

CHAPTER 5

INTRODUCTION TO SECOND SAMUEL 5

In this chapter we have an account of all the tribes of Israel coming to Hebron, and anointing David king over them, (^{<1018>}2 Samuel 5:1-5); of his expedition against the Jebusites in Jerusalem, and taking from them the strong hold of Zion, (^{<1018>}2 Samuel 5:6-10); of his building an house for himself, and of his building up his family, by taking more wives and concubines, and having more children, whose names are given, (^{<1018>}2 Samuel 5:11-16); and of an invasion of the land by the Philistines, and David's victory over them, (^{<1017>}2 Samuel 5:17-25).

Ver. 1. *Then came all the tribes of Israel to David unto Hebron*, etc.] All the rest of the tribes, save the tribe of Judah, who had made him king over them in Hebron seven years ago. These were ambassadors sent in the name of the several tribes to him, quickly after the deaths of Abner and Ishbosheth; from having any hand in which David had sufficiently cleared himself, and which had tended to reconcile the minds of the people of Israel to him:

and spake, saying, we [are] thy bone and thy flesh; for though he was of the tribe of Judah, yet as all the tribes sprung from one man, they were all one bone, flesh, and blood; all nearly related to each other, all of the same general family of which David was; and so, according to their law, a fit person to be their king, (^{<1018>}Deuteronomy 16:18-17:13); and from whom they might expect clemency and tenderness, being so near akin to them.

Ver. 2. *Also in time past, when Saul was king over us*, etc.] Even over all the tribes of Israel:

thou wast he that leddest out and broughtest in Israel; that led out the armies of Israel against their enemies, fought their battles for them, obtained victories, and brought the troops under his command home in safety; and the remembrance of these valiant acts of his, which then endeared him to the people, was now another reason for their choosing him king: and another follows, the chiefest of them all:

and the Lord said to thee; when anointed by Samuel; for though what follows is not recorded in so many words, yet the sense of it is expressed in the anointing him to be king, whose office, as such, lay in doing the following things:

thou shalt feed my people Israel; as a shepherd feeds his flock; hence kings were frequently called shepherds, and David particularly, in which he was an eminent type of Christ, (see ^{<19787>}Psalm 78:71,72 ^{<3843>}Ezekiel 34:23,24) (^{<35724>}Ezekiel 37:24);

and thou shalt be a captain over Israel; the Targum is,

“and thou shalt be king over Israel;”

which gives the true sense of the tribes, and which was the chief and prevailing reason with them to make him their king; and which they, at least many of them, would have done before, even immediately upon the death of Saul, but that they were persuaded by Abner to yield obedience to Ishbosheth he set up.

Ver. 3. *So all the elders of Israel came to the king to Hebron*, etc.] Which either explains what is meant by the tribes coming to him, (^{<1081>}2 Samuel 5:1); namely, coming by their elders as their representatives; or else the meaning is, that the messengers the tribes sent, when they returned and reported the favourable reception they had met with from David; the elders of the several tribes, the princes or principal men met, and came together to David in Hebron:

and King David made a league with them before the Lord; the states of the nation; he entered into a covenant with them; he on his part promising to rule them in justice and judgment according to the laws, and they promising to yield a cheerful obedience to him in all things just and lawful: and this was done “before the Lord”; either before the ark of the Lord, as Abarbinel; but that was in Kirjathjearim, from whence it was after this brought by David to this city; rather, as Kimchi observes, wherever all Israel, or the greater part of them, were assembled, there the divine Shechinah or Majesty dwelt; so that what was done in a public assembly was reckoned as done before the Lord, and in his presence; or this covenant was made before the Lord, and each party appealed to him as witness of it, so that it was a very solemn one:

and they anointed David king over Israel; that is, over all Israel, which was the third time of his being anointed; the first was by Samuel, pointing out the person the Lord chose and appointed king; the second was by the tribe of Judah, when they invested him with the office of a king over them; and now by all the tribes, when he was inaugurated into the whole kingdom of Israel; and not only the elders came at this time, but great numbers of the people from the several tribes, and continued with David some days, eating, drinking and rejoicing, (see ^{<1521>}1 Chronicles 12:1-40).

Ver. 4. *David [was] thirty years old when he began reign*, etc.] Over Judah, which was the age of his antitype Christ, when he entered upon his public ministry, (^{<1023>}Luke 3:23);

[and] he reigned forty years; and six months, as appears by (^{<1025>}2 Samuel 5:5); but the months are not mentioned, only the round number of years given: two reasons the Jews ^{f78} give for this; the one, that he fled six months from Absalom; the other is, that he was ill in Hebron so long, and therefore are not reckoned.

Ver. 5. *In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months*, etc.] So long the kingdom of Israel continued in the house of Saul after his death; and by this it appears that David was near thirty eight years of age when the elders of Israel came and made him their king:

and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty and three years over all Israel and Judah; which in all made forty years and six months, (see ^{<1021>}1 Kings 2:11); upon his being made king over all the tribes, as soon as he had taken the strong hold of Zion, which he immediately attacked, as follows, he removed the seat of his kingdom from Hebron to Jerusalem.

Ver. 6. *And the king and his men went to Jerusalem*, etc.] Which, at least part of it, belonged to the tribe of Benjamin; and therefore until all Israel, and that tribe, with the rest, made him king, he did not attempt the reduction of it, but now he immediately set out on an expedition against it:

unto the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land: who inhabited the country about it, and even dwelt in that itself; for the tribe of Judah could not drive them out at first from that part of it which belonged to them, nor the tribe of Benjamin from that part which was theirs; in short, they became so much masters of it, that it was called, even in later times, Jebus, and the city of the Jebusites; (see ^{<1025>}Joshua 15:63) (^{<1002>}Judges 1:21 19:10,11);

which spake unto David; when he came up against them, and besieged them:

except thou take away the blind and lame, thou shalt not come in hither; which many understand of their idols and images, which had eyes, but saw not, and feet, but walked not, which therefore David and his men in derision called the blind and lame; these the Jebusites placed for the defence of their city, and put great confidence in them for the security of it, and therefore said to David, unless you can remove these, which you scornfully call the blind and the lame, you will never be able to take the place. And certain it is the Heathens had their tutelar gods for their cities as well as their houses, in which they greatly trusted for their safety; and therefore with the Romans, when they besieged a city, the first thing they attempted to do was by any means, as by songs particularly, to get the tutelar gods out of it^{f79}; believing otherwise it would never be taken by them; or if it could, it was not lawful to make the gods captives^{f80}: and to this sense most of the Jewish commentators agree, as Kimchi, Jarchi, Ben Gersom, and R. Isaiah, who take them to be images; some say, made of brass, which were placed either in the streets of the city, or on the towers: it was usual with all nations to place on their walls both their household and country gods, to defend them from the enemy^{f81}. A learned countryman of ours^{f82} is of opinion that these were statues or images talismanically made, under a certain constellation, by some skilful in astrology, placed in the recess of the fort, and intrusted with the keeping of it, and in which the utmost confidence was put: but it seems better with Aben Ezra and Abarbinel, and so Josephus^{f83}, to understand this of blind and lame men; and that the sense is, that the Jebusites had such an opinion of the strength of their city, that a few blind and lame men were sufficient to defend it against David and his army; and perhaps in contempt of him placed some invalids, blind and lame men, on the walls of it, and jeeringly told him, that unless he could remove them, he would never take the city:

thinking: or “saying”^{f84}; this was the substance of what they said, or what they meant by it:

David cannot come in hither; it is impossible for him to enter it, he cannot and shall not do it, and very probably these words were put into the mouths of the blind and lame, and they said them frequently.

Ver. 7. *Nevertheless, David took the strong hold of Zion*, etc.] A fortress without the city, and separate from it, and which was very strong; and the

taking it might facilitate the taking of the city, which yet as appears by what follows, was very difficult to do:

the same [is] the city of David; it was afterwards so called, where he built an house, and dwelt.

Ver. 8. *And David said on that day*, etc.] On which he took the strong hold of Zion:

whosoever getteth up to the gutter; where it is generally supposed the blind and lame were, whether images or real men: but what is meant by “Tzinnur”, we render “gutter”, is not easy to say; we follow some of the Jewish writers, who take it to be a canal, or water spout, used to carry off the water from roofs of houses into cisterns, as the word is rendered in (¹⁹⁴⁷Psalm 42:7); which is the only place besides this in which it is used in Scripture; but R. Isaiah takes it to be the bar or bolt of the gate, and the sense to be, whoever got up to the gate, and got in at that, unbolting it, or breaking through it; the Targum interprets it of the tower of the city, or strong fortress, and so Abarinel; but Jarchi says it was a ditch, agreeably to which Bochart^{f85} translates the words, and indeed more agreeably to the order of them;

“whosoever smites the Jebusites, let him cast into the ditch (next the wall) both the blind and the lame, extremely hated by David.”

But a learned modern writer^{f86} gives a more ingenious and probable interpretation of these words thus;

“whosoever (first) smiteth the Jebusites, and through the subterraneous passages reaches the lame and the blind, etc.”

and which seems to be favoured by Josephus, as he observes; who says^{f87}, the king promised the command of the whole army to him who should **διὰ τῶν ὑποκειμένων φαραγγῶν**, “through the subterraneous cavities”, go up to the citadel, and take it: to which I would add that the word is used in the Chaldee paraphrase of (²⁰⁰⁷Ecclesiastes 1:7), of the several subterraneous passages, through which the rivers flow out of and reflow into the ocean: remarkable is the note of Theodoret,

“a certain Hebrew says, Aquila renders it “through a pipe”; on which, he observes, David being willing to spare the walls of the city, ordered the citizens should enter into the city by an aqueduct;”

according to the Jews, there, was a cave underground, which reached from the king's house in Jerusalem to Jericho, when it was taken by Nebuchadnezzar; (see Gill on "~~2804~~Jeremiah 39:4"); in which story there may be a mixture of fable; yet it is not improbable that there was such a subterraneous passage; since Dio Cassius^{f88} speaks of several such, through which the Jews made their escape in the last siege of the city:

and smiteth the Jebusites, and the lame and the blind; or even the lame and the blind men the Jebusites had placed to mock David; and therefore it follows,

[that are] hated of David's soul: because he was despised and jeered at by them, and through them: if these could be understood of their idols and images, the phrase would be easily accounted for, nothing being more abominable to David than idolatry:

[he shall be chief and captain]; these words are not in the original text here, but are supplied from (~~3116~~1 Chronicles 11:6); that is, he shall be chief commander of the army, as Joab became, who was the first that went up and smote them:

wherefore they said, the blind and the lame shall not come into the house; that is, either the Jebusites said this, that their images, called in derision by David the blind and the lame, if these did not keep David out, they should never be intrusted with the safety of their fort any more^{f89}; or rather because the blind and the lame men said this of David, he shall not come into the house, the fort, or citadel, therefore David hated them; which is the sense of the above learned writer^{f90}.

Ver. 9. *So David dwelt in the fort,* etc.] The strong hold of Zion, which he took:

and called it the city of David; from his own name, to keep up the memory of his taking it, and of his habitation in it:

and David built round about, from Millo and inward; built a wall about it, and enlarged the place, increased the buildings both within and without. Millo is supposed to be a ditch round the fort, full of water, from whence it had its name; or was a large hollow place which divided the fort from the lower city, and which afterwards Solomon filled up, and made it a level, and therefore is called so here by anticipation; though Jarchi says it was

done by David. According to Dr. Lightfoot ^{f91}, it was a part or Sion, or some hillock, east up against it on the west side; his first sense is best, Millo being no other than the fortress or citadel; which, as Josephus says ^{f92}, David joined to the lower city, and made them one body, and erecting walls about it made Joab superintendent of them; and this was the “round about”, or circuit, which David made, reaching from Millo, or the citadel, to that again, which is meant by “inward”, or “to the house” ^{f93}, as it should be rendered; that is, to the house of Millo, as in (~~2222~~ 2 Kings 12:20); and so it is said (~~3108~~ 1 Chronicles 11:8); that David built the city “from Millo round about”; that is, to the same place from whence he began ^{f94}.

Ver. 10. *And David went on, and grew great*, etc.] In honour and wealth, in fame and reputation, in subduing his enemies, obtaining conquests over them, and enlarging his dominions:

and the Lord God of hosts, of armies above and below,

[*was*] *with him*: to whom all his prosperity and success was owing. The Targum is,

“the Word of the Lord God of hosts was for his help,”

or his helper.

Ver. 11. *And Hiram king of Tyre*, etc.] This was father of that Hiram that lived in the times of Solomon, whose name was Abibalus before he took the name of Hiram, which became a common name of the kings of Tyre; his former name may be seen in the ancient historians quoted by Josephus ^{f95}; of the city of Tyre, (see Gill on “~~2301~~ Isaiah 23:1”); which was built one year before the destruction of Troy ^{f96}. This king, on hearing of David’s being acknowledged king by all Israel, and of his taking Jerusalem out of the hands of the Jebusites,

sent messengers to David; to congratulate him upon all this:

and cedar trees, and carpenters, and masons; these might not be sent at first, but David intending to build himself an house, might, by the messengers on their return, request of Hiram to send him timber and workmen for that purpose; the people of Israel being chiefly employed in cultivating their fields, and vineyards, and oliveyards, and feeding their flocks and herds, few of them had any skill in hewing: timber and stone, and building houses, at least not like the Tyrians and Sidonians; (see ~~4116~~ 1

Kings 5:6); and accordingly he sent him cedars from Lebanon, a great part of which was in his dominions, and artificers in wood and stone, to build his house in the most elegant manner:

and they built David an house; to dwell in, a stately palace, called an house of cedar, (^{<ARB>}2 Samuel 7:2).

Ver. 12. *And David perceived that the Lord had established him king over Israel*, etc.] By the prosperity and success which attended him in everything he set his hand to:

and that he had exalted his kingdom for his people Israel's sake; for their advantage and glory more than for his own.

Ver. 13. *And David took [him] more concubines and wives out of Jerusalem, after he was come from Hebron*, etc.] He had six when he was at Hebron, (^{<ARB>}2 Samuel 3:2-5), and now he took more, which was not to his honour, and contrary to the law of God, (^{<ARB>}Deuteronomy 17:17); the concubines were a sort of half wives, as the word may signify, or secondary ones, and under the others:

and there were yet sons and daughters born to David; besides those in Hebron mentioned in (^{<ARB>}2 Samuel 3:2-5).

Ver. 14. *And these [be] the names of those that were born unto him in Jerusalem*, etc.] The names of his sons, for his daughters are not mentioned, and these seem to be such only that were born of his wives, (see ^{<ARB>}1 Chronicles 3:9);

Shammua, and Shobab, and Nathan, and Solomon; these four were by Bathsheba; the first of these is called Shimea, (^{<ARB>}1 Chronicles 3:5).

Ver. 15. *Ibhar also, and Elishua, and Nepheg, and Japhia*.] Elishua is called Elishama, (^{<ARB>}1 Chronicles 3:6).

Ver. 16. *And Elishama, and Eliada, and Eliphalet*.] Seven more by some other wife or wives; nine are mentioned in (^{<ARB>}1 Chronicles 3:6-8); there being in that account two Eliphalets, and another called Nogah; which two, one of the Eliphalets, and Nogah, might die without sons, as Kimchi thinks, and so are not mentioned here.

Ver. 17. *But when the Philistines heard that they had anointed David king over Israel*, etc.] That the civil war in the nation was now at an end, which

they hoped would have issued in their destruction, and therefore lay still and quiet; but now being united under the government of David, and he hereby greatly strengthened and become powerful; and hearing also of his success against Jerusalem, and the friendship he had contracted with Hiram king of Tyre, they thought it was high time to bestir themselves, and put a stop to his power and greatness; and now it was, as Kimchi thinks, that David penned the second psalm, which begins, “why do the Heathen rage”, etc. (^{<4911>}Psalm 2:1-12),

all the Philistines came up to seek David: in order to fight him, all the five principalities of the Philistines combined together against him; perhaps his old friend Achish king of Gath was now dead, or had now entertained a different opinion of him:

and David heard [of it]; that they had invaded his kingdom, and sought to fight him:

and went down to the hold; some fortified place or strong hold near Jerusalem, which lay lower than the city, or than the strong hold of Zion, in which David dwelt; hither he went, not so much for safety, or with an intention to abide there, but as a rendezvous for his men, and to prepare to meet the Philistines.

Ver. 18. *The Philistines also came and spread themselves in the valley of Rephaim.*] Or “of the giants”, as (^{<4658>}Joshua 15:8); which lay to the west of Jerusalem; of which, (see Gill on “^{<4658>}Joshua 15:8”); the Philistines spreading themselves in it, shows that they were very numerous.

Ver. 19. *And David inquired of the Lord,* etc.] By Abiathar, and the Urim and Thummim, in the ephod he had on:

saying, shall I go up to the Philistines? who by this time were gone from the valley to an higher place, to Mount Perazim, as in (^{<2321>}Isaiah 28:21);

wilt thou deliver them into my hand? here two questions are put together, and an answer returned to both, contrary to a notion of the Jews, (see Gill on “^{<4921>}1 Samuel 23:11”);

and the Lord said to David, go up, for I will doubtless deliver the Philistines into thine hand; by which oracle he had both the mind of God that he should go up, and was assured of victory.

Ver. 20. *And David came to Baalperazim*, etc.] As it was after called, for here it has its name by anticipation, and whither the Philistines were come from the valley of Rephaim; (see ^{<3341>}1 Chronicles 14:11); which was at no great distance, the one being the hill, to which the other was the valley, computed to be about three miles from Jerusalem, in the way to Bethlehem ^{f97}, between which places were two hours' travels ^{f98}:

and David smote them there; there a battle was fought, in which David had the victory assured him:

and said, the Lord hath broken forth upon mine enemies before me, as the breach of waters; as when waters, through their mighty force, break down the banks of rivers, and carry all before them; or as one breaks an earthen vessel full of water, so the Targum on (^{<3341>}1 Chronicles 14:11).

therefore he called the name of the place Baalperazim; which signifies “the master of breaches”, where the Philistines were broke in upon, and broken to pieces, of which God was the author, and which gave David the mastery over his enemies; the Targum renders it “the plain of breaches”, and seems to take it to be the same with the valley of Rephaim; (see ^{<1052>}2 Samuel 5:22).

Ver. 21. *And they left their images*, etc.] Their idol gods, which they brought with them to protect and defend them, and give them success; perhaps in imitation of the Israelites, who formerly brought the ark of God into their camp against the Philistines, (^{<004>}1 Samuel 4:3-6); and it appears to have been the custom of other countries, in later times, to bring their gods with them to battle ^{f99}:

and David and his men burnt them: that is, his men burnt them at his command, (^{<3342>}1 Chronicles 14:12); agreeably to the law of God, that so no profit might be made of them, (^{<005>}Deuteronomy 7:5); the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions, and others, render it, “and took them”, or “carried them away”, ^{f100}; as they might do, and, after they had exposed them in triumph, then burnt them.

Ver. 22. *And the Philistines came up yet again*, etc.] And, as Josephus says ^{f101}, with an army three times larger than the former:

and spread themselves in the valley of Rephaim; in the same place where they were before, (^{<1051>}2 Samuel 5:20).

Ver. 23. *And when David inquired of the Lord*, etc.] For though he had success before, and got the victory, he would not engage again with them without having the mind and will of God, on whom he knew victory alone depended:

he said, thou shalt not go up; that is, directly, and in a straight line:

[but] fetch a compass behind them; and get to the rear of them, instead of falling upon them in the front:

and come upon them over against the mulberry trees: which grew in the valley of Rephaim, and near where the Philistines had pitched.

Ver. 24. *And let it be, when thou hearest the sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees*, etc.] Of a going of the wind on the tops of these trees, making a rustling upon them, and that in such a manner as to resemble the going of men, or march of armies, as if they were moving in the air over the tops of the mulberry trees; which Jarchi and R. Isaiah interpret of angels being sent of God, and moving at that time to help David, and destroy the Philistines; so the Targum on (~~1345~~ 1 Chronicles 14:15). These trees being in Judea account for silk there, (~~3160~~ Ezekiel 16:10); though some think time was not known so early; others suppose it was, and to be the Hebrew byssus mentioned by Pausanias^{f102}, as being of a yellow colour:

that then thou shalt bestir thyself; or move towards the camp of the Philistines, and fall upon them in the rear, who, by reason of the sound in the trees, would not hear the motion of the Israelites; or, if they heard it, would take it to be no other than the motion of the trees they heard, both sounds being confounded together; or they would take the sound they heard for the motion of the enemy in the front, and give way, and so fall into the hands of the Israelites in their rear, which must throw them into the utmost confusion and consternation:

for then shall the Lord go out before thee to smite the host of the Philistines: by an angel or angels; so the Targum,

“for then shall go forth the angel of the Lord, to make thee prosperous to slay in the camp of the Philistines;”

that being the precise time for the salvation of Israel, and the destruction of the Philistines, and the token of it.

Ver. 25. *And David did so as the Lord commanded him*, etc.] In all things he was obedient to the command of God; Saul was not: he got behind the army of the Philistines, as he was directed; and when he heard the sound in the mulberry trees, he arose and fell upon his enemies:

and smote the Philistines from Geba until thou come to Gazer; or from Gibeon, as in (^{<3346>}1 Chronicles 14:16); a city in the tribe of Benjamin, near to which this battle was fought, and where the pursuit began, which was carried as far as Gazer, a city that lay on the borders of the Philistines, as Josephus says ^{f103}; and so far they were pursued, and were smitten as they fled; and, according to Bunting ^{f104}, it was a space of eighteen miles.