
2SAMUEL 5: 1 Then came all the tribes of Israel to David to Hebron, and spoke, saying, "Behold, we are your bone and your flesh.

The elders of all the tribes of Israel come and anoint David king over all Israel, 2Sam 5:1-5. He goes against the Jebusites, and takes the strong hold of Zion, and afterwards the city itself; which is called the city of David, 2Sam 5:6-9. David's prosperity, and friendship with Hiram, king of Tyre, 2Sam 5:10-12. He takes more concubines, and begets several sons and daughters, 2Sam 5:13-16. The Philistines gather together against him in the valley of Rephaim; he defeats them; they abandon their idols, and David and his men burn them, 2Sam 5:17-21. They assemble once more in the valley of Rephaim, and David smites them from Geba to Gazer, 2Sam 5:22-25.

Verse 1

Then came all the tribes of Israel - Ish-bosheth the king, and Abner the general, being dead, they had no hope of maintaining a separate kingdom, and therefore thought it better to submit to David's authority. And they founded their resolution on three good arguments:

1. David was their own countryman; We are thy bone and thy flesh.
 2. Even in Saul's time David had been their general, and had always led them to victory; Thou wast he that leddest out and broughtest in Israel.
 3. God had appointed him to the kingdom, to govern and protect the people; The Lord said to thee, Thou shalt feed my people and be a captain over Israel.
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2SAMUEL 5: 2 In times past, when Saul was king over us, it was you who led out and brought in Israel. The LORD said to you, 'You shall be shepherd of my people Israel, and you shall be prince over Israel.'

2SAMUEL 5: 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.

Verse 3

They anointed David king - This was the third time that David was anointed, having now taken possession of the whole kingdom.

2SAMUEL 5: 4 David was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years.

2SAMUEL 5: 5 In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months; and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty-three years over all Israel and Judah.

2SAMUEL 5: 6 The king and his men went to Jerusalem against the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land, who spoke to David, saying, "Unless you take away the blind and the lame, you shall not come in here"; thinking, "David can't come in here."

 Verse 6

The king and his men went to Jerusalem - This city was now in the hands of the Jebusites; but how they got possession of it is not known, probably they took it during the wars between Ish-bosheth and David. After Joshua's death, what is called the lower city was taken by the Israelites; and it is evident that the whole city was in their possession in the time of Saul, for David brought the head of Goliath thither, 1Sam 17:54. It appears to have been a very strong fortress, and, from what follows, deemed impregnable by the Jebusites. It was right that the Israelites should repossess it; and David very properly began his reign over the whole country by the siege of this city.

Except thou take away the blind and the lame - Scarcely a passage in the sacred oracles has puzzled commentators more than this. For my own part, I do not think that it is worth the labor spent upon it, nor shall I encumber these pages with the discordant opinions of learned men. From the general face of the text it appears that the Jebusites, vainly confiding in the strength of their fortress, placed lame and blind men upon the walls, and thus endeavored to turn into ridicule David's attempt to take the place: Thou shalt not come in hither, except thou take away the blind and the lame; nothing could be more cutting to a warrior.

Dr. Kennicott has taken great pains to correct this passage, as may be seen in his First Dissertation on the Hebrew Text, pages 27 to 47. I shall insert our present version with his amended text line for line, his translation being distinguished by italics; and for farther information refer to Dr. K.'s work. 2Sam 5:6.

And the king and his men went to Jerusalem unto the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land: who spake unto David, saying, Except thou take away the blind and the lame, thou shalt not come in hither; for the lame shall drive thee away by saying, David cannot come in hither. "David shall not come in hither." 2Sam 5:8.

And David said - Whosoever getteth up to the gutter, and smiteth the Jebusites, and through the subterranean passage the lame and the blind, that are hated of David's soul - Wherefore they said, The hate the life of David (because the lame and the blind shall not come into the house,) shall be chief and captain. So Joab the son of Zeruiah went up first, and was chief.

 2SAMUEL 5: 7 Nevertheless David took the stronghold of Zion; the same is the city of David.

2SAMUEL 5: 8 David said on that day, "Whoever strikes the Jebusites, let him get up to the watercourse, and strike the lame and the blind, who are hated by David's soul." Therefore they say, "The blind and the lame can't come into the house."

2SAMUEL 5: 9 David lived in the stronghold, and called it the city of David. David built around from Millo and inward.

2SAMUEL 5: 10 David grew greater and greater; for the LORD, the God of Armies, was with him.

2SAMUEL 5: 11 Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David, and cedar trees, and carpenters, and masons; and they built David a house.

Verse 11

Hiram king of Tyre - He was a very friendly man, and no doubt a believer in the true God. He was not only a friend to David, but also of his son Solomon, to whom, in building the temple, he afforded the most important assistance.

2SAMUEL 5: 12 David perceived that the LORD had established him king over Israel, and that he had exalted his kingdom for his people Israel's sake.

2SAMUEL 5: 13 David took him more concubines and wives out of Jerusalem, after he had come from Hebron; and there were yet sons and daughters born to David.

Verse 13

David took him more concubines - He had, in all conscience, enough before; he had, in the whole, eight wives and ten concubines. That dispensation permitted polygamy, but from the beginning it was not so; and as upon an average there are about fourteen males born to thirteen females, polygamy is unnatural, and could never have entered into the original design of God.

2SAMUEL 5: 14 These are the names of those who were born to him in Jerusalem: Shammua, and Shobab, and Nathan, and Solomon,

Verse 14

These be the names - Eleven children are here enumerated in the Hebrew text; but the Septuagint has no less than twenty-four. I shall insert their names, and the reader if he please may collate them with the text: Sammus, Sobab, Nathan, Solomon, Ebear, Elisue, Naphek, Jephies, Elisama, Elidae, Eliphalath, Samae, Jessibath, Nathan, Galimaan, Jebaar, Theesus, Eliphalat, Naged, Naphek, Jonathan, Leasamus, Baalimath, and Eliphaath. There is no doubt some corruption in these names; there are two of the name of Nathan, two of Eliphalath, and two of Naphek; and probably Sammus and Samae are the same.

2SAMUEL 5: 15 and Ibhar, and Elishua, and Nepheg, and Japhia,

2SAMUEL 5: 16 and Elishama, and Eliada, and Eliphelet.

2SAMUEL 5: 17 When the Philistines heard that they had anointed David king over Israel, all the Philistines went up to seek David; and David heard of it, and went down to the stronghold.

Verse 17

The Philistines came up to seek David - Ever since the defeat of the Israelites and the fall of Saul and his sons, the Philistines seem to have been in undisturbed possession of the principal places in the

land of Israel; now, finding that David was chosen king by the whole nation, they thought best to attack him before his army got too numerous, and the affairs of the kingdom were properly settled.

2SAMUEL 5: 18 Now the Philistines had come and spread themselves in the valley of Rephaim.

2SAMUEL 5: 19 David inquired of the LORD, saying, "Shall I go up against the Philistines? Will you deliver them into my hand?"

The LORD said to David, "Go up; for I will certainly deliver the Philistines into your hand."

Verse 19

David inquired of the Lord - He considered himself only the captain of the Lord's host, and therefore would not strike a stroke without the command of his Superior.

2SAMUEL 5: 20 David came to Baal Perazim, and David struck them there; and he said, "The LORD has broken my enemies before me, like the breach of waters." Therefore he called the name of that place Baal Perazim.

Verse 20

The Lord hath broken forth - He very properly attributes the victory of Jehovah, without whose strength and counsel he could have done nothing.

Baal-perazim - The plain or chief of breaches, because of the breach which God made in the Philistine army; and thus he commemorated the interference of the Lord.

2SAMUEL 5: 21 They left their images there; and David and his men took them away.

Verse 21

They left their images - It was the custom of most nations to carry their gods with them to battle: in imitation of this custom the Israelites once took the ark and lost it in the field; see 1Sam 4:10, 1Sam 4:11.

2SAMUEL 5: 22 The Philistines came up yet again, and spread themselves in the valley of Rephaim.

2SAMUEL 5: 23 When David inquired of the LORD, he said, "You shall not go up. Circle around behind them, and attack them over against the mulberry trees."

Verse 23

Fetch a compass behind them - When they may be had, God will not work without using human means. By this he taught David caution, prudence, and dependence on the Divine strength.

2SAMUEL 5: 24 It shall be, when you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the mulberry trees, that then you shall stir yourself up; for then the LORD has gone out before you to strike the army of the Philistines."

Verse 24

When thou hearest the sound of a going - If there had not been an evident supernatural interference, David might have thought that the sleight or ruse de guerre which he had used was the cause of his victory. By the going in the tops of the mulberry trees probably only a rustling among the leaves is intended. The Targum says, a noise; the Arabic has it, the noise of horses' hoofs.

2SAMUEL 5: 25 David did so, as the LORD commanded him, and struck the Philistines from Geba until you come to Gezer.

Verse 25

And David did so - He punctually obeyed the directions of the Lord, and then every thing succeeded to his wish.

How is it that such supernatural directions and assistances are not communicated now? Because they are not asked for; and they are not asked for because they are not expected; and they are not expected because men have not faith; and they have not faith because they are under a refined spirit of atheism, and have no spiritual intercourse with their Maker. Who believes that God sees all things and is everywhere? Who supposes that he concerns himself with the affairs of his creatures? Who acknowledges him in all his ways? Who puts not his own wisdom, prudence, and strength, in the place of God Almighty? Reader, hast thou faith in God? Then exercise it, cultivate it, and thou mayest remove mountains.

It is worthy of remark that David was, by the appointment of God, to feed the people. As he had formerly the care of a flock of sheep, which he was to watch over, defend, lead in and out, and for which he was to find pasture; now he is to watch over, defend, lead in and out, feed, and protect, the Israelites. He is to be the shepherd of the people, not the tyrant or oppressor.

In ancient times, among the Greeks, kings were denominated ποιμενες λαου, shepherds of the people; and all good kings were really such: but, in process of time, this pleasing title was changed for βασιλευς and τυραννος, sovereign and tyrant; in neither of which names does any thing of the original title exist. And such are the different political constitutions of the kingdoms of the earth, that it is impossible that in any of them, the British excepted, the king can be the shepherd and father of his people. All the other regal constitutions under the sun permit the sovereign to be despotic, and consequently oppressive and tyrannical if he please. The British alone gives no power of this kind to the prince; by the constitution he is a patriotic king, and by the influence of those maxims of state which are continually presented to his view, and according to which all acts of

government are formed, he becomes habitually the father of his people, and in this light alone do the British people behold the British king.

David, by his own authority, without any form of law, could slay the Amalekite who said he had killed Saul; and could cut off the heads of Rechab and Baanah, who murdered Ish-bosheth; but, in the government of Britain, the culprit is to be heard in his vindication, witnesses are to be examined, the facts viewed by an upright judge in the light of the law; and then the alleged criminality is left to the decision of twelve honest men, the equals of the accused, who are bound by a solemn oath to decide according to the evidence brought before them. The Israelitish constitution was radically good, but the British constitution is much better. In the former, while the king ruled according to the spirit of the constitution, he could do no wrong, because he was only the vicegerent of the Almighty; in the latter, the king can do no wrong, because he is bound both by the spirit and letter of the law, to do nothing but what is according to the rules of eternal justice and equity laid down in that law; nothing is left to mere regal power or authority, and nothing trusted to human fickleness or caprice. In all his acts he is directed by his nobles and commons; who, being the representatives of all classes of the people, are always supposed to speak their mind. Well may it be said, Blessed are the people who are in such a case!