

that were with him, to eat: for they suspected that the people were faint with hunger and thirst in the wilderness.

## Chapter 18

And David, having reviewed his people, appointed over them captains of thousands and of hundreds,

**2** And sent forth a third part of the people under the hand of Joab, and a third part under the hand of Abisai the son of Sarvia Joab's brother, and a third part under the hand of Ethai, who was of Geth: and the king said to the people: I also will go forth with you.

**3** And the people answered: Thou shalt not go forth: for if we flee away, they will not much mind us: or if half of us should fall, they will not greatly care: for thou alone art accounted for ten thousand: it is better therefore that thou shouldst be in the city to succour us.

**4** And the king said to them: What seemeth good to you, that will I do. And the king stood by the gate: and all the people went forth by their troops, by hundreds and by thousands.

**5** And the king commanded Joab, and Abisai, and Ethai, saying: Save me the boy Absalom. And all the people heard the king giving charge to all the princes concerning Absalom.

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

**7** And the people of Israel were defeated there by David's army, and a great slaughter was made that day of twenty thousand men.

**8** And the battle there was scattered over the face of all the country, and there were many more of the people whom the forest consumed, than whom the sword devoured that day.

**9** And it happened that Absalom met the servants of David, riding on a mule: and as the mule went under a thick and large oak, his head stuck in the oak: and while he hung between the heaven and the earth, the mule on which he rode passed on.

**10** And one saw this and told Joab, saying: I saw Absalom hanging upon an oak.

**11** And Joab said to the man that told him: If thou sawest him, why didst thou not stab him to the ground, and I would have given thee ten sicles of silver, and a belt?

**12** And he said to Joab: If thou wouldst have paid down in my hands a thousand pieces of silver, I would not lay my hands upon the king's son for in our hearing the king charged thee, and Abisai, and Ethai, saying: Save me the boy Absalom.

**13** Yea and if I should have acted boldly against my own life, this could not have been hid from the king, and wouldst thou have stood by me?

**14** And Joab said: Not as thou wilt, but I will set upon him in thy sight. So he took three lances in his hand, and thrust them into the heart of Absalom: and whilst he yet panted for life, sticking on the oak,

**15** Ten young men, armourbearers of Joab, ran up, and striking him slew him.

**16** And Joab sounded the trumpet, and kept back the people from pursuing after Israel in their flight, being willing to spare the multitude.

**17** And they took Absalom, and cast him into a great pit in the forest, and they laid an exceeding great heap of stones upon him: but all Israel fled to their own dwellings.

**18** Now Absalom had reared up for himself, in his lifetime, a pillar, which is in the king's valley: for he said: I have no son, and this shall be the monument of my name. And he called the pillar

by his own name, and it is called the hand of Absalom, to this day.

**19** And Achimaas the son of Sadoc said: I will run and tell the king, that the Lord hath done judgment for him from the hand of his enemies.

**20** And Joab said to him: Thou shalt not be the messenger this day, but shalt bear tidings another day: this day I will not have thee bear tidings, because the king's son is dead.

**21** And Joab said to Chusai: Go, and tell the king what thou hast seen. Chusai bowed down to Joab, and ran.

**22** Then Achimaas the son of Sadoc said to Joab again: Why might not I also run after Chusai? And Joab said to him: Why wilt thou run, my son? thou wilt not be the bearer of good tidings.

**23** He answered: But what if I run? And he said to him: Run. Then Achimaas running by a nearer way passed Chusai.

**24** And David sat between the two gates: and the watchman that was on the top of the gate upon the wall, lifting up his eyes, saw a man running alone.

**25** And crying out he told the king: and the king said: If he be alone, there are good tidings in his mouth. And as he was coming apace, and drawing nearer,

**26** The watchman saw another man running, and crying aloud from above, he said: I see another man running alone. And the king said: He also is a good messenger.

**27** And the watchman said: The running of the foremost seemeth to me like the running of Achimaas the son of Sadoc. And the king said: He is a good man: and cometh with good news.

**28** And Achimaas crying out, said to the king: God save thee, O king. And falling down before the king with his face to the ground, he said: Blessed be the Lord thy God, who hath shut up

the men that have lifted up their hands against the lord my king.

**29** And the king said: Is the young man Absalom safe? And Achimaas said: I saw a great tumult, O king, when thy servant Joab sent me thy servant: I know nothing else.

**30** And the king said to him: Pass, and stand here.

**31** And when he had passed, and stood still, Chusai appeared and coming up he said: I bring good tidings, my lord, the king, for the Lord hath judged for thee this day from the hand of all that have risen up against thee.

**32** And the king said to Chusai: Is the young man Absalom safe? And Chusai answering him, said: Let the enemies of my lord, the king, and all that rise against him unto evil, be as the young man is.

**33** The king therefore being much moved, went up to the high chamber over the gate, and wept. And as he went he spoke in this manner: My son Absalom, Absalom my son: would to God that I might die for thee, Absalom my son, my son Absalom.

## Chapter 19

And it was told Joab, that the king wept and mourned for his son:

**2** 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.

**3** And the people shunned the going into the city that day as a people would do that hath turned their backs, and fled away from the battle.

**4** And the king covered his head, and cried with a loud voice: O my son Absalom, O Absa-

lom my son, O my son.

**5** Then Joab going into the house to the king, said: Thou hast shamed this day the faces of all thy servants, that 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.

**6** Thou lovest them that hate thee, and thou hatest them that love thee: and thou hast shewn this day that thou carest not for thy nobles, nor for thy servants: and I now plainly perceive that if Absalom had lived, and all we had been slain, then it would have pleased thee.

**7** Now therefore arise, and go out, and speak to the satisfaction of thy servants: for I swear to thee by the Lord, that if thou wilt not go forth, there will not tarry with thee so much as one this night: and that will be worse to thee, than all the evils that have befallen thee from thy youth until now.

**8** Then the king arose and sat in the gate: and it was told to all the people that the king sat in the gate: and all the people came before the king, but Israel fled to their own dwellings.

**9** And all the people were at strife in 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 for Absalom.

**10** But Absalom, whom we anointed over us, is dead in the battle: how long are you silent, and bring not back the king?

**11** And king David sent to Sadoc, and Abiathar the priests, saying: Speak to the ancients of Juda, saying: Why are you the last to bring the king back to his house? (For the talk of all Israel was come to the king in his house.)

**12** You are my brethren, you are my bone, and my flesh, why are you the last to bring back the king?

**13** And say ye to Amasa: Art not thou my

bone, and my flesh? So do God to me and add more, if thou be not the chief captain of the army before me always in the place of Joab.

**14** And he inclined the heart of all the men of Juda, as it were of one man: and they sent to the king, saying: Return thou, and all thy servants.

**15** And the king returned and came as far as the Jordan, and all Juda came as far as Galgal to meet the king, and to bring him over the Jordan.

**16** And Semei the son of Gera the son of Jemini of Bahurim, made haste and went down with the men of Juda to meet king David,

**17** With a thousand men of Benjamin, and Siba the servant of the house of Saul: and his fifteen sons, and twenty servants were with him: and going over the Jordan,

**18** They passed the fords before the king, that they might help over the king's household, and do according to his commandment. And Semei the son of Gera falling down before the king, when he was come over the Jordan,

**19** Said to him: Impute not to me, my lord, the iniquity, nor remember the injuries of thy servant on the day that thou, my lord, the king, wentest out of Jerusalem, nor lay it up in thy heart, O king.

**20** For I thy servant acknowledge my sin: and therefore I am come this day the first of all the house of Joseph, and am come down to meet my lord the king.

**21** But Abisai the son of Sarvia answering, said: Shall Semei for these words not be put to death, because he cursed the Lord's anointed?

**22** And David said: What have I to do with you, ye sons of Sarvia? why are you a satan this day to me? shall there any man be killed this day in Israel? do not I know that this day I am made king over Israel?

**23** And the king said to Semei: Thou shalt not die. And he swore unto him.