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Judaism

2 Samuel

(Shmuel II)

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JPS Tanakh (1917)

Credits

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About:

The reign of David: the capture of Jerusalem, the promise of an everlasting dynasty, the sin with Bathsheba and the revolt of Absalom. In Hebrew: שְׁמוּאֵל ב.

It is the continuation of the book of Samuel. God's promise to David (ch. 7) — a house and a throne that will last for ever — is the root of the Jewish hope for a Messiah son of David, recalled in the blessing after the reading from the Prophets.

David's lament for Saul and Jonathan (ch. 1), "how are the mighty fallen", is among the most beautiful poems of the Tanakh.

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CHAPTER 1

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1 And it came to pass after the death of Saul, when David was returned from the slaughter of the Amalekites, and David had abode two days in Ziklag;

2 it came even to pass on the third day, that, behold, a man came out of the camp from Saul with his clothes rent, and earth upon his head; and so it was, when he came to David, that he fell to the earth, and prostrated himself.

3 And David said unto him: 'From whence comest thou?' And he said unto him: 'Out of the camp of Israel am I escaped.'

4 And David said unto him: 'How went the matter? I pray thee, tell me.' And he answered: 'The people are fled from the battle, and many of the people also are fallen and dead; and Saul and Jonathan his son are dead also.'

5 And David said unto the young man that told him: 'How knowest thou that Saul and Jonathan his son are dead?'

6 And the young man that told him said: 'As I happened by chance upon mount Gilboa, behold, Saul leaned upon his spear; and, lo, the chariots and the horsemen pressed hard upon him.

7 And when he looked behind him, he saw me, and called unto me. And I answered: Here am I.

8 And he said unto me: Who art thou? And I answered him: I am an Amalekite.

9 And he said unto me: Stand, I pray thee, beside me, and slay me, for the agony hath taken hold of me; because my life is just yet in me.

10 So I stood beside him, and slew him, because I was sure that he could not live after that he was fallen; and I took the crown that was upon his head, and the bracelet that was on his arm, and have brought them hither unto my lord.'

11 Then David took hold on his clothes, and rent them; and likewise all the men that were with him.

12 And they wailed, and wept, and fasted until even, for Saul, and for Jonathan his son, and for the people of the LORD, and for the house of Israel; because they were fallen by the sword.

13 And David said unto the young man that told him: 'Whence art thou?' And he answered: 'I am the son of an Amalekite stranger.'

14 And David said unto him: 'How wast thou not afraid to put forth thy hand to destroy the LORD'S anointed?'

15 And David called one of the young men, and said: 'Go near, and fall upon him.' And he smote him that he died.

16 And David said unto him: 'Thy blood be upon thy head; for thy mouth hath testified against thee, saying: I have slain the LORD'S anointed.'

17 And David lamented with this lamentation over Saul and over Jonathan his son,

18 and said—To teach the sons of Judah the bow. Behold, it is written in the book of Jashar:

19 Thy beauty, O Israel, upon thy high places is slain! How are the mighty fallen!

20 Tell it not in Gath, Publish it not in the streets of Ashkelon; Lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, Lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph.

21 Ye mountains of Gilboa, Let there be no dew nor rain upon you, Neither fields of choice fruits; For there the shield of the mighty was vilely cast away, The shield of Saul, not anointed with oil.

22 From the blood of the slain, from the fat of the mighty, The bow of Jonathan turned not back, And the sword of Saul returned not empty.

23 Saul and Jonathan, the lovely and the pleasant In their lives, even in their death they were not divided; They were swifter than eagles, They were stronger than lions.

24 Ye daughters of Israel, weep over Saul, Who clothed you in scarlet, with other delights, Who put ornaments of gold upon your apparel.

25 How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle! Jonathan upon thy high places is slain!

26 I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan; Very pleasant hast thou been unto me; Wonderful was thy love to me, Passing the love of women.

27 How are the mighty fallen, And the weapons of war perished!

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CHAPTER 2

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1 And it came to pass after this, that David inquired of the LORD, saying: 'Shall I go up into any of the cities of Judah?' And the LORD said unto him: 'Go up.' And David said: 'Whither shall I go up?' And He said: 'Unto Hebron.'

2 So David went up thither, and his two wives also, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite.

3 And his men that were with him did David bring up, every man with his household; and they dwelt in the cities of Hebron.

4 And the men of Judah came, and they there anointed David king over the house of Judah. And they told David, saying: 'The men of Jabesh-gilead were they that buried Saul.'

5 And David sent messengers unto the men of Jabesh-gilead, and said unto them: 'Blessed be ye of the LORD, that ye have shown this kindness unto your lord, even unto Saul, and have buried him.

6 And now the LORD show kindness and truth unto you; and I also will requite you this kindness, because ye have done this thing.

7 Now therefore let your hands be strong, and be ye valiant; for Saul your lord is dead, and also the house of Judah have anointed me king over them.'

8 Now Abner the son of Ner, captain of Saul's host, had taken Ish-bosheth the son of Saul, and brought him over to Mahanaim;

9 and he made him king over Gilead, and over the Ashurites, and over Jezreel, and over Ephraim, and over Benjamin, and over all Israel.

10 Ish-bosheth Saul's son was forty years old when he began to reign over Israel, and he reigned two years. But the house of Judah followed David.

11 And the time that David was king in Hebron over the house of Judah was seven years and six months.

12 And Abner the son of Ner, and the servants of Ish-bosheth the son of Saul, went out from Mahanaim to Gibeon.

13 And Joab the son of Zeruiah, and the servants of David, went out; and they met together by the pool of Gibeon, and sat down, the one on the one side of the pool, and the other on the other side of the pool.

14 And Abner said to Joab: 'Let the young men, I pray thee, arise and play before us.' And Joab said: 'Let them arise.'

15 Then they arose and passed over by number: twelve for Benjamin, and for Ish-bosheth the son of Saul, and twelve of the servants of David.

16 And they caught every one his fellow by the head, and thrust his sword in his fellow's side; so they fell down together; wherefore that place was called Helkath-hazzurim, which is in Gibeon.

17 And the battle was very sore that day; and Abner was beaten, and the men of Israel, before the servants of David.

18 And the three sons of Zeruiah were there, Joab, and Abishai, and Asahel; and Asahel was as light of foot as one of the roes that are in the field.

19 And Asahel pursued after Abner; and in going he turned not to the right hand nor to the left from following Abner.

20 Then Abner looked behind him, and said: 'Is it thou, Asahel?' And he answered: 'It is I.'

21 And Abner said to him: 'Turn thee aside to thy right hand or to thy left, and lay thee hold on one of the young men, and take thee his armour.' But Asahel would not turn aside from following him.

22 And Abner said again to Asahel: 'Turn thee aside from following me; wherefore should I smite thee to the ground? how then should I hold up my face to Joab thy brother?'

23 Howbeit he refused to turn aside; wherefore Abner with the hinder end of the spear smote him in the groin, that the spear came out behind him; and he fell down there, and died in the same place; and it came to pass, that as many as came to the place where Asahel fell down and died stood still. .

24 But Joab and Abishai pursued after Abner; and the sun went down when they were come to the hill of Ammah, that lieth before Giah by the way of the wilderness of Gibeon.

25 And the children of Benjamin gathered themselves together after Abner, and became one band, and stood on the top of a hill.

26 Then Abner called to Joab, and said: 'Shall the sword devour for ever? knowest thou not that it will be bitterness in the end? how long shall it be then, ere thou bid the people return from following their brethren?'

27 And Joab said: 'As God liveth, if thou hadst not spoken, surely then only after the morning the people had gone away, every one from following his brother.'

28 So Joab blew the horn, and all the people stood still, and pursued after Israel no more, neither fought they any more.

29 And Abner and his men went all that night through the Arabah; and they passed over the Jordan, and went through all Bithron, and came to Mahanaim.

30 And Joab returned from following Abner; and when he had gathered all the people together, there lacked of David's servants nineteen men and Asahel.

31 But the servants of David had smitten of Benjamin, even of Abner's men—three hundred and threescore men died.

32 And they took up Asahel, and buried him in the sepulchre of his father, which was in Beth-lehem. And Joab and his men went all night, and the day broke upon them at Hebron.

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CHAPTER 3

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1 Now there was long war between the house of Saul and the house of David; and David waxed stronger and stronger, but the house of Saul waxed weaker and weaker.

2 And unto David were sons born in Hebron; and his first-born was Amnon, of Ahinoam the Jezreelitess;

3 and his second, Chileab, of Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite; and the third, Absalom the son of Maacah the daughter of Talmai king of Geshur;

4 and the fourth, Adonijah the son of Haggith; and the fifth, Shephatiah the son of Abital;

5 and the sixth, Ithream, of Eglah David's wife. These were born to David in Hebron.

6 And it came to pass, while there was war between the house of Saul and the house of David, that Abner showed himself strong in the house of Saul.

7 Now Saul had a concubine, whose name was Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah; and [Ish-bosheth] said to Abner: 'Wherefore hast thou gone in unto my father's concubine?'

8 Then was Abner very wroth for the words of Ish-bosheth, and said: 'Am I a dog's head that belongeth to Judah? This day do I show kindness unto the house of Saul thy father, to his brethren, and to his friends, and have

not delivered thee into the hand of David, and yet thou chargest me this day with a fault concerning this woman.

9 God do so to Abner, and more also, if, as the LORD hath sworn to David, I do not even so to him;

10 to transfer the kingdom from the house of Saul, and to set up the throne of David over Israel and over Judah, from Dan even to Beer-sheba.'

11 And he could not answer Abner another word, because he feared him.

12 And Abner sent messengers to David straightway, saying: 'Whose is the land?' saying also: 'Make thy league with me, and, behold, my hand shall be with thee, to bring over all Israel unto thee.'

13 And he said: 'Well; I will make a league with thee; but one thing I require of thee, that is, thou shalt not see my face, except thou first bring Michal Saul's daughter, when thou comest to see my face.'

14 And David sent messengers to Ish-bosheth Saul's son, saying: 'Deliver me my wife Michal, whom I betrothed to me for a hundred foreskins of the Philistines.'

15 And Ish-bosheth sent, and took her from her husband, even from Paltiel the son of Laish.

16 And her husband went with her, weeping as he went, and followed her to Bahurim. Then said Abner unto him: 'Go, return'; and he returned.

17 And Abner had communication with the elders of Israel, saying: 'In times past ye sought for David to be king over you;

18 now then do it; for the LORD hath spoken of David, saying: By the hand of My servant David I will save My people Israel out of the hand of the Philistines, and out of the hand of all their enemies.'

19 And Abner also spoke in the ears of Benjamin; and Abner went also to speak in the ears of David in Hebron all that seemed good to Israel, and to the whole house of Benjamin.

20 So Abner came to David to Hebron, and twenty men with him. And David made Abner and the men that were with him a feast.

21 And Abner said unto David: 'I will arise and go, and will gather all Israel unto my lord the king, that they may make a covenant with thee, and that thou mayest reign over all that thy soul desireth.' And David sent Abner away; and he went in peace.

22 And, behold, the servants of David and Joab came from a foray, and brought in a great spoil with them; but Abner was not with David in Hebron; for he had sent him away, and he was gone in peace.

23 When Joab and all the host that was with him were come, they told Joab, saying: 'Abner the son of Ner came to the king, and he hath sent him away, and he is gone in peace.'

24 Then Joab came to the king, and said: 'What hast thou done? behold, Abner came unto thee; why is it that thou hast sent him away, and he is quite gone?

25 Thou knowest Abner the son of Ner, that he came to deceive thee, and to know thy going out and thy coming in, and to know all that thou doest.'

26 And when Joab was come out from David, he sent messengers after Abner, and they brought him back from Bor-sirah; but David knew it not.

27 And when Abner was returned to Hebron, Joab took him aside into the midst of the gate to speak with him quietly, and smote him there in the groin, that he died, for the blood of Asahel his brother.

28 And afterward when David heard it, he said: 'I and my kingdom are guiltless before the LORD for ever from the blood of Abner the son of Ner;

29 let it fall upon the head of Joab, and upon all his father's house; and let there not fail from the house of Joab one that hath an issue, or that is a leper, or that leaneth on a staff, or that falleth by the sword, or that lacketh bread.'

30 So Joab and Abishai his brother slew Abner, because he had killed their brother Asahel at Gibeon in the battle.

31 And David said to Joab, and to all the people that were with him: 'Rend your clothes, and gird you with sackcloth, and wail before Abner.' And king David followed the bier.

32 And they buried Abner in Hebron; and the king lifted up his voice, and wept at the grave of Abner; and all the people wept.

33 And the king lamented for Abner, and said: Should Abner die as a churl dieth?

34 Thy hands were not bound, nor thy feet put into fetters; As a man falleth before the children of iniquity, so didst thou fall. And all the people wept again over him.

35 And all the people came to cause David to eat bread while it was yet day; but David swore, saying: ‘God do so to me, and more also, if I taste bread, or aught else, till the sun be down.’

36 And all the people took notice of it, and it pleased them; whatsoever the king did, pleased all the people.

37 So all the people and all Israel understood that day that it was not of the king to slay Abner the son of Ner.

38 And the king said unto his servants: ‘Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel?

39 And I am this day weak, and just anointed king; and these men the sons of Zeruiah are too hard for me; the LORD reward the evildoer according to his wickedness.’

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CHAPTER 4

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1 And when Saul's son heard that Abner was dead in Hebron, his hands became feeble, and all the Israelites were affrighted.

2 And Saul's son had two men that were captains of bands; the name of the one was Baanah, and the name of the other Rechab, the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, of the children of Benjamin; for Beeroth also is reckoned to Benjamin;

3 and the Beerothites fled to Gittaim, and have been sojourners there until this day.

4 Now Jonathan, Saul's son, had a son that was lame of his feet. He was five years old when the tidings came of Saul and Jonathan out of Jezreel, and his nurse took him up, and fled; and it came to pass, as she made haste to flee, that he fell, and became lame. And his name was Mephibosheth.

5 And the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, Rechab and Baanah, went, and came about the heat of the day to the house of Ish-bosheth, as he took his rest at noon.

6 And they came thither into the midst of the house, as though they would have fetched wheat; and they smote him in the groin; and Rechab and Baanah his brother escaped.

7 Now when they came into the house, as he lay on his bed in his bed-chamber, they smote him, and slew him, and beheaded him, and took his head, and went by the way of the Arabah all night.

8 And they brought the head of Ish-bosheth unto David to Hebron, and said to the king: ‘Behold the head of Ish-bosheth the son of Saul thine enemy, who sought thy life; and the LORD hath avenged my lord the king this day of Saul, and of his seed.’

9 And David answered Rechab and Baanah his brother, the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, and said unto them: ‘As the LORD liveth, who hath redeemed my soul out of all adversity,

10 when one told me, saying: Behold, Saul is dead, and he was in his own eyes as though he brought good tidings, I took hold of him, and slew him in Ziklag, instead of giving a reward for his tidings.

11 How much more, when wicked men have slain a righteous person in his own house upon his bed, shall I not now require his blood of your hand, and take you away from the earth?’

12 And David commanded his young men, and they slew them, and cut off their hands and their feet, and hanged them up beside the pool in Hebron. But they took the head of Ish-bosheth, and buried it in the grave of Abner in Hebron.

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CHAPTER 5

1 Then came all the tribes of Israel to David unto Hebron, and spoke, saying: 'Behold, we are thy bone and thy flesh.

2 In times past, when Saul was king over us, it was thou that didst lead out and bring in Israel; and the LORD said to thee: Thou shalt feed My people Israel, and thou shalt be prince over Israel.'

3 So all the elders of Israel came to the king to Hebron; and king David made a covenant with them in Hebron before the LORD; and they anointed David king over Israel.

4 David was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years.

5 In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months; and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty and three years over all Israel and Judah.

6 And the king and his men went to Jerusalem against the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land, who spoke unto David, saying: 'Except thou take away the blind and the lame, thou shalt not come in hither'; thinking: 'David cannot come in hither.'

7 Nevertheless David took the stronghold of Zion; the same is the city of David.

8 And David said on that day: 'Whosoever smiteth the Jebusites, and getteth up to the gutter, and [taketh away] the lame and the blind, that are hated of David's soul—.' Wherefore they say: 'There are the blind and the

lame; he cannot come into the house.'

9 And David dwelt in the stronghold, and called it the city of David. And David built round about from Millo and inward.

10 And David waxed greater and greater; for the LORD, the God of hosts, was with him. .

11 And Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David, and cedar-trees, and carpenters, and masons; and they built David a house.

12 And David perceived that the LORD had established him king over Israel, and that He had exalted his kingdom for His people Israel's sake.

13 And David took him more concubines and wives out of Jerusalem, after he was come from Hebron; and there were yet sons and daughters born to David.

14 And these are the names of those that were born unto him in Jerusalem: Shammua, and Shobab, and Nathan, and Solomon;

15 and Ibhar, and Elishua, and Nepheg, and Japhia;

16 and Elishama, and Eliada, and Eliphelet.

17 And when the Philistines heard that David was anointed king over Israel, all the Philistines went up to seek David; and David heard of it, and went down to the hold.

18 Now the Philistines had come and spread themselves in the valley of Rephaim.

19 And David inquired of the LORD, saying: ‘Shall I go up against the Philistines? wilt Thou deliver them into my hand?’ And the LORD said unto David: ‘Go up; for I will certainly deliver the Philistines into thy hand.’

20 And David came to Baal-perazim, and David smote them there; and he said: ‘The LORD hath broken mine enemies before me, like the breach of waters.’ Therefore the name of that place was called Baal-perazim.

21 And they left their images there, and David and his men took them away.

22 And the Philistines came up yet again, and spread themselves in the valley of Rephaim.

23 And when David inquired of the LORD, He said: ‘Thou shalt not go up; make a circuit behind them, and come upon them over against the mulberry-trees.

24 And it shall be, when thou hearest the sound of marching in the tops of the mulberry-trees, that then thou shalt bestir thyself; for then is the LORD gone out before thee to smite the host of the Philistines.’

25 And David did so, as the LORD commanded him, and smote the Philistines from Geba until thou come to Gezer.

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CHAPTER 6

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1 And David again gathered together all the chosen men of Israel, thirty thousand.

2 And David arose, and went with all the people that were with him, from Baale-judah, to bring up from thence the ark of God, whereupon is called the Name, even the name of the LORD of hosts that sitteth upon the cherubim.

3 And they set the ark of God upon a new cart, and brought it out of the house of Abinadab that was in the hill; and Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, drove the new cart.

4 And they brought it out of the house of Abinadab, which was in the hill, with the ark of God, and Ahio went before the ark.

5 And David and all the house of Israel played before the LORD with all manner of instruments made of cypress-wood, and with harps, and with psalteries, and with timbrels, and with sistra, and with cymbals.

6 And when they came to the threshing-floor of Nacon, Uzzah put forth his hand to the ark of God, and took hold of it; for the oxen stumbled.

7 And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzzah; and God smote him there for his error; and there he died by the ark of God.

8 And David was displeased, because the LORD had broken forth upon Uzzah; and that place was called Perez-uzzah, unto this day

9 And David was afraid of the LORD that day; and he said: ‘How shall the ark of the LORD come unto me?’

10 So David would not remove the ark of the LORD unto him into the city of David; but David carried it aside into the house of Obed-edom the Gittite.

11 And the ark of the LORD remained in the house of Obed-edom the Gittite three months; and the LORD blessed Obed-edom, and all his house.

12 And it was told king David, saying: ‘The LORD hath blessed the house of Obed-edom, and all that pertaineth unto him, because of the ark of God.’ And David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-edom into the city of David with joy.

13 And it was so, that when they that bore the ark of the LORD had gone six paces, he sacrificed an ox and a fatling.

14 And David danced before the LORD with all his might; and David was girded with a linen ephod.

15 So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the LORD with shouting, and with the sound of the horn.

16 And it was so, as the ark of the LORD came into the city of David, that Michal the daughter of Saul looked out at the window, and saw king David leaping and dancing before the LORD; and she despised him in her heart.

17 And they brought in the ark of the LORD, and set it in its place, in the midst of the tent that David had pitched for it; and David offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings before the LORD.

18 And when David had made an end of offering the burnt-offering and the peace-offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD of hosts.

19 And he dealt among all the people, even among the whole multitude of Israel, both to men and women, to every one a cake of bread, and a cake made in a pan, and a sweet cake. So all the people departed every one to his house.

20 Then David returned to bless his household. And Michal the daughter of Saul came out to meet David, and said: 'How did the king of Israel get him honour to-day, who uncovered himself to-day in the eyes of the handmaids of his servants, as one of the vain fellows shamelessly uncovereth himself! '

21 And David said unto Michal: 'Before the LORD, who chose me above thy father, and above all his house, to appoint me prince over the people of the LORD, over Israel, before the LORD will I make merry.

22 And I will be yet more vile than thus, and will be base in mine own sight; and with the handmaids whom thou hast spoken of, with them will I get me honour.'

23 And Michal the daughter of Saul had no child unto the day of her death.

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CHAPTER 7

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1 And it came to pass, when the king dwelt in his house, and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies round about,

2 that the king said unto Nathan the prophet: 'See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwelleth within curtains.'

3 And Nathan said to the king: 'Go, do all that is in thy heart; for the LORD is with thee.'

4 And it came to pass the same night, that the word of the LORD came unto Nathan, saying:

5 'Go and tell My servant David: Thus saith the LORD: Shalt thou build Me a house for Me to dwell in?

6 for I have not dwelt in a house since the day that I brought up the children of Israel out of Egypt, even to this day, but have walked in a tent and in a tabernacle.

7 In all places wherein I have walked among all the children of Israel, spoke I a word with any of the tribes of Israel, whom I commanded to feed My people Israel, saying: Why have ye not built Me a house of cedar?

8 Now therefore thus shalt thou say unto My servant David: Thus saith the LORD of hosts: I took thee from the sheepcote, from following the sheep, that thou shouldest be prince over My people, over Israel.

9 And I have been with thee whithersoever thou didst go, and have cut off all thine enemies from before thee; and I will make thee a great name, like unto the name of the great ones that are in the earth.

10 And I will appoint a place for My people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in their own place, and be disquieted no more; neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more, as at the first,

11 even from the day that I commanded judges to be over My people Israel; and I will cause thee to rest from all thine enemies. Moreover the LORD telleth thee that the LORD will make thee a house.

12 When thy days are fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, that shall proceed out of thy body, and I will establish his kingdom.

13 He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever.

14 I will be to him for a father, and he shall be to Me for a son; if he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men;

15 but My mercy shall not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee.

16 And thy house and thy kingdom shall be made sure for ever before thee; thy throne shall be established for ever.'

17 According to all these words, and according to all this vision, so did Nathan speak unto David. .

18 Then David the king went in, and sat before the LORD; and he said: ‘Who am I, O Lord GOD, and what is my house, that Thou hast brought me thus far?

19 And this was yet a small thing in Thine eyes, O Lord GOD; but Thou hast spoken also of Thy servant’s house for a great while to come; and this too after the manner of great men, O Lord GOD.

20 And what can David say more unto Thee? for Thou knowest Thy servant, O Lord GOD.

21 For Thy word’s sake, and according to Thine own heart, hast Thou wrought all this greatness, to make Thy servant know it.

22 Therefore Thou art great, O LORD God; for there is none like Thee, neither is there any God beside Thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears.

23 And who is like Thy people, like Israel, a nation one in the earth, whom God went to redeem unto Himself for a people, and to make Him a name, and to do for Thy land great things and tremendous, even for you, [in driving out] from before Thy people, whom Thou didst redeem to Thee out of Egypt, the nations and their gods?

24 And Thou didst establish to Thyself Thy people Israel to be a people unto Thee for ever; and Thou, LORD, becamest their God.

25 And now, O LORD God, the word that Thou hast spoken concerning Thy servant, and concerning his house, confirm Thou it for ever, and do as Thou hast spoken.

26 And let Thy name be magnified for ever, that it may be said: The LORD of hosts is God over Israel; and the house of Thy servant David shall be established before Thee.

27 For Thou, O LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, hast revealed to Thy servant, saying: I will build thee a house; therefore hath Thy servant taken heart to pray this prayer unto Thee.

28 And now, O Lord GOD, Thou alone art God, and Thy words are truth, and Thou hast promised this good thing unto Thy servant;

29 now therefore let it please Thee to bless the house of Thy servant, that it may continue for ever before Thee; for Thou, O Lord GOD, hast spoken it; and through Thy blessing let the house of Thy servant be blessed for ever.'

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CHAPTER 8

✦

1 And after this it came to pass, that David smote the Philistines, and subdued them; and David took Metheg-ammah out of the hand of the Philistines.

2 And he smote Moab, and measured them with the line, making them to lie down on the ground; and he measured two lines to put to death, and one full line to keep alive. And the Moabites became servants to David, and brought presents.

3 David smote also Hadadezer the son of Rehob, king of Zobah, as he went to establish his dominion at the river Euphrates.

4 And David took from him a thousand and seven hundred horsemen, and twenty thousand footmen; and David houghed all the chariot horses, but reserved of them for a hundred chariots.

5 And when the Arameans of Damascus came to succour Hadadezer king of Zobah, David smote of the Arameans two and twenty thousand men.

6 Then David put garrisons in Aram of Damascus; and the Arameans became servants to David, and brought presents. And the LORD gave victory to David whithersoever he went.

7 And David took the shields of gold that were on the servants of Hadadezer, and brought them to Jerusalem.

8 And from Betah and from Berothai, cities of Hadadezer, king David took exceeding much brass.

9 And when Toi king of Hamath heard that David had smitten all the host of Hadadezer,

10 then Toi sent Joram his son unto king David, to salute him, and to bless him—because he had fought against Hadadezer and smitten him; for Hadadezer had wars with Toi—and he brought with him vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and vessels of brass.

11 These also did king David dedicate unto the LORD, with the silver and gold that he dedicated of all the nations which he subdued:

12 of Aram, and of Moab, and of the children of Ammon, and of the Philistines, and of Amalek, and of the spoil of Hadadezer, son of Rehob, king of Zobah.

13 And David got him a name when he returned from smiting the Arameans in the Valley of Salt, even eighteen thousand men.

14 And he put garrisons in Edom; throughout all Edom put he garrisons, and all the Edomites became servants to David. And the LORD gave victory to David whithersoever he went.

15 And David reigned over all Israel; and David executed justice and righteousness unto all his people.

16 And Joab the son of Zeruiah was over the host; and Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud was recorder;

17 and Zadok the son of Ahitub, and Ahimelech the son of Abiathar, were priests; and Seraiah was scribe;

18 and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was over the Cherethites and the Pelethites; and David's sons were chief ministers.

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CHAPTER 9

✦

1 And David said: 'Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?'

2 Now there was of the house of Saul a servant whose name was Ziba, and they called him unto David; and the king said unto him: 'Art thou Ziba?' And he said: 'Thy servant is he.'

3 And the king said: 'Is there not yet any of the house of Saul, that I may show the kindness of God unto him?' And Ziba said unto the king: 'Jonathan hath yet a son, who is lame on his feet.'

4 And the king said unto him: 'Where is he?' And Ziba said unto the king: 'Behold, he is in the house of Machir the son of Ammiel, in Lo-debar.'

5 Then king David sent, and fetched him out of the house of Machir the son of Ammiel, from Lo-debar.

6 And Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, came unto David, and fell on his face, and prostrated himself. And David said: 'Mephibosheth! ' And he answered: 'Behold thy servant! '

7 And David said unto him: 'Fear not; for I will surely show thee kindness for Jonathan thy father's sake, and will restore thee all the land of Saul thy father; and thou shalt eat bread at my table continually.'

8 And he bowed down, and said: 'What is thy servant, that thou shouldest look upon such a dead dog as I am?'

9 Then the king called to Ziba, Saul's servant, and said unto him: 'All that pertained to Saul and to all his house have I given unto thy master's son.

10 And thou shalt till the land for him, thou, and thy sons, and thy servants; and thou shalt bring in the fruits, that thy master's son may have bread to eat; but Mephibosheth thy master's son shall eat bread continually at my table.' Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants.

11 Then said Ziba unto the king: 'According to all that my lord the king commandeth his servant, so shall thy servant do; but Mephibosheth eateth at my table as one of the king's sons.'

12 Now Mephibosheth had a young son, whose name was Mica. And all that dwelt in the house of Ziba were servants unto Mephibosheth.

13 But Mephibosheth dwelt in Jerusalem; for he did eat continually at the king's table; and he was lame on both his feet.

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CHAPTER 10

✦

1 And it came to pass after this, that the king of the children of Ammon died, and Hanun his son reigned in his stead.

2 And David said: 'I will show kindness unto Hanun the son of Nahash, as his father showed kindness unto me.' So David sent by the hand of his servants to comfort him concerning his father. And David's servants came into the land of the children of Ammon.

3 But the princes of the children of Ammon said unto Hanun their lord: 'Thinkest thou that David doth honour thy father, that he hath sent comforters unto thee? hath not David sent his servants unto thee to search the city, and to spy it out, and to overthrow it?'

4 So Hanun took David's servants, and shaved off the one half of their beards, and cut off their garments in the middle, even to their buttocks, and sent them away.

5 When they told it unto David, he sent to meet them; for the men were greatly ashamed. And the king said: 'Tarry at Jericho until your beards be grown, and then return.'

6 And when the children of Ammon saw that they were become odious to David, the children of Ammon sent and hired the Arameans of Beth-rehob, and the Arameans of Zobah, twenty thousand footmen, and the king of Maacah with a thousand men, and the men of Tob twelve thousand men.

7 And when David heard of it, he sent Joab, and all the host of the mighty men.

8 And the children of Ammon came out, and put the battle in array at the entrance of the gate; and the Arameans of Zobah, and of Rehob, and the men of Tob and Maacah, were by themselves in the field.

9 Now when Joab saw that the battle was set against him before and behind, he chose of all the choice men of Israel, and put them in array against the Arameans;

10 and the rest of the people he committed into the hand of Abishai his brother, and he put them in array against the children of Ammon.

11 And he said: 'If the Arameans be too strong for me, then thou shalt help me, but if the children of Ammon be too strong for thee, then I will come and help thee.

12 Be of good courage, and let us prove strong for our people, and for the cities of our God; and the LORD do that which seemeth Him good.'

13 So Joab and the people that were with him drew nigh unto the battle against the Arameans; and they fled before him.

14 And when the children of Ammon saw that the Arameans were fled, they likewise fled before Abishai, and entered into the city. Then Joab returned from the children of Ammon, and came to Jerusalem.

15 And when the Arameans saw that they were put to the worse before Israel, they gathered themselves together.

16 And Hadadezer sent, and brought out the Arameans that were beyond the River; and they came to Helam, with Shobach the captain of the host of Hadadezer at their head.

17 And it was told David; and he gathered all Israel together, and passed over the Jordan, and came to Helam. And the Arameans set themselves in array against David, and fought with him.

18 And the Arameans fled before Israel; and David slew of the Arameans seven hundred drivers of chariots, and forty thousand horsemen, and smote Shobach the captain of their host, so that he died there.

19 And when all the kings that were servants to Hadadezer saw that they were put to the worse before Israel, they made peace with Israel, and served them. So the Arameans feared to help the children of Ammon any more.

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CHAPTER 11

✦

1 And it came to pass, at the return of the year, at the time when kings go out to battle, that David sent Joab, and his servants with him, and all Israel; and they destroyed the children of Ammon, and besieged Rabbah. But David tarried at Jerusalem.

2 And it came to pass at eventide, that David arose from off his bed, and walked upon the roof of the king's house; and from the roof he saw a woman bathing; and the woman was very beautiful to look upon.

3 And David sent and inquired after the woman. And one said: 'Is not this Bath-sheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?'

4 And David sent messengers, and took her; and she came in unto him, and he lay with her; for she was purified from her uncleanness; and she returned unto her house.

5 And the woman conceived; and she sent and told David, and said: 'I am with child.'

6 And David sent to Joab, [saying]: 'Send me Uriah the Hittite.' And Joab sent Uriah to David.

7 And when Uriah was come unto him, David asked of him how Joab did, and how the people fared, and how the war prospered.

8 And David said to Uriah: 'Go down to thy house, and wash thy feet.' And Uriah departed out of the king's house, and there followed him a mess of food from the king.

9 But Uriah slept at the door of the king's house with all the servants of his lord, and went not down to his house.

10 And when they had told David, saying: 'Uriah went not down unto his house', David said unto Uriah: 'Art thou not come from a journey? wherefore didst thou not go down unto thy house?'

11 And Uriah said unto David: 'The ark, and Israel, and Judah, abide in booths; and my lord Joab, and the servants of my lord, are encamped in the open field; shall I then go into my house, to eat and to drink, and to lie with my wife? as thou livest, and as thy soul liveth, I will not do this thing.'

12 And David said to Uriah: 'Tarry here to-day also, and to-morrow I will let thee depart.' So Uriah abode in Jerusalem that day, and the morrow.

13 And when David had called him, he did eat and drink before him; and he made him drunk; and at even he went out to lie on his bed with the servants of his lord, but went not down to his house.

14 And it came to pass in the morning, that David wrote a letter to Joab, and sent it by the hand of Uriah.

15 And he wrote in the letter, saying: 'Set ye Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle, and retire ye from him, that he may be smitten, and die.'

16 And it came to pass, when Joab kept watch upon the city, that he assigned Uriah unto the place where he knew that valiant men were.

17 And the men of the city went out, and fought with Joab; and there fell some of the people, even of the servants of David; and Uriah the Hittite died also.

18 Then Joab sent and told David all the things concerning the war;

19 and he charged the messenger, saying: 'When thou hast made an end of telling all the things concerning the war unto the king,

20 it shall be that, if the king's wrath arise, and he say unto thee: Wherefore went ye so nigh unto the city to fight? knew ye not that they would shoot from the wall?

21 who smote Abimelech the son of Jerubbesheth? did not a woman cast an upper millstone upon him from the wall, that he died at Thebez? why went ye so nigh the wall? then shalt thou say: Thy servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also.'

22 So the messenger went, and came and told David all that Joab had sent him for.

23 And the messenger said unto David: 'The men prevailed against us, and came out unto us into the field, and we were upon them even unto the entrance of the gate.

24 And the shooters shot at thy servants from off the wall; and some of the king's servants are dead, and thy servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also.'

25 Then David said unto the messenger: 'Thus shalt thou say unto Joab: Let not this thing displease thee, for the sword devoureth in one manner or another; make thy battle more strong against the city, and overthrow it; and encourage thou him.'

26 And when the wife of Uriah heard that Uriah her husband was dead, she made lamentation for her husband.

27 And when the mourning was past, David sent and took her home to his house, and she became his wife, and bore him a son. But the thing that David had done displeased the LORD.

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CHAPTER 12

1 And the LORD sent Nathan unto David. And he came unto him, and said unto him: 'There were two men in one city: the one rich, and the other poor.

2 The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds;

3 but the poor man had nothing save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and reared; and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own morsel, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter.

4 And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him, but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him.'

5 And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan: 'As the LORD liveth, the man that hath done this deserveth to die;

6 and he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity.'

7 And Nathan said to David: 'Thou art the man. Thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel: I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul;

8 and I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah; and if that were too little, then would I add unto thee so much more.

9 Wherefore hast thou despised the word of the LORD, to do that which is evil in My sight? Uriah the Hittite thou hast smitten with the sword, and his wife thou hast taken to be thy wife, and him thou hast slain with the sword of the children of Ammon.

10 Now therefore, the sword shall never depart from thy house; because thou hast despised Me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife.

11 Thus saith the LORD: Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun.

12 For thou didst it secretly; but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun.'

13 And David said unto Nathan: 'I have sinned against the LORD.' And Nathan said unto David: 'The LORD also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die.

14 Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast greatly blasphemed the enemies of the LORD, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die.'

15 And Nathan departed unto his house. And the LORD struck the child that Uriah's wife bore unto David, and it was very sick.

16 David therefore besought God for the child; and David fasted, and as often as he went in, he lay all night upon the earth.

17 And the elders of his house arose, and stood beside him, to raise him up from the earth; but he would not, neither did he eat bread with them.

18 And it came to pass on the seventh day, that the child died. And the servants of David feared to tell him that the child was dead; for they said: 'Behold, while the child was yet alive, we spoke unto him, and he hearkened not unto our voice; how then shall we tell him that the child is dead, so that he do himself some harm?'

19 But when David saw that his servants whispered together, David perceived that the child was dead; and David said unto his servants: 'Is the child dead?' And they said: 'He is dead.'

20 Then David arose from the earth, and washed, and anointed himself, and changed his apparel; and he came into the house of the LORD, and worshipped; then he came to his own house; and when he required, they set bread before him, and he did eat.

21 Then said his servants unto him: 'What thing is this that thou hast done? thou didst fast and weep for the child, while it was alive; but when the child was dead, thou didst rise and eat bread.'

22 And he said: 'While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept; for I said: Who knoweth whether the LORD will not be gracious to me, that the child may live?

23 But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he will not return to me.'

24 And David comforted Bath-sheba his wife, and went in unto her, and lay with her; and she bore a son, and called his name Solomon. And the LORD loved him;

25 and He sent by the hand of Nathan the prophet, and he called his name Jedidiah, for the LORD'S sake.

26 Now Joab fought against Rabbah of the children of Ammon, and took the royal city.

27 And Joab sent messengers to David, and said: 'I have fought against Rabbah, yea, I have taken the city of waters.

28 Now therefore gather the rest of the people together, and encamp against the city, and take it; lest I take the city, and it be called after my name.'

29 And David gathered all the people together, and went to Rabbah, and fought against it, and took it.

30 And he took the crown of Malcam from off his head; and the weight thereof was a talent of gold, and in it were precious stones; and it was set on David's head. And he brought forth the spoil of the city, exceeding much.

31 And he brought forth the people that were therein, and put them under saws, and under harrows of iron, and under axes of iron, and made them pass through the brickkiln; and thus did he unto all the cities of the children of Ammon. And David and all the people returned unto Jerusalem.

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CHAPTER 13

1 And it came to pass after this, that Absalom the son of David had a fair sister, whose name was Tamar; and Amnon the son of David loved her.

2 And Amnon was so distressed that he fell sick because of his sister Tamar; for she was a virgin; and it seemed hard to Amnon to do any thing unto her.

3 But Amnon had a friend, whose name was Jonadab, the son of Shimeah David's brother; and Jonadab was a very subtle man.

4 And he said unto him: 'Why, O son of the king, art thou thus becoming leaner from day to day? wilt thou not tell me?' And Amnon said unto him: 'I love Tamar, my brother Absalom's sister.'

5 And Jonadab said unto him: 'Lay thee down on thy bed, and feign thyself sick; and when thy father cometh to see thee, say unto him: Let my sister Tamar come, I pray thee, and give me bread to eat, and dress the food in my sight, that I may see it, and eat it at her hand.'

6 So Amnon lay down, and feigned himself sick; and when the king was come to see him, Amnon said unto the king: 'Let my sister Tamar come, I pray thee, and make me a couple of cakes in my sight, that I may eat at her hand.'

7 Then David sent home to Tamar, saying: 'Go now to thy brother Amnon's house, and dress him food.'

8 So Tamar went to her brother Amnon's house; and he was lying down. And she took dough, and kneaded it, and made cakes in his sight, and did bake the cakes.

9 And she took the pan, and poured them out before him; but he refused to eat. And Amnon said: 'Have out all men from me.' And they went out every man from him.

10 And Amnon said unto Tamar: 'Bring the food into the chamber, that I may eat of thy hand.' And Tamar took the cakes which she had made, and brought them into the chamber to Amnon her brother.

11 And when she had brought them near unto him to eat, he took hold of her, and said unto her: 'Come lie with me, my sister.'

12 And she answered him: 'Nay, my brother, do not force me; for no such thing ought to be done in Israel; do not thou this wanton deed.

13 And I, whither shall I carry my shame? and as for thee, thou wilt be as one of the base men in Israel. Now therefore, I pray thee, speak unto the king; for he will not withhold me from thee.'

14 Howbeit he would not hearken unto her voice; but being stronger than she, he forced her, and lay with her.

15 Then Amnon hated her with exceeding great hatred; for the hatred wherewith he hated her was greater than the love wherewith he had loved her. And Amnon said unto her: 'Arise, be gone.'

16 And she said unto him: 'Not so, because this great wrong in putting me forth is worse than the other that thou didst unto me.' But he would not hearken unto her.

17 Then he called his servant that ministered unto him, and said: 'Put now this woman out from me, and bolt the door after her.'—

18 Now she had a garment of many colours upon her; for with such robes were the king's daughters that were virgins apparelled.—And his servant brought her out, and bolted the door after her.

19 And Tamar put ashes on her head, and rent her garment of many colours that was on her; and she laid her hand on her head, and went her way, crying aloud as she went.

20 And Absalom her brother said unto her: 'Hath Amnon thy brother been with thee? but now hold thy peace, my sister: he is thy brother; take not this thing to heart.' So Tamar remained desolate in her brother, Absalom's house.

21 But when king David heard of all these things, he was very wroth.

22 And Absalom spoke unto Amnon neither good nor bad; for Absalom hated Amnon, because he had forced his sister Tamar.

23 And it came to pass after two full years, that Absalom had sheep-shearers in Baal-hazor, which is beside Ephraim; and Absalom invited all the king's sons.

24 And Absalom came to the king, and said: 'Behold now, thy servant hath sheep-shearers; let the king, I pray thee, and his servants go with thy servant.'

25 And the king said to Absalom: 'Nay, my son, let us not all go, lest we be burdensome unto thee.' And he pressed him; howbeit he would not go, but blessed him.

26 Then said Absalom: ‘If not, I pray thee, let my brother Amnon go with us.’ And the king said unto him: ‘Why should he go with thee?’

27 But Absalom pressed him, and he let Amnon and all the king’s sons go with him.

28 And Absalom commanded his servants, saying: ‘Mark ye now, when Amnon’s heart is merry with wine; and when I say unto you: Smite Amnon, then kill him, fear not; have not I commanded you? be courageous, and be valiant.’

29 And the servants of Absalom did unto Amnon as Absalom had commanded. Then all the king’s sons arose, and every man got him up upon his mule, and fled.

30 And it came to pass, while they were in the way, that the tidings came to David, saying: ‘Absalom hath slain all the king’s sons, and there is not one of them left.’

31 Then the king arose, and rent his garments, and lay on the earth; and all his servants stood by with their clothes rent.

32 And Jonadab, the son of Shimeah David’s brother, answered and said: ‘Let not my lord suppose that they have killed all the young men the king’s sons; for Amnon only is dead; for by the appointment of Absalom this hath been determined from the day that he forced his sister Tamar.

33 Now therefore let not my lord the king take the thing to his heart, to think that all the king’s sons are dead; for Amnon only is dead.’

34 But Absalom fled. And the young man that kept the watch lifted up his eyes, and looked, and, behold, there came much people in a roundabout way by the hill-side.

35 And Jonadab said unto the king: ‘Behold, the king’s sons are come; as thy servant said, so it is.’

36 And it came to pass, as soon as he had made an end of speaking, that, behold, the king’s sons came, and lifted up their voice, and wept; and the king also and all his servants wept very sore.

37 But Absalom fled, and went to Talmai the son of Ammihud, king of Geshur. And [David] mourned for his son every day.

38 So Absalom fled, and went to Geshur, and was there three years.

39 And the soul of king David failed with longing for Absalom; for he was comforted concerning Amnon, seeing he was dead.

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CHAPTER 14

✦

1 Now Joab the son of Zeruiah perceived that the king's heart was toward Absalom.

2 And Joab sent to Tekoa, and fetched thence a wise woman, and said unto her: 'I pray thee, feign thyself to be a mourner, and put on mourning apparel, I pray thee, and anoint not thyself with oil, but be as a woman that had a long time mourned for the dead;

3 and go in to the king, and speak on this manner unto him.' So Joab put the words in her mouth.

4 And when the woman of Tekoa spoke to the king, she fell on her face to the ground, and prostrated herself, and said: 'Help, O king.'

5 And the king said unto her: 'What aileth thee?' And she answered: 'Of a truth I am a widow, my husband being dead.

6 And thy handmaid had two sons, and they two strove together in the field, and there was none to part them, but the one smote the other, and killed him.

7 And, behold, the whole family is risen against thy handmaid, and they said: Deliver him that smote his brother, that we may kill him for the life of his brother whom he slew, and so destroy the heir also. Thus will they quench my coal which is left, and will leave to my husband neither name nor remainder upon the face of the earth.'

8 And the king said unto the woman: 'Go to thy house, and I will give charge concerning thee.'

9 And the woman of Tekoa said unto the king: 'My lord, O king, the iniquity be on me, and on my father's house; and the king and his throne be guiltless.'

10 And the king said: 'Whosoever saith aught unto thee, bring him to me, and he shall not touch thee any more.'

11 Then said she: 'I pray thee, let the king remember the LORD thy God, that the avenger of blood destroy not any more, lest they destroy my son.' And he said: 'As the LORD liveth, there shall not one hair of thy son fall to the earth.'

12 Then the woman said: 'Let thy handmaid, I pray thee, speak a word unto my lord the king.' And he said: 'Say on.'

13 And the woman said: 'Wherefore then hast thou devised such a thing against the people of God? for in speaking this word the king is as one that is guilty, in that the king doth not fetch home again his banished one.

14 For we must needs die, and are as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again; neither doth God respect any person; but let him devise means, that he that is banished be not an outcast from him.

15 Now therefore seeing that I am come to speak this word unto my lord the king, it is because the people have made me afraid; and thy handmaid said: I will now speak unto the king; it may be that the king will perform the request of his servant.

16 For the king will hear, to deliver his servant out of the hand of the man that would destroy me and my son together out of the inheritance of God.

17 Then thy handmaid said: Let, I pray thee, the word of my lord the king be for my comfort; for as an angel of God, so is my lord the king to discern good and bad; and the LORD thy God be with thee.'

18 Then the king answered and said unto the woman: 'Hide not from me, I pray thee, aught that I shall ask thee.' And the woman said: 'Let my lord the king now speak.'

19 And the king said: 'Is the hand of Joab with thee in all this?' And the woman answered and said: 'As thy soul liveth, my lord the king, none can turn to the right hand or to the left from aught that my lord the king hath spoken; for thy servant Joab, he bade me, and he put all these words in the mouth of thy handmaid;

20 to change the face of the matter hath thy servant Joab done this thing; and my lord is wise, according to the wisdom of an angel of God, to know all things that are in the earth.'

21 And the king said unto Joab: 'Behold now, I have granted this request; go therefore, bring the young man Absalom back.'

22 And Joab fell to the ground on his face, and prostrated himself, and blessed the king; and Joab said: 'To-day thy servant knoweth that I have found favour in thy sight, my lord, O king, in that the king hath performed the request of thy servant.'

23 So Joab arose and went to Geshur, and brought Absalom to Jerusalem.

24 And the king said: 'Let him turn to his own house, but let him not see my face.' So Absalom turned to his own house, and saw not the king's face.

25 Now in all Israel there was none to be so much praised as Absalom for his beauty; from the sole of his foot even to the crown of his head there was no blemish in him.

26 And when he polled his head—now it was at every year's end that he polled it; because the hair was heavy on him, therefore he polled it—he weighed the hair of his head at two hundred shekels, after the king's weight.

27 And unto Absalom there were born three sons, and one daughter, whose name was Tamar; she was a woman of a fair countenance.

28 And Absalom dwelt two full years in Jerusalem; and he saw not the kings face.

29 Then Absalom sent for Joab, to send him to the king; but he would not come to him; and he sent again a second time, but he would not come.

30 Therefore he said unto his servants: 'See, Joab's field is near mine, and he hath barley there; go and set it on fire.' And Absalom's servants set the field on fire.

31 Then Joab arose, and came to Absalom unto his house, and said unto him: 'Wherefore have thy servants set my field on fire?'

32 And Absalom answered Joab: 'Behold, I sent unto thee, saying: Come hither, that I may send thee to the king, to say: Wherefore am I come from Geshur? it were better for me to be there still; now therefore let me see the king's face; and if there be iniquity in me, let him kill me.'

33 So Joab came to the king, and told him; and when he had called for Absalom, he came to the king, and bowed himself on his face to the ground before the king; and the king kissed Absalom.

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CHAPTER 15

1 And it came to pass after this, that Absalom prepared him a chariot and horses, and fifty men to run before him.

2 And Absalom used to rise up early, and stand beside the way of the gate; and it was so, that when any man had a suit which should come to the king for judgment, then Absalom called unto him, and said: 'Of what city art thou?' And he said: 'Thy servant is of one of the tribes of Israel.'

3 And Absalom said unto him: 'See, thy matters are good and right; but there is no man deputed of the king to hear thee.'

4 Absalom said moreover: 'Oh that I were made judge in the land, that every man who hath any suit or cause might come unto me, and I would do him justice! '

5 And it was so, that when any man came nigh to prostrate himself before him, he put forth his hand, and took hold of him, and kissed him.

6 And on this manner did Absalom to all Israel that came to the king for judgment; so Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel.

7 And it came to pass at the end of forty years, that Absalom said unto the king: 'I pray thee, let me go and pay my vow, which I have vowed unto the LORD, in Hebron.

8 For thy servant vowed a vow while I abode at Geshur in Aram, saying: If the LORD shall indeed bring me back to Jerusalem, then I will serve the LORD.'

9 And the king said unto him: ‘Go in peace.’ So he arose, and went to Hebron.

10 But Absalom sent spies throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying: ‘As soon as ye hear the sound of the horn, then ye shall say: Absalom is king in Hebron.’

11 And with Absalom went two hundred men out of Jerusalem, that were invited, and went in their simplicity; and they knew not any thing.

12 And Absalom sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, David’s counsellor, from his city, even from Giloh, while he offered the sacrifices. And the conspiracy was strong; for the people increased continually with Absalom.

13 And there came a messenger to David, saying: ‘The hearts of the men of Israel are after Absalom.’

14 And David said unto all his servants that were with him at Jerusalem: ‘Arise, and let us flee; for else none of us shall escape from Absalom; make speed to depart, lest he overtake us quickly, and bring down evil upon us, and smite the city with the edge of the sword.’

15 And the king’s servants said unto the king: ‘Behold, thy servants are ready to do whatsoever my lord the king shall choose.’

16 And the king went forth, and all his household after him. And the king left ten women, that were concubines, to keep the house.

17 And the king went forth, and all the people after him; and they tarried in Beth-merhak.

18 And all his servants passed on beside him; and all the Cherethites, and all the Pelethites, and all the Gittites, six hundred men that came after him from Gath, passed on before the king.

19 Then said the king to Ittai the Gittite: 'Wherefore goest thou also with us? return, and abide with the king; for thou art a foreigner, and also an exile from thine own place.

20 Whereas thou camest but yesterday, should I this day make thee go up and down with us, seeing I go whither I may? return thou, and take back thy brethren with thee in kindness and truth.'

21 And Ittai answered the king, and said: 'As the LORD liveth, and as my lord the king liveth, surely in what place my lord the king shall be, whether for death or for life, even there also will thy servant be.'

22 And David said to Ittai: 'Go and pass over.' And Ittai the Gittite passed over, and all his men, and all the little ones that were with him.

23 And all the country wept with a loud voice, as all the people passed over; and as the king passed over the brook Kidron, all the people passed over, toward the way of the wilderness.

24 And, lo, Zadok also came, and all the Levites with him, bearing the ark of the covenant of God; and they set down the ark of God—but Abiathar went up—until all the people had done passing out of the city.

25 And the king said unto Zadok: 'Carry back the ark of God into the city; if I shall find favour in the eyes of the LORD, He will bring me back, and show me both it, and His habitation;

26 but if He say thus: I have no delight in thee; behold, here am I, let Him do to me as seemeth good unto Him.'

27 The king said also unto Zadok the priest: 'Seest thou? return into the city in peace, and your two sons with you, Ahimaaz thy son, and Jonathan the son of Abiathar.

28 See, I will tarry in the plains of the wilderness, until there come word from you to announce unto me.'

29 Zadok therefore and Abiathar carried the ark of God back to Jerusalem; and they abode there.

30 And David went up by the ascent of the mount of Olives, and wept as he went up; and he had his head covered, and went barefoot; and all the people that were with him covered every man his head, and they went up, weeping as they went up.

31 And one told David, saying: 'Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom.' And David said: 'O LORD, I pray Thee, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness.'

32 And it came to pass, that when David was come to the top of the ascent, where God was wont to be worshipped, behold, Hushai the Archite came to meet him with his coat rent, and earth upon his head.

33 And David said unto him: 'If thou passest on with me, then thou wilt be a burden unto Me;

34 but if thou return to the city, and say unto Absalom: I will be thy servant, O king; as I have been thy father's servant in time past, so will I now be thy servant; then wilt thou defeat for me the counsel of Ahithophel.

35 And hast thou not there with thee Zadok and Abiathar the priests? therefore it shall be, that what thing soever thou shalt hear out of the king's house, thou shalt tell it to Zadok and Abiathar the priests.

36 Behold, they have there with them their two sons, Ahimaaz Zadok's son, and Jonathan Abiathar's son; and by them ye shall send unto me every thing that ye shall hear.'

37 So Hushai David's friend came into the city; and Absalom was at the point of coming into Jerusalem.

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CHAPTER 16

✦

1 And when David was a little past the top, behold, Ziba the servant of Mephibosheth met him, with a couple of asses saddled, and upon them two hundred loaves of bread, and a hundred clusters of raisins, and a hundred of summer fruits, and a bottle of wine.

2 And the king said unto Ziba: 'What meanest thou by these?' And Ziba said: 'The asses are for the king's household to ride on; and the bread and summer fruit for the young men to eat; and the wine, that such as are faint in the wilderness may drink.'

3 And the king said: 'And where is thy master's son?' And Ziba said unto the king: 'Behold, he abideth at Jerusalem; for he said: To-day will the house of Israel restore me the kingdom of my father.'

4 Then said the king to Ziba: 'Behold, thine is all that pertaineth unto Mephibosheth.' And Ziba said: 'I prostrate myself; let me find favour in thy sight, my lord, O king.'

5 And when king David came to Bahurim, behold, there came out thence a man of the family of the house of Saul, whose name was Shimei, the son of Gera; he came out, and kept on cursing as he came.

6 And he cast stones at David, and at all the servants of king David; and all the people and all the mighty men were on his right hand and on his left.

7 And thus said Shimei when he cursed: 'Begone, begone, thou man of blood, and base fellow;

8 the LORD hath returned upon thee all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose stead thou hast reigned; and the LORD hath delivered the kingdom into the hand of Absalom thy son; and, behold, thou art taken in thine own mischief, because thou art a man of blood.'

9 Then said Abishai the son of Zeruiah unto the king: 'Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? let me go over, I pray thee, and take off his head.'

10 And the king said: 'What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah? So let him curse, because the LORD hath said unto him: Curse David; who then shall say: Wherefore hast thou done so?'

11 And David said to Abishai, and to all his servants: 'Behold, my son, who came forth of my body, seeketh my life; how much more this Benjamite now? let him alone, and let him curse; for the LORD hath bidden him.

12 It may be that the LORD will look on mine eye, and that the LORD will requite me good for his cursing of me this day.'

13 So David and his men went by the way; and Shimei went along on the hill-side over against him, and cursed as he went, and threw stones at him, and cast dust.

14 And the king, and all the people that were with him, came weary; and he refreshed himself there.

15 And Absalom, and all the people, the men of Israel, came to Jerusalem, and Ahithophel with him.

16 And it came to pass, when Hushai the Archite, David's friend, was come unto Absalom, that Hushai said unto Absalom: 'Long live the king, long live the king.'

17 And Absalom said to Hushai: 'Is this thy kindness to thy friend? why wentest thou not with thy friend?'

18 And Hushai said unto Absalom: 'Nay; but whom the LORD, and this people, and all the men of Israel have chosen, his will I be, and with him will I abide.

19 And again, whom should I serve? should I not serve in the presence of his son? as I have served in thy father's presence, so will I be in thy presence.'

20 Then said Absalom to Ahithophel: 'Give your counsel what we shall do.'

21 And Ahithophel said unto Absalom: 'Go in unto thy father's concubines, that he hath left to keep the house; and all Israel will hear that thou art abhorred of thy father; then will the hands of all that are with thee be strong.'

22 So they spread Absalom a tent upon the top of the house; and Absalom went in unto his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel.—

23 Now the counsel of Ahithophel, which he counselled in those days, was as if a man inquired of the word of God; so was all the counsel of Ahithophel both with David and with Absalom.

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CHAPTER 17

1 Moreover Ahithophel said unto Absalom: 'Let me now choose out twelve thousand men, and I will arise and pursue after David this night;

2 and I will come upon him while he is weary and weak-handed, and will make him afraid; and all the people that are with him shall flee; and I will smite the king only;

3 and I will bring back all the people unto thee; when all shall have returned, [save] the man whom thou seekest, all the people will be in peace.'

4 And the saying pleased Absalom well, and all the elders of Israel.

5 Then said Absalom: 'Call now Hushai the Archite also, and let us hear likewise what he saith.'

6 And when Hushai was come to Absalom, Absalom spoke unto him, saying: 'Ahithophel hath spoken after this manner; shall we do after his saying? if not, speak thou.'

7 And Hushai said unto Absalom: 'The counsel that Ahithophel hath given this time is not good.'

8 Hushai said moreover: 'Thou knowest thy father and his men, that they are mighty men, and they are embittered in their minds, as a bear robbed of her whelps in the field; and thy father is a man of war, and will not lodge with the people.

9 Behold, he is hid now in some pit, or in some place; and it will come to pass, when they fall upon them at the first, and whosoever heareth it shall say: There is a slaughter among the people that follow Absalom;

10 then even he that is valiant, whose heart is as the heart of a lion, will utterly melt; for all Israel knoweth that thy father is a mighty man, and they that are with him are valiant men.

11 But I counsel that all Israel be gathered together unto thee, from Dan even to Beer-sheba, as the sand that is by the sea for multitude; and that thou go to battle in thine own person.

12 So shall we come upon him in some place where he shall be found, and we will light upon him as the dew falleth on the ground; and of him and of all the men that are with him we will not leave so much as one.

13 Moreover, if he withdraw himself into a city, then shall all Israel bring up ropes to that city, and we will draw it into the valley until there be not one small stone found there.'

14 And Absalom and all the men of Israel said: 'The counsel of Hushai the Archite is better than the counsel of Ahithophel.'—For the LORD had ordained to defeat the good counsel of Ahithophel, to the intent that the LORD might bring evil upon Absalom.

15 Then said Hushai unto Zadok and to Abiathar the priests: 'Thus and thus did Ahithophel counsel Absalom and the elders of Israel; and thus and thus have I counselled.

16 Now therefore send quickly, and tell David, saying: Lodge not this night in the plains of the wilderness, but in any wise pass over; lest the king be swallowed up, and all the people that are with him.'

17 Now Jonathan and Ahimaaz stayed by En-rogel; and a maid-servant used to go and tell them; and they went and told king David; for they might not be seen to come into the city.

18 But a lad saw them, and told Absalom; and they went both of them away quickly, and came to the house of a man in Bahurim, who had a well in his court; and they went down thither.

19 And the woman took and spread the covering over the well's mouth, and strewed groats thereon; and nothing was known.

20 And Absalom's servants came to the woman to the house; and they said: 'Where are Ahimaaz and Jonathan?' And the woman said unto them: 'They are gone over the brook of water.' And when they had sought and could not find them, they returned to Jerusalem. .

21 And it came to pass, after they were departed, that they came up out of the well, and went and told king David; and they said unto David: 'Arise ye, and pass quickly over the water; for thus hath Ahithophel counselled against you.'

22 Then David arose, and all the people that were with him, and they passed over the Jordan; by the morning light there lacked not one of them that was not gone over the Jordan.

23 And when Ahithophel saw that his counsel was not followed, he saddled his ass, and arose, and got him home, unto his city, and set his house in order, and strangled himself; and he died, and was buried in the sepulchre of his father.

24 When David was come to Mahanaim, Absalom passed over the Jordan, he and all the men of Israel with him.

25 And Absalom had set Amasa over the host instead of Joab. Now Amasa was the son of a man, whose name was Ithra the Jesraelite, that went in to Abigal the daughter of Nahash, sister to Zeruiah Joab's mother.

26 And Israel and Absalom pitched in the land of Gilead.

27 And it came to pass, when David was come to Mahanaim, that Shobi the son of Nahash of Rabbah of the children of Ammon, and Machir the son of Ammiel of Lo-debar, and Barzillai the Gileadite of Rogelim,

28 brought beds, and basins, and earthen vessels, and wheat, and barley, and meal, and parched corn, and beans, and lentils, and parched pulse,

29 and honey, and curd, and sheep, and cheese of kine, for David, and for the people that were with him, to eat; for they said: 'The people is hungry, and faint, and thirsty, in the wilderness.'

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CHAPTER 18

✦

1 And David numbered the people that were with him, and set captains of thousands and captains of hundreds over them.

2 And David sent forth the people, a third part under the hand of Joab, and a third part under the hand of Abishai the son of Zeruiah, Joab's brother, and a third part under the hand of Ittai the Gittite. And the king said unto the people: 'I will surely go forth with you myself also.'

3 But the people said: 'Thou shalt not go forth; for if we flee away, they will not care for us; neither if half of us die, will they care for us; but thou art worth ten thousand of us: therefore now it is better that thou be ready to succour us out of the city.'

4 And the king said unto them: 'What seemeth you best I will do.' And the king stood by the gate-side, and all the people went out by hundreds and by thousands.

5 And the king commanded Joab and Abishai and Ittai, saying: 'Deal gently for my sake with the young man, even with Absalom.' And all the people heard when the king gave all the captains charge concerning Absalom.

6 So the people went out into the field against Israel; and the battle was in the forest of Ephraim.

7 And the people of Israel were smitten there before the servants of David, and there was a great slaughter there that day of twenty thousand men.

8 For the battle was there spread over the face of all the country; and the forest devoured more people that day than the sword devoured.

9 And Absalom chanced to meet the servants of David. And Absalom was riding upon his mule, and the mule went under the thick boughs of a great terebinth, and his head caught hold of the terebinth, and he was taken up between the heaven and the earth; and the mule that was under him went on.

10 And a certain man saw it, and told Joab, and said: 'Behold, I saw Absalom hanging in a terebinth.'

11 And Joab said unto the man that told him: 'And, behold, thou sawest it, and why didst thou not smite him there to the ground? and I would have had to give thee ten pieces of silver, and a girdle.'

12 And the man said unto Joab: 'Though I should receive a thousand pieces of silver in my hand, yet would I not put forth my hand against the king's son; for in our hearing the king charged thee and Abishai and Ittai, saying: Beware that none touch the young man Absalom.

13 Otherwise if I had dealt falsely against mine own life—and there is no matter hid from the king—then thou thyself wouldest have stood aloof.'

14 Then said Joab: 'I may not tarry thus with thee.' And he took three darts in his hand, and thrust them through the heart of Absalom, while he was yet alive in the midst of the terebinth.

15 And ten young men that bore Joab's armour compassed about and smote Absalom, and slew him.

16 And Joab blew the horn, and the people returned from pursuing after Israel; for Joab held back the people.

17 And they took Absalom, and cast him into the great pit in the forest, and raised over him a very great heap of stones; and all Israel fled every one to his tent.—

18 Now Absalom in his life-time had taken and reared up for himself the pillar, which is in the king's dale; for he said: 'I have no son to keep my name in remembrance'; and he called the pillar after his own name; and it is called Absalom's monument unto this day.

19 Then said Ahimaaz the son of Zadok: 'Let me now run, and bear the king tidings, how that the LORD hath avenged him of his enemies.'

20 And Joab said unto him: 'Thou shalt not be the bearer of tidings this day, but thou shalt bear tidings another day; but this day thou shalt bear no tidings, forasmuch as the king's son is dead.'

21 Then said Joab to the Cushite: 'Go tell the king what thou hast seen.' And the Cushite bowed down unto Joab, and ran.

22 Then said Ahimaaz the son of Zadok yet again to Joab: 'But come what may, let me, I pray thee, also run after the Cushite.' And Joab said: 'Wherefore wilt thou run, my son, seeing that thou wilt have no reward for the tidings?'

23 'But come what may, [said he,] I will run.' And he said unto him: 'Run.' Then Ahimaaz ran by the way of the Plain, and overran the Cushite.

24 Now David sat between the two gates; and the watchman went up to the roof of the gate unto the wall, and lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold a man running alone.

25 And the watchman cried, and told the king. And the king said: 'If he be alone, there is tidings in his mouth.' And he came apace, and drew near.

26 And the watchman saw another man running; and the watchman called unto the porter, and said: 'Behold another man running alone.' And the king said: 'He also bringeth tidings.'

27 And the watchman said: 'I think the running of the foremost is like the running of Ahimaaz the son of Zadok.' And the king said: 'He is a good man, and cometh with good tidings.'

28 And Ahimaaz called, and said unto the king: 'All is well.' And he bowed down before the king with his face to the earth, and said: 'Blessed be the LORD thy God, who hath delivered up the men that lifted up their hand against my lord the king.'

29 And the king said: 'Is it well with the young man Absalom?' And Ahimaaz answered: 'When Joab sent the king's servant, and me thy servant, I saw a great tumult, but I knew not what it was.'

30 And the king said: 'Turn aside, and stand here.' And he turned aside, and stood still.

31 And, behold, the Cushite came; and the Cushite said: 'Tidings for my lord the king; for the LORD hath avenged thee this day of all them that rose up against thee.'

32 And the king said unto the Cushite: ‘Is it well with the young man Absalom?’ And the Cushite answered: ‘The enemies of my lord the king and all that rise up against thee to do thee hurt, be as that young man is.’

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CHAPTER 19

✦

1 And the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept; and as he went, thus he said: 'O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son! '

2 And it was told Joab: 'Behold, the king weepeth and mourneth for Absalom.'

3 And the victory that day was turned into mourning unto all the people; for the people heard say that day: 'The king grieveth for his son.'

4 And the people got them by stealth that day into the city, as people that are ashamed steal away when they flee in battle.

5 And the king covered his face, and the king cried with a loud voice: 'O my son Absalom, O Absalom, my son, my son! '

6 And Joab came into the house to the king, and said: 'Thou hast shamed this day the faces of all thy servants, who this day have saved thy life, and the lives of thy sons and of thy daughters, and the lives of thy wives, and the lives of thy concubines;

7 in that thou lovest them that hate thee, and hatest them that love thee. For thou hast declared this day, that princes and servants are nought unto thee; for this day I perceive, that if Absalom had lived, and all we had died this day, then it had pleased thee well.

8 Now therefore arise, go forth, and speak to the heart of thy servants; for I swear by the LORD, if thou go not forth, there will not tarry a man with thee this night; and that will be worse unto thee than all the evil that hath befallen thee from thy youth until now.'

9 Then the king arose, and sat in the gate. And they told unto all the people, saying: 'Behold, the king doth sit in the gate'; and all the people came before the king. Now Israel had fled every man to his tent.

10 And all the people were at strife throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying: 'The king delivered us out of the hand of our enemies, and he saved us out of the hand of the Philistines; and now he is fled out of the land from Absalom.

11 And Absalom, whom we anointed over us, is dead in battle. Now, therefore, why speak ye not a word of bringing the king back?'

12 And king David sent to Zadok and to Abiathar the priests, saying: 'Speak unto the elders of Judah, saying: Why are ye the last to bring the king back to his house?—For the speech of all Israel was come to the king, to bring him to his house.—

13 Ye are my brethren, ye are my bone and my flesh; wherefore then should ye be the last to bring back the king?

14 And say ye to Amasa: Art thou not my bone and my flesh? God do so to me, and more also, if thou be not captain of the host before me continually in the room of Joab.'

15 And he bowed the heart of all the men of Judah, even as the heart of one man; so that they sent unto the king: ‘Return thou, and all thy servants.’

16 So the king returned, and came to the Jordan. And Judah came to Gilgal, to go to meet the king, to bring the king over the Jordan.

17 And Shimei the son of Gera, the Benjamite, who was of Bahurim, made haste and came down with the men of Judah to meet king David.

18 And there were a thousand men of Benjamin with him, and Ziba the servant of the house of Saul, and his fifteen sons and his twenty servants with him. And they rushed into the Jordan before the king.

19 And the ferryboat passed to and fro to bring over the king’s household, and to do what he thought good. And Shimei the son of Gera fell down before the king, when he would go over the Jordan.

20 And he said unto the king: ‘Let not my lord impute iniquity unto me, neither do thou remember that which thy servant did iniquitously the day that my lord the king went out of Jerusalem, that the king should take it to his heart.

21 For thy servant doth know that I have sinned; therefore, behold, I am come this day the first of all the house of Joseph to go down to meet my lord the king.’

22 But Abishai the son of Zeruiah answered and said: ‘Shall not Shimei be put to death for this, because he cursed the LORD’S anointed?’

23 And David said: ‘What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah, that ye should this day be adversaries unto me? shall there any man be put to death this day in Israel? for do not I know that I am this day king over Israel?’

24 And the king said unto Shimei: ‘Thou shalt not die.’ And the king swore unto him.

25 And Mephibosheth the son of Saul came down to meet the king; and he had neither dressed his feet, nor trimmed his beard, nor washed his clothes, from the day the king departed until the day he came home in peace.

26 And it came to pass, when he was come to Jerusalem to meet the king, that the king said unto him: ‘Wherefore wentest not thou with me, Mephibosheth?’

27 And he answered: ‘My lord, O king, my servant deceived me; for thy servant said: I will saddle me an ass, that I may ride thereon, and go with the king; because thy servant is lame.

28 And he hath slandered thy servant unto my lord the king; but my lord the king is as an angel of God; do therefore what is good in thine eyes.

29 For all my father’s house were deserving of death at the hand of my lord the king; yet didst thou set thy servant among them that did eat at thine own table. What right therefore have I yet? or why should I cry any more unto the king?’

30 And the king said unto him: ‘Why speakest thou any more of thy matters? I say: Thou and Ziba divide the land.’

31 And Mephibosheth said unto the king: 'Yea, let him take all, forasmuch as my lord the king is come in peace unto his own house.'

32 And Barzillai the Gileadite came down from Rogelim; and he passed on to Jordan with the king, to bring him on the way over the Jordan.

33 Now Barzillai was a very aged man, even fourscore years old; and he had provided the king with sustenance while he lay at Mahanaim; for he was a very great man.

34 And the king said unto Barzillai: 'Come thou over with me, and I will sustain thee with me in Jerusalem.'

35 And Barzillai said unto the king: 'How many are the days of the years of my life, that I should go up with the king unto Jerusalem?

36 I am this day fourscore years old; can I discern between good and bad? can thy servant taste what I eat or what I drink? can I hear any more the voice of singing men and singing women? wherefore then should thy servant be yet a burden unto my lord the king?

37 Thy servant would but just go over the Jordan with the king; and why should the king recompense it me with such a reward?

38 Let thy servant, I pray thee, turn back, that I may die in mine own city, by the grave of my father and my mother. But behold thy servant Chimham; let him go over with my lord the king; and do to him what shall seem good unto thee.'

39 And the king answered: 'Chimham shall go over with me, and I will do to him that which shall seem good unto thee; and whatsoever thou shalt require of me, that will I do for thee.'

40 And all the people went over the Jordan, and the king went over; and the king kissed Barzillai, and blessed him; and he returned unto his own place.

41 So the king went over to Gilgal, and Chimham went over with him; and all the people of Judah brought the king over, and also half the people of Israel.

42 And, behold, all the men of Israel came to the king, and said unto the king: 'Why have our brethren the men of Judah stolen thee away, and brought the king, and his household, over the Jordan, and all David's men with him?'

43 And all the men of Judah answered the men of Israel: 'Because the king is near of kin to us; wherefore then are ye angry for this matter? have we eaten at all of the king's cost? or hath any gift been given us?'

44 And the men of Israel answered the men of Judah, and said: 'We have ten parts in the king, and we have also more right in David than ye; why then did ye despise us, that our advice should not be first had in bringing back our king?' And the words of the men of Judah were fiercer than the words of the men of Israel.

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CHAPTER 20

✦

1 Now there happened to be there a base fellow, whose name was Sheba, the son of Bichri, a Benjamite; and he blew the horn, and said: 'We have no portion in David, neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse; every man to his tents, O Israel.'

2 So all the men of Israel went up from following David, and followed Sheba the son of Bichri; but the men of Judah did cleave unto their king, from the Jordan even to Jerusalem.

3 And David came to his house at Jerusalem; and the king took the ten women his concubines, whom he had left to keep the house, and put them in ward, and provided them with sustenance, but went not in unto them. So they were shut up unto the day of their death, in widowhood, with their husband alive.

4 Then said the king to Amasa: 'Call me the men of Judah together within three days, and be thou here present.'

5 So Amasa went to call the men of Judah together; but he tarried longer than the set time which he had appointed him.

6 And David said to Abishai: 'Now will Sheba the son of Bichri do us more harm than did Absalom; take thou thy lord's servants, and pursue after him, lest he get him fortified cities, and escape out of our sight.'

7 And there went out after him Joab's men, and the Cherethites and the Pelethites, and all the mighty men; and they went out of Jerusalem, to pursue after Sheba the son of Bichri.

8 When they were at the great stone which is in Gibeon, Amasa came to meet them. And Joab was girded with his apparel of war that he had put on, and thereon was a girdle with a sword fastened upon his loins in the sheath thereof; and as he went forth it fell out.

9 And Joab said to Amasa: 'Is it well with thee, my brother?' And Joab took Amasa by the beard with his right hand to kiss him.

10 But Amasa took no heed to the sword that was in Joab's hand; so he smote him therewith in the groin, and shed out his bowels to the ground, and struck him not again; and he died. And Joab and Abishai his brother pursued after Sheba the son of Bichri.

11 And there stood by him one of Joab's young men, and said: 'He that favoureth Joab, and he that is for David let him follow Joab.'

12 And Amasa lay wallowing in his blood in the midst of the highway. And when the man saw that all the people stood still, he carried Amasa out of the highway into the field, and cast a garment over him, when he saw that every one that came by him stood still.

13 When he was removed out of the highway, all the people went on after Joab, to pursue after Sheba the son of Bichri.

14 And he went through all the tribes of Israel unto Abel, and to Beth-maacah, and all the Berites; and they were gathered together, and went in also after him.

15 And they came and besieged him in Abel of Beth-maacah, and they cast up a mound against the city, and it stood in the moat; and all the people that were with Joab battered the wall, to throw it down.

16 Then cried a wise woman out of the city: ‘Hear, hear; say, I pray you, unto Joab: Come near hither, that I may speak with thee.’

17 And he came near unto her; and the woman said: ‘Art thou Joab?’ And he answered: ‘I am.’ Then she said unto him: ‘Hear the words of thy handmaid.’ And he answered: ‘I do hear.’

18 Then she spoke, saying: ‘They were wont to speak in old time, saying: They shall surely ask counsel at Abel; and so they ended the matter.

19 We are of them that are peaceable and faithful in Israel; seekest thou to destroy a city and a mother in Israel? why wilt thou swallow up the inheritance of the LORD?’

20 And Joab answered and said: ‘Far be it, far be it from me, that I should swallow up or destroy.

21 The matter is not so; but a man of the hill-country of Ephraim, Sheba the son of Bichri by name, hath lifted up his hand against the king, even against David; deliver him only, and I will depart from the city.’ And the woman said unto Joab: ‘Behold, his head shall be thrown to thee over the wall.’

22 Then the woman went unto all the people in her wisdom. And they cut off the head of Sheba the son of Bichri, and threw it out to Joab. And he blew the horn, and they were dispersed from the city, every man to his tent. And Joab returned to Jerusalem unto the king.

23 Now Joab was over all the host of Israel; and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was over the Cherethites and over the Pelethites;

24 and Adoram was over the levy; and Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud was the recorder;

25 and Sheva was scribe; and Zadok and Abiathar were priests;

26 and Ira also the Jairite was chief minister unto David.

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CHAPTER 21

✦

1 And there was a famine in the days of David three years, year after year; and David sought the face of the LORD. And the LORD said: 'It is for Saul, and for his bloody house, because he put to death the Gibeonites.'

2 And the king called the Gibeonites, and said unto them—now the Gibeonites were not of the children of Israel, but of the remnant of the Amorites; and the children of Israel had sworn unto them; and Saul sought to slay them in his zeal for the children of Israel and Judah—

3 and David said unto the Gibeonites: 'What shall I do for you? and wherewith shall I make atonement, that ye may bless the inheritance of the LORD?'

4 And the Gibeonites said unto him: 'It is no matter of silver or gold between us and Saul, or his house; neither is it for us to put any man to death in Israel.' And he said: 'What say ye that I should do for you?'

5 And they said unto the king: 'The man that consumed us, and that devised against us, so that we have been destroyed from remaining in any of the borders of Israel,

6 let seven men of his sons be delivered unto us, and we will hang them up unto the LORD in Gibeah of Saul, the chosen of the LORD.' And the king said: 'I will deliver them.'

7 But the king spared Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan the son of Saul, because of the LORD'S oath that was between them, between David and Jonathan the son of Saul.

8 But the king took the two sons of Rizpah the daughter of Aiah, whom she bore unto Saul, Armoni and Mephibosheth; and the five sons of Michal the daughter of Saul, whom she bore to Adriel the son of Barzillai the Meholathite;

9 and he delivered them into the hands of the Gibeonites, and they hanged them in the mountain before the LORD, and they fell all seven together; and they were put to death in the days of harvest, in the first days, at the beginning of barley harvest.

10 And Rizpah the daughter of Aiah took sackcloth, and spread it for her upon the rock, from the beginning of harvest until water was poured upon them from heaven; and she suffered neither the birds of the air to rest on them by day, nor the beasts of the field by night.

11 And it was told David what Rizpah the daughter of Aiah, the concubine of Saul, had done.

12 And David went and took the bones of Saul and the bones of Jonathan his son from the men of Jabesh-gilead, who had stolen them from the broad place of Beth-shan, where the Philistines had hanged them, in the day that the Philistines slew Saul in Gilboa;

13 and he brought up from thence the bones of Saul and the bones of Jonathan his son; and they gathered the bones of them that were hanged.

14 And they buried the bones of Saul and Jonathan his son in the country of Benjamin in Zela, in the sepulchre of Kish his father; and they performed all that the king commanded. And after that God was entreated for the land.

15 And the Philistines had war again with Israel; and David went down, and his servants with him, and fought against the Philistines; and David waxed faint.

16 And Ishbibenob, who was of the sons of the giant, the weight of whose spear was three hundred shekels of brass in weight, he being girded with new armour, thought to have slain David.

17 But Abishai the son of Zeruiah succoured him, and smote the Philistine, and killed him. Then the men of David swore unto him, saying: 'Thou shalt go no more out with us to battle, that thou quench not the lamp of Israel.'

18 And it came to pass after this, that there was again war with the Philistines at Gob; then Sibbecai the Hushathite slew Saph, who was of the sons of the giant.

19 And there was again war with the Philistines at Gob; and Elhanan the son of Jaare-oregim the Beth-lehemite slew Goliath the Gittite, the staff of whose spear was like a weaver's beam.

20 And there was again war at Gath, where was a champion, that had on every hand six fingers, and on every foot six toes, four and twenty in number; and he also was born to the giant.

21 And when he taunted Israel, Jonathan the son of Shimea David's brother slew him.

22 These four were born to the giant in Gath; and they fell by the hand of David, and by the hand of his servants.

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CHAPTER 22

✦

1 And David spoke unto the LORD the words of this song in the day that the LORD delivered him out of the hand of all his enemies, and out of the hand of Saul;

2 and he said: The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer;

3 The God who is my rock, in Him I take refuge; My shield, and my horn of salvation, my high tower, and my refuge; My saviour, Thou savest me from violence.

4 Praised, I cry, is the LORD, and I am saved from mine enemies.

5 For the waves of Death compassed me. The floods of Belial assailed me.

6 The cords of Sheol surrounded me; the snares of Death confronted me.

7 In my distress I called upon the LORD, yea, I called unto my God; and out of His temple He heard my voice, and my cry did enter into His ears.

8 Then the earth did shake and quake, the foundations of heaven did tremble; they were shaken, because He was wroth.

9 Smoke arose up in His nostrils, and fire out of His mouth did devour; coals flamed forth from Him.

10 He bowed the heavens also, and came down; and thick darkness was under His feet.

11 And He rode upon a cherub, and did fly; Yea, He was seen upon the wings of the wind.

12 And He made darkness pavilions round about Him, gathering of waters, thick clouds of the skies.

13 At the brightness before Him coals of fire flamed forth.

14 The LORD thundered from heaven, and the Most High gave forth His voice.

15 And He sent out arrows, and scattered them; lightning, and discomfited them.

16 And the channels of the sea appeared, the foundations of the world were laid bare by the rebuke of the LORD, at the blast of the breath of His nostrils.

17 He sent from on high, He took me; He drew me out of many waters;

18 He delivered me from mine enemy most strong, from them that hated me, for they were too mighty for me.

19 They confronted me in the day of my calamity; but the LORD was a stay unto me.

20 He brought me forth also into a large place; He delivered me, because He delighted in me.

21 The LORD rewarded me according to my righteousness; According to the cleanness of my hands hath He recompensed me.

22 For I have kept the ways of the LORD, And have not wickedly departed from my God.

23 For all His ordinances were before me; And as for His statutes, I did not depart from them.

24 And I was single-hearted toward Him, And I kept myself from mine iniquity.

25 Therefore hath the LORD recompensed me according to my righteousness, According to my cleanness in His eyes.

26 With the merciful Thou dost show Thyself merciful, With the upright man Thou dost show Thyself upright,

27 With the pure Thou dost show Thyself pure; And with the crooked Thou dost show Thyself subtle.

28 And the afflicted people Thou dost save; But Thine eyes are upon the haughty, that Thou mayest humble them.

29 For Thou art my lamp, O LORD; And the LORD doth lighten my darkness.

30 For by Thee I run upon a troop; By my God do I scale a wall.

31 As for God, His way is perfect; The word of the LORD is tried; He is a shield unto all them that take refuge in Him.

32 For who is God, save the LORD? And who is a Rock, save our God?

33 The God who is my strong fortress, And who letteth my way go forth straight;

34 Who maketh my feet like hinds', And setteth me upon my high places;

35 Who traineth my hands for war, So that mine arms do bend a bow of brass.

36 Thou hast also given me Thy shield of salvation; And Thy condescension hath made me great.

37 Thou hast enlarged my steps under me, And my feet have not slipped.

38 I have pursued mine enemies, and destroyed them; Neither did I turn back till they were consumed.

39 And I have consumed them, and smitten them through, that they cannot arise; Yea, they are fallen under my feet.

40 For Thou hast girded me with strength unto the battle; Thou hast subdued under me those that rose up against me.

41 Thou hast also made mine enemies turn their backs unto me; Yea, them that hate me, that I might cut them off.

42 They looked, but there was none to save; Even unto the LORD, but He answered them not.

43 Then did I beat them small as the dust of the earth, I did stamp them as the mire of the streets, and did tread them down.

44 Thou also hast delivered me from the contentions of my people; Thou hast kept me to be the head of the nations; A people whom I have not known serve me.

45 The sons of the stranger dwindle away before me; As soon as they hear of me, they obey me.

46 The sons of the stranger fade away, And come halting out of their close places.

47 The LORD liveth, and blessed be my Rock; And exalted be the God, my Rock of salvation; .

48 Even the God that executeth vengeance for me, And bringeth down peoples under me,

49 And that bringeth me forth from mine enemies; Yea, Thou liftest me up above them that rise up against me; Thou deliverest me from the violent man.

50 Therefore I will give thanks unto Thee, O LORD, among the nations, And will sing praises unto Thy name.

51 A tower of salvation is He to His king; And showeth mercy to His anointed, To David and to his seed, for evermore.

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CHAPTER 23

✦

1 Now these are the last words of David: The saying of David the son of Jesse, And the saying of the man raised on high, The anointed of the God of Jacob, And the sweet singer of Israel:

2 The spirit of the LORD spoke by me, And His word was upon my tongue.

3 The God of Israel said, The Rock of Israel spoke to me: 'Ruler over men shall be The righteous, even he that ruleth in the fear of God,

4 And as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, A morning without clouds; When through clear shining after rain, The tender grass springeth out of the earth.'

5 For is not my house established with God? For an everlasting covenant He hath made with me, Ordered in all things, and sure; For all my salvation, and all my desire, Will he not make it to grow?

6 But the ungodly, they are as thorns thrust away, all of them, For they cannot be taken with the hand;

7 But the man that toucheth them Must be armed with iron and the staff of a spear; And they shall be utterly burned with fire in their place.

8 These are the names of the mighty men whom David had: Josheb-basshebeth a Tahchemonite, chief of the captains; the same was Adino the Eznite; [he lifted up his spear] against eight hundred, whom he slew at one time.

9 And after him was Eleazar the son of Dodo the son of an Ahohite, one of the three mighty men with David, when they jeoparded their lives against the Philistines that were there gathered together to battle, and the men of Israel were gone away;

10 he stood firm, and smote the Philistines until his hand was weary, and his hand did cleave unto the sword; and the LORD wrought a great victory that day; and the people returned after him only to strip the slain.

11 And after him was Shammah the son of Age the Ararite. And the Philistines were gathered together into a troop, where was a plot of ground full of lentils; and the people fled from the Philistines.

12 But he stood in the midst of the plot, and defended it, and slew the Philistines; and the LORD wrought a great victory.

13 And three of the thirty chief went down, and came to David in the harvest time unto the cave of Adullam; and the troop of the Philistines were encamped in the valley of Rephaim.

14 And David was then in the stronghold, and the garrison of the Philistines was then in Beth-lehem.

15 And David longed, and said: 'Oh that one would give me water to drink of the well of Beth-lehem, which is by the gate! '

16 And the three mighty men broke through the host of the Philistines, and drew water out of the well of Beth-lehem, that was by the gate, and took it, and brought it to David; but he would not drink thereof, but poured it out unto the LORD.

17 And he said: 'Be it far from me, O LORD, that I should do this; shall I drink the blood of the men that went in jeopardy of their lives?' therefore he would not drink it. These things did the three mighty men.

18 And Abishai, the brother of Joab, the son of Zeruiah, was chief of the three. And he lifted up his spear against three hundred and slew them, and had a name among the three.

19 He was most honourable of the three; therefore he was made their captain; howbeit he attained not unto the first three.

20 And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, the son of a valiant man of Kabzeel, who had done mighty deeds, he smote the two altar-hearths of Moab; he went down also and slew a lion in the midst of a pit in time of snow;

21 and he slew an Egyptian, a goodly man; and the Egyptian had a spear in his hand; but he went down to him with a staff, and plucked the spear out of the Egyptian's hand, and slew him with his own spear.

22 These things did Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and had a name among the three mighty men.

23 He was more honourable than the thirty, but he attained not to the first three. And David set him over his guard.

24 Asahel the brother of Joab was one of the thirty; Elhanan the son of Dodo of Beth-lehem;

25 Shammah the Harodite, Elika the Harodite;

26 Helez the Paltite, Ira the son of Ikkesh the Tekoite;

27 Abiezer the Anathothite, Mebunnai the Hushathite;

28 Zalmon the Ahohite, Maharai the Netophathite;

29 Heleb the son of Baanah the Netophathite, Ittai the son of Ribai of Gibeah of the children of Benjamin;

30 Benaiah a Pirathonite, Hiddai of Nahale-gaash;

31 Abi-albon the Arbathite, Azmaveth the Barhumite;

32 Eliahba the Shaalbonite, of the sons of Jashen, Jonathan;

33 Shammah the Hararite, Ahiam the son of Sharar the Ararite;

34 Eliphelet the son of Ahasbai, the son of the Maacathite, Eliam the son of Ahithophel the Gilonite;

35 Hezrai the Carmelite, Paarai the Arbite;

36 Igal the son of Nathan of Zobah, Bani the Gadite;

37 Zelek the Ammonite, Naharai the Beerothite, armour-bearer to Joab the son of Zeruiah;

38 Ira the Ithrite, Gareb the Ithrite;

39 Uriah the Hittite. Thirty and seven in all.

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CHAPTER 24

✦

1 And again the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and He moved David against them, saying: 'Go, number Israel and Judah.'

2 And the king said to Joab the captain of the host that was with him: 'Go now to and fro through all the tribes of Israel, from Dan even to Beer-sheba, and number ye the people, that I may know the sum of the people.'

3 And Joab said unto the king: 'Now the LORD thy God add unto the people, how many soever they may be, a hundredfold, and may the eyes of my lord the king see it; but why doth my lord the king delight in this thing?'

4 Notwithstanding the king's word prevailed against Joab, and against the captains of the host. And Joab and the captains of the host went out from the presence of the king, to number the people of Israel.

5 And they passed over the Jordan, and pitched in Aroer, on the right side of the city that is in the middle of the valley of Gad, and unto Jazer;

6 then they came to Gilead, and to the land of Tahtim-hodshi; and they came to Dan-jaan, and round about to Zidon,

7 and came to the stronghold of Tyre, and to all the cities of the Hivites, and of the Canaanites; and they went out to the south of Judah, at Beer-sheba.

8 So when they had gone to and fro through all the land, they came to Jerusalem at the end of nine months and twenty days.

9 And Joab gave up the sum of the numbering of the people unto the king; and there were in Israel eight hundred thousand valiant men that drew the sword; and the men of Judah were five hundred thousand men.

10 And David's heart smote him after that he had numbered the people. And David said unto the LORD: 'I have sinned greatly in what I have done; but now, O LORD, put away, I beseech Thee, the iniquity of Thy servant; for I have done very foolishly.'

11 And when David rose up in the morning, the word of the LORD came unto the prophet Gad, David's seer, saying:

12 'Go and speak unto David: Thus saith the LORD: I lay upon thee three things; choose thee one of them, that I may do it unto thee.'

13 So Gad came to David, and told him, and said unto him: 'Shall seven years of famine come unto thee in thy land? or wilt thou flee three months before thy foes while they pursue thee? or shall there be three days' pestilence in thy land? now advise thee, and consider what answer I shall return to Him that sent Me.'

14 And David said unto Gad: 'I am in a great strait; let us fall now into the hand of the LORD; for His mercies are great; and let me not fall into the hand of man.'

15 So the LORD sent a pestilence upon Israel from the morning even to the time appointed; and there died of the people from Dan even to Beer-sheba seventy thousand men.

16 And when the angel stretched out his hand toward Jerusalem to destroy it, the LORD repented Him of the evil, and said to the angel that destroyed the people: 'It is enough; now stay thy hand.' And the angel of the LORD was by the threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite.

17 And David spoke unto the LORD when he saw the angel that smote the people, and said: 'Lo, I have sinned, and I have done iniquitously; but these sheep, what have they done? let Thy hand, I pray Thee, be against me, and against my father's house.'

18 And Gad came that day to David, and said unto him: 'Go up, rear an altar unto the LORD in the threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite.'

19 And David went up according to the saying of Gad, as the LORD commanded.

20 And Araunah looked forth, and saw the king and his servants coming on toward him; and Araunah went out, and bowed down before the king with his face to the ground.

21 And Araunah said: 'Wherefore is my lord the king come to his servant?' And David said: 'To buy the threshing-floor of thee, to build an altar unto the LORD, that the plague may be stayed from the people.'

22 And Araunah said unto David: 'Let my lord the king take and offer up what seemeth good unto him; behold the oxen for the burnt-offering, and the threshing-instruments and the furniture of the oxen for the wood.'

23 All this did Araunah the king give unto the king. And Araunah said unto the king: 'The LORD thy God accept thee.'

24 And the king said unto Araunah: 'Nay; but I will verily buy it of thee at a price; neither will I offer burnt-offerings unto the LORD my God which cost me nothing.' So David bought the threshing-floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver.

25 And David built there an altar unto the LORD, and offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings. So the LORD was entreated for the land, and the plague was stayed from Israel.

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