the bones of Saul and his son Jonathan from the men of Jabesh-gilead, who had taken them away secretly from the public place of Beth-shan, where the Philistines had put them, hanging up the bodies there on the day when they put Saul to death in Gilboa: ¹³ And he took the bones of Saul and his son Jonathan from that place; and they got together the bones of those who had been put to death by hanging. ¹⁴ And they put them with the bones of Saul and his son Jonathan in the resting-place of Kish, his father, in Zela in the country of Benjamin; they did all the king had given them orders to do. And after that, God gave ear to their prayers for the land. ¹⁵ And the Philistines went to war again with Israel; and David went down with his people, and while they were at Gob they had a fight with the Philistines: ¹⁶ And there came against David one of the offspring of the Rephaim, whose spear was three hundred shekels of brass in weight, and having a new sword, he made an attempt to put David to death. ¹⁷ But Abishai, the son of Zeruah, came to his help, and, turning on the Philistine, gave him his death-blow. Then David's men took

an oath, and said, Never again are you to go out with us to the fight, so that you may not put out the light of Israel. ¹⁸ Now after this there was war with the Philistines again at Gob, and Sibbecai the Hushathite put to death Saph, one of the offspring of the Rephaim. ¹⁹ And again there was war with the Philistines at Gob, and Elhanan, the son of Jair the Beth-lehemite, put to death Goliath the Gittite, the stem of whose spear was like a cloth-worker's rod. ²⁰ And again there was war at Gath, where there was a very tall man, who had twenty-four fingers and toes, six fingers on his hands and six toes on his feet; he was one of the offspring of the Rephaim. ²¹ And when he was purposing to put shame on Israel, Jonathan, the son of Shimei, David's brother, put him to death. ²² These four were of the offspring of the Rephaim in Gath; and they came to their end by the hands of David and his servants.

22

¹ And David made a song to the Lord in these words, on the day when the Lord made him free from the hands of all his haters, and from the hand of Saul: ² And he said, The Lord is my Rock, my walled town, and my saviour, even mine; ³ My God, my Rock, in him will I put my faith; my breastplate, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower, and my safe place; my saviour, who keeps me safe from the violent man. ⁴ I will send up my cry to the Lord, who is to be praised; so will I be made safe from those who are against me. ⁵ For the waves of death came round me, and the seas of

evil put me in fear; ⁶ The cords of hell were round me: the nets of death came on me. ⁷ In my trouble my voice went up to the Lord, and my cry to my God: my voice came to his hearing in his holy Temple, and my prayer came to his ears. ⁸ Then the earth was moved with a violent shock; the bases of heaven were moved and shaking, because he was angry. ⁹ There went up a smoke from his nose, and a fire of destruction from his mouth: coals were lighted by it. ¹⁰ The heavens were bent, so that he might come down; and it was dark under his feet. ¹¹ And he went through the air, seated on a storm-cloud: going quickly on the wings of the wind. ¹² And he made the dark his tent round him, a mass of waters, thick clouds of the skies. ¹³ Before his shining light his dark clouds went past, raining ice and coals of fire. ¹⁴ The Lord made thunder in the heavens, and the voice of the Highest was sounding out. ¹⁵ And he sent out his arrows, driving them in all directions; by his flames of fire they were troubled. ¹⁶ Then the deep beds of the sea were seen, and the bases of the world were uncovered, because of the Lord's wrath, because of the breath of his mouth. ¹⁷ He sent from on high, he took me, pulling me out of great waters. ¹⁸ He made me free from my strong hater, from those who were against me, because they were stronger than I. ¹⁹ They came on me in the day of my trouble: but the Lord was my support. ²⁰ He took me out into a wide place; he was my saviour because he had delight in me. ²¹ The Lord gives me the reward of my righteousness, because my hands are clean before

him. ²² For I have kept the ways of the Lord; I have not been turned away in sin from my God. ²³ For all his decisions were before me, and I did not put away his laws from me. ²⁴ And I was upright before him, and I kept myself from sin. ²⁵ Because of this the Lord has given me the reward of my righteousness, because my hands are clean in his eyes. ²⁶ On him who has mercy you will have mercy; to the upright you will be upright; ²⁷ He who is holy will see that you are holy; but to the man whose way is not straight you will be a hard judge. ²⁸ For you are the saviour of those who are in trouble; but your eyes are on men of pride, to make them low. ²⁹ For you are my light, O Lord; and the Lord will make the dark bright for me. ³⁰ By your help I have made a way through the wall which was shutting me in: by the help of my God I have gone over a wall. ³¹ As for God, his way is all good: the word of the Lord is tested; he is a safe cover for all those who put their faith in him. ³² For who is God but the Lord? and who is a Rock but our God? ³³ God puts a strong band about me, guiding me in a straight way. ³⁴ He makes my feet like roes' feet, and puts me on high places. ³⁵ He makes my hands expert in war, so that a bow of brass is bent by my arms. ³⁶ You have given me the breastplate of your salvation, and your mercy has made me great. ³⁷ You have made my steps wide under me, so that my feet make no slip. ³⁸ I go after my haters and overtake them; not turning back till they are all overcome. ³⁹ I have sent destruction on them and given them wounds, so that they

are not able to get up: they are stretched under my feet. ⁴⁰ For I have been armed by you with strength for the fight: you have made low under me those who came out against me. ⁴¹ By you their backs are turned in flight, so that my haters are cut off. ⁴² They were crying out, but there was no one to come to their help: even to the Lord, but he gave them no answer. ⁴³ Then they were crushed as small as the dust of the earth, stamped down under my feet like the waste of the streets. ⁴⁴ You have made me free from the fightings of my people; you have made me the head of the nations: a people of whom I had no knowledge will be my servants. ⁴⁵ Men of other countries will, with false hearts, put themselves under my authority: from the time when my name comes to their ears, they will be ruled by me. ⁴⁶ They will be wasted away, they will come out of their secret places shaking with fear. ⁴⁷ The Lord is living; praise be to my Rock, and let the God of my salvation be honoured: ⁴⁸ It is God who sends punishment on my haters, and puts peoples under my rule. ⁴⁹ He makes me free from my haters: I am lifted up over those who come up against me: you have made me free from the violent man. ⁵⁰ Because of this I will give you praise, O Lord, among the nations, and will make a song of praise to your name. ⁵¹ Great salvation does he give to his king; he has mercy on the king of his selection, David, and on his seed for ever.

23

¹ Now these are the last words of David. David,

the son of Jesse, says, the man who was lifted up on high, the man on whom the God of Jacob put the holy oil, the loved one of Israel's songs, says: ² The spirit of the Lord had voice through me, his word was on my tongue. ³ The God of Israel said, the word of the Rock of Israel came to me: When an upright king is ruling over men, when he is ruling in the fear of God, ⁴ It is as the light of the morning, when the sun comes up, a morning without clouds; making young grass come to life from the earth. ⁵ For is not my house so with God? For he has made with me an eternal agreement, ordered in all things and certain: as for all my salvation and all my desire, will he not give it increase? ⁶ But the evil-doers, all of them, will be like thorns to be pushed away, because they may not be gripped in the hand: ⁷ But anyone touching them has to be armed with iron and the rod of a spear; and they will be burned with fire, every one of them. ⁸ These are the names of David's men of war: Ishbaal the Hachmonite, chief of the three; his axe was lifted up against eight hundred put to death at one time. ⁹ After him was Eleazar, the son of Dodai the Ahohite, one of the three great fighters, who was with David in Pas-dammim when the Philistines came together there for the fight; and when the men of Israel had gone in flight, ¹⁰ He was with David and went on fighting the Philistines till his hand became tired and stiff from gripping his sword: and that day the Lord gave a great salvation, and the people came back after him only to take the goods of the Philistines. ¹¹ After him was Shammah, the

son of Ela the Hararite. And the Philistines came together in Lehi, where there was a bit of land full of seed; and the people went in flight from the Philistines. ¹² But he kept his place in the middle of the bit of land, and kept back their attack and overcame the Philistines: and the Lord gave a great salvation. ¹³ And three of the thirty went down at the start of the grain-cutting, and they came to David at the strong place of Adullam; and the band of Philistines had taken up their position in the valley of Rephaim. ¹⁴ And at that time David had taken cover in the strong place, and an armed force of the Philistines was in Beth-lehem. ¹⁵ And David, moved by a strong desire, said, If only someone would give me a drink of water from the water-hole of Beth-lehem, by the doorway into the town! ¹⁶ And the three men, forcing their way through the Philistine army, got water from the water-hole of Beth-lehem, by the doorway into the town, and took it back to David: but he would not take it, but, draining it out, made an offering of it to the Lord. ¹⁷ And he said, Far be it from me, O Lord, to do this; how may I take as my drink the life-blood of men who have put their lives in danger? So he would not take it. These things did the three great men of war. ¹⁸ And Abishai, the brother of Joab, the son of Zeruah, was chief of the thirty. He put to death three hundred with his spear, and he got for himself a name among the thirty. ¹⁹ Was he not the noblest of the thirty? so he was made their captain: but he was not equal to the first three. ²⁰ And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, a fighting man of Kabzeel, had done

great acts; he put to death the two sons of Ariel of Moab: he went down into a hole and put a lion to death in time of snow: ²¹ And he made an attack on an Egyptian, a tall man: and the Egyptian had a spear in his hand; but he went down to him with a stick, and pulling the spear out of the hands of the Egyptian, put him to death with that same spear. ²² These were the acts of Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada, who had a great name among the thirty men of war. ²³ He was honoured over the rest of the thirty, but he was not equal to the first three. And David put him over the fighting men who kept him safe. ²⁴ Asahel, the brother of Joab, was one of the thirty; and Elhanan, the son of Dodai, of Beth-lehem, ²⁵ Shammah the Harodite, Elikah the Harodite, ²⁶ Helez the Paltite, Ira, the son of Ikkesh the Tekoite, ²⁷ Abiezer the Anathothite, Sibbecai the Hushathite, ²⁸ Zalmon the Ahohite, Maharai the Netophathite, ²⁹ Heldai, the son of Baanah the Netophathite, Ittai, the son of Ribai of Gibeah of the children of Benjamin, ³⁰ Benaiah the Pirathonite, Hiddai of the valleys of Gaash, ³¹ Abiel the Arbathite, Azmaveth of Bahurim, ³² Eliahba the Shaalbonite, Jashen the Gunite, ³³ Jonathan, the son of Shammah the Hararite, Ahiam, the son of Sharar the Hararite, ³⁴ Eliphelet, the son of Ahasbai the Maacathite, Eliam, the son of Ahithophel the Gilonite, ³⁵ Hezrai the Carmelite, Paarai the Archite, ³⁶ Igal, the son of Nathan of Zobah, Bani the Gadite, ³⁷ Zelek the Ammonite, Naharai the Beerothite, who had the care of the arms of Joab, son of Zeruiah, ³⁸ Ira the Ithrite, Gareb the Ithrite, ³⁹ Uriah the Hittite: thirty-seven

in number.

24

¹ Again the wrath of the Lord was burning against Israel, and moving David against them, he said, Go, take the number of Israel and Judah. ² And the king said to Joab and the captains of the army, who were with him, Go now through all the tribes of Israel, from Dan as far as Beer-sheba, and have all the people numbered, so that I may be certain of the number of the people. ³ And Joab said to the king, Whatever the number of the people, may the Lord make it a hundred times as much, and may the eyes of my lord the king see it: but why does my lord the king take pleasure in doing this thing? ⁴ But the king's order was stronger than Joab and the captains of the army. And Joab and the captains of the army went out from the king, to take the number of the children of Israel. ⁵ And they went over Jordan, and starting from Aroer, from the town which is in the middle of the valley, they went in the direction of the Gadites, and on to Jazer; ⁶ Then they came to Gilead, and to the land of the Hittites under Hermon; and they came to Dan, and from Dan they came round to Zidon, ⁷ And to the walled town of Tyre, and to all the towns of the Hivites and the Canaanites: and they went out to the South of Judah at Beer-sheba. ⁸ So after going through all the land in every direction, they came to Jerusalem at the end of nine months and twenty days. ⁹ And Joab gave the king the number of all the people: there were in Israel eight hundred thousand fighting men

able to take up arms; and the men of Judah were five hundred thousand. ¹⁰ And after the people had been numbered, David's heart was troubled. And David said to the Lord, Great has been my sin in doing this; but now, O Lord, be pleased to take away the sin of your servant, for I have done very foolishly ¹¹ And David got up in the morning; now the word of the Lord had come to the prophet Gad, David's seer, saying, ¹² Go and say to David, The Lord says, Three things are offered to you: say which of them you will have, and I will do it to you. ¹³ So Gad came to David, and gave him word of this and said to him, Are there to be three years when there is not enough food in your land? or will you go in flight from your haters for three months, while they go after you? or will you have three days of violent disease in your land? take thought and say what answer I am to give to him who sent me. ¹⁴ And David said to Gad, This is a hard decision for me to make: let us come into the hands of the Lord, for great are his mercies: let me not come into the hands of men. ¹⁵ So David made selection of the disease; and the time was the days of the grain-cutting, when the disease came among the people, causing the death of seventy thousand men from Dan as far as Beer-sheba. ¹⁶ And when the hand of the angel was stretched out in the direction of Jerusalem, for its destruction, the Lord had regret for the evil, and said to the angel who was sending destruction on the people, It is enough; do no more. And the angel of the Lord was by the grain-floor of Araunah the Jebusite. ¹⁷ And when David saw the angel who

was causing the destruction of the people, he said to the Lord, Truly, the sin is mine; I have done wrong: but these are only sheep; what have they done? let your hand be against me and against my family. ¹⁸ And that day Gad came to David and said to him, Go up, and put up an altar to the Lord on the grain-floor of Araunah the Jebusite. ¹⁹ So David went up, as Gad had said and as the Lord had given orders. ²⁰ And Araunah, looking out, saw the king and his servants coming to him: and Araunah went out, and went down on his face to the earth before the king. ²¹ And Araunah said, Why has my lord the king come to his servant? And David said, To give you a price for your grain-floor, so that I may put up an altar to the Lord, and the disease may be stopped among the people. ²² And Araunah said to David, Let my lord the king take whatever seems right to him, and make an offering of it: see, here are the oxen for the burned offering, and the grain-cleaning instruments and the ox-yokes for wood: ²³ All this does the servant of my lord the king give to the king. And Araunah said, May the Lord your God be pleased with your offering! ²⁴ And the king said to Araunah, No, but I will give you a price for it; I will not give to the Lord my God burned offerings for which I have given nothing. So David got the grain-floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver. ²⁵ And there David put up an altar to the Lord, making burned offerings and peace-offerings. So the Lord gave ear to his prayer for the land, and the disease came to an end in Israel.

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