

# CHAPTER 5

How far Abner's deserting the house of Saul, his murder, and the murder of Ish-bosheth, might contribute to the perfecting of the revolution, and the establishing of David as king over all Israel, does not appear; but, it should seem, that happy change followed presently thereupon, which in this chapter we have an account of. Here is,

- I.** David anointed king by all the tribes (v. 1-5).
- II.** Making himself master of the strong-hold of Zion (v. 6-10).
- III.** Building himself a house and strengthening himself in his kingdom (v. 11, 12).
- IV.** His children that were born after this (v. 13-16).
- V.** His victories over the Philistines (v. 17-25).

## <101E> 2 SAMUEL 5:1-5

### DAVID KING OVER ALL ISRAEL

Here is,

**I.** The humble address of all the tribes to David, beseeching him to take upon him the government (for they were now as sheep having no shepherd), and owning him for their king. Though David might by no means approve the murder of Ish-bosheth, yet he might improve the advantages he gained thereby, and accept the applications made to him thereupon. Judah had submitted to David as their king above seven years ago, and their ease and happiness, under his administration, encouraged the rest of the tribes to make their court to him. What numbers came from each tribe, with what zeal and sincerity they came, and how they were entertained for three days at Hebron, when they were all of one heart to make David king, we have a full account, <3123>1 Chronicles 12:23-40. Here we have only the heads of their address, containing the grounds they went upon in making David king.

**1.** Their relation to him was some inducement: “*We are thy bone and thy flesh* (v. 1), not only thou art our bone and our flesh, not a stranger, unqualified by the law to be king (<sup><B75></sup>Deuteronomy 17:15), but we are thine,” that is, “we know that thou considerest us as thy bone and thy flesh, and hast as tender a concern for us as a man has for his own body, which Saul and his house had not. *We are thy bone and thy flesh*, and therefore thou wilt be as glad as we shall be to put an end to this long civil war; and thou wilt take pity on us, protect us, and do thy utmost for our welfare.” Those who take Christ for their king may thus plead with him: “*We are thy bone and thy flesh*, thou hast made thyself in all things *like unto thy brethren* (<sup><B17></sup>Hebrews 2:17); therefore be thou our ruler, and let this ruin be under thy hand,” <sup><B6></sup>Isaiah 3:6.

**2.** His former good services to the public were a further inducement (v. 2): “*When Saul was king* he was but the cypher, thou wast the figure, *thou wast he that leddest out* Israel to battle, and broughtest them in in triumph; and therefore who so fit now to fill the vacant throne?” He that is faithful in a little deserves to be entrusted with more. Former good offices done for us should be gratefully remembered by us when there is occasion.

**3.** The divine appointment was the greatest inducement of all: *The Lord said, Thou shalt feed my people Israel*, that is, thou shalt rule them; for princes are to feed their people as shepherds, in every thing consulting the subjects' benefit, feeding them and not fleecing them. “And thou shalt be not only a king to govern in peace, but a captain to preside in war, and be exposed to all the toils and perils of the camp.” Since God has said so, now at length, when need drives them to it, they are persuaded to say so too.

**II.** The public and solemn inauguration of David, v. 3. A convention of the states was called; all the elders of Israel came to him; the contract was settled, the *pacta conventa* — *covenants*, sworn to, and subscribed on both sides. He obliged himself to protect them as their judge in peace and captain in war; and they obliged themselves to obey him. He *made a league* with them to which God was a witness: it was *before the Lord*. Hereupon he was, for the third time, anointed king. His advances were gradual, that his faith might be tried and that he might gain experience. And thus his kingdom typified that of the Messiah, which was to come to its height by degrees; for *we see not yet all things put under him* (<sup><B18></sup>Hebrews 2:8), but we shall see it, <sup><B5></sup>1 Corinthians 15:25.

**III.** A general account of his reign and age. He was thirty years old when he began to reign, upon the death of Saul, v. 4. At that age the Levites were at first appointed to begin their administration, <sup><000B></sup>Numbers 4:3. About that age the Son of David entered upon his public ministry, <sup><0023></sup>Luke 3:23. Then men come to their full maturity of strength and judgment. He reigned, in all, forty years and six months, of which seven years and a half in Hebron and thirty-three years in Jerusalem, v. 5. Hebron had been famous, <sup><0445></sup>Joshua 14:15. It was a priest's city. But Jerusalem was to be more so, and to be the holy city. Great kings affected to raise cities of their own, <sup><0101></sup>Genesis 10:11, 36, 32-35. David did so, and Jerusalem was the city of David. It is a name famous to the end of the Bible (Revelation 21), where we read of a new Jerusalem.

## <sup><0086></sup>2 SAMUEL 5:6-10

### DAVID TAKES MOUNT ZION

If Salem, the place of which Melchizedec was king, was Jerusalem (as seems probable from <sup><0762></sup>Psalm 76:2), it was famous in Abraham's time. Joshua, in his time, found it the chief city of the south part of Canaan, <sup><0601></sup>Joshua 10:1-3. It fell to Benjamin's lot (<sup><0688></sup>Joshua 18:28), but joined close to Judah's, <sup><0638></sup>Joshua 15:8. The children of Judah had taken it (<sup><0708></sup>Judges 1:8), but the children of Benjamin suffered the Jebusites to dwell among them (<sup><0021></sup>Judges 1:21), and they grew so upon them that it became a *city of Jebusites*, <sup><0791></sup>Judges 19:11. Now the very first exploit David did, after he was anointed king over all Israel, was to gain Jerusalem out of the hand of the Jebusites, which, because it belonged to Benjamin, he could not well attempt till that tribe, which long adhered to Saul's house (<sup><1329></sup>1 Chronicles 12:29), submitted to him. Here we have,

**I.** The Jebusites' defiance of David and his forces. They said, *Except thou take away the blind and the lame, thou shalt not come in hither*, v. 6. They sent David this provoking message, because, as it is said afterwards, on another occasion, they could not believe that *ever an enemy would enter into the gates of Jerusalem*, <sup><2042></sup>Lamentations 4:12. They confided either,

**1.** In the protection of their gods, which David, in contempt, had called *the blind and the lame*, for *they have eyes and see not, feet and walk not*.

“But,” say they, “these are the guardians of our city, and except thou take these away (which thou canst never do) thou canst not come in hither.” Some think they were constellated images of brass set up in the recess of the fort, and entrusted with the custody of the place. They called their idols their *Mauzzim*, or *strong-holds* (<sup>271138</sup>Daniel 11:38) and as such relied on them. *The name of the Lord is our strong tower*, and his arm is strong, his eyes are piercing. Or,

**2.** In the strength of their fortifications, which they thought were made so impregnable by nature or art, or both, that the blind and the lame were sufficient to defend them against the most powerful assailant. The strong-hold of Zion they especially depended on, as that which could not be forced. Probably they set blind and lame people, invalids or maimed soldiers, to make their appearance upon the walls, in scorn of David and his men, judging them an equal match for him. Though there remain but wounded men among them, yet they should serve to beat back the besiegers. Compare <sup>245710</sup>Jeremiah 37:10. Note, The enemies of God's people are often very confident of their own strength and most secure when their day to fall draws nigh.

**II.** David's success against the Jebusites. Their pride and insolence, instead of daunting him, animated him, and when he made a general assault he gave this order to his men: “*He that smiteth the Jebusites, let him also throw down into the ditch, or gutter, the lame and the blind, which are set upon the wall to affront us and our God.*” It is probable they had themselves spoken blasphemous things, and were therefore hated of David's soul. Thus v. 8 may be read; we fetch our reading of it from <sup>13106</sup>1 Chronicles 11:6, which speaks only of smiting the Jebusites, but nothing of the blind and the lame. The Jebusites had said that if these images of theirs did not protect them *the blind and the lame should not come into the house*, that is, they would never again trust their palladium (so Mr. Gregory understands it) nor pay the respect they had paid to their images; and David, having gained the fort, said so too, that these images, which could not protect their worshippers, should never have any place there more.

**III.** His fixing his royal seat in Sion. He himself dwelt in the fort (the strength whereof, which had given him opposition, and was a terror to him, now contributed to his safety), and he built houses round about for his attendants and guards (v. 9) from Millo (the town-hall, or state-house) and

inward. He proceeded and prospered in all he set his hand to, grew great in honour, strength, and wealth, more and more honourable in the eyes of his subjects and formidable in the eyes of his enemies; for *the Lord God of hosts was with him*. God has all creatures at his command, makes what use he pleases of them, and serves his own purposes by them; and he was with him, to direct, preserve, and prosper him, Those that have the Lord of hosts for them need not fear what hosts of men or devils can do against them. Those who grow great must ascribe their advancement to the presence of God with them, and give him the glory of it. The church is called *Sion*, and the *city of the living God*. The Jebusites, Christ's enemies, must first be conquered and dispossessed, the blind and the lame taken away, and then Christ divides the spoil, sets up his throne there, and makes it his residence by the Spirit.

## <0051> 2 SAMUEL 5:11-16

### DAVID'S CHILDREN

Here is,

**I.** David's house built, a royal palace, fit for the reception of the court he kept and the homage that was paid to him, v. 11. The Jews were husbandmen and shepherds, and did not much addict themselves either to merchandise or manufactures; and therefore Hiram, king of Tyre, a wealthy prince, when he sent to congratulate David on his accession to the throne, offered him workmen to build him a house. David thankfully accepted the offer, and Hiram's workmen built David a house to his mind. Many have excelled in arts and sciences who were strangers to the covenants of promise. Yet David's house was never the worse, nor the less fit to be dedicated to God, for being built by the sons of the stranger. It is prophesied of the gospel church, *The sons of the strangers shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee*, <2100> Isaiah 60:10.

**II.** David's government settled and built up, v. 12.

**1.** His kingdom was established, there was nothing to shake it, none to disturb his possession or question his title. He that made him king established him, because he was to be a type of Christ, with whom God's hand should be established, and his *covenant stand fast*, <1992> Psalm 89:21-

28. Saul was made king, but not established; so Adam in innocency. David was established king, so is the Son of David, with all who through him are made to our God *kings and priests*.

**2.** It was exalted in the eyes both of its friends and enemies. Never had the nation of Israel looked so great or made such a figure as it began now to do. Thus it is promised of Christ that he shall be *higher than the kings of the earth*, <sup><8827></sup>Psalm 89:27. God has *highly exalted him*, <sup><3189></sup>Philippians 2:9.

**3.** David perceived, by the wonderful concurrence of providences to his establishment and advancement, that God was with him. *By this I know that thou favourest me*, <sup><9411></sup>Psalm 41:11. Many have the favour of God and do not perceive it, and so want the comfort of it: but to be exalted to that and established in it, and to perceive it, is happiness enough.

**4.** He owned that it was for his people Israel's sake that God had done great things for him, that he might be a blessing to them and they might be happy under his administration. God did not make Israel his subjects for his sake, that he might be great, and rich, and absolute: but he made him their king for their sake, that he might lead, and guide, and protect them. Kings are *ministers of God to their people for good*, <sup><5130></sup>Romans 13:4.

**III.** David's family multiplied and increased. All the sons that were born to him after he came to Jerusalem are here mentioned together, eleven in all, besides the six that were born to him before in Hebron, <sup><1082></sup>2 Samuel 3:2, 5. *There* the mothers are mentioned, not *here*; only, in general, it is said that he *took more concubines and wives*, v. 13. Shall we praise him for this? We praise him not; we justify him not; nor can we scarcely excuse him. The bad example of the patriarchs might make him think there was no harm in it, and he might hope it would strengthen his interest, by multiplying his alliances, and increasing the royal family. *Happy is the man that has his quiver full of these arrows*. But one vine by the side of the house, with the blessing of God, may send boughs to the sea and branches to the rivers. Adam, by one wife, peopled the world, and Noah re-peopled it. David had many wives, and yet that did not keep him from coveting his neighbour's wife and defiling her; for men that have once broken the fence will wander endlessly. Of David's concubines, see <sup><10516></sup>2 Samuel 15:16; 16:22; 19:5. Of his sons, see <sup><4330></sup>1 Chronicles 3:1-9.

## <1017> 2 SAMUEL 5:17-25

### DAVID DEFEATS THE PHILISTINES

The particular service for which David was raised up was to *save Israel out of the hand of the Philistines*, <1018> 2 Samuel 3:18. This therefore divine Providence, in the first place, gives him an opportunity of accomplishing. Two great victories obtained over the Philistines we have here an account of, by which David not only balanced the disgrace and retrieved the loss Israel had sustained in the battle wherein Saul was slain, but went far towards the total subduing of those vexatious neighbours, the last remains of the devoted nations.

**I.** In both these actions the Philistines were the aggressors, stirred first towards their own destruction, and pulled it on their own heads.

**1.** In the former they *came up to seek David* (v. 17), because they *heard that he was anointed king over Israel*. He that under Saul had slain his ten thousands, what would he do when he himself came to be king! They therefore thought it was time to look about them, and try to crush his government in its infancy, before it was well settled. Their success against Saul, some years ago, perhaps encouraged them to make this attack upon David; but they considered not that David had that presence of God with him which Saul had forfeited and lost. The kingdom of the Messiah, as soon as ever it was set up in the world, was thus vigorously attacked by the powers of darkness, who, with the combined force both of Jews and Gentiles, made head against it. The heathen raged, and the kings of the earth set themselves to oppose it; but all in vain, <1019> Psalm 2:1, etc. The destruction will turn, as this did, upon Satan's own kingdom. They took counsel together, but were *broken in pieces*, <2019> Isaiah 8:9, 10.

**2.** In the latter they *came up yet again*, hoping to recover what they had lost in the former engagement, and their hearts being hardened to their destruction, v. 22.

**3.** In both they *spread themselves in the valley of Rephaim*, which lay very near Jerusalem. That city they hoped to make themselves masters of before David had completed the fortifications of it. Jerusalem, from its infancy, has been aimed at, and struck at, with a particular enmity. Their spreading themselves intimates that they were very numerous and that they made a

very formidable appearance. We read of the church's enemies *going up on the breadth of the earth* (◀611▶ Revelation 20:9), but the further they spread themselves the fairer mark they are to God's arrows.

**II.** In both, David, though forward enough to go forth against them (for as soon as he heard it he *went down to the hold*, to secure some important and advantageous post, v. 17), yet entered not upon action till he had *enquired of the Lord* by the breast-plate of judgment, v. 19, and again, v. 23. His enquiry was twofold: —

**1.** Concerning his duty: “*Shall I go up?* Shall I have a commission from heaven to engage them?” One would think he needed not doubt this; what was he made king for, but to fight the battles of the Lord and Israel? But a good man loves to see God going before him in every step he takes. “Shall I go up *now?*” It is to be done, but is it to be done at this time? *In all thy ways acknowledge him.* And besides, though the Philistines were public enemies, yet some of them had been his particular friends. Achish had been kind to him in his distress, and had protected him. “Now,” says David, “ought not I, in remembrance of that, rather to make peace with them than to make war with them?” “No,” says God, “they are Israel's enemies, and are doomed to destruction, and therefore scruple not, but *go up.*”

**2.** Concerning his success. His conscience asked the former question, *Shall I go up?* His prudence asked this, *Wilt thou deliver them into my hand?* Hereby he owns his dependence on God for victory, that he could not conquer them unless God delivered them into his hand, and refers his cause to the good pleasure of God: *Wilt thou do it?* Yea, says God, *I will doubtless do it.* If God send us, he will bear us out and stand by us. The assurance God has given us of victory over our spiritual enemies, that he will tread Satan under our feet shortly, should animate us in our spiritual conflicts. We do not fight at uncertainty. David had now a great army at command and in good heart, yet he relied more on God's promise than his own force.

**III.** In the former of these engagements David routed the army of the Philistines by dint of sword (v. 20): He *smote them*; and when he had done,

**1.** He gave his God the glory; he said, “*The Lord has broken forth upon my enemies before me.* I could not have done it if he had not done it before me; he opened the breach like the breach of waters in a dam, which when once opened grows wider and wider.” The principal part of the work was

God's doing; nay, he did all; what David did was not worth speaking of; and therefore, *Not unto us, but unto the Lord, give glory*. He hoped likewise that this breach, like that of waters, was as the opening of the sluice, to let in a final desolation upon them; and, to perpetuate the remembrance of it, he called the place *Baal-perazim, the master of the breaches*, because, God having broken in upon their forces, he soon had the mastery of them. Let posterity take notice of it to God's honour.

**2.** He put their gods to shame. They brought the images of their gods into the field as their protectors, in imitation of the Israelites bringing the ark into their camp; but, being put to flight, they could not stay to carry off their images, for they were a *burden to the weary beasts* (<sup>2301</sup>Isaiah 46:1), and therefore they left them to fall with the rest of their baggage into the hands of the conqueror. Their images failed them, and gave them no assistance, and therefore they left their images to shift for themselves. God can make men weary of those things that they have been most fond of, and compel them to desert what they dote upon, and cast even *the idols of silver and gold to the moles and the bats*, (<sup>2302</sup>Isaiah 2:20, 21. David and his men converted to their own use the rest of the plunder, but the images they burnt, as God had appointed (<sup>1905</sup>Deuteronomy 7:5): “*You shall burn their graven images with fire*, in token of your detestation of idolatry, and lest they should be a snare.” Bishop Patrick well observes here that when the ark fell into the Philistines' hands it consumed them, but, when these images fell into the hands of Israel, they could not save themselves from being consumed.

**IV.** In the latter of these engagements God gave David some sensible tokens of his presence with him, bade him not fall upon them directly, as he had done before, but *fetch a compass behind them*, v. 23.

**1.** God appoints him to draw back, as *Israel stood still to see the salvation of the Lord*.

**2.** He promised him to charge the enemy himself, by an invisible host of angels, v. 24. “*Thou shalt hear the sound of a going*, like the march of an army in the air, *upon the tops of the mulberry trees*.” Angels tread light, and he that can walk upon the clouds can, when he pleases, walk on the tops of trees, or (as bishop Patrick understands it) at the head of the mulberry-trees, that is, of the wood, or hedge-row of those trees. “*And, by that sign, thou shalt know that the Lord goes out before thee*; though thou

see him not, yet thou shalt hear him, and faith shall come and be confirmed by hearing. He goes forth *to smite the host of the Philistines.*” When David had himself smitten them (v. 20), he ascribed it to God: *The Lord has broken forth upon my enemies*, to reward him for which thankful acknowledgment the next time God did it himself alone, without putting him to any toil or peril. Those that own God in what he has done for them will find him doing more. But observe, Though God promised to *go before him and smite the Philistines*, yet David, when he heard the sound of the going must bestir himself and be ready to pursue the victory. Note, God's grace must quicken our endeavours. If God work in us both to will and to do, it does not follow that we must sit still, as those that have nothing to do, but we must therefore, *work out our own salvation* with all possible care and diligence, <sup><1812></sup>Philippians 2:12, 13. The sound of the going was,

**(1.)** A signal to David when to move; it is comfortable going out when God goes before us. And,

**(2.)** Perhaps it was an alarm to the enemy, and put them into confusion. Hearing the march of an army against their front, they retreated with precipitation, and fell into David's army which lay behind them in their rear. Of those whom God fights against it is said (<sup><1816></sup>Leviticus 26:36), *The sound of a shaken leaf shall chase them.*

**(3.)** The success of this is briefly set down, v. 25. David observed his orders, waited till God moved, and stirred them, but not till then. Thus he was trained up in a dependence on God and his providence. God performed his promise, went before him, and routed all the enemies' force, and David failed not to improve his advantages; he smote the Philistines, even to the borders of their own country. When the kingdom of the Messiah was to be set up, the apostles that were to beat down the devil's kingdom must not attempt any thing till they received the promise of the Spirit, who *came with a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind* (<sup><4112></sup>Acts 2:2), which was typified by this sound of the going on the tops of the mulberry trees; and, when they heard that, they must bestir themselves, and did so; they went forth conquering and to conquer.