

Book 7

**FROM THE DEATH OF SAUL
TO THE DEATH OF DAVID**

Flavius Josephus

Chapter 1

David Reigns Over One Tribe at Hebron

1. This fight proved to be on the same day whereon David was come back to Ziklag, after he had overcome the Amalekites. Now when he had been already two days at Ziklag, there came to him the man who slew Saul, which was the third day after the fight. He had escaped out of the battle which the Israelites had with the Philistines, and had his clothes rent, and ashes upon his head. And when he made his obeisance to David, he inquired of him whence he came. He replied, from the battle of the Israelites; and he informed him that the end of it was unfortunate, many ten thousands of the Israelites having been cut off, and Saul, together with his sons, slain. He also said that he could well give him this information, because he was present at the victory gained over the Hebrews, and was with the king when he fled. Nor did he deny that he had himself slain the king, when he was ready to be taken by the enemy, and he himself exhorted him to do it, because, when he was fallen on his sword, his great wounds had made him so weak that he was not able to kill himself. He also produced demonstrations that the king was slain, which were the golden bracelets that had been on the king's arms, and his crown, which he had taken away from Saul's dead body, and had brought them to him. So David having no longer any room to call in question the truth of what he said, but seeing most evident marks that Saul was dead, he rent his garments, and continued all that day with his companions in weeping and lamentation. This grief was augmented by the consideration of Jonathan; the son of Saul, who had been his most faithful friend, and the occasion of his own deliverance. He also demonstrated himself to have such great virtue, and such great kindness for Saul, as not only to take his death to heart, though he had been frequently in danger of losing his life by his means, but to punish him that slew him; for when David had said to him that he was become his own accuser, as the very man who had slain the king, and when

he had understood that he was the son of an Amalekite, he commanded him to be slain. He also committed to writing some lamentations and funeral commendations of Saul and Jonathan, which have continued to my own age.

2. Now when David had paid these honors to the king, he left off his mourning, and inquired of God by the prophet which of the cities of the tribe of Judah he would bestow upon him to dwell in; who answered that he bestowed upon him Hebron. So he left Ziklag, and came to Hebron, and took with him his wives, who were in number two, and his armed men; whereupon all the people of the forementioned tribe came to him, and ordained him their king. But when he heard that the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead had buried Saul and his sons [honorably], he sent to them and commended them, and took what they had done kindly, and promised to make them amends for their care of those that were dead; and at the same time he informed them that the tribe of Judah had chosen him for their king.

3. But as soon as Abner, the son of Ner, who was general of Saul's army, and a very active man, and good-natured, knew that the king, and Jonathan, and his two other sons, were fallen in the battle, he made haste into the camp; and taking away with him the remaining son of Saul, whose name was Ishbosheth, he passed over to the land beyond Jordan, and ordained him the king of the whole multitude, excepting the tribe of Judah; and made his royal seat in a place called in our own language Mahanaim, but in the language of the Grecians, The Camps; from whence Abner made haste with a select body of soldiers, to fight with such of the tribe of Judah as were disposed to it, for he was angry that this tribe had set up David for their king. But Joab, whose father was Suri, and his mother Zeruah, David's sister, who was general of David's army, met him, according to David's appointment. He had with him his brethren, Abishai and Asahel, as also all David's armed men. Now when he met Abner at a certain fountain, in the city of Gibeon, he prepared to fight. And when Abner said to him, that he had a mind to know which of them had the more valiant soldiers, it was agreed between them that twelve

soldiers of each side should fight together. So those that were chosen out by both the generals for this fight came between the two armies, and throwing their lances one against the other, they drew their swords, and catching one another by the head, they held one another fast, and ran each other's swords into their sides and groins, until they all, as it were by mutual agreement, perished together. When these were fallen down dead, the rest of the army came to a sore battle, and Abner's men were beaten; and when they were beaten, Joab did not leave off pursuing them, but he pressed upon them, and excited the soldiers to follow them close, and not to grow weary of killing them. His brethren also pursued them with great alacrity, especially the younger, Asahel, who was the most eminent of them. He was very famous for his swiftness of foot, for he could not only be too hard for men, but is reported to have overrun a horse, when they had a race together. This Asahel ran violently after Abner, and would not turn in the least out of the straight way, either to the one side or to the other. Hereupon Abner turned back, and attempted artfully to avoid his violence. Sometimes he bade him leave off the pursuit, and take the armor of one of his soldiers; and sometimes, when he could not persuade him so to do, he exhorted him to restrain himself, and not to pursue him any longer, lest he should force him to kill him, and he should then not be able to look his brother in the face: but when Asahel would not admit of any persuasions, but still continued to pursue him, Abner smote him with his spear, as he held it in his flight, and that by a back-stroke, and gave him a deadly wound, so that he died immediately; but those that were with him pursuing Abner, when they came to the place where Asahel lay, they stood round about the dead body, and left off the pursuit of the enemy. However, both Joab (1) himself, and his brother Abishai, ran past the dead corpse, and making their anger at the death of Asahel an occasion of greater zeal against Abner, they went on with incredible haste and alacrity, and pursued Abner to a certain place called Ammah: it was about sun-set. Then did Joab ascend a certain hill, as he stood at that place, having the tribe of Benjamin with him, whence he took a view of them, and of Abner also. Hereupon Abner cried aloud, and said that it was not fit that they should

irritate men of the same nation to fight so bitterly one against another; that as for Asahel his brother, he was himself in the wrong, when he would not be advised by him not to pursue him any farther, which was the occasion of his wounding and death. So Joab consented to what he said, and accepted these his words as an excuse [about Asahel], and called the soldiers back with the sound of the trumpet, as a signal for their retreat, and thereby put a stop to any further pursuit. After which Joab pitched his camp there that night; but Abner marched all that night, and passed over the river Jordan, and came to Ishbosheth, Saul's son, to Mahanaim. On the next day Joab counted the dead men, and took care of all their funerals. Now there were slain of Abner's soldiers about three hundred and sixty; but of those of David nineteen, and Asahel, whose body Joab and Abishai carried to Bethlehem; and when they had buried him in the sepulcher of their fathers, they came to David to Hebron. From this time therefore there began an intestine war, which lasted a great while, in which the followers of David grew stronger in the dangers they underwent, and the servants and subjects of Saul's sons did almost every day become weaker.

4. About this time David was become the father of six sons, born of as many mothers. The eldest was by Ahinoam, and he was called Arenon; the second was Daniel, by his wife Abigail; the name of the third was Absalom, by Maacah, the daughter of Talmai, king of Geshur; the fourth he named Adonijah, by his wife Haggith; the fifth was Shephatiah, by Abital; the sixth he called Ithream, by Eglah. Now while this intestine war went on, and the subjects of the two kings came frequently to action and to fighting, it was Abner, the general of the host of Saul's son, who, by his prudence, and the great interest he had among the multitude, made them all continue with Ishbosheth; and indeed it was a considerable time that they continued of his party; but afterwards Abner was blamed, and an accusation was laid against him, that he went in unto Saul's concubine: her name was Rispah, the daughter of Aiah. So when he was complained of by Ishbosheth, he was very uneasy and angry at it, because he had not justice done him by Ishbosheth, to

whom he had shown the greatest kindness; whereupon he threatened to transfer the kingdom to David, and demonstrate that he did not rule over the people beyond Jordan by his own abilities and wisdom, but by his warlike conduct and fidelity in leading his army. So he sent ambassadors to Hebron to David, and desired that he would give him security upon oath that he would esteem him his companion and his friend, upon condition that he should persuade the people to leave Saul's son, and choose him king of the whole country; and when David had made that league with Abner, for he was pleased with his message to him, he desired that he would give this as the first mark of performance of the present league, that he might have his wife Michal restored to him, as her whom he had purchased with great hazards, and with those six hundred heads of the Philistines which he had brought to Saul her father. So Abner took Michal from Phaltiel, who was then her husband, and sent her to David, Ishbosheth himself affording him his assistance, for David had written to him that of right he ought to have this his wife restored to him. Abner also called together the elders of the multitude, the commanders and captains of thousands, and spake thus to them: That he had formerly dissuaded them from their own resolution, when they were ready to forsake Ishbosheth, and to join themselves to David; that, however, he now gave them leave so to do, if they had a mind to it, for they knew that God had appointed David to be king of all the Hebrews by Samuel the prophet; and had foretold that he should punish the Philistines, and overcome them, and bring them under. Now when the elders and rulers heard this, and understood that Abner was come over to those sentiments about the public affairs which they were of before, they changed their measures, and came in to David. When these men had agreed to Abner's proposal, he called together the tribe of Benjamin, for all of that tribe were the guards of Ishbosheth's body, and he spake to them to the same purpose. And when he saw that they did not in the least oppose what he said, but resigned themselves up to his opinion, he took about twenty of his friends and came to David, in order to receive himself security upon oath from him; for we may justly esteem those things to be firmer which every one of us do by ourselves, than those which

we do by another. He also gave him an account of what he had said to the rulers, and to the whole tribe of Benjamin; and when David had received him in a courteous manner, and had treated him with great hospitality for many days, Abner, when he was dismissed, desired him to bring the multitude with him, that he might deliver up the government to him, when David himself was present, and a spectator of what was done.

5. When David had sent Abner away, Joab, the of his army, came immediately to Hebron; he had understood that Abner had been with David, and had parted with him a little before under leagues and agreements that the government should be delivered up to David, he feared lest David should place Abner, who had assisted him to gain the kingdom, in the first rank of dignity, especially since he was a shrewd man in other respects, in understanding affairs, and in managing them artfully, as proper seasons should require, and that he should himself be put lower, and be deprived of the command of the army; so he took a knavish and a wicked course. In the first place, he endeavored to calumniate Abner to the king, exhorting him to have a care of him, and not to give attention to what he had engaged to do for him, because all he did tended to confirm the government to Saul's son; that he came to him deceitfully and with guile, and was gone away in hopes of gaining his purpose by this management: but when he could not thus persuade David, nor saw him at all exasperated, he betook himself to a project bolder than the former: - he determined to kill Abner; and in order thereto, he sent some messengers after him, to whom he gave in charge, that when they should overtake him they should recall him in David's name, and tell him that he had somewhat to say to him about his affairs, which he had not remembered to speak of when he was with him. Now when Abner heard what the messengers said, (for they overtook him in a certain place called Besira, which was distant from Hebron twenty furlongs,) he suspected none of the mischief which was befalling him, and came back. Hereupon Joab met him in the gate, and received him in the kindest manner, as if he were Abner's most benevolent acquaintance and friend; for such as undertake the

vilest actions, in order to prevent the suspicion of any private mischief intended, do frequently make the greatest pretenses to what really good men sincerely do. So he took him aside from his own followers, as if he would speak with him in private, and brought him into a void place of the gate, having himself nobody with him but his brother Abishai; then he drew his sword, and smote him in the groin; upon which Abner died by this treachery of Joab, which, as he said himself, was in the way of punishment for his brother Asahel, whom Abner smote and slew as he was pursuing after him in the battle of Hebron, but as the truth was, out of his fear of losing his command of the army, and his dignity with the king, and lest he should be deprived of those advantages, and Abner should obtain the first rank in David's court. By these examples any one may learn how many and how great instances of wickedness men will venture upon for the sake of getting money and authority, and that they may not fail of either of them; for as when they are desirous of obtaining the same, they acquire them by ten thousand evil practices; so when they are afraid of losing them, they get them confirmed to them by practices much worse than the former, as if no other calamity so terrible could befall them as the failure of acquiring so exalted an authority; and when they have acquired it, and by long custom found the sweetness of it, the losing it again: and since this last would be the heaviest of all afflictions they all of them contrive and venture upon the most difficult actions, out of the fear of losing the same. But let it suffice that I have made these short reflections upon that subject.

6. When David heard that Abner was slain, it grieved his soul; and he called all men to witness, with stretching out his hands to God, and crying out that he was not a partaker in the murder of Abner, and that his death was not procured by his command or approbation. He also wished the heaviest curses might light upon him that slew him and upon his whole house; and he devoted those that had assisted him in this murder to the same penalties on its account; for he took care not to appear to have had any hand in this murder, contrary to the assurances he had given and the oaths he had taken to

Abner. However, he commanded all the people to weep and lament this man, and to honor his dead body with the usual solemnities; that is, by rending their garments, and putting on sackcloth, and that things should be the habit in which they should go before the bier; after which he followed it himself, with the elders and those that were rulers, lamenting Abner, and by his tears demonstrating his good-will to him while he was alive, and his sorrow for him now he was dead, and that he was not taken off with his consent. So he buried him at Hebron in a magnificent manner, and indited funeral elegies for him; he also stood first over the monument weeping, and caused others to do the same; nay, so deeply did the death of Abner disorder him, that his companions could by no means force him to take any food, but he affirmed with an oath that he would taste nothing till the sun was set. This procedure gained him the good-will of the multitude; for such as had an affection for Abner were mightily satisfied with the respect he paid him when he was dead, and the observation of that faith he had plighted to him, which was shown in his vouchsafing him all the usual ceremonies, as if he had been his kinsman and his friend, and not suffering him to be neglected and injured with a dishonorable burial, as if he had been his enemy; insomuch that the entire nation rejoiced at the king's gentleness and mildness of disposition, every one being ready to suppose that the king would have taken the same care of them in the like circumstances, which they saw be showed in the burial of the dead body of Abner. And indeed David principally intended to gain a good reputation, and therefore he took care to do what was proper in this case, whence none had any suspicion that he was the author of Abner's death. He also said this to the multitude, that he was greatly troubled at the death of so good a man; and that the affairs of the Hebrews had suffered great detriment by being deprived of him, who was of so great abilities to preserve them by his excellent advice, and by the strength of his hands in war. But he added, that "God, who hath a regard to all men's actions, will not suffer this man [Joab] to go off unrevenged; but know ye, that I am not able to do any thing to these sons of Zeruiah, Joab and Abishai, who have more power than I have; but God will requite their insolent attempts upon their

own heads." And this was the fatal conclusion of the life of Abner.

Footnote:

1. It ought to be here noted, that Joab, Abishai, and Asahel were all three David's nephews, the sons of his sister Zeraiah, as 1 Chronicles 2:16; and that Amasa was also his nephew by his other sister Abigail, ver. 17.

Chapter 2

David Received the Whole Kingdom

1. When Ishbosheth, the son of Saul, had heard of the death of Abner, he took it to heart to be deprived of a man that was of his kindred, and had indeed given him the kingdom, but was greatly afflicted, and Abner's death very much troubled him; nor did he himself outlive any long time, but was treacherously set upon by the sons of Rimmon, (Baanah and Rechab were their names,) and was slain by them; for these being of a family of the Benjamites, and of the first rank among them, thought that if they should slay Ishbosheth, they should obtain large presents from David, and be made commanders by him, or, however, should have some other trust committed to them. So when they once found him alone, and asleep at noon, in an upper room, when none of his guards were there, and when the woman that kept the door was not watching, but was fallen asleep also, partly on account of the labor she had undergone, and partly on account of the heat of the day, these men went into the room in which Ishbosheth, Saul's son, lay asleep, and slew him; they also cut off his head, and took their journey all that night, and the next day, as supposing themselves flying away from those they had injured, to one that would accept of this action as a favor, and would afford them security. So they came to Hebron, and showed David the head of Ishbosheth, and presented themselves to him as his well-wishers, and such as had killed one that was his enemy and antagonist. Yet David did not relish what they had done as they expected, but said to them, "You vile wretches, you shall immediately receive the punishment you deserve. Did not you know what vengeance I executed on him that murdered Saul, and brought me his crown of gold, and this while he who made this slaughter did it as a favor to him, that he might not be caught by his enemies? Or do you imagine that I am altered in my disposition, and suppose that I am not the same man I then was, but am pleased with men that are wicked doers, and esteem your vile

actions, when you are become murderers of your master, as grateful to me, when you have slain a righteous man upon his bed, who never did evil to any body, and treated you with great good-will and respect? Wherefore you shall suffer the punishment due on his account, and the vengeance I ought to inflict upon you for killing Ishbosheth, and for supposing that I should take his death kindly at your hands; for you could not lay a greater blot on my honor, than by making such a supposal." When David had said this, he tormented them with all sorts of torments, and then put them to death; and he bestowed all accustomed rites on the burial of the head of Ishbosheth, and laid it in the grave of Abner.

2. When these things were brought to this conclusion, all the principal men of the Hebrew people came to David to Hebron, with the heads of thousands, and other rulers, and delivered themselves up to him, putting him in mind of the good-will they had borne to him in Saul's lifetime, and the respect they then had not ceased to pay him when he was captain of a thousand, as also that he was chosen of God by Samuel the prophet, he and his sons; (1) and declaring besides, how God had given him power to save the land of the Hebrews, and to overcome the Philistines. Whereupon he received kindly this their alacrity on his account; and exhorted them to continue in it, for that they should have no reason to repent of being thus disposed to him. So when he had feasted them, and treated them kindly, he sent them out to bring all the people to him; upon which came to him about six thousand and eight hundred armed men of the tribe of Judah, who bare shields and spears for their weapons, for these had [till now] continued with Saul's son, when the rest of the tribe of Judah had ordained David for their king. There came also seven thousand and one hundred out of the tribe of Simeon. Out of the tribe of Levi came four thousand and seven hundred, having Jehoiada for their leader. After these came Zadok the high priest, with twenty-two captains of his kindred. Out of the tribe of Benjamin the armed men were four thousand; but the rest of the tribe continued, still expecting that some one of the house of Saul should reign over them. Those of the tribe

of Ephraim were twenty thousand and eight hundred, and these mighty men of valor, and eminent for their strength. Out of the half tribe of Manasseh came eighteen thousand, of the most potent men. Out of the tribe of Issachar came two hundred, who foreknew what was to come hereafter, (2) but of armed men twenty thousand. Of the tribe of Zebulun fifty thousand chosen men. This was the only tribe that came universally in to David, and all these had the same weapons with the tribe of Gad. Out of the tribe of Naphtali the eminent men and rulers were one thousand, whose weapons were shields and spears, and the tribe itself followed after, being (in a manner) innumerable [thirty-seven thousand]. Out of the tribe of Dan there were of chosen men twenty-seven thousand and six hundred. Out of the tribe of Asher were forty thousand. Out of the two tribes that were beyond Jordan, and the rest of the tribe of Manasseh, such as used shields, and spears, and head-pieces, and swords, were a hundred and twenty thousand. The rest of the tribes also made use of swords. This multitude came together to Hebron to David, with a great quantity of corn, and wine, and all other sorts of food, and established David in his kingdom with one consent. And when the people had rejoiced for three days in Hebron, David and all the people removed and came to Jerusalem.

Footnotes:

1. This may be a true observation of Josephus's, that Samuel by command from God entailed the crown on David and his posterity; for no further did that entail ever reach, Solomon himself having never had any promise made him that his posterity should always have the right to it.
2. These words of Josephus concerning the tribe of Issachar, who foreknew what was to come hereafter," are best paraphrased by the parallel text. 1 Chronicles 12:32, "Who had understanding of the times to know what Israel ought to do;" that is, who had so much knowledge in astronomy as to make calendars for the Israelites, that they might keep their festivals, and plough and sow, and gather in their harvests and vintage, in due

season.

Chapter 3

David Had Taken Jerusalem

1. Now the Jebusites, who were the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and were by extraction Canaanites, shut their gates, and placed the blind, and the lame, and all their maimed persons, upon the wall, in way of derision of the king, and said that the very lame themselves would hinder his entrance into it. This they did out of contempt of his power, and as depending on the strength of their walls. David was hereby enraged, and began the siege of Jerusalem, and employed his utmost diligence and alacrity therein, as intending by the taking of this place to demonstrate his power, and to intimidate all others that might be of the like [evil] disposition towards him. So he took the lower city by force, but the citadel held out still; (1) whence it was that the king, knowing that the proposal of dignities and rewards would encourage the soldiers to greater actions, promised that he who should first go over the ditches that were beneath the citadel, and should ascend to the citadel itself and take it, should have the command of the entire people conferred upon him. So they all were ambitious to ascend, and thought no pains too great in order to ascend thither, out of their desire of the chief command. However, Joab, the son of Zeruiah, prevented the rest; and as soon as he was got up to the citadel, cried out to the king, and claimed the chief command.

2. When David had cast the Jebusites out of the citadel, he also rebuilt Jerusalem, and named it The City of David, and abode there all the time of his reign; but for the time that he reigned over the tribe of Judah only in Hebron, it was seven years and six months. Now when he had chosen Jerusalem to be his royal city, his affairs did more and more prosper, by the providence of God, who took care that they should improve and be augmented. Hiram also, the king of the Tyrians, sent ambassadors to him, and made a league of mutual friendship and assistance with him. He also sent

him presents, cedar-trees, and mechanics, and men skillful in building and architecture, that they might build him a royal palace at Jerusalem. Now David made buildings round about the lower city: he also joined the citadel to it, and made it one body; and when he had encompassed all with walls, he appointed Joab to take care of them. It was David, therefore, who first cast the Jebusites out of Jerusalem, and called it by his own name, The City of David: for under our forefather Abraham it was called (Salem, or) Solyma; (2) but after that time, some say that Homer mentions it by that name of Solyma, [for he named the temple Solyma, according to the Hebrew language, which denotes security.] Now the whole time from the warfare under Joshua our general against the Canaanites, and from that war in which he overcame them, and distributed the land among the Hebrews, (nor could the Israelites ever cast the Canaanites out of Jerusalem until this time, when David took it by siege,) this whole time was five hundred and fifteen years.

3. I shall now make mention of Araunah, who was a wealthy man among the Jebusites, but was not slain by David in the siege of Jerusalem, because of the good-will he bore to the Hebrews, and a particular benignity and affection which he had to the king himself; which I shall take a more seasonable opportunity to speak of a little afterwards. Now David married other wives over and above those which he had before: he had also concubines. The sons whom he had were in number eleven, whose names were Amnon, Emnos, Eban, Nathan, Solomon, Jeban, Elien, Phalna, Ennaphen, Jenaë, Eliphale; and a daughter, Tamar. Nine of these were born of legitimate wives, but the two last-named of concubines; and Tamar had the same mother with Absalom.

Footnotes:

1. What our other copies say of Mount Sion, as alone properly called the city of David, 2 Samuel 5:6-9, and of this its siege and conquest now by David, Josephus applies to the whole city Jerusalem, though including

the citadel also; by what authority we do not now know perhaps, after David had united them together, or joined the citadel to the lower city, as sect. 2, Josephus esteemed them as one city. However, this notion seems to be confirmed by what the same Josephus says concerning David's and many other kings of Judah's sepulchers, which as the authors of the books of Kings and Chronicles say were in the city of David, so does Josephus still say they were in Jerusalem. The sepulcher of David seems to have been also a known place in the several days of Hyrcanus, of Herod, and of St. Peter, *Antiq. B. XIII. ch. 8. sect. 4 B. XVI. ch. 8. sect. 1; Acts 2:29*. Now no such royal sepulchers have been found about Mount Sion, but are found close by the north wall of Jerusalem, which I suspect, therefore, to be these very sepulchers. See the note on ch. 15. sect. 3. In the meantime, Josephus's explication of the lame, and the blind, and the maimed, as set to keep this city or citadel, seems to be the truth, and gives the best light to that history in our Bible. Mr. Ottius truly observes, (up. Hayercamp, p. 305,) that Josephus never mentions Mount Sion by that name, as taking it for an appellative, as I suppose, and not for a proper name; he still either styles it *The Citadel*, or *The Upper City*; nor do I see any reason for Mr. Ottius's evil suspicions about this procedure of Josephus.

2. Some copies of Josephus have here *Solyma*, or *Salem*; and others *Hierosolyma*, or *Jerusalem*. The latter best agree to what Josephus says elsewhere, (*Of the War, B. VI. ch. 10.*), that this city was called *Solyma*, or *Salem*, before the days of Melchisedec, but was by him called *Hierosolyma*, or *Jerusalem*. I rather suppose it to have been so called after Abraham had received that oracle Jehovah Jireh, "The Lord will see, or provide," *Genesis 22:14*. The latter word, *Jireh*, with a little alteration, prefixed to the old name *Salem*, *Peace*, will be *Jerusalem*; and since that expression, "God will see," or rather, "God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt-offering," ver. 8, 14, is there said to have been proverbial till the days of Moses, this seems to me the most probable derivation of that name, which will then denote that God would provide

peace by that "Lamb of God which was to take away the sins of the world." However, that which is put into brackets can hardly be supposed the genuine words of Josephus, as Dr. Hudson well judges.

Chapter 4

David Removed the Ark to Jerusalem

1. When the Philistines understood that David was made king of the Hebrews, they made war against him at Jerusalem; and when they had seized upon that valley which is called The Valley of the Giants, and is a place not far from the city, they pitched their camp therein; but the king of the Jews, who never permitted himself to do any thing without prophecy, (1) and the command of God and without depending on him as a security for the time to come, bade the high priest to foretell to him what was the will of God, and what would be the event of this battle. And when he foretold that he should gain the victory and the dominion, he led out his army against the Philistines; and when the battle was joined, he came himself behind, and fell upon the enemy on the sudden, and slew some of them, and put the rest to flight. And let no one suppose that it was a small army of the Philistines that came against the Hebrews, as guessing so from the suddenness of their defeat, and from their having performed no great action, or that was worth recording, from the slowness of their march, and want of courage; but let him know that all Syria and Phoenicia, with many other nations besides them, and those warlike nations also, came to their assistance, and had a share in this war, which thing was the only cause why, when they had been so often conquered, and had lost so many ten thousands of their men, they still came upon the Hebrews with greater armies; nay, indeed, when they had so often failed of their purpose in these battles, they came upon David with an army three times as numerous as before, and pitched their camp on the same spot of ground as before. The king of Israel therefore inquired of God again concerning the event of the battle; and the high priest prophesied to him, that he should keep his army in the groves, called the Groves of Weeping, which were not far from the enemy's camp, and that he should not move, nor begin to fight, till the trees of the grove should be in motion without the wind's

blowing; but as soon as these trees moved, and the time foretold to him by God was come, he should, without delay, go out to gain what was an already prepared and evident victory; for the several ranks of the enemy's army did not sustain him, but retreated at the first onset, whom he closely followed, and slew them as he went along, and pursued them to the city Gaza (which is the limit of their country): after this he spoiled their camp, in which he found great riches; and he destroyed their gods.

2. When this had proved the event of the battle, David thought it proper, upon a consultation with the elders, and rulers, and captains of thousands, to send for those that were in the flower of their age out of all his countrymen, and out of the whole land, and withal for the priests and the Levites, in order to their going to Kirjathjearim, to bring up the ark of God out of that city, and to carry it to Jerusalem, and there to keep it, and offer before it those sacrifices and those other honors with which God used to be well-pleased; for had they done thus in the reign of Saul, they had not undergone any great misfortunes at all. So when the whole body of the people were come together, as they had resolved to do, the king came to the ark, which the priest brought out of the house of Aminadab, and laid it upon a new cart, and permitted their brethren and their children to draw it, together with the oxen. Before it went the king, and the whole multitude of the people with him, singing hymns to God, and making use of all sorts of songs usual among them, with variety of the sounds of musical instruments, and with dancing and singing of psalms, as also with the sounds of trumpets and of cymbals, and so brought the ark to Jerusalem. But as they were come to the threshing-floor of Chidon, a place so called, Uzzah was slain by the anger of God; for as the oxen shook the ark, he stretched out his hand, and would needs take hold of it. Now, because he was not a priest (2) and yet touched the ark, God struck him dead. Hereupon both the king and the people were displeased at the death of Uzzah; and the place where he died is still called the Breach of Uzzah unto this day. So David was afraid; and supposing that if he received the ark to himself into the city, he might suffer in the like manner as Uzzah

had suffered, who, upon his bare putting out his hand to the ark, died in the manner already mentioned, he did not receive it to himself into the city, but he took it aside unto a certain place belonging to a righteous man, whose name was Obededom, who was by his family a Levite, and deposited the ark with him; and it remained there three entire months. This augmented the house of Obededom, and conferred many blessings upon it. And when the king heard what had befallen Obededom, how he was become, of a poor man in a low estate, exceeding happy, and the object of envy to all those that saw or inquired after his house, he took courage, and, hoping that he should meet with no misfortune thereby, he transferred the ark to his own house; the priests carrying it, while seven companies of singers, who were set in that order by the king, went before it, and while he himself played upon the harp, and joined in the music, insomuch, that when his wife Michel, the daughter of Saul, who was our first king, saw him so doing, she laughed at him. But when they had brought in the ark, they placed it under the tabernacle which David had pitched for it, and he offered costly sacrifices and peace-offerings, and treated the whole multitude, and dealt both to the women, and the men, and the infants a loaf of bread and a cake, and another cake baked in a pan, with the portion of the sacrifice. So when he had thus feasted the people, he sent them away, and he himself returned to his own house.

3. But when Michal his wife, the daughter of Saul, came and stood by him, she wished him all other happiness, and entreated that whatsoever he should further desire, to the utmost possibility, might be given him by God, and that he might be favorable to him; yet did she blame him, that so great a king as he was should dance after an unseemly manner, and in his dancing, uncover himself among the servants and the handmaidens. But he replied, that he was not ashamed to do what was acceptable to God, who had preferred him before her father, and before all others; that he would play frequently, and dance, without any regard to what the handmaidens and she herself thought of it. So this Michal, who was David's wife, had no children; however, when she was afterward married to him to whom Saul her father

had given her, (for at this time David had taken her away from him, and had her himself,) she bare five children. But concerning those matters I shall discourse in a proper place.

4. Now when the king saw that his affairs grew better almost every day, by the will of God, he thought he should offend him, if, while he himself continued in houses made of cedar, such as were of a great height, and had the most curious works of architecture in them, he should overlook the ark while it was laid in a tabernacle, and was desirous to build a temple to God, as Moses had predicted such a temple should be built. (3) And when he had discoursed with Nathan the prophet about these things, and had been encouraged by him to do whatsoever he had a mind to do, as having God with him, and his helper in all things, he was thereupon the more ready to set about that building. But God appeared to Nathan that very night, and commanded him to say to David, (4) that he took his purpose and his desires kindly, since nobody had before now taken it into their head to build him a temple, although upon his having such a notion he would not permit him to build him that temple, because he had made many wars, and was defiled with the slaughter of his enemies; that, however, after his death, in his old age, and when he had lived a long life, there should be a temple built by a son of his, who should take the kingdom after him, and should be called Solomon, whom he promised to provide for, as a father provides for his son, by preserving the kingdom for his son's posterity, and delivering it to them; but that he would still punish him, if he sinned, with diseases and barrenness of land. When David understood this from the prophet, and was overjoyful at this knowledge of the sure continuance of the dominion to his posterity, and that his house should be splendid, and very famous, he came to the ark, and fell down on his face, and began to adore God, and to return thanks to him for all his benefits, as well for those that he had already bestowed upon him in raising him from a low state, and from the employment of a shepherd, to so great dignity of dominion and glory; as for those also which he had promised to his posterity; and besides, for that providence which he had

exercised over the Hebrews in procuring them the liberty they enjoyed. And when he had said thus, and had sung a hymn of praise to God, he went his way.

Footnotes:

1. It deserves here to be remarked, that Saul very rarely, and David very frequently, consulted God by Urim; and that David aimed always to depend, not on his own prudence or abilities but on the Divine direction, contrary to Saul's practice. See sect. 2, and the note on Antiq. B. III. ch. 8. sect. 9; and when Saul's daughter, (but David's wife,) Michal, laughed at David's dancing before the ark, 2 Samuel 6:16, &c., and here, sect. 1, 2, 3, it is probable she did so, because her father Saul did not use to pay such a regard to the ark, to the Urim there inquired by, or to God's worship before it, and because she thought it beneath the dignity of a king to be so religious.
2. Josephus seems to be partly in the right, when he observes here that Uzzah was no priest, (though perhaps he might be a Levite,) and was therefore struck dead for touching the ark, contrary to the law, and for which profane rashness death was the penalty by that law, Numbers 4:15, 20. See the like before, Antiq. B. VI. ch. 1. sect. 4. It is not improbable that the putting this ark in a cart, when it ought to have been carried by the priests or Levites, as it was presently here in Josephus so carried from Obededom's house to David's, might be also an occasion of the anger of God on that breach of his law. See Numbers 4:15; 1 Chronicles 15:13.
3. Josephus here informs us, that, according to his understanding of the sense of his copy of the Pentateuch, Moses had himself foretold the building of the temple, which yet is no where, that I know of, in our present copies. And that this is not a mistake set down by him unwarily, appears by what he observed before, on Antiq. B. IV. ch. 8. sect. 46, how Moses foretold that, upon the Jews' future disobedience, their

temple should be burnt and rebuilt, and that not once only, but several times afterward. See also Josephus's mention of God's former commands to build such a temple presently, ch. 14. sect. 2, contrary to our other copies, or at least to our translation of the Hebrew, 2 Samuel 7:6, 7; 1 Chronicles 17:5, 6.

4. Josephus seems, in this place, with our modern interpreters to confound the two distinct predictions which God made to David and to Nathan, concerning the building him a temple by one of David's posterity; the one belongeth to Solomon, the other to the Messiah; the distinction between which is of the greatest consequence to the Christian religion.

Chapter 5

How David Brought Under the Philistines

1. A Little while after this, he considered that he ought to make war against the Philistines, and not to see any idleness or laziness permitted in his management, that so it might prove, as God had foretold to him, that when he had overthrown his enemies, he should leave his posterity to reign in peace afterward: so he called together his army again, and when he had charged them to be ready and prepared for war, and when he thought that all things in his army were in a good state, he removed from Jerusalem, and came against the Philistines; and when he had overcome them in battle, and had cut off a great part of their country, and adjoined it to the country of the Hebrews, he transferred the war to the Moabites; and when he had overcome two parts of their army in battle, he took the remaining part captive, and imposed tribute upon them, to be paid annually. He then made war against Iadadezer, the son of Rehob, king of Sophene; (1) and when he had joined battle with him at 'the river Euphrates, he destroyed twenty thousand of his footmen, and about seven thousand of his horsemen. He also took a thousand of his chariots, and destroyed the greatest part of them, and ordered that no more than one hundred should be kept. (2)

2. Now when Hadad, king of Damascus and of Syria, heard that David fought against Hadadezer, who was his friend, he came to his assistance with a powerful army, in hopes to rescue him; and when he had joined battle with David at the river Euphrates, he failed of his purpose, and lost in the battle a great number of his soldiers; for there were slain of the army of Hadad twenty thousand, and all the rest fled. Nicelens also [of Damascus] makes mention of this king in the fourth book of his histories; where he speaks thus: "A great while after these things had happened, there was one of that country whose name was Hadad, who was become very potent; he reigned over

Damascus, and, the other parts of Syria, excepting Phoenicia. He made war against David, the king of Judea, and tried his fortune in many battles, and particularly in the last battle at Euphrates, wherein he was beaten. He seemed to have been the most excellent of all their kings in strength and manhood," Nay, besides this, he says of his posterity, that "they succeeded one another in his kingdom, and in his name;" where he thus speaks: "When Hadad was dead, his posterity reigned for ten generations, each of his successors receiving from his father that his dominion, and this his name; as did the Ptolemies in Egypt. But the third was the most powerful of them all, and was willing to avenge the defeat his forefather had received; so he made an expedition against the Jews, and laid waste the city which is now called Samaria." Nor did he err from the truth; for this is that Hadad who made the expedition against Samaria, in the reign of Ahab, king of Israel, concerning whom we shall speak in due place hereafter.

3. Now when David had made an expedition against Damascus, and the other parts of Syria, and had brought it all into subjection, and had placed garrisons in the country, and appointed that they should pay tribute, he returned home. He also dedicated to God at Jerusalem the golden quivers, the entire armor which the guards of Hadad used to wear; which Shishak, the king of Egypt, took away when he fought with David's grandson, Rehoboam, with a great deal of other wealth which he carried out of Jerusalem. However, these things will come to be explained in their proper places hereafter. Now as for the king of the Hebrews, he was assisted by God, who gave him great success in his wars, and he made all expedition against the best cities of Hadadezer, Betah and Machen; so he took them by force, and laid them waste. Therein was found a very great quantity of gold and silver, besides that sort of brass which is said to be more valuable than gold; of which brass Solomon made that large vessel which was called The [Brazen] Sea, and those most curious lavers, when he built the temple for God.

4. But when the king of Hamath was informed of the ill success of

Hadadezer, and had heard of the ruin of his army, he was afraid on his own account, and resolved to make a league of friendship and fidelity with David before he should come against him; so he sent to him his son Joram, and professed that he owed him thanks for fighting against Hadadezer, who was his enemy, and made a league with him of mutual assistance and friendship. He also sent him presents, vessels of ancient workmanship, both of gold, of silver, and of brass. So when David had made this league of mutual assistance with Toi, (for that was the name of the king of Hamath,) and had received the presents he sent him, he dismissed his son with that respect which was due on both sides; but then David brought those presents that were sent by him, as also the rest of the gold and silver which he had taken of the cities whom he had conquered, and dedicated them to God. Nor did God give victory and success to him only when he went to the battle himself, and led his own army, but he gave victory to Abishai, the brother of Joab, general of his forces, over the Idumeans, (3) and by him to David, when he sent him with an army into Idumea: for Abishai destroyed eighteen thousand of them in the battle; whereupon the king [of Israel] placed garrisons through all Idumea, and received the tribute of the country, and of every head among them. Now David was in his nature just, and made his determination with regard to truth. He had for the general of his whole army Joab; and he made Jehoshaphat, the son of Ahilud, recorder. He also appointed Zadok, of the family of Phinehas, to be high priest, together with Abiathar, for he was his friend. He also made Seisan the scribe, and committed the command over the guards of his body to Benaiah; the son of Jehoiada. His elder sons were near his body, and had the care of it also.

5. He also called to mind the covenants and the oaths he had made with Jonathan, the son of Saul, and the friendship and affection Jonathan had for him; for besides all the rest of his excellent qualities with which he was endowed, he was also exceeding mindful of such as had at other times bestowed benefits upon him. He therefore gave order that inquiry should be made, whether any of Jonathan's lineage were living, to whom he might

make return of that familiar acquaintance which Jonathan had had with him, and for which he was still debtor. And when one of Saul's freed men was brought to him, who was acquainted with those of his family that were still living, he asked him whether he could tell him of any one belonging to Jonathan that was now alive, and capable of a requital of the benefits which he had received from Jonathan. And he said, that a son of his was remaining, whose name was Mephibosheth, but that he was lame of his feet; for that when his nurse heard that the father and grandfather of the child were fallen in the battle, she snatched him up, and fled away, and let him fall from her shoulders, and his feet were lamed. So when he had learned where and by whom he was brought up, he sent messengers to Machir, to the city of Lodebar, for with him was the son of Jonathan brought up, and sent for him to come to him. So when Mephibosheth came to the king, he fell on his face and worshipped him; but David encouraged him, bade him be of good cheer, and expect better times. So he gave him his father's house, and all the estate which his grandfather Saul was in possession of, and bade him come and diet with him at his own table, and never to be absent one day from that table. And when the youth had worshipped him on account of his words and gifts given to him, he called for Ziba, and told him that he had given the youth his father's house, and all Saul's estate. He also ordered that Ziba should cultivate his land, and take care of it, and bring him the profits of all to Jerusalem. Accordingly, David brought him to his table every day, and bestowed upon the youth, Ziba and his sons, who were in number fifteen, and his servants, who were in number twenty. When the king had made these appointments, and Ziba had worshipped him, and promised to do all that he had bidden him, he went his way; so that this son of Jonathan dwelt at Jerusalem, and dined at the king's table, and had the same care that a son could claim taken of him. He also had himself a son, whom he named Micha.

Footnotes:

1. Whether Syria Zobah, 2 Samuel 3:8; 1 Chronicles 18:3-8, be Sophene,

as Josephus here supposes; which yet Ptolemy places beyond Euphrates, as Dr. Hudson observes here, whereas Zobah was on this side; or whether Josephus was not here guilty of a mistake in his geography; I cannot certainly determine.

2. David's reserving only one hundred chariots for himself out of one thousand he had taken from Hadadezer, was most probably in compliance with the law of Moses, which forbade a king of Israel "to multiply horses to himself," Deuteronomy 17:16; one of the principal uses of horses in Judea at that time being for drawing their chariots. See Joshua 12:6; and Antiq. B. V. ch. 1. sect. 18. It deserves here to be remarked, that this Hadad, being a very great king, was conquered by David, whose posterity yet for several generations were called Benhadad, or the son of Hadad, till the days of Hazael, whose son Adar or Ader is also in our Hebrew copy (2 Kings 13:24) written Benhadad, but in Josephus Adad or Adar. And strange it is, that the son of Hazael, said to be such in the same text, and in Josephus, Antiq. B. IX. ch. 8. sect. 7, should still be called the son of Hadad. I would, therefore, here correct our Hebrew copy from Josephus's, which seems to have the true reading. nor does the testimony of Nicolaus of Damascus, produced in this place by Josephus, seem to be faultless, when it says that he was the third of the Hadads, or second of the Benhadads, who besieged Samaria in the days of Ahab. He must rather have been the seventh or eighth, if there were ten in all of that name, as we are assured there were. For this testimony makes all the Hadads or Benhadads of the same line, and to have immediately succeeded one another; whereas Hazael was not of that line, nor is he called Hadad or Benhadad in any copy. And note, that from this Hadad, in the days of David, to the beginning of Hazael, were near two hundred years, according to the exactest chronology of Josephus.
3. By this great victory over the Idameans or Edomites, the posterity of Esau, and by the consequent tribute paid by that nation to the Jews, were the prophecies delivered to Rebecca before Jacob and Esau were born,

and by old Isaac before his death, that the elder, Esau, (or the Edomites,) should serve and the younger, Jacob, (or the Israelites,) and Jacob (or the Israelites) should be Esau's (or the Edomites') lord, remarkably fulfilled. See Antiq. B. VIII. ch 7. sect. 6; Genesis 25;9,3; and the notes on Antiq. B. I. ch. 18. sect. 5, 6.

Chapter 6

The War Against the Ammonites was Happily Concluded

1. This were the honors that such as were left of Saul's and Jonathan's lineage received from David. About this time died Nahash, the king of the Ammonites, who was a friend of David's; and when his son had succeeded his father in the kingdom, David sent ambassadors to him to comfort him; and exhorted him to take his father's death patiently, and to expect that he would continue the same kindness to himself which he had shown to his father. But the princes of the Ammonites took this message in evil part, and not as David's kind dispositions gave reason to take it; and they excited the king to resent it; and said that David had sent men to spy out the country, and what strength it had, under the pretense of humanity and kindness. They further advised him to have a care, and not to give heed to David's words, lest he should be deluded by him, and so fall into an inconsolable calamity. Accordingly Nahash's [son], the king of the Ammonites, thought these princes spake what was more probable than the truth would admit, and so abused the ambassadors after a very harsh manner; for he shaved the one half of their beards, and cut off one half of their garments, and sent his answer, not in words, but in deeds. When the king of Israel saw this, he had indignation at it, and showed openly that he would not overlook this injurious and contumelious treatment, but would make war with the Ammonites, and would avenge this wicked treatment of his ambassadors on their king. So that king's intimate friends and commanders, understanding that they had violated their league, and were liable to be punished for the same, made preparations for war; they also sent a thousand talents to the Syrian king of Mesopotamia, and endeavored to prevail with him to assist them for that pay, and Shobach. Now these kings had twenty thousand footmen. They also hired the king of the country called Maacah, and a fourth

king, by name Ishtob; which last had twelve thousand armed men.

2. But David was under no consternation at this confederacy, nor at the forces of the Ammonites; and putting his trust in God, because he was going to war in a just cause, on account of the injurious treatment he had met with, he immediately sent Joab, the captain of his host, against them, and gave him the flower of his army, who pitched his camp by Rabbah, the metropolis of the Ammonites; whereupon the enemy came out, and set themselves in array, not all of them together, but in two bodies; for the auxiliaries were set in array in the plain by themselves, but the army of the Ammonites at the gates over against the Hebrews. When Joab saw this, he opposed one stratagem against another, and chose out the most hardy part of his men, and set them in opposition to the king of Syria, and the kings that were with him, and gave the other part to his brother Abishai, and bid him set them in opposition to the Ammonites; and said to him, that in case he should see that the Syrians distressed him, and were too hard for him, he should order his troops to turn about and assist him; and he said that he himself would do the same to him, if he saw him in the like distress from the Ammonites. So he sent his brother before, and encouraged him to do every thing courageously and with alacrity, which would teach them to be afraid of disgrace, and to fight manfully; and so he dismissed him to fight with the Ammonites, while he fell upon the Syrians. And though they made a strong opposition for a while, Joab slew many of them, but compelled the rest to betake themselves to flight; which, when the Ammonites saw, and were withal afraid of Abishai and his army, they staid no longer, but imitated their auxiliaries, and fled to the city. So Joab, when he had thus overcome the enemy, returned with great joy to Jerusalem to the king.

3. This defeat did not still induce the Ammonites to be quiet, nor to own those that were superior to them to be so, and be still, but they sent to Chalaman, the king of the Syrians, beyond Euphrates, and hired him for an auxiliary. He had Shobach for the captain of his host, with eighty thousand

footmen, and ten thousand horsemen. Now when the king of the Hebrews understood that the Ammonites had again gathered so great an army together, he determined to make war with them no longer by his generals, but he passed over the river Jordan himself with all his army; and when he met them he joined battle with them, and overcame them, and slew forty thousand of their footmen, and seven thousand of their horsemen. He also wounded Shobach, the general of Chalaman's forces, who died of that stroke; but the people of Mesopotamia, upon such a conclusion of the battle, delivered themselves up to David, and sent him presents, who at winter time returned to Jerusalem. But at the beginning of the spring he sent Joab, the captain of his host, to fight against the Ammonites, who overran all their country, and laid it waste, and shut them up in their metropolis Rabbah, and besieged them therein.

Chapter 7

David Slew Uriah

1. But David fell now into a very grievous sin, though he were otherwise naturally a righteous and a religious man, and one that firmly observed the laws of our fathers; for when late in an evening he took a view round him from the roof of his royal palace, where he used to walk at that hour, he saw a woman washing herself in her own house: she was one of extraordinary beauty, and therein surpassed all other women; her name was Bathsheba. So he was overcome by that woman's beauty, and was not able to restrain his desires, but sent for her, and lay with her. Hereupon she conceived with child, and sent to the king, that he should contrive some way for concealing her sin (for, according to the laws of their fathers, she who had been guilty of adultery ought to be put to death). So the king sent for Joab's armor-bearer from the siege, who was the woman's husband, and his name was Uriah. And when he was come, the king inquired of him about the army, and about the siege; and when he had made answer that all their affairs went according to their wishes, the king took some portions of meat from his supper, and gave them to him, and bade him go home to his wife, and take his rest with her. Uriah did not do so, but slept near the king with the rest of his armor-bearers. When the king was informed of this, he asked him why he did not go home to his house, and to his wife, after so long an absence; which is the natural custom of all men, when they come from a long journey. He replied, that it was not right, while his fellow soldiers, and the general of the army, slept upon the ground, in the camp, and in an enemy's country, that he should go and take his rest, and solace himself with his wife. So when he had thus replied, the king ordered him to stay there that night, that he might dismiss him the next day to the general. So the king invited Uriah to supper, and after a cunning and dexterous manlier plied him with drink at supper, till he was thereby disordered; yet did he nevertheless sleep at the king's gates without

any inclination to go to his wife. Upon this the king was very angry at him; and wrote to Joab, and commanded him to punish Uriah, for he told him that he had offended him; and he suggested to him the manner in which he would have him punished, that it might not be discovered that he was himself the author of this his punishment; for he charged him to set him over against that part of the enemy's army where the attack would be most hazardous, and where he might be deserted, and be in the greatest jeopardy, for he bade him order his fellow soldiers to retire out of the fight. When he had written thus to him, and sealed the letter with his own seal, he gave it to Uriah to carry to Joab. When Joab had received it, and upon reading it understood the king's purpose, he set Uriah in that place where he knew the enemy would be most troublesome to them; and gave him for his partners some of the best soldiers in the army; and said that he would also come to their assistance with the whole army, that if possible they might break down some part of the wall, and enter the city. And he desired him to be glad of the opportunity of exposing himself to such great pains, and not to be displeased at it, since he was a valiant soldier, and had a great reputation for his valor, both with the king and with his countrymen. And when Uriah undertook the work he was set upon with alacrity, he gave private orders to those who were to be his companions, that when they saw the enemy make a sally, they should leave him. When, therefore, the Hebrews made an attack upon the city, the Ammonites were afraid that the enemy might prevent them, and get up into the city, and this at the very place whither Uriah was ordered; so they exposed their best soldiers to be in the forefront, and opened their gates suddenly, and fell upon the enemy with great vehemence, and ran violently upon them. When those that were with Uriah saw this, they all retreated backward, as Joab had directed them beforehand; but Uriah, as ashamed to run away and leave his post, sustained the enemy, and receiving the violence of their onset, he slew many of them; but being encompassed round, and caught in the midst of them, he was slain, and some other of his companions were slain with him.

2. When this was done, Joab sent messengers to the king, and ordered them to tell him that he did what he could to take the city soon; but that, as they made an assault on the wall, they had been forced to retire with great loss; and bade them, if they saw the king was angry at it, to add this, that Uriah was slain also. When the king had heard this of the messengers, he took it heinously, and said that they did wrong when they assaulted the wall, whereas they ought, by undermining and other stratagems of war, to endeavor the taking of rite city, especially when they had before their eyes the example of Abimelech, the son of Gideon, who would needs take the tower in Thebes by force, and was killed by a large stone thrown at him by an old woman; and although he was a man of great prowess, he died ignominiously by the dangerous manner of his assault: that they should remember this accident, and not come near the enemy's wall, for that the best method of making war with success was to call to mind the accidents of former wars, and what good or bad success had attended them in the like dangerous cases, that so they might imitate the one, and avoid the other. But when the king was in this disposition, the messenger told him that Uriah was slain also; whereupon he was pacified. So he bade the messenger go back to Joab and tell him that this misfortune is no other than what is common among mankind, and that such is the nature, and such the accidents of war, insomuch that sometimes the enemy will have success therein, and sometimes others; but that he ordered him to go on still in his care about the siege, that no ill accident might befall him in it hereafter; that they should raise bulwarks and use machines in besieging the city; and when they have gotten it, to overturn its very foundations, and to destroy all those that are in it. Accordingly the messenger carried the king's message with which he was charged, and made haste to Joab. But Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah, when she was informed of the death of her husband, mourned for his death many days; and when her mourning was over, and the tears which she shed for Uriah were dried up, the king took her to wife presently; and a son was born to him by her.

3. With this marriage God was not well pleased, but was thereupon angry at David; and he appeared to Nathan the prophet in his sleep, and complained of the king. Now Nathan was a fair and prudent man; and considering that kings, when they fall into a passion, are guided more by that passion than they are by justice, he resolved to conceal the threatenings that proceeded from God, and made a good-natured discourse to him, and this after the manner following: - He desired that the king would give him his opinion in the following case: - There were," said he, "two men inhabiting the same city, the one of them was rich, and [the other poor]. The rich man had a great many flocks of cattle, of sheep, and of kine; but the poor man had but one ewe lamb. This he brought up with his children, and let her eat her food with them; and he had the same natural affection for her which any one might have for a daughter. Now upon the coming of a stranger to the rich man, he would not vouchsafe to kill any of his own flocks, and thence feast his friend; but he sent for the poor man's lamb, and took her away from him, and made her ready for food, and thence feasted the stranger." This discourse troubled the king exceedingly; and he denounced to Nathan, that "this man was a wicked man who could dare to do such a thing; and that it was but just that he should restore the lamb fourfold, and be punished with death for it also." Upon this Nathan immediately said that he was himself the man who ought to suffer those punishments, and that by his own sentence; and that it was he who had perpetrated this 'great and horrid crime. He also revealed to him, and laid before him, the anger of God against him, who had made him king over the army of the Hebrews, and lord of all the nations, and those many and great nations round about him; who had formerly delivered him out of the hands of Saul, and had given him such wives as he had justly and legally married; and now this God was despised by him, and affronted by his impiety, when he had married, and now had, another man's wife; and by exposing her husband to the enemy, had really slain him; 'that God would inflict punishments upon him on account of those instances of wickedness; that his own wives should be forced by one of his sons; and that he should be treacherously supplanted by the same son; and that although he had

perpetrated his wickedness secretly, yet should that punishment which he was to undergo be inflicted publicly upon him; "that, moreover," said he, "the child which was born to thee of her shall soon die." When the king was troubled at these messages, and sufficiently confounded, and said with tears and sorrow that he had sinned, (for he was without controversy a pious man, and guilty of no sin at all in his whole life, excepting those in the matter of Uriah,) God had compassion on him, and was reconciled to him, and promised that he would preserve to him both his life and his kingdom; for he said that, seeing he repented of the things he had done, he was no longer displeased with him. So Nathan, when he had delivered this prophecy to the king, returned home.

4. However, God sent a dangerous distemper upon the child that was born to David of the wife of Uriah, at which the king was troubled, and did not take any food for seven days, although his servants almost forced him to take it; but he clothed himself in a black garment, and fell down, and lay upon the ground in sackcloth, entrusting God for the recovery of the child, for he vehemently loved the child's mother; but when, on the seventh day, the child was dead, the king's servants durst not tell him of it, as supposing that when he knew it, he would still less admit of food, and other care of himself, by reason of his grief at the death of his son, since when the child was only sick, he so greatly afflicted himself, and grieved for him: but when the king perceived that his servants were in disorder, and seemed to be affected, as those who are very desirous to conceal something, he understood that the child was dead; and when he had called one of his servants to him, and discovered that so it was, he arose up and washed himself, and took a white garment, and came into the tabernacle of God. He also commanded them to set supper before him, and thereby greatly surprised his kindred and servants, while he did nothing of this when the child was sick, but did it all when he was dead. Whereupon having first begged leave to ask him a question, they besought him to tell them the reason of this his conduct; he then called them unskillful people, and instructed them how he had hopes of

the recovery of the child while it was alive, and accordingly did all that was proper for him to do, as thinking by such means to render God propitious to him; but that when the child was dead, there was no longer any occasion for grief, which was then to no purpose. When he had said this, they commended the king's wisdom and understanding. He then went in unto Bathsheba his wife, and she conceived and bare a son; and by the command of Nathan the prophet called his name Solomon.

5. But Joab sorely distressed the Ammonites in the siege, by cutting off their waters, and depriving them of other means of subsistence, till they were in the greatest want of meat and drink, for they depended only on one small well of water, and this they durst not drink of too freely, lest the fountain should entirely fail them. So he wrote to the king, and informed him thereof; and persuaded him to come himself to take the city, that he might have the honor of the victory. Upon this letter of Joab's, the king accepted of his goodwill and fidelity, and took with him his army, and came to the destruction of Rabbah; and when he had taken it by force, he gave it to his soldiers to plunder it; but he himself took the king of the Ammonites' crown, whose weight was a talent of gold; (13) and it had in its middle a precious stone called a sardonyx; which crown David ever after wore on his own head. He also found many other vessels in the city, and those both splendid and of great price; but as for the men, he tormented them, (14) and then destroyed them; and when he had taken the other cities of the Ammonites by force, he treated them after the same manner.

Footnotes:

1. That a talent of gold was about seven pounds weight, see the description of the temple ch. 13. Nor could Josephus well estimate it higher, since he here says that David wore it on his head perpetually.
2. Whether Josephus saw the words of our copies, 2 Samuel 12:31, and 1 Chronicles 20:3, that David put the inhabitants, or at least the garrison of

Rabbah, and of the other Ammonite cities, which he besieged and took, under, or cut them with saws, and under, or with harrows of iron, and under, or with axes of iron, and made them pass through the brick-kiln, is not here directly expressed. If he saw them, as is most probable he did, he certainly expounded them of tormenting these Ammonites to death, who were none of those seven nations of Canaan whose wickedness had rendered them incapable of mercy; otherwise I should be inclinable to think that the meaning, at least as the words are in Samuel, might only be this: That they were made the lowest slaves, to work in sawing of timber or stone, in harrowing the fields, in hewing timber, in making and burning bricks, and the like hard services, but without taking away their lives. We never elsewhere, that I remember, meet with such methods of cruelty in putting men to death in all the Bible, or in any other ancient history whatsoever; nor do the words in Samuel seem naturally to refer to any such thing.

Chapter 8

Absalom Murdered Amnon

1. When the king was returned to Jerusalem, a sad misfortune befell his house, on the occasion following: He had a daughter, who was yet a virgin, and very handsome, insomuch that she surpassed all the most beautiful women; her name was Tamar; she had the same mother with Absalom. Now Amnon, David's eldest son, fell in love with her, and being not able to obtain his desires, on account of her virginity, and the custody she was under, was so much out of order, nay, his grief so eat up his body, that he grew lean, and his color was changed. Now there was one Jenadab, a kinsman and friend of his, who discovered this his passion, for he was an extraordinary wise man, and of great sagacity of mind. When, therefore, he saw that every morning Amnon was not in body as he ought to be, he came to him, and desired him to tell him what was the cause of it: however, he said that he guessed that it arose from the passion of love. Amnon confessed his passion, that he was in love with a sister of his, who had the same father with himself. So Jenadab suggested to him by what method and contrivance he might obtain his desires; for he persuaded him to pretend sickness, and bade him, when his father should come to him, to beg of him that his sister might come and minister to him; for if that were done, he should be better, and should quickly recover from his distemper. So Amnon lay down on his bed, and pretended to be sick, as Jonadab had suggested. When his father came, and inquired how he did, he begged of him to send his sister to him. Accordingly, he presently ordered her to be brought to him; and when she was come, Amnon bade her make cakes for him, and fry them in a pan, and do it all with her own hands, because he should take them better from her hand [than from any one's else]. So she kneaded the flour in the sight of her brother, and made him cakes, and baked them in a pan, and brought them to him; but at that time he would not taste them, but gave order to his servants to send all that

were there out of his chamber, because he had a mind to repose himself, free from tumult and disturbance. As soon as what he had commanded was done, he desired his sister to bring his supper to him into the inner parlor; which, when the damsel had done, he took hold of her, and endeavored to persuade her to lie with him. Whereupon the damsel cried out, and said, "Nay, brother, do not force me, nor be so wicked as to transgress the laws, and bring upon thyself the utmost confusion. Curb this thy unrighteous and impure lust, from which our house will get nothing but reproach and disgrace." She also advised him to speak to his father about this affair; for he would permit him [to marry her]. This she said, as desirous to avoid her brother's violent passion at present. But he would not yield to her; but, inflamed with love and blinded with the vehemency of his passion, he forced his sister: but as soon as Amnon had satisfied his lust, he hated her immediately, and giving her reproachful words, bade her rise up and be gone. And when she said that this was a more injurious treatment than the former, if, now he had forced her, he would not let her stay with him till the evening, but bid her go away in the day-time, and while it was light, that she might meet with people that would be witnesses of her shame, - he commanded his servant to turn her out of his house. Whereupon she was sorely grieved at the injury and violence that had been offered to her, and rent her loose coat, (for the virgins of old time wore such loose coats tied at the hands, and let down to the ankles, that the inner coats might not be seen,) and sprinkled ashes on her head; and went up the middle of the city, crying out and lamenting for the violence that had been offered her. Now Absalom, her brother, happened to meet her, and asked her what sad thing had befallen her, that she was in that plight; and when she had told him what injury had been offered her, he comforted her, and desired her to be quiet, and take all patiently, and not to esteem her being corrupted by her brother as an injury. So she yielded to his advice, and left off her crying out, and discovering the force offered her to the multitude; and she continued as a widow with her brother Absalom a long time.

2. When David his father knew this, he was grieved at the actions of

Amnon; but because he had an extraordinary affection for him, for he was his eldest son, he was compelled not to afflict him; but Absalom watched for a fit opportunity of revenging this crime upon him, for he thoroughly hated him. Now the second year after this wicked affair about his sister was over, and Absalom was about to go to shear his own sheep at Baalhazor, which is a city in the portion of Ephraim, he besought his father, as well as his brethren, to come and feast with him: but when David excused himself, as not being willing to be burdensome to him, Absalom desired he would however send his brethren; whom he did send accordingly. Then Absalom charged his own servants, that when they should see Amnon disordered and drowsy with wine, and he should give them a signal, they should fear nobody, but kill him.

3. When they had done as they were commanded, the rest of his brethren were astonished and disturbed, and were afraid for themselves, so they immediately got on horseback, and rode away to their father; but somebody there was who prevented them, and told their father they were all slain by Absalom; whereupon he was overcome with sorrow, as for so many of his sons that were destroyed at once, and that by their brother also; and by this consideration, that it was their brother that appeared to have slain them, he aggravated his sorrow for them. So he neither inquired what was the cause of this slaughter, nor staid to hear any thing else, which yet it was but reasonable to have done, when so very great, and by that greatness so incredible, a misfortune was related to him: he rent his clothes and threw himself upon the ground, and there lay lamenting the loss of all his sons, both those who, as he was informed, were slain, and of him who slew them. But Jonadab, the son of his brother Shemeah, entreated him not to indulge his sorrow so far, for as to the rest of his sons he did not believe that they were slain, for he found no cause for such a suspicion; but he said it might deserve inquiry as to Amnon, for it was not unlikely that Absalom might venture to kill him on account of the injury he had offered to Tamar. In the mean time, a great noise of horses, and a tumult of some people that were

coming, turned their attention to them; they were the king's sons, who were fled away from the feast. So their father met them as they were in their grief, and he himself grieved with them; but it was more than he expected to see those his sons again, whom he had a little before heard to have perished. However, there were tears on both sides; they lamenting their brother who was killed, and the king lamenting his son, who was killed also; but Absalom fled to Geshur, to his grandfather by his mother's side, who was king of that country, and he remained with him three whole years.

4. Now David had a design to send to Absalom, not that he should come to be punished, but that he might be with him, for the effects of his anger were abated by length of time. It was Joab, the captain of his host, that chiefly persuaded him so to do; for he suborned an ordinary woman, that was stricken in age, to go to the king in mourning apparel, who said thus to him: - That two of her sons, in a coarse way, had some difference between them, and that in the progress of that difference they came to an open quarrel, and that one was smitten by the other, and was dead; and she desired him to interpose in this case, and to do her the favor to save this her son from her kindred, who were very zealous to have him that had slain his brother put to death, that so she might not be further deprived of the hopes she had of being taken care of in her old age by him; and that if he would hinder this slaughter of her son by those that wished for it, he would do her a great favor, because the kindred would not be restrained from their purpose by any thing else than by the fear of him. And when the king had given his consent to what the woman had begged of him, she made this reply to him: - "I owe thee thanks for thy benignity to me in pitying my old age, and preventing the loss of my only remaining child; but in order to assure me of this thy kindness, be first reconciled to thine own son, and cease to be angry with him; for how shall I persuade myself that thou hast really bestowed this favor upon me, while thou thyself continuest after the like manner in thy wrath to thine own son? for it is a foolish thing to add willfully another to thy dead son, while the death of the other was brought about without thy consent." And now the king

perceived that this pretended story was a subornation derived from Joab, and was of his contrivance; and when, upon inquiry of the old woman, he understood it to be so in reality, he called for Joab, and told him he had obtained what he requested according to his own mind; and he bid him bring Absalom back, for he was not now displeased, but had already ceased to be angry with him. So Joab bowed himself down to the king, and took his words kindly, and went immediately to Geshur, and took Absalom with him, and came to Jerusalem.

5. However, the king sent a message to his son beforehand, as he was coming, and commanded him to retire to his own house, for he was not yet in such a disposition as to think fit at present to see him. Accordingly, upon the father's command, he avoided coming into his presence, and contented himself with the respects paid him by his own family only. Now his beauty was not impaired, either by the grief he had been under, or by the want of such care as was proper to be taken of a king's son, for he still surpassed and excelled all men in the tallness of his body, and was more eminent [in a fine appearance] than those that dieted the most luxuriously; and indeed such was the thickness of the hair of his head, that it was with difficulty that he was polled every eighth day; and his hair weighed two hundred shekels (1) which are five pounds. However, he dwelt in Jerusalem two years, and became the father of three sons, and one daughter; which daughter was of very great beauty, and which Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, took to wife afterward, and had by her a son named Abijah. But Absalom sent to Joab, and desired him to pacify his father entirely towards him; and to beseech him to give him leave to come to him to see him, and speak with him. But when Joab neglected so to do, he sent some of his own servants, and set fire to the field adjoining to him; which, when Joab understood, he came to Absalom, and accused him of what he had done; and asked him the reason why he did so. To which Absalom replied, that "I have found out this stratagem that might bring thee to us, while thou hast taken no care to perform the injunction I laid upon thee, which was this, to reconcile my father to me; and I really beg it of

thee, now thou art here, to pacify my father as to me, since I esteem my coming hither to be more grievous than my banishment, while my father's wrath against me continues." Hereby Joab was persuaded, and pitied the distress that Absalom was in, and became an intercessor with the king for him. And when he had discoursed with his father, he soon brought him to that amicable disposition towards Absalom, that he presently sent for him to come to him; and when he had cast himself down upon the ground, and had begged for the forgiveness of his offenses, the king raised him up, and promised him to forget what he had formerly done.

Footnote:

1. Of this weight of Absalom's hair, how in twenty or thirty years it might well amount to two hundred shekels, or to somewhat above six pounds avoirdupois, see the *Literal Accomplishment of Prophecies*, p. 77, 78. But a late very judicious author thinks that the LXXX. meant not its weight, but its value, Was twenty shekels. - Dr. Wall's *Critical Notes on the Old Testament*, upon 2 Samuel 14:26. It does not appear what was Josephus's opinion: he sets the text down honestly as he found it in his copies, only he thought that "at the end of days," when Absalom polled or weighed his hair, was once a week.

Chapter 9

The Insurrection of Absalom Against David

1. Now Absalom, upon this his success with the king, procured to himself a great many horses, and many chariots, and that in a little time also. He had moreover fifty armor-bearers that were about him; and he came early every day to the king's palace, and spake what was agreeable to such as came for justice and lost their causes, as if that happened for want of good counselors about the king, or perhaps because the judges mistook in that unjust sentence they gave; whereby he gained the good-will of them all. He told them, that had he but such authority committed to him, he would distribute justice to them in a most equitable manner. When he had made himself so popular among the multitude, he thought he had already the good-will of the people secured to him; but when four years (1) had passed since his father's reconciliation to him, he came to him, and besought him to give him leave to go to Hebron, and pay a sacrifice to God, because he vowed it to him when he fled out of the country. So when David had granted his request, he went thither, and great multitudes came running together to him, for he had sent to a great number so to do.

2. Among them came Ahithophel the Gilonite, a counsellor of David's, and two hundred men out of Jerusalem itself, who knew not his intentions, but were sent for as to a sacrifice. So he was appointed king by all of them, which he obtained by this stratagem. As soon as this news was brought to David, and he was informed of what he did not expect from his son, he was afrighted at this his impious and bold undertaking, and wondered that he was so far from remembering how his offense had been so lately forgiven him, that he undertook much worse and more wicked enterprises; first, to deprive him of that kingdom which was given him of God; and secondly, to take away his own father's life. He therefore resolved to fly to the parts

beyond Jordan: so he called his most intimate friends together, and communicated to them all that he had heard of his son's madness. He committed himself to God, to judge between them about all their actions; and left the care of his royal palace to his ten concubines, and went away from Jerusalem, being willingly accompanied by the rest of the multitude, who went hastily away with him, and particularly by those six hundred armed men, who had been with him from his first flight in the days of Saul. But he persuaded Abiathar and Zadok, the high priests, who had determined to go away with him, as also all the Levites, who were with the ark, to stay behind, as hoping that God would deliver him without its removal; but he charged them to let him know privately how all things went on; and he had their sons, Ahimmaz the son of Zadok, and Jonathan the son of Abiathar, for faithful ministers in all things; but Ittai the Gitrite went out with him whether David would let him or not, for he would have persuaded him to stay, and on that account he appeared the more friendly to him. But as he was ascending the Mount of Olives barefooted, and all his company were in tears, it was told him that Ahithophel was with Absalom, and was of his side. This hearing augmented his grief; and he besought God earnestly to alienate the mind of Absalom from Ahithophel, for he was afraid that he should persuade him to follow his pernicious counsel, for he was a prudent man, and very sharp in seeing what was advantageous. When David was gotten upon the top of the mountain, he took a view of the city; and prayed to God with abundance of tears, as having already lost his kingdom; and here it was that a faithful friend of his, whose name was Hushai, met him. When David saw him with his clothes rent, and having ashes all over his head, and in lamentation for the great change of affairs, he comforted him, and exhorted him to leave off grieving; nay, at length he besought him to go back to Absalom, and appear as one of his party, and to fish out the secretest counsels of his mind, and to contradict the counsels of Ahithophel, for that he could not do him so much good by being with him as he might by being with Absalom. So he was prevailed on by David, and left him, and came to Jerusalem, whither Absalom himself came also a little while afterward.

3. When David was gone a little farther, there met him Ziba, the servant of Mephibosheth, (whom he had sent to take care of the possessions which had been given him, as the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul,) with a couple of asses, laden with provisions, and desired him to take as much of them as he and his followers stood in need of. And when the king asked him where he had left Mephibosheth, he said he had left him in Jerusalem, expecting to be chosen king in the present confusions, in remembrance of the benefits Saul had conferred upon them. At this the king had great indignation, and gave to Ziba all that he had formerly bestowed on Mephibosheth; for he determined that it was much fitter that he should have them than the other; at which Ziba greatly rejoiced.

4. When David was at Bahurim, a place so called, there came out a kinsman of Saul's, whose name was Shimei, and threw stones at him, and gave him reproachful words; and as his friends stood about the king and protected him, he persevered still more in his reproaches, and called him a bloody man, and the author of all sorts of mischief. He bade him also go out of the land as ,an impure and accursed wretch; and he thanked God for depriving him of his kingdom, and causing him to be punished for what injuries he had done to his master [Saul], and this by the means of his own son. Now when they were all provoked against him, and angry at bin;, and particularly Abishai, who had a mind to kill Shimei, David restrained his anger. "Let us not," said he, "bring upon ourselves another fresh misfortune to those we have already, for truly I have not the least regard nor concern for this dog that raves at me: I submit myself to God, by whose permission this man treats me in such a wild manner; nor is it any wonder that I am obliged to undergo these abuses from him, while I experience the like from an impious son of my own; but perhaps God will have some commiseration upon us; if it be his will we shall overcome them." So he went on his way without troubling himself with Shimei, who ran along the other side of the mountain, and threw out his abusive language plentifully. But when David

was come to Jordan, he allowed those that were with him to refresh themselves; for they were weary.

5. But when Absalom, and Ahithophel his counselor, were come to Jerusalem, with all the people, David's friend, Hushai, came to them; and when he had worshipped Absalom, he withal wished that his kingdom might last a long time, and continue for all ages. But when Absalom said to him, "How comes this, that he who was so intimate a friend of my father's, and appeared faithful to him in all things, is not with him now, but hath left him, and is come over to me?" Hushai's answer was very pertinent and prudent; for he said, "We ought to follow God and the multitude of the people; while these, therefore, my lord and master, are with thee, it is fit that I should follow them, for thou hast received the kingdom from God. I will therefore, if thou believest me to be thy friend, show the same fidelity and kindness to thee, which thou knowest I have shown to thy father; nor is there any reason to be in the least dissatisfied with the present state of affairs, for the kingdom is not transferred into another, but remains still in the same family, by the son's receiving it after his father." This speech persuaded Absalom, who before suspected Hushai. And now he called Ahithophel, and consulted with him what he ought to do: he persuaded him to go in unto his father's concubines; for he said that "by this action the people would believe that thy difference with thy father is irreconcilable, and will thence fight with great alacrity against thy father, for hitherto they are afraid of taking up open enmity against him, out of an expectation that you will be reconciled again." Accordingly, Absalom was prevailed on by this advice, and commanded his servants to pitch him a tent upon the top of the royal palace, in the sight of the multitude; and he went in and lay with his father's concubines. Now this came to pass according to the prediction of Nathan, when he prophesied and signified to him that his son would rise up in rebellion against him.

6. And when Absalom had done what he was advised to by Ahithophel, he desired his advice, in the second place, about the war against his father.

Now Ahithophel only asked him to let him have ten thousand chosen men, and he promised he would slay his father, and bring the soldiers back again in safety; and he said that then the kingdom would be firm to him when David was dead [but not otherwise]. Absalom was pleased with this advice, and called for Hushai, David's friend (for so did he style him); and informing him of the opinion of Ahithophel, he asked, further, what was his opinion concerning that matter. Now he was sensible that if Ahithophel's counsel were followed, David would be in danger of being seized on, and slain; so he attempted to introduce a contrary opinion, and said, Thou art not unacquainted, O king, with the valor of thy father, and of those that are now with him; that he hath made many wars, and hath always come off with victory, though probably he now abides in the camp, for he is very skilful in stratagems, and in foreseeing the deceitful tricks of his enemies; yet will he leave his own soldiers in the evening, and will either hide himself in some valley, or will place an ambush at some rock; so that when our army joins battle with him, his soldiers will retire for a little while, but will come upon us again, as encouraged by the king's being near them; and in the mean time your father will show himself suddenly in the time of the battle, and will infuse courage into his own people when they are in danger, but bring consternation to thine. Consider, therefore, my advice, and reason upon it, and if thou canst not but acknowledge it to be the best, reject the opinion of Ahithophel. Send to the entire country of the Hebrews, and order them to come and fight with thy father; and do thou thyself take the army, and be thine own general in this war, and do not trust its management to another; then expect to conquer him with ease, when thou overtakest him openly with his few partisans, but hast thyself many ten thousands, who will be desirous to demonstrate to thee their diligence and alacrity. And if thy father shall shut himself up in some city, and bear a siege, we will overthrow that city with machines of war, and by undermining it." When Hushai had said this, he obtained his point against Ahithophel, for his opinion was preferred by Absalom before the other's: however, it was no other than God (2) who made the counsel of Hushai appear best to the mind of Absalom.

7. So Hushai made haste to the high priests, Zadok and Abiathar, and told them the opinion of Ahithophel, and his own, and that the resolution was taken to follow this latter advice. He therefore bade them send to David, and tell him of it, and to inform him of the counsels that had been taken; and to desire him further to pass quickly over Jordan, lest his son should change his mind, and make haste to pursue him, and so prevent him, and seize upon him before he be in safety. Now the high priests had their sons concealed in a proper place out of the city, that they might carry news to David of what was transacted. Accordingly, they sent a maid-servant, whom they could trust, to them, to carry the news of Absalom's counsels, and ordered them to signify the same to David with all speed. So they made no excuse nor delay, but taking along with them their fathers' injunctions, because pious and faithful ministers, and judging that quickness and suddenness was the best mark of faithful service, they made haste to meet with David. But certain horsemen saw them when they were two furlongs from the city, and informed Absalom of them, who immediately sent some to take them; but when the sons of the high priest perceived this, they went out of the road, and betook themselves to a certain village; that village was called Bahurim; there they desired a certain woman to hide them, and afford them security. Accordingly she let the young men down by a rope into a well, and laid fleeces of wool over them; and when those that pursued them came to her, and asked her whether she saw them, she did not deny that she had seen them, for that they staid with her some time, but she said they then went their ways; and she foretold that, however, if they would follow them directly, they would catch them; but when after a long pursuit they could not catch them, they came back again; and when the woman saw those men were returned, and that there was no longer any fear of the young men's being caught by them, she drew them up by the rope, and bade them go on their journey accordingly, they used great diligence in the prosecution of that journey, and came to David, and informed him accurately of all the counsels of Absalom. So he commanded those that were with him to pass over Jordan while it was night, and not to

delay at all on that account.

8. But Ahithophel, on rejection of his advice, got upon his ass, and rode away to his own country, Gilon; and, calling his family together, he told them distinctly what advice he had given Absalom; and since he had not been persuaded by it, he said he would evidently perish, and this in no long time, and that David would overcome him, and return to his kingdom again; so he said it was better that he should take his own life away with freedom and magnanimity, than expose himself to be punished by David, in opposition to whom he had acted entirely for Absalom. When he had discoursed thus to them, he went into the inmost room of his house, and hanged himself; and thus was the death of Ahithophel, who was self-condemned; and when his relations had taken him down from the halter, they took care of his funeral. Now, as for David, he passed over Jordan, as we have said already, and came to Mahanaim, every fine and very strong city; and all the chief men of the country received him with great pleasure, both out of the shame they had that he should be forced to flee away [from Jerusalem], and out of the respect they bare him while he was in his former prosperity. These were Barzillai the Gileadite, and Siphar the ruler among the Ammonites, and Machir the principal man of Gilead; and these furnished him with plentiful provisions for himself and his followers, insomuch that they wanted no beds nor blankets for them, nor loaves of bread, nor wine; nay, they brought them a great many cattle for slaughter, and afforded them what furniture they wanted for their refreshment when they were weary, and for food, with plenty of other necessities.

Footnotes:

1. This is one of the best corrections that Josephus's copy affords us of a text that in our ordinary copies is grossly corrupted. They say that this rebellion of Absalom was forty years after what went before, (of his reconciliation to his father,) whereas the series of the history shows it

could not be more than four years after it, as here in Josephus; whose number is directly confirmed by that copy of the Septuagint version whence the Armenian translation was made, which gives us the small number of four years.

2. This reflection of Josephus's, that God brought to nought the dangerous counsel of Ahithophel, and directly infatuated wicked Absalom to reject it, (which infatuation is what the Scripture styles the judicial hardening the hearts and blinding the eyes of men, who, by their former voluntary wickedness, have justly deserved to be destroyed, and are thereby brought to destruction,) is a very just one, and in him not unfrequent. Nor does Josephus ever puzzle himself, or perplex his readers, with subtle hypotheses as to the manner of such judicial infatuations by God, while the justice of them is generally so obvious. That peculiar manner of the Divine operations, or permissions, or the means God makes use of in such cases, is often impenetrable by us. "Secret things belong to the Lord our God; but those things that are revealed belong to us, and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law," Deuteronomy 29:29. Nor have all the subtleties of the moderns, as far as I see, given any considerable light in this, and many other the like points of difficulty relating either to Divine or human operations.--See the notes on Antiq. B. V ch. 1. sect. 2; and Antiq. B. IX. ch. 4. sect. 3.

Chapter 10

Absalom Was Slain

1. And this was the state of David and his followers: but Absalom got together a vast army of the Hebrews to oppose his father, and passed therewith over the river Jordan, and sat down not far off Mahanaim, in the country of Gilead. He appointed Amasa to be captain of all his host, instead of Joab his kinsman: his father was Ithra and his mother Abigail: now she and Zeruiah, the mother of Joab, were David's sisters. But when David had numbered his followers, and found them to be about four thousand, he resolved not to tarry till Absalom attacked him, but set over his men captains of thousands, and captains of hundreds, and divided his army into three parts; the one part he committed to Joab, the next to Abishai, Joab's brother, and the third to Ittai, David's companion and friend, but one that came from the city Gath; and when he was desirous of fighting himself among them, his friends would not let him: and this refusal of theirs was founded upon very wise reasons: "For," said they, "if we be conquered when he is with us, we have lost all good hopes of recovering ourselves; but if we should be beaten in one part of our army, the other parts may retire to him, and may thereby prepare a greater force, while the enemy will naturally suppose that he hath another army with him." So David was pleased with this their advice, and resolved himself to tarry at Mahanaim; and as he sent his friends and commanders to the battle, he desired them to show all possible alacrity and fidelity, and to bear in mind what advantages they had received from him, which, though they had not been very great, yet had they not been quite inconsiderable; and he begged of them to spare the young man Absalom, lest some mischief should befall himself, if he should be killed; and thus did he send out his army to the battle, and wished them victory therein.

2. Then did Joab put his army in battle-array over against the enemy in

the Great Plain, where he had a wood behind him. Absalom also brought his army into the field to oppose him. Upon the joining of the battle, both sides showed great actions with their hands and their boldness; the one side exposing themselves to the greatest hazards, and using their utmost alacrity, that David might recover his kingdom; and the other being no way deficient, either in doing or suffering, that Absalom might not be deprived of that kingdom, and be brought to punishment by his father for his impudent attempt against him. Those also that were the most numerous were solicitous that they might not be conquered by those few that were with Joab, and with the other commanders, because that would be the greater disgrace to them; while David's soldiers strove greatly to overcome so many ten thousands as the enemy had with them. Now David's men were conquerors, as superior in strength and skill in war; so they followed the others as they fled away through the forests and valleys; some they took prisoners, and many they slew, and more in the flight than in the battle for there fell about twenty thousand that day. But all David's men ran violently upon Absalom, for he was easily known by his beauty and tallness. He was himself also afraid lest his enemies should seize on him, so he got upon the king's mule, and fled; but as he was carried with violence, and noise, and a great motion, as being himself light, he entangled his hair greatly in the large boughs of a knotty tree that spread a great way, and there he hung, after a surprising manner; and as for the beast, it went on farther, and that swiftly, as if his master had been still upon his back; but he, hanging in the air upon the boughs, was taken by his enemies. Now when one of David's soldiers saw this, he informed Joab of it; and when the general said, that if he had shot at and killed Absalom, he would have given him fifty shekels, - he replied, "I would not have killed my master's son if thou wouldst have given me a thousand shekels, especially when he desired that the young man might be spared in the hearing of us all." But Joab bade him show him where it was that he saw Absalom hang; whereupon he shot him to the heart, and slew him, and Joab's armor-bearers stood round the tree, and pulled down his dead body, and cast it into a great chasm that was out of sight, and laid a heap of stones upon

him, till the cavity was filled up, and had both the appearance and the bigness of a grave. Then Joab sounded a retreat, and recalled his own soldiers from pursuing the enemy's army, in order to spare their countrymen.

3. Now Absalom had erected for himself a marble pillar in the king's dale, two furlongs distant from Jerusalem, which he named Absalom's Hand, saying, that if his children were killed, his name would remain by that pillar; for he had three sons and one daughter, named Tamar, as we said before, who when she was married to David's grandson, Rehoboam, bare a son, Abijah by name, who succeeded his father in the kingdom; but of these we shall speak in a part of our history which will be more proper. After the death of Absalom, they returned every one to their own homes respectively.

4. But now Ahimaaz, the son of Zadok the high priest, went to Joab, and desired he would permit him to go and tell David of this victory, and to bring him the good news that God had afforded his assistance and his providence to him. However, he did not grant his request, but said to him, "Wilt thou, who hast always been the messenger of good news, now go and acquaint the king that his son is dead?" So he desired him to desist. He then called Cushi, and committed the business to him, that he should tell the king what he had seen. But when Ahimaaz again desired him to let him go as a messenger, and assured him that he would only relate what concerned the victory, but not concerning the death of Absalom, he gave him leave to go to David. Now he took a nearer road than the former did, for nobody knew it but himself, and he came before Cushi. Now as David was sitting between the gates, (1) and waiting to see when somebody would come to him from the battle, and tell him how it went, one of the watchmen saw Ahimaaz running, and before he could discern who he was, he told David that he saw somebody coming to him, who said he was a good messenger. A little while after, he informed him that another messenger followed him; whereupon the king said that he also was a good messenger: but when the watchman saw Ahimaaz, and that he was already very near, he gave the king notice that it was the son of

Zadok the high priest who came running. So David was very glad, and said he was a messenger of good tidings, and brought him some such news from the battle as he desired to hear.

5. While the king was saying thus, Ahimaaz appeared, and worshipped the king. And when the king inquired of him about the battle, he said he brought him the good news of victory and dominion. And when he inquired what he had to say concerning his son, he said that he came away on the sudden as soon as the enemy was defeated, but that he heard a great noise of those that pursued Absalom, and that he could learn no more, because of the haste he made when Joab sent him to inform him of the victory. But when Cushai came, and had worshipped him, and informed him of the victory, he asked him about his son, who replied, "May the like misfortune befall thine enemies as hath befallen Absalom." That word did not permit either himself or his soldiers to rejoice for the victory, though it was a very great one; but David went up to the highest part of the city, (2) and wept for his son, and beat his breast, tearing [the hair of] his head, tormenting himself all manner of ways, and crying out, "O my son! I wish that I had died myself, and ended my days with thee!" for he was of a tender natural affection, and had extraordinary compassion for this son in particular. But when the army and Joab heard that the king mourned for his son, they were ashamed to enter the city in the habit of conquerors, but they all came in as cast down, and in tears, as if they had been beaten. Now while the king covered himself, and grievously lamented his son, Joab went in to him, and comforted him, and said, "O my lord the king, thou art not aware that thou layest a blot on thyself by what thou now doest; for thou seemest to hate those that love thee, and undergo dangers for thee nay, to hate thyself and thy family, and to love those that are thy bitter enemies, and to desire the company of those that are no more, and who have been justly slain; for had Absalom gotten the victory, and firmly settled himself in the kingdom, there had been none of us left alive, but all of us, beginning with thyself and thy children, had miserably perished, while our enemies had not wept for his, but rejoiced over us, and

punished even those that pitied us in our misfortunes; and thou art not ashamed to do this in the case of one that has been thy bitter enemy, who, while he was thine own son hath proved so wicked to thee. Leave off, therefore, thy unreasonable grief, and come abroad and be seen of thy soldiers, and return them thanks for the alacrity they showed in the fight; for I myself will this day persuade the people to leave thee, and to give the kingdom to another, if thou continuest to do thus; and then I shall make thee to grieve bitterly and in earnest." Upon Joab's speaking thus to him, he made the king leave off his sorrow, and brought him to the consideration of his affairs. So David changed his habit, and exposed himself in a manner fit to be seen by the multitude, and sat at the gates; whereupon all the people heard of it, and ran together to him, and saluted him. And this was the present state of David's affairs.

Footnotes:

1. Those that take a view of my description of the gates of the temple, will not be surprised at this account of David's throne, both here and 2 Samuel 18:21, that it was between two gates or portals. Gates being in cities, as well as at the temple, large open places, with a portal at the entrance, and another at the exit, between which judicial causes were heard, and public consultations taken, as is well known from several places of Scripture, 2 Chronicles 31:2; Psalm 9:14; 137:5; Proverbs 1:21; 8:3, 31; 31:23, and often elsewhere.
2. Since David was now in Mahanairn, and in the open place of that city gate, which seems still to have been built the highest of any part of the wall, and since our other copies say he went up to the chamber over the gate, 2 Samuel 18:33, I think we ought to correct our present reading in Josephus, and for city, should read gate, i.e. instead of the highest part of the city, should say the highest part of the gate. Accordingly we find David presently, in Josephus, as well as in our other copies, 2 Samuel 19:8, sitting as before, in the gate of the city.

Chapter 11

Amasa Was Slain by Joab

1. Now those Hebrews that had been With Absalom, and had retired out of the battle, when they were all returned home, sent messengers to every city to put them in mind of what benefits David had bestowed upon them, and of that liberty which he had procured them, by delivering them from many and great wars. But they complained, that whereas they had ejected him out of his kingdom, and committed it to another governor, which other governor, whom they had set up, was already dead, they did not now beseech David to leave off his anger at them, and to become friends with them, and, as he used to do, to resume the care of their affairs, and take the kingdom again. This was often told to David. And, this notwithstanding, David sent to Zadok and Abiathar the high priests, that they should speak to the rulers of the tribe of Judah after the manner following: That it would be a reproach upon them to permit the other tribes to choose David for their king before their tribe, "and this," said he, "while you are akin to him, and of the same common blood." He commanded them also to say the same to Amasa the captain of their forces, That whereas he was his sister's son, he had not persuaded the multitude to restore the kingdom to David; that he might expect from him not only a reconciliation, for that was already granted, but that supreme command of the army also which Absalom had bestowed upon him. Accordingly the high priests, when they had discoursed with the rulers of the tribe, and said what the king had ordered them, persuaded Amasa to undertake the care of his affairs. So he persuaded that tribe to send immediately ambassadors to him, to beseech him to return to his own kingdom. The same did all the Israelites, at the like persuasion of Amasa.

2. When the ambassadors came to him, he came to Jerusalem; and the tribe of Judah was the first that came to meet the king at the river Jordan.

And Shimei, the son of Gera, came with a thousand men, which he brought with him out of the tribe of Benjamin; and Ziba, the freed-man of Saul, with his sons, fifteen in number, and with his twenty servants. All these, as well as the tribe of Judah, laid a bridge [of boats] over the river, that the king, and those that were with him, might with ease pass over it. Now as soon as he was come to Jordan, the tribe of Judah saluted him. Shimei also came upon the bridge, and took hold of his feet, and prayed him to forgive him what he had offended, and not to be too bitter against him, nor to think fit to make him the first example of severity under his new authority; but to consider that he had repented of his failure of duty, and had taken care to come first of all to him. While he was thus entreating the king, and moving him to compassion, Abishai, Joab's brother, said, "And shall not this man die for this, that he hath cursed that king whom God hath appointed to reign over us?" But David turned himself to him, and said, "Will you never leave off, ye sons of Zeruiah? Do not you, I pray, raise new troubles and seditions among us, now the former are over; for I would not have you ignorant that I this day begin my reign, and therefore swear to remit to all offenders their punishments, and not to animadvert on any one that has sinned. Be thou, therefore," said he, "O Shimei, of good courage, and do not at all fear being put to death." So he worshipped him, and went on before him.

3. Mephibosheth also, Saul's grandson, met David, clothed in a sordid garment, and having his hair thick and neglected; for after David was fled away, he was in such grief that he had not polled his head, nor had he washed his clothes, as dooming himself to undergo such hardships upon occasion of the change-of the king's affairs. Now he had been unjustly calumniated to the king by Ziba, his steward. When he had saluted the king, and worshipped him, the king began to ask him why he did not go out of Jerusalem with him, and accompany him during his flight. He replied, that this piece of injustice was owing to Ziba; because, when he was ordered to get things ready for his going out with him, he took no care of it, but regarded him no more than if he had been a slave; "and, indeed, had I had my

feet sound and strong, I had not deserted thee, for I could then have made use of them in my flight: but this is not all the injury that Ziba has done me, as to my duty to thee, my lord and master, but he hath calumniated me besides, and told lies about me of his own invention; but I know thy mind will not admit of such calumnies, but is righteously disposed, and a lover of truth, which it is also the will of God should prevail. For when thou wast in the greatest danger of suffering by my grandfather, and when, on that account, our whole family might justly have been destroyed, thou wast moderate and merciful, and didst then especially forget all those injuries, when, if thou hadst remembered them, thou hadst the power of punishing us for them; but thou hast judged me to be thy friend, and hast set me every day at thine own table; nor have I wanted any thing which one of thine own kinsmen, of greatest esteem with thee, could have expected." When he had said this, David resolved neither to punish Mephibosheth, nor to condemn Ziba, as having belied his master; but said to him, that as he had [before] granted all his estate to Ziba, because he did not come along with him, so he [now] promised to forgive him, and ordered that the one half of his estate should be restored to him. (1) Whereupon Mephibosheth said, "Nay, let Ziba take all; it suffices me that thou hast recovered thy kingdom."

4. But David desired Barzillai the Gileadite, that great and good man, and one that had made a plentiful provision for him at Mahanaim, and had conducted him as far as Jordan, to accompany him to Jerusalem, for he promised to treat him in his old age with all manner of respect - to take care of him, and provide for him. But Barzillai was so desirous to live at home, that he entreated him to excuse him from attendance on him; and said that his age was too great to enjoy the pleasures [of a court,] since he was fourscore years old, and was therefore making provision for his death and burial: so he desired him to gratify him in this request, and dismiss him; for he had no relish of his meat, or his drink, by reason of his age; and that his ears were too much shut up to hear the sound of pipes, or the melody of other musical instruments, such as all those that live with kings delight in. When he

entreated for this so earnestly, the king said, "I dismiss thee, but thou shalt grant me thy son Chimham, and upon him I will bestow all sorts of good things." So Barzillai left his son with him, and worshipped the king, and wished him a prosperous conclusion of all his affairs according to his own mind, and then returned home; but David came to Gilgal, having about him half the people [of Israel], and the [whole] tribe of Judah.

5. Now the principal men of the country came to Gilgal to him with a great multitude, and complained of the tribe of Judah, that they had come to him in a private manner; whereas they ought all conjointly, and with one and the same intention, to have given him the meeting. But the rulers of the tribe of Judah desired them not to be displeased, if they had been prevented by them; for, said they, "We are David's kinsmen, and on that account we the rather took care of him, and loved him, and. so came first to him;" yet had they not, by their early coming, received any gifts from him, which might give them who came last any uneasiness. When the rulers of the tribe of Judah had said this, the rulers of the other tribes were not quiet, but said further, "O brethren, we cannot but wonder at you when you call the king your kinsman alone, whereas he that hath received from God the power over all of us in common ought to be esteemed a kinsman to us all; for which reason the whole people have eleven parts in him, and you but one part (2) we are also elder than you; wherefore you have not done justly in coming to the king in this private and concealed manner."

6. While these rulers were thus disputing one with another,. a certain wicked man, who took a pleasure in seditious practices, (his name was Sheba, the son of Bichri, of the tribe of Benjamin,) stood up in the midst of the multitude, and cried aloud, and spake thus to them: "We have no part in David, nor inheritance in the son of Jesse." And when he had used those words, he blew with a trumpet, and declared war against the king; and they all left David, and followed him; the tribe of Judah alone staid with him, and settled him in his royal palace at Jerusalem. But as for his concubines, with

whom Absalom his son had accompanied, truly he removed them to another house, and ordered those that had the care of them to make a plentiful provision for them, but he came not near them any more. He also appointed Amass for the captain of his forces, and gave him the same high office which Joab before had; and he commanded him to gather together, out of the tribe of Judah, as great an army as he could, and come to him within three days, that he might deliver to him his entire army, and might send him to fight against [Sheba] the son of Bichri. Now while Amass was gone out, and made some delay in gathering the army together, and so was not yet returned, on the third day the king said to Joab, "It is not fit we should make any delay in this affair of Sheba, lest he get a numerous army about him, and be the occasion of greater mischief, and hurt our affairs more than did Absalom himself; do not thou therefore wait any longer, but take such forces as thou hast at hand, and that [old] body of six hundred men, and thy brother Abishai, with thee, and pursue after our enemy, and endeavor to fight him wheresoever thou canst overtake him. Make haste to prevent him, lest he seize upon some fenced cities, and cause us great labor and pains before we take him."

7. So Joab resolved to make no delay, but taking with him his brother, and those six hundred men, and giving orders that the rest of the army which was at Jerusalem should follow him, he marched with great speed against Sheba; and when he was come to Gibeon, which is a village forty furlongs distant from Jerusalem, Amasa brought a great army with him, and met Joab. Now Joab was girded with a sword, and his breastplate on; and when Amasa came near him to salute him, he took particular care that his sword should fall out, as it were, of its own accord: so he took it up from the ground, and while he approached Amasa, who was then near him, as though he would kiss him, he took hold of Amasa's beard with his other hand, and he smote him in his belly when he did not foresee it, and slew him. This impious and altogether profane action Joab did to a good young man, and his kinsman, and one that had done him no injury, and this out of jealousy that he would

obtain the chief command of the army, and be in equal dignity with himself about the king; and for the same cause it was that he killed Abner. But as to that former wicked action, the death of his brother Asahel, which he seemed to revenge, afforded him a decent pretense, and made that crime a pardonable one; but in this murder of Amasa there was no such covering for it. Now when Joab had killed this general, he pursued after Sheba, having left a man with the dead body, who was ordered to proclaim aloud to the army, that Amasa was justly slain, and deservedly punished. "But," said he, "if you be for the king, follow Joab his general, and Abishai, Joab's brother:" but because the body lay on the road, and all the multitude came running to it, and, as is usual with the multitude, stood wondering a great while at it, he that guarded it removed it thence, and carried it to a certain place that was very remote from the road, and there laid it, and covered it with his garment. When this was done, all the people followed Joab. Now as he pursued Sheba through all the country of Israel, one told him that he was in a strong city, called Abelbeth-maachah. Hereupon Joab went thither, and set about it with his army, and cast up a bank round it, and ordered his soldiers to undermine the walls, and to overthrow them; and since the people in the city did not admit him, he was greatly displeased at them.

8. Now there was a woman of small account, and yet both wise and intelligent, who seeing her native city lying at the last extremity, ascended upon the wall, and, by means of the armed men, called for Joab; and when he came to her, she began to say, That "God ordained kings and generals of armies, that they might cut off the enemies of the Hebrews, and introduce a universal peace among them; but thou art endeavoring to overthrow and depopulate a metropolis of the Israelites, which hath been guilty of no offense." But he replied, "God continue to be merciful unto me: I am disposed to avoid killing any one of the people, much less would I destroy such a city as this; and if they will deliver me up Sheba, the son of Bichri, who hath rebelled against the king, I will leave off the siege, and withdraw the army from the place." Now as soon as the woman heard what Joab said,

she desired him to intermit the siege for a little while, for that he should have the head of his enemy thrown out to him presently. So she went down to the citizens, and said to them, "Will you be so wicked as to perish miserably, with your children and wives, for the sake of a vile fellow, and one whom nobody knows who he is? And will you have him for your king instead of David, who hath been so great a benefactor to you, and oppose your city alone to such a mighty and strong army?" So she prevailed with them, and they cut off the head of Sheba, and threw it into Joab's army. When this was done, the king's general sounded a retreat, and raised the siege. And when he was come to Jerusalem, he was again appointed to be general of all the people. The king also constituted Benaiah captain of the guards, and of the six hundred men. He also set Adoram over the tribute, and Sabathes and Achilais over the records. He made Sheva the scribe, and appointed Zadok and Abiathar the high priests.

Footnotes:

1. By David's disposal of half Mephibosheth's estate to Ziba, one would imagine that he was a good deal dissatisfied, and doubtful whether Mephibosheth's story were entirely true or not; nor does David now invite him to diet with him, as he did before, but only forgives him, if he had been at all guilty. Nor is this odd way of mourning that Mephibosheth made use of here, and 2 Samuel 19:24, wholly free from suspicion by hypocrisy. If Ziba neglected or refused to bring Mephibosheh an ass of his own, on which he might ride to David, it is half to suppose that so great a man as he was should not be able to procure some other beast for the same purpose.
2. I clearly prefer Josephus's reading here, when it supposes eleven tribes, including Benjamin, to be on the one side, and the tribe of Judah alone on the other, since Benjamin, in general, had been still father of the house of Saul, and less firm to David hitherto, than any of the rest, and so cannot be supposed to be joined with Judah at this time, to make it

double, especially when the following rebellion was headed by a Benjamite. See sect. 6, and 2 Samuel 20:2, 4.

Chapter 12

The Hebrews Were Delivered from a Famine

1. After this, when the country was greatly afflicted with a famine, David besought God to have mercy on the people, and to discover to him what was the cause of it, and how a remedy might be found for that distemper. And when the prophets answered, that God would have the Gibeonites avenged whom Saul the king was so wicked as to betray to slaughter, and had not observed the oath which Joshua the general and the senate had sworn to them: If, therefore, said God, the king would permit such vengeance to be taken for those that were slain as the Gibeonites should desire, he promised that he would be reconciled to them, and free the multitude from their miseries. As soon therefore as the king understood that this it was which God sought, he sent for the Gibeonites, and asked them what it was they should have; and when they desired to have seven sons of Saul delivered to them to be punished, he delivered them up, but spared Mephibosheth the son of Jonathan. So when the Gibeonites had received the men, they punished them as they pleased; upon which God began to send rain, and to recover the earth to bring forth its fruits as usual, and to free it from the foregoing drought, so that the country of the Hebrews flourished again. A little afterward the king made war against the Philistines; and when he had joined battle with them, and put them to flight, he was left alone, as he was in pursuit of them; and when he was quite tired down, he was seen by one of the enemy, his name was Achmon, the son of Araph, he was one of the sons of the giants. He had a spear, the handle of which weighed three hundred shekels, and a breastplate of chain-work, and a sword. He turned back, and ran violently to slay [David] their enemy's king, for he was quite tired out with labor; but Abishai, Joab's brother, appeared on the sudden, and protected the king with his shield, as he lay down, and slew the enemy. Now the multitude were very uneasy at these dangers of the king, and that he was

very near to be slain; and the rulers made him swear that he would no more go out with them to battle, lest he should come to some great misfortune by his courage and boldness, and thereby deprive the people of the benefits they now enjoyed by his means, and of those that they might hereafter enjoy by his living a long time among them.

2. When the king heard that the Philistines were gathered together at the city Gazara, he sent an army against them, when Sibbechai the Hittite, one of David's most courageous men, behaved himself so as to deserve great commendation, for he slew many of those that bragged they were the posterity of the giants, and vaunted themselves highly on that account, and thereby was the occasion of victory to the Hebrews. After which defeat, the Philistines made war again; and when David had sent an army against them, Nephan his kinsman fought in a single combat with the stoutest of all the Philistines, and slew him, and put the rest to flight. Many of them also were slain in the fight. Now a little while after this, the Philistines pitched their camp at a city which lay not far off the bounds of the country of the Hebrews. They had a man who was six cubits tall, and had on each of his feet and hands one more toe and finger than men naturally have. Now the person who was sent against them by David out of his army was Jonathan, the son of Shimea, who fought this man in a single combat, and slew him; and as he was the person who gave the turn to the battle, he gained the greatest reputation for courage therein. This man also vaunted himself to be of the sons of the giants. But after this fight the Philistines made war no more against the Israelites.

3. And now David being freed from wars and dangers, and enjoying for the future a profound peace, (1) composed songs and hymns to God of several sorts of metre; some of those which he made were trimeters, and some were pentameters. He also made instruments of music, and taught the Levites to sing hymns to God, both on that called the sabbath day, and on other festivals. Now the construction of the instruments was thus: The viol

was an instrument of ten strings, it was played upon with a bow; the psaltery had twelve musical notes, and was played upon by the fingers; the cymbals were broad and large instruments, and were made of brass. And so much shall suffice to be spoken by us about these instruments, that the readers may not be wholly unacquainted with their nature.

4. Now all the men that were about David were men of courage. Those that were most illustrious and famous of them for their actions were thirty-eight; of five of whom I will only relate the performances, for these will suffice to make manifest the virtues of the others also; for these were powerful enough to subdue countries, and conquer great nations. First, therefore, was Jessai, the son of Achimaas, who frequently leaped upon the troops of the enemy, and did not leave off fighting till he overthrew nine hundred of them. After him was Eleazar, the son of Dodo, who was with the king at Arasam. This man, when once the Israelites were under a consternation at the multitude of the Philistines, and were running away, stood alone, and fell upon the enemy, and slew many of them, till his sword clung to his band by the blood he had shed, and till the Israelites, seeing the Philistines retire by his means, came down from the mountains and pursued them, and at that time won a surprising and a famous victory, while Eleazar slew the men, and the multitude followed and spoiled their dead bodies. The third was Sheba, the son of Ilus. Now this man, when, in the wars against the Philistines, they pitched their camp at a place called Lehi, and when the Hebrews were again afraid of their army, and did not stay, he stood still alone, as an army and a body of men; and some of them he overthrew, and some who were not able to abide his strength and force he pursued. These are the works of the hands, and of fighting, which these three performed. Now at the time when the king was once at Jerusalem, and the army of the Philistines came upon him to fight him, David went up to the top of the citadel, as we have already said, to inquire of God concerning the battle, while the enemy's camp lay in the valley that extends to the city Bethlehem, which is twenty furlongs distant from Jerusalem. Now David said to his

companions, "We have excellent water in my own city, especially that which is in the pit near the gate," wondering if any one would bring him some of it to drink; but he said that he would rather have it than a great deal of money. When these three men heard what he said, they ran away immediately, and burst through the midst of their enemy's camp, and came to Bethlehem; and when they had drawn the water, they returned again through the enemy's camp to the king, insomuch that the Philistines were so surprised at their boldness and alacrity, that they were quiet, and did nothing against them, as if they despised their small number. But when the water was brought to the king, he would not drink it, saying, that it was brought by the danger and the blood of men, and that it was not proper on that account to drink it. But he poured it out to God, and gave him thanks for the salvation of the men. Next to these was Abishai, Joab's brother; for he in one day slew six hundred. The fifth of these was Benaiah, by lineage a priest; for being challenged by [two] eminent men in the country of Moab, he overcame them by his valor. Moreover, there was a man, by nation an Egyptian, who was of a vast bulk, and challenged him, yet did he, when he was unarmed, kill him with his own spear, which he threw at him; for he caught him by force, and took away his weapons while he was alive and fighting, and slew him with his own weapons. One may also add this to the forementioned actions of the same man, either as the principal of them in alacrity, or as resembling the rest. When God sent a snow, there was a lion who slipped and fell into a certain pit, and because the pit's mouth was narrow it was evident he would perish, being enclosed with the snow; so when he saw no way to get out and save himself, he roared. When Benaiah heard the wild beast, he went towards him, and coming at the noise he made, he went down into the mouth of the pit and smote him, as he struggled, with a stake that lay there, and immediately slew him. The other thirty-three were like these in valor also.

Footnote:

1. This section is a very remarkable one, and shows that, in the opinion of

Josephus, David composed the Book of Psalms, not at several times before, as their present inscriptions frequently imply, but generally at the latter end of his life, or after his wars were over. Nor does Josephus, nor the authors of the known books of the Old and New Testament, nor the Apostolical Constitutions, seem to have ascribed any of them to any other author than to David himself. See Essay on the Old Testament, pages 174, 175. Of these metres of the Psalms, see the note on Antiq. B. II. ch. 16. sect. 4.

Chapter 13

David Had Numbered the People

1. Now king David was desirous to know how many ten thousands there were of the people, but forgot the commands of Moses, (1) who told them beforehand, that if the multitude were numbered, they should pay half a shekel to God for every head. Accordingly the king commanded Joab, the captain of his host, to go and number the whole multitude; but when he said there was no necessity for such a numeration, he was not persuaded [to countermand it], but he enjoined him to make no delay, but to go about the numbering of the Hebrews immediately. So Joab took with him the heads of the tribes, and the scribes, and went over the country of the Israelites, and took notice how numerous the multitude were, and returned to Jerusalem to the king, after nine months and twenty days; and he gave in to the king the number of the people, without the tribe of Benjamin, for he had not yet numbered that tribe, no more than the tribe of Levi, for the king repented of his having sinned against God. Now the number of the rest of the Israelites was nine hundred thousand men, who were able to bear arms and go to war; but the tribe of Judah, by itself, was four hundred thousand men.

2. Now when the prophets had signified to David that God was angry at him, he began to entreat him, and to desire he would be merciful to him, and forgive his sin. But God sent Nathan the prophet to him, to propose to him the election of three things, that he might choose which he liked best: Whether he would have famine come upon the country for seven years, or would have a war, and be subdued three months by his enemies? or, whether God should send a pestilence and a distemper upon the Hebrews for three days? But as he was fallen to a fatal choice of great miseries, he was in trouble, and sorely confounded; and when the prophet had said that he must of necessity make his choice, and had ordered him to answer quickly, that he

might declare what he had chosen to God, the king reasoned with himself, that in case he should ask for famine, he would appear to do it for others, and without danger to himself, since he had a great deal of corn hoarded up, but to the harm of others; that in case he should choose to be overcome [by his enemies] for three months, he would appear to have chosen war, because he had valiant men about him, and strong holds, and that therefore he feared nothing therefrom: so he chose that affliction which is common to kings and to their subjects, and in which the fear was equal on all sides; and said this beforehand, that it was much better to fall into the hands of God, than into those of his enemies.

3. When the prophet had heard this, he declared it to God; who thereupon sent a pestilence and a mortality upon the Hebrews; nor did they die after one and the same manner, nor so that it was easy to know what the distemper was. Now the miserable disease was one indeed, but it carried them off by ten thousand causes and occasions, which those that were afflicted could not understand; for one died upon the neck of another, and the terrible malady seized them before they were aware, and brought them to their end suddenly, some giving up the ghost immediately with very great pains and bitter grief, and some were worn away by their distempers, and had nothing remaining to be buried, but as soon as ever they fell were entirely macerated; some were choked, and greatly lamented their case, as being also stricken with a sudden darkness; some there were who, as they were burying a relation, fell down dead, without finishing the rites of the funeral. Now there perished of this disease, which began with the morning, and lasted till the hour of dinner, seventy thousand. Nay, the angel stretched out his hand over Jerusalem, as sending this terrible judgment upon it. But David had put on sackcloth, and lay upon the ground, entreating God, and begging that the distemper might now cease, and that he would be satisfied with those that had already perished. And when the king looked up into the air, and saw the angel carried along thereby into Jerusalem, with his sword drawn, he said to God, that he might justly be punished, who was their

shepherd, but that the sheep ought to be preserved, as not having sinned at all; and he implored God that he would send his wrath upon him, and upon all his family, but spare the people.

4. When God heard his supplication, he caused the pestilence to cease, and sent Gad the prophet to him, and commanded him to go up immediately to the thrashing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite, and build an altar there to God, and offer sacrifices. When David heard that, he did not neglect his duty, but made haste to the place appointed him. Now Araunah was thrashing wheat; and when he saw the king and all his servants coming to him, he ran before, and came to him and worshipped him: he was by his lineage a Jebusite, but a particular friend of David's; and for that cause it was that, when he overthrew the city, he did him no harm, as we informed the reader a little before. Now Araunah inquired, "Wherefore is my lord come to his servant?" He answered, to buy of him the thrashing-floor, that he might therein build an altar to God, and offer a sacrifice. He replied, that he freely gave him both the thrashing-floor and the ploughs and the oxen for a burnt-offering; and he besought God graciously to accept his sacrifice. But the king made answer, that he took his generosity and magnanimity loudly, and accepted his good-will, but he desired him to take the price of them all, for that it was not just to offer a sacrifice that cost nothing. And when Araunah said he would do as he pleased, he bought the thrashing-floor of him for fifty shekels. And when he had built an altar, he performed Divine service, and brought a burnt-offering, and offered peace-offerings also. With these God was pacified, and became gracious to them again. Now it happened that Abraham (2) came and offered his son Isaac for a burnt-offering at that very place; and when the youth was ready to have his throat cut, a ram appeared on a sudden, standing by the altar, which Abraham sacrificed in the stead of his son, as we have before related. Now when king David saw that God had heard his prayer, and had graciously accepted of his sacrifice, he resolved to call that entire place The Altar of all the People, and to build a temple to God there; which words he uttered very appositely to what was to be done

afterward; for God sent the prophet to him, and told him that there should his son build him an altar, that son who was to take the kingdom after him.

Footnotes:

1. The words of God by Moses, Exodus 30:12, sufficiently satisfy the reason here given by Josephus for the great plague mentioned in this chapter: - "When thou takest the sum of the children of Israel after their number, then shall they give a ransom for his soul unto the Lord, when thou numberest them; that there be no plague amongst them, when numberest them." Nor indeed could David's or the neglect of executing this law at this numeration of half a shekel apiece with them, when they came numbered. The great reason why nations are so committed by and with their wicked kings and governors that they almost constantly comply with them in their of or disobedience to the Divine laws, and suffer Divine laws to go into disuse or contempt, in order to kings and governors; and that they sub-political laws and commands of those governors, instead of the righteous laws of God, which all mankind ought ever to obey, let their kings and governors say what they please to the contrary; this preference of human before Divine laws seeming to me the principal character of idolatrous or antichristian nations. Accordingly, Josephus well observes, Antiq. B. IV. ch. 8. sect. 17, that it was the duty of the people of Israel to take care that their kings, when they should have them, did not exceed their proper limits of power, and prove ungovernable by the laws of God, which would certainly be a most pernicious thing to their Divine settlement. Nor do I think that negligence peculiar to the Jews: those nations which are called Christians, are sometimes indeed very solicitous to restrain their kings and governors from breaking the human laws of their several kingdoms, but without the like care for restraining them from breaking the laws of God. "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto men more than to God, judge ye," Acts 4:19. "We ought to obey God rather than

men," ver. 29.

2. What Josephus adds here is very remarkable, that this Mount Moriah was not only the very place where Abraham offered up Isaac long ago, but that God had foretold to David by a prophet, that here his son should build him a temple, which is not directly in any of our other copies, though very agreeable to what is in them, particularly in 1 Chronicles 21:25, 28; 22:1, to which places I refer the reader.

Chapter 14

David Appointed Solomon to Reign

1. After the delivery of this prophecy, the king commanded the strangers to be numbered; and they were found to be one hundred and eighty thousand; of these he appointed fourscore thousand to be hewers of stone, and the rest of the multitude to carry the stones, and of them he set over the workmen three thousand and five hundred. He also prepared a great quantity of iron and brass for the work, with many (and those exceeding large) cedar trees; the Tyrians and Sidonians sending them to him, for he had sent to them for a supply of those trees. And he told his friends that these things were now prepared, that he might leave materials ready for the building of the temple to his son, who was to reign after him, and that he might not have them to seek then, when he was very young, and by reason of his age unskillful in such matters, but might have them lying by him, and so might the more readily complete the work.

2. So David called his son Solomon, and charged him, when he had received the kingdom, to build a temple to God, and said, "I was willing to build God a temple myself, but he prohibited me, because I was polluted with blood and wars; but he hath foretold that Solomon, my youngest son, should build him a temple, and should be called by that name; over whom he hath promised to take the like care as a father takes over his son; and that he would make the country of the Hebrews happy under him, and that, not only in other respects, but by giving it peace and freedom from wars, and from internal seditions, which are the greatest of all blessings. Since, therefore," says he, "thou wast ordained king by God himself before thou wast born, endeavor to render thyself worthy of this his providence, as in other instances, so particularly in being religious, and righteous, and courageous. Keep thou also his commands and his laws, which he hath given us by

Moses, and do not permit others to break them. Be zealous also to dedicate to God a temple, which he hath chosen to be built under thy reign; nor be thou afrighted by the vastness of the work, nor set about it timorously, for I will make all things ready before I die: and take notice, that there are already ten thousand talents of gold, and a hundred thousand talents of silver (1) collected together. I have also laid together brass and iron without number, and an immense quantity of timber and of stones. Moreover, thou hast many ten thousand stone-cutters and carpenters; and if thou shalt want any thing further, do thou add somewhat of thine own. Wherefore, if thou performest this work, thou wilt be acceptable to God, and have him for thy patron." David also further exhorted the rulers of the people to assist his son in this building, and to attend to the Divine service, when they should be free from all their misfortunes, for that they by this means should enjoy, instead of them, peace and a happy settlement, with which blessings God rewards such men as are religious and righteous. He also gave orders, that when the temple should be once built, they should put the ark therein, with the holy vessels; and he assured them that they ought to have had a temple long ago, if their fathers had not been negligent of God's commands, who had given it in charge, that when they had got the possession of this land, they should build him a temple. Thus did David discourse to the governors, and to his son.

3. David was now in years, and his body, by length of time, was become cold, and benumbed, insomuch that he could get no heat by covering himself with many clothes; and when the physicians came together, they agreed to this advice, that a beautiful virgin, chosen out of the whole country, should sleep by the king's side, and that this damsel would communicate heat to him, and be a remedy against his numbness. Now there was found in the city one woman, of a superior beauty to all other women, (her name was Abishag,) who, sleeping with the king, did no more than communicate warmth to him, for he was so old that he could not know her as a husband knows his wife. But of this woman we shall speak more presently.

4. Now the fourth son of David was a beautiful young man, and tall, born to him of Haggith his wife. He was named Adonijah, and was in his disposition like to Absalom; and exalted himself as hoping to be king, and told his friends that he ought to take the government upon him. He also prepared many chariots and horses, and fifty men to run before him. When his father saw this, he did not reprove him, nor restrain him from his purpose, nor did he go so far as to ask wherefore he did so. Now Adonijah had for his assistants Joab the captain of the army, and Abiathar the high priest; and the only persons that opposed him were Zadok the high priest, and the prophet Nathan, and Benaiah, who was captain of the guards, and Shimei, David's friend, with all the other most mighty men. Now Adonijah had prepared a supper out of the city, near the fountain that was in the king's paradise, and had invited all his brethren except Solomon, and had taken with him Joab the captain of the army, and: Abiathar, and the rulers of the tribe of Judah, but had not invited to this feast either Zadok the high priest, or Nathan the prophet, or Benaiah the captain of the guards, nor any of those of the contrary party. This matter was told by Nathan the prophet to Bathsheba, Solomon's mother, that Adonijah was king, and that David knew nothing of it; and he advised her to save herself and her son Solomon, and to go by herself to David, and say to him, that he had indeed sworn that Solomon should reign after him, but that in the mean time Adonijah had already taken the kingdom. He said that he, the prophet himself, would come after her, and when she had spoken thus to the king, would confirm what she had said. Accordingly Bathsheba agreed with Nathan, and went in to the king and worshipped him, and when she had desired leave to speak with him, she told him all things in the manner that Nathan had suggested to her; and related what a supper Adonijah had made, and who they were whom he had invited; Abiathar the and Joab the general, and David's sons, excepting Solomon and his intimate friends. She also said that all the people had their eyes upon him, to know whom he would choose for their king. She desired him also to consider how, after his departure, Adonijah, if he were king, would slay her and her son Solomon.

5. Now, as Bathsheba was speaking, the keeper of the king's chambers told him that Nathan desired to see him. And when the king had commanded that he should be admitted, he came in, and asked him whether he had ordained Adonijah to be king, and delivered the government to him, or not; for that he had made a splendid supper, and invited all his sons, except Solomon; as also that he had invited Joab, the captain of his host, [and Abiathar the high priest,] who are feasting with applauses, and many joyful sounds of instruments, and wish that his kingdom may last for ever; but he hath not invited me, nor Zadok the high priest, nor Benaiah the captain of the guards; and it is but fit that all should know whether this be done by thy approbation or not. When Nathan had said thus, the king commanded that they should call Bathsheba to him, for she had gone out of the room when the prophet came. And when Bathsheba was come, David said, "I swear by Almighty God, that thy son Solomon shall certainly be king, as I formerly swore; and that he shall sit upon my throne, and that this very day also." So Bathsheba worshipped him, and wished him a long life; and the king sent for Zadok the high priest, and Benaiah the captain of the guards; and when they were come, he ordered them to take with them Nathan the prophet, and all the armed men about the palace, and to set his son Solomon upon the king's mule, and to carry him out of the city to the fountain called Gihon, and to anoint him there with the holy oil, and to make him king. This he charged Zadok the high priest, and Nathan the prophet, to do, and commanded them to follow Solomon through the midst of the city, and to sound the trumpets, and wish aloud that Solomon the king may sit upon the royal throne for ever, that so all the people may know that he is ordained king by his father. He also gave Solomon a charge concerning his government, to rule the whole nation of the Hebrews, and particularly the tribe of Judah, religiously and righteously. And when Benaiah had prayed to God to be favorable to Solomon, without any delay they set Solomon upon the mule, and brought him out of the city to the fountain, and anointed him with oil, and brought him into the city again, with acclamations and wishes that his kingdom might

continue a long time: and when they had introduced him into the king's house, they set him upon the throne; whereupon all the people betook themselves to make merry, and to celebrate a festival, dancing and delighting themselves with musical pipes, till both the earth and the air echoed with the multitude of the instruments of music.

6. Now when Adonijah and his guests perceived this noise, they were in disorder; and Joab the captain of the host said he was not pleased with these echoes, and the sound of these trumpets. And when supper was set before them, nobody tasted of it, but they were all very thoughtful what would be the matter. Then Jonathan, the son of Abiathar the high priest, came running to them; and when Adonijah saw the young man gladly, and said to him that he was a good messenger, he declared to them the whole matter about Solomon, and the determination of king David: hereupon both Adonijah and all the guests rose hastily from the feast, and every one fled to their own homes. Adonijah also, as afraid of the king for what he had done, became a suppliant to God, and took hold of the horns of the altar, which were prominent. It was also told Solomon that he had so done; and that he desired to receive assurances from him that he would not remember the injury he had done, and not inflict any severe punishment for it. Solomon answered very mildly and prudently, that he forgave him this his offense; but said withal, that if he were found out in any attempt for new innovations, that he would be the author of his own punishment. So he sent to him, and raised him up from the place of his supplication. And when he was come to the king, and had worshipped him, the king bid him go away to his own house, and have no suspicion of any harm; and desired him to show himself a worthy man, as what would tend to his own advantage.

7. But David, being desirous of ordaining his son king of all the people, called together their rulers to Jerusalem, with the priests and the Levites; and having first numbered the Levites, he found them to be thirty-eight thousand, from thirty years old to fifty; out of which he appointed twenty-three

thousand to take care of the building of the temple, and out of the same, six thousand to be judges of the people and scribes, four thousand for porters to the house of God, and as many for singers, to sing to the instruments which David had prepared, as we have said already. He divided them also into courses: and when he had separated the priests from them, he found of these priests twenty-four courses, sixteen of the house of Eleazar, and eight of that of Ithamar; and he ordained that one course should minister to God eight days, from sabbath to sabbath. And thus were the courses distributed by lot, in the presence of David, and Zadok and Abiathar the high priests, and of all the rulers; and that course which came up first was written down as the first, and accordingly the second, and so on to the twenty-fourth; and this partition hath remained to this day. He also made twenty-four parts of the tribe of Levi; and when they cast lots, they came up in the same manner for their courses of eight days. He also honored the posterity of Moses, and made them the keepers of the treasures of God, and of the donations which the kings dedicated. He also ordained that all the tribe of Levi, as well as the priests, should serve God night and day, as Moses had enjoined them.

8. After this he parted the entire army into twelve parts, with their leaders [and captains of hundreds] and commanders. Now every part had twenty-four thousand, which were ordered to wait on Solomon, by thirty days at a time, from the first day till the last, with the captains of thousands and captains of hundreds. He also set rulers over every part, such as he knew to be good and righteous men. He set others also to take charge of the treasures, and of the villages, and of the fields, and of the beasts, whose names I do not think it necessary to mention. When David had ordered all these officers after the manner before mentioned, he called the rulers of the Hebrews, and their heads of tribes, and the officers over the several divisions, and those that were appointed over every work, and every possession; and standing upon a high pulpit, he said to the multitude as follows: "My brethren and my people, I would have you know that I intended to build a house for God, and prepared a large quantity of gold, and

a hundred thousand talents of silver; but God prohibited me by the prophet Nathan, because of the wars I had on your account, and because my right hand was polluted with the slaughter of our enemies; but he commanded that my son, who was to succeed me in the kingdom, should build a temple for him. Now therefore, since you know that of the twelve sons whom Jacob our forefather had Judah was appointed to be king, and that I was preferred before my six brethren, and received the government from God, and that none of them were uneasy at it, so do I also desire that my sons be not seditious one against another, now Solomon has received the kingdom, but to bear him cheerfully for their lord, as knowing that God hath chosen him; for it is not a grievous thing to obey even a foreigner as a ruler, if it be God's will, but it is fit to rejoice when a brother hath obtained that dignity, since the rest partake of it with him. And I pray that the promises of God may be fulfilled; and that this happiness which he hath promised to bestow upon king Solomon, over all the country, may continue therein for all time to come. And these promises O son, will be firm, and come to a happy end, if thou showest thyself to be a religious and a righteous man, and an observer of the laws of thy country; but if not, expect adversity upon thy disobedience to them."

9. Now when the king had said this, he left off; but gave the description and pattern of the building of the temple in the sight of them all to Solomon: of the foundations and of the chambers, inferior and superior; how many they were to be, and how large in height and in breadth; as also he determined the weight of the golden and silver vessels: moreover, he earnestly excited them with his words to use the utmost alacrity about the work; he exhorted the rulers also, and particularly the tribe of Levi, to assist him, both because of his youth, and because God had chosen him to take care of the building of the temple, and of the government of the kingdom. He also declared to them that the work would be easy, and not very laborious to them, because he had prepared for it many talents of gold, and more of silver, with timber, and a great many carpenters and stone-cutters, and a

large quantity of emeralds, and all sorts of precious stones; and he said, that even now he would give of the proper goods of his own dominion two hundred talents, and three hundred other talents of pure gold, for the most holy place, and for the chariot of God, the cherubim, which are to stand over and cover the ark. Now when David had done speaking, there appeared great alacrity among the rulers, and the priests, and the Levites, who now contributed and made great and splendid promises for a future Contribution; for they undertook to bring of gold five thousand talents, and ten thousand drams, and of silver ten thousand talents, and many ten thousand talents of iron; and if any one had a precious stone he brought it, and bequeathed it to be put among the treasures; of which Jachiel, one of the posterity of Moses, had the care.

10. Upon this occasion all the people rejoiced, as in particular did David, when he saw the zeal and forward ambition of the rulers, and the priests, and of all the rest; and he began to bless God with a loud voice, calling him the Father and Parent of the universe, and the Author of human and divine things, with which he had adorned Solomon, the patron and guardian of the Hebrew nation, and of its happiness, and of that kingdom which he hath given his son. Besides this, he prayed for happiness to all the people; and to Solomon his son, a sound and a righteous mind, and confirmed in all sorts of virtue; and then he commanded the multitude to bless God; upon which they all fell down upon the ground and worshipped him. They also gave thanks to David, on account of all the blessings which they had received ever since he had taken the kingdom. On the next day he presented sacrifices to God, a thousand bullocks, and as many lambs, which they offered for burnt-offerings. They also offered peace-offerings, and slew many ten thousand sacrifices; and the king feasted all day, together with all the people; and they anointed Solomon a second time with the oil, and appointed him to be king, and Zadok to be the high priest of the whole multitude. And when they had brought Solomon to the royal palace, and had set him upon his father's throne, they were obedient to him from that day.

Footnote:

1. Of the quantity of gold and silver expended in the building of Solomon's temple, and whence it arose, see the description of ch. 13.

Chapter 15

David Gave the Building of the Temple to Solomon

1. A Little afterward David also fell into a distemper, by reason of his age; and perceiving that he was near to death, he called his son Solomon, and discoursed to him thus: "I am now, O my son, going to my grave, and to my fathers, which is the common way which all men that now are, or shall be hereafter, must go; from which way it is no longer possible to return, and to know any thing that is done in this world. On which account I exhort thee, while I am still alive, though already very near to death, in the same manner as I have formerly said in my advice to thee, to be righteous towards thy subjects, and religious towards God, that hath given thee thy kingdom; to observe his commands and his laws, which he hath sent us by Moses; and neither do thou out of favor nor flattery allow any lust or other passion to weigh with thee to disregard them; for if thou transgressest his laws, thou wilt lose the favor of God, and thou wilt turn away his providence from thee in all things; but if thou behave thyself so as it behooves thee, and as I exhort thee, thou wilt preserve our kingdom to our family, and no other house will bear rule over the Hebrews but we ourselves for all ages. Be thou also mindful of the transgressions of Joab, (1) the captain of the host, who hath slain two generals out of envy, and those righteous and good men, Abner the son of Ner, and Amasa the son of Jether; whose death do thou avenge as shall seem good to thee, since Joab hath been too hard for me, and more potent than myself, and so hath escaped punishment hitherto. I also commit to thee the son of Barzillai the Gileadite, whom, in order to gratify me, thou shalt have in great honor, and take great care of; for we have not done good to him first, but we only repay that debt which we owe to his father for what he did to me in my flight. There is also Shimei the son of Gera, of the tribe of Benjamin, who, after he had cast many reproaches upon me, when, in my flight, I was going to Mahanaim, met me at Jordan, and received assurances

that he should then suffer nothing. Do thou now seek out for some just occasion, and punish him."

2. When David had given these admonitions to his son about public affairs, and about his friends, and about those whom he knew to deserve punishment, he died, having lived seventy years, and reigned seven years and six months in Hebron over the tribe of Judah, and thirty-three years in Jerusalem over all the country. This man was of an excellent character, and was endowed with all virtues that were desirable in a king, and in one that had the preservation of so many tribes committed to him; for he was a man of valor in a very extraordinary degree, and went readily and first of all into dangers, when he was to fight for his subjects, as exciting the soldiers to action by his own labors, and fighting for them, and not by commanding them in a despotic way. He was also of very great abilities in understanding, and apprehension of present and future circumstances, when he was to manage any affairs. He was prudent and moderate, and kind to such as were under any calamities; he was righteous and humane, which are good qualities, peculiarly fit for kings; nor was he guilty of any offense in the exercise of so great an authority, but in the business of the wife of Uriah. He also left behind him greater wealth than any other king, either of the Hebrews or, of other nations, ever did.

3. He was buried by his son Solomon, in Jerusalem, with great magnificence, and with all the other funeral pomp which kings used to be buried with; moreover, he had great and immense wealth buried with him, the vastness of which may be easily conjectured at by what I shall now say; for a thousand and three hundred years afterward Hyrcanus the high priest, when he was besieged by Antiochus, that was called the Pious, the son of Demetrius, and was desirous of giving him money to get him to raise the siege and draw off his army, and having no other method of compassing the money, opened one room of David's sepulcher, and took out three thousand talents, and gave part of that sum to Antiochus; and by this means caused the

siege to be raised, as we have informed the reader elsewhere. Nay, after him, and that many years, Herod the king opened another room, and took away a great deal of money, and yet neither of them came at the coffins of the kings themselves, for their bodies were buried under the earth so artfully, that they did not appear to even those that entered into their monuments. But so much shall suffice us to have said concerning these matters.

Footnote:

1. David is here greatly blamed by some for recommending Joab and Shimei to be punished by Solomon, if he could find a proper occasion, after he had borne with the first a long while, and seemed to have pardoned the other entirely, which Solomon executed accordingly; yet I cannot discern any fault either in David or Solomon in these cases. Joab's murder of Abner and Amasa were very barbarous, and could not properly be forgiven either by David or Solomon; for a dispensing power in kings for the crime of willful murder is warranted by no law of God, nay, is directly against it every where; nor is it, for certain, in the power of men to grant such a prerogative to any of their kings; though Joab was so nearly related to David, and so potent in the army under a warlike administration, that David durst not himself put him to death, 2 Samuel 3:39; 19:7. Shimei's cursing the Lord's anointed, and this without any just cause, was the highest act of treason against God and his anointed king, and justly deserved death; and though David could forgive treason against himself, yet had he done no more in the case of Shimei than promised him that he would not then, on the day of his return and reinauguration, or upon that occasion, himself put him to death, 2 Samuel 19:22; and he swore to him no further, ver. 23, as the words are in Josephus, than that he would not then put him to death, which he performed; nor was Solomon under any obligation to spare such a traitor.