
שמואל ב • 2ND SAMUEL

INTRODUCTION

In the Hebrew Bible, the two *Books of Samuel* constitute one single work; for additional notes, see the [Introduction to 1st Samuel](#). The *Books of Samuel* cover a period from the rise of the monarchy to the end of the reign of David. Philistine expansion (the battle of Aphek was fought about 1050 BCE) threatened the very existence of Israel and made monarchical government a necessity. Saul (*circa* 1030 BCE) first appears as one of the line of Judges but his recognition by all the tribes invests him with a wider and a lasting authority: monarchy has begun. The war of liberation begins and the Philistines are driven back to their own frontiers (1S 14); henceforth, the engagements take place on the borders of Israelite territory, (1S 17, 28 & 31). The battle of Gilboa ends in disaster and Saul dies on the field, *circa* 1010 BCE. National unity is once more in jeopardy: at Hebron, the men of Judah proclaim David as king; the northern tribes set up a rival, Ishbaal, son of Saul, who had taken refuge in Transjordan. The assassination of Ishbaal, however, clears the way for unity and the northern tribes acknowledge David's sovereignty.

The Second *Book of Samuel* mentions only briefly the political consequences of the reign of David, which were nevertheless far-reaching. The Philistines had been repelled for good; unification of the national territory was completed by the absorption of the Canaanite enclaves, in particular Jerusalem, which became the political and religious capital of the kingdom. The whole of Transjordan was reduced to submission, and David extended his authority to include the Aramaeans of southern Syria. This notwithstanding, when David died, *circa* 970 BCE, national unity had not in fact been achieved: Israel and Judah, the two sections of his kingdom, were frequently at loggerheads.

AUTHORSHIP AND DATES

The second part of book is traditionally attributed to the prophets, Nathan and Gad. It is possible that other literary units, besides the lengthy history of 2S 9–20, were formed some time in the first two centuries of the monarchy, namely, the earliest Samuel cycle and the two histories of Saul and David (1S 17 through 2S 1). It is further possible that these units had already been combined by about 700 BCE, though the books did not reach definitive form until they were gathered into the great Deuteronomic historical work a little before, or during, the Exile. Even so, the influence of the so-called 'Deuteronomic Editor' is less obvious here than in Judges and Kings; it is most noticeable in the earlier chapters (especially 1S 7 & 12) and may possibly be traced in a re-handling of Nathan's prophecy, 2S 7; but the narrative of 2S 9–20 has remained almost untouched.

2 SAMUEL 1

שמואל ב פרק א

^א וַיְהִי אַחֲרֵי מוֹת שָׁאוּל וְדָוִד שָׁב מִהַכּוֹת אֶת־
הָעַמְלָק וַיֵּשֶׁב דָּוִד בְּצִקְלָג יָמִים שְׁנַיִם: ^ב וַיְהִי
בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי וְהִנֵּה אִישׁ בָּא מִן־הַמַּחֲנֶה מֵעַם
שָׁאוּל וּבִגְדָיו קָרְעִים וְאַדְמָה עַל־רֹאשׁוֹ וַיְהִי בְּבָאוֹ
אֶל־דָּוִד וַיִּפֹּל אֶרְצָה וַיִּשְׁתַּחוּ: ^ג וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ דָּוִד אִי
מִזֶּה תָּבוֹא וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו מִמַּחֲנֶה יִשְׂרָאֵל נִמְלָטִי:
^ד וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו דָּוִד מַה־הָיָה הַדָּבָר הַגָּדֵנָא לִי
וַיֹּאמֶר אֲשֶׁר־נָס הָעָם מִן־הַמִּלְחָמָה וְגַם־הַרְבֵּה
נָפַל מִן־הָעָם וַיָּמָתוּ וְגַם שָׁאוּל וַיְהוֹנָתָן בְּנוֹ מָתוּ:
^ה וַיֹּאמֶר דָּוִד אֶל־הַנָּעַר הַמַּגִּיד לוֹ אֵיךְ יָדַעְתָּ כִּי־
מָת שָׁאוּל וַיְהוֹנָתָן בְּנוֹ: ^ו וַיֹּאמֶר הַנָּעַר | הַמַּגִּיד לוֹ
נִקְרָא נִקְרִיתִי בְּהַר הַגִּלְבֹּעַ וְהִנֵּה שָׁאוּל נֹשֵׁן עַל־
חֲנִיתוֹ וְהִנֵּה הָרֶכֶב וּבַעֲלֵי הַפָּרָשִׁים הַדֹּבְקָהוּ:

¹ After the death of Saul, when David had returned from his rout of the Amalekites, David remained two days in Ziklag. ² On the third day, and behold, a man came from the camp where Saul had been, his garments torn and earth on his head. When he came to David, he fell to the ground and did homage. ³ "Where have you come from?" David asked him. "I have escaped from the Israelite camp," he said. ⁴ David said to him, "How were things going? Tell me." He replied, "The people have fled from the battlefield and many of the people fell and died; and Saul and his son Jonathon are dead too." ⁵ David then asked the young man who brought the news, "How do you know that Saul and his son Jonathon are dead?" ⁶ "I happened to be on Mount Gilboa," the young man who was telling him this said, "and there was Saul, leaning on his spear, with the chariots and the cavalry pressing

2 SAMUEL 1

- ¹ 'Ziklag' (צִקְלָג) was a city in the Negev which had been given to David by Achish king of Gath; for more than a year, David used it as a base from which he conducted military expeditions (see 1S 27:5-12). However, according to 1S 30:1-19, it was destroyed by the Amalekites while Saul fought the Philistines.
- ² Tearing one's clothing and throwing earth on one's head were outward expressions of grief in the ancient Middle East, where such demonstrable reactions were a common response to tragic news. The word translated 'behold' (וְהִנֵּה) is often used as an interjection.
- ³ The literal translation of 'have you come' is 'are you coming'.
- ⁴ In place of 'how were things going', here following NETB, the NJB has 'what happened'; the literal translation is 'what was the word'.
- ⁵ In place of 'who brought the news...', here following the MT, the Peshitta, ends this verse with, "declare to me how Saul and his son Jonathan died."
- ⁶ The Peshitta and 1 MS of the LXX lack the words 'who was telling him this'.

וַיִּפֶּן אַחֲרָיו וַיֵּרְאֵנִי וַיִּקְרָא אֵלַי וַאֲמַר הֲגִנִי:
וַיֹּאמֶר לִי מִי־אַתָּה וַיֹּאמֶר וַאֲמַר אֵלָיו עַמְלֵקִי
אָנֹכִי: וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלַי עַמְד־נָא עָלַי וּמַתְּתֵנִי בִּי אַחֲזָנִי
הַשֶּׁבֶן בִּי־כָל־עוֹד נִפְשִׁי בִּי: וַאֲעַמֵּד עָלָיו
וַאֲמַתְתֵּהוּ בִּי יָדַעְתִּי כִּי לֹא יִחְיֶה אַחֲרַי נִפְלוּ וְאֶלֶךְ
הַנָּזֵר אֲשֶׁר עַל־רֹאשׁוֹ וְאֶצְעָדָה אֲשֶׁר עַל־זְרָעוֹ
וְאֶבְיֵאֵם אֶל־אֲדֹנִי הִנֵּה: וַיַּחֲזֹק דָּוִד בַּבֶּגְדוֹ
וַיִּקְרַעֵם וְגַם כָּל־הָאֲנָשִׁים אֲשֶׁר אִתּוֹ: וַיִּסְפְּדוּ
וַיִּבְכּוּ וַיִּצְמוּ עַד־הָעֶרֶב עַל־שָׂאוֹל וְעַל־יְהוֹנָתָן בְּנוֹ
וְעַל־עַם יְהוָה וְעַל־בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל כִּי נִפְלוּ
בַּחֶרֶב: {פ}

וַיֹּאמֶר דָּוִד אֶל־הַנָּעַר הַמַּגִּיד לוֹ אִי מָזָה אַתָּה
וַיֹּאמֶר בֶּן־אִישׁ גֵּר עַמְלֵקִי אָנֹכִי: וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו

him hard. ⁷ Then he turned round, saw me, and shouted to me. I answered, "Here I am." ⁸ He said, "Who are you?" And I said, "An Amalekite." ⁹ Then he said, "Stand over me and kill me, for a giddiness has come on me, though my life is wholly in me still." ¹⁰ So, I stood over him and killed him, because I knew that, once he fell, he could not survive. Then I took the crown he wore on his head and the bracelet on his arm, and I have brought them here to my lord." ¹¹ Then David took hold of his garments and tore them, as did all the men with him. ¹² They mourned, and wept, and fasted until the evening for Saul and his son Jonathon, for the people of Yahweh, and for the House of Israel, because they had fallen by the sword.

¹³ David said to the young man who had brought the news, "Where are you from?" He answered, "I am the son of a resident alien, an

⁷ The NRSV opens this verse, here following the NJB, with, "When he looked behind him, he saw me."

⁸ In place of 'and I said', here following the Qere (וַאֲמַר), the Ketiv has 'and he said' (וַיֹּאמֶר).

⁹ The text at the end of this verse is grammatically awkward (literally, 'because all still my life in me'): whether the broken construct phrase is due to the fact that the speaker is confused (as he is on the verge of dying), or whether the MT has sustained corruption in transmission, is unclear; some take the MT to be the result of conflation of two shorter forms of text. Early translators also struggled with the verse, choosing to leave part of the text untranslated; for example, the Lucianic recension of the LXX lacks 'all', while other witnesses (Codex Alexandrinus and the Peshitta) lack 'still'.

¹⁰ The claims that the soldier is making here seem to contradict the story of Saul's death as presented in 1S 31:3–5, where it appears that Saul took his own life, not that he was slain by a passer-by.

¹¹ The NJB & NRSV end this verse, here following NETB, with, "and all the men with him did the same."

¹² NETB has 'lamented' in place of 'mourned', here following the NJB & NRSV.

¹³ 'Resident alien' (גֵּר) was a term for a foreigner residing in Israel, deserving protection but not entitled to full civil rights (Ex 20:10, Dt 14:29).

דָּוִד אָיֵךְ לֹא יָרֵאתָ לְשַׁלַּח יָדְךָ לְשַׁחַת אֶת־מְשִׁיחַ
יְהוָה: ^ט וַיִּקְרָא דָּוִד לְאַחַד מִהַנְּעָרִים וַיֹּאמֶר גֵּשׁ
פְּגַע־בּוֹ וַיַּכְהוּ וַיָּמָת: ^{טז} וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו דָּוִד דְּמִיךְ דָּמָךְ
עַל־רֹאשְׁךָ כִּי פִידְ עָנָה בְּךָ לֵאמֹר אֲנֹכִי מִתְתִּי אֶת־
מְשִׁיחַ יְהוָה: {פ}

^{יז} וַיִּקְנֶן דָּוִד אֶת־הַקִּינָה הַזֹּאת עַל־שָׂאוּל וְעַל־
יְהוֹנָתָן בְּנוֹ: ^{יח} וַיֹּאמֶר לְלַמֵּד בְּנֵי־יְהוּדָה קֶשֶׁת הַנָּה
כְּתוּבָה עַל־סֵפֶר הַיָּשָׁר:

^ט הַצְבִּי יִשְׂרָאֵל עַל־בְּמוֹתֶיךָ חָלָל
אֵיךְ נָפְלוּ גִבּוֹרִים:

^כ אֶל־תִּגִּידוּ בְּגַת
אֶל־תְּבַשְׂרוּ בַּחוּצַת אֲשָׁקֶלוֹן
פֶּן־תִּשְׂמַחְנָה בָּנוֹת פְּלִשְׁתִּים
פֶּן־תַּעֲלִזְנָה בָּנוֹת הָעֶרְלִים:

Amalekite.” ¹⁴ David said, “Were you not afraid to lift your hand to destroy Yahweh’s anointed?” ¹⁵ Then David called one of his soldiers and said, “Come here; strike him down!” The man struck him and he died. ¹⁶ David said, “Your blood be on your head, for your own lips testified against you, saying, “I killed Yahweh’s anointed.””

¹⁷ Then David made this lament over Saul and his son Jonathon. ¹⁸ (He ordered that the Bow be taught to the people of Judah; it is written in the Book of Jashar):

¹⁹ Your splendour, O Israel, lies dead on your heights?
How the mighty have fallen!

²⁰ Do not speak of it in Gath,
nor broadcast it in the streets of Ashkelon,
for fear the daughters of the Philistines rejoice;
for fear the daughters of the uncircumcised gloat.

¹⁴ Note David’s respect for the memory of Saul and the office he held (1S 26:9, 11, 16, 24); he did not know that the Amalekite was lying.

¹⁵ The literal translation of ‘his soldiers’ is ‘the young men’.

¹⁶ The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

¹⁷ The poem is certainly authentic: David is said to have played the Lyre (1S 16:23) and is traditionally connected with the Psalms.

¹⁸ For the 1st part of this verse, the NJB reads ‘it is for teaching archery to the children of Judah’, and the NJB has ‘The Song of the Bow’ in place of ‘the Bow’; the reference to ‘the Bow’ is very difficult here: the NJB and KJV understand it as meaning ‘the use of the bow’, implying that a period of warfare will follow the deaths of Saul and Jonathon, whereas most modern translators (e.g. the NRSV, ASV, NASB, CEV, NIV, NLV) take it as a reference to the poem of vv. 19–27. The ‘Book of Jashar’ (here following the NRSV – the NJB has ‘the Book of the Just’) is an ancient collection now lost but quoted also in Jos 10:13. The song accompanied archery exercises (see 22:35 and the same verb in Ps 144:1).

¹⁹ For the last line, here following the NRSV, the NJB has, “How did the heroes fall?”

²⁰ ‘Gath’ and ‘Ashkelon’ were major Philistine cities and here represent the whole of Philistia.

כא הָרִי בְּגִלְבֹּעַ
 אֶל-טֶל וְאֶל-מָטָר עֲלֵיכֶם
 וְשִׁדֵּי תְרוּמַת בֵּי שָׁם נִגְעַל
 מִגֶּן גִּבּוֹרִים
 מִגֶּן שָׁאוּל בְּלִי מָשִׁיחַ בִּשְׁמֹן:
 כב מִדָּם חֲלָלִים מִחֶלֶב גִּבּוֹרִים
 קִשְׁתֹּת יְהוֹנָתָן לֹא נָשׁוּג אַחֲזָר
 וְחֶרֶב שָׁאוּל לֹא תָשׁוּב רִיקָם:
 כג שָׁאוּל וַיהוֹנָתָן
 הִנָּאֵהִבִּים וְהִנְעִימָם בְּחַיֵּיהֶם וּבְמוֹתָם
 לֹא נִפְרְדּוּ מִנִּשְׁרִים
 קָלוּ מֵאֲרִיּוֹת גִּבּוֹרִים:
 כד בָּנוֹת יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶל-שָׁאוּל בְּכִינָה
 הַמְּלִבְשָׁכֶם שָׁנִי עִם-עֲדָנִים
 הַמַּעֲלָה עֲדֵי זָהָב עַל לְבוּשְׁכֶן:
 כה אֵיךְ נָפְלוּ גִבּוֹרִים
 בַּתּוֹךְ הַמִּלְחָמָה
 יְהוֹנָתָן עַל-בְּמוֹתֶיךָ חָלָל:

- 21 You mountains of Gilboa:
 let there be no dew or rain on you,
 O treacherous fields,
 where the hero's shield lies dishonoured;
 the shield of Saul, anointed with oil no more.
 22 But with the blood of wounded men, the fat of warriors!
 The bow of Jonathon never turned back;
 the sword of Saul never returned empty handed!
 23 Saul and Jonathon, beloved and lovely!
 In life and in death they were not divided.
 They were swifter than eagles;
 they were stronger than lions.
 24 O daughters of Israel, weep for Saul
 who gave you scarlet and fine linen to wear,
 who pinned golden jewellery on your dresses!
 25 How the mighty have fallen
 in the thick of the battle!
 Jonathon lies slain upon your high places.

21 The NRSV uses 'bounteous' in place of 'treacherous'; the meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain. The NJB includes the last line as part of v. 22.

22 For 'returned', the Hebrew imperfect verbal form is used here to indicate repeated past action.

23 For 'beloved and lovely', here following the NRSV, the NJB has 'beloved and handsome' and NETB has 'greatly loved'.

24 For the 2nd line, the NRSV has, 'who clothed you in crimson with luxury'; the meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

25 For the 1st line, here following the NRSV, the NJB has, "How did the heroes fall?"

כז צַר־לִי עָלֶיךָ אָחִי יְהוֹנָתָן

נֶעֱמַתָּ לִי מְאֹד

נִפְלְאַתָּה אֶהְבֶּתְךָ לִי

מֵאֶהֱבַת נָשִׁים:

כז אֵיךְ נָפְלוּ גִבּוֹרִים

וַיֵּאבְדּוּ כָּלֵי מִלְחָמָה:

{פ}

²⁶ I am desolate for you, Jonathon my brother.

Very dear you were to me,

your love more wonderful to me

than the love of a woman.

²⁷ How the mighty have fallen,

and the weapons of war perished?

²⁶ For the 1st line, the NJB uses the conjectural translation: "O Jonathon, by your dying I too am stricken."

²⁷ The expression, 'weapons of war', may here be a figurative way of referring to Saul and Jonathan.

שמואל ב פרק ב

א ויהי אחרי־כן וישאל דָּוִד בַּיהוָה | לֵאמֹר הֲאֵעֲלֶה
בְּאַחַת עָרֵי יְהוּדָה ויאמר יהוה אליו עלה ויאמר
דָּוִד אָנֹכִי אֵעֲלֶה ויאמר חֲבֹרֹנָה: ב ויעל שם דָּוִד
וְגַם שְׁתֵּי נָשָׁיו אַחִינֹעַם הִיזְרְעֵלִית וְאַבִּיגַיִל אִשְׁת
נָבָל הַכַּרְמֶלִי: ג וְאַנְשָׁיו אֲשֶׁר־עִמּוֹ הָעֲלָה דָּוִד אִישׁ
וּבֵיתוֹ ויֵּשְׁבוּ בְּעָרֵי חֲבֹרֹן: ד ויבאו אנשי יהודה
וַיִּמְשְׁחוּ־שָׁם אֶת־דָּוִד לְמֶלֶךְ עַל־בֵּית יְהוּדָה וַיִּגְדּוּ
לְדָוִד לֵאמֹר אֲנָשִׁי יָבִישׁ גִּלְעָד אֲשֶׁר קָבְרוּ אֶת־
שָׁאוּל: {ס}

ה וישלח דָּוִד מַלְאָכִים אֶל־אֲנָשֵׁי יָבִישׁ גִּלְעָד
וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵיהֶם בָּרְכִים אֶתֶם לַיהוָה אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתֶם
הַחֶסֶד הַזֶּה עִם־אֲדֹנֵיכֶם עִם־שָׁאוּל וַתִּקְבְּרוּ אֹתוֹ:
וְעַתָּה יַעֲשֵׂי־הוָה עִמָּכֶם חֶסֶד וְאֱמֶת וְגַם אֲנֹכִי
אֶעֱשֶׂה אִתְּכֶם הַטּוֹבָה הַזֹּאת אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתֶם הַדָּבָר

2 SAMUEL 2

¹ After this, David consulted Yahweh. "Shall I go up to one of the towns of Judah?" he asked. Yahweh answered, "Go up." David asked, "To which shall I go?" "To Hebron," was the reply. ² So, David went up there, with his two wives, Ahinoam of Jezreel and Abigail the wife of Nabal from Carmel. ³ David brought up the men who were with him, each one with his household, and they settled in the towns of Hebron. ⁴ The men of Judah came there and anointed David king over the House of Judah. They told David that the people of Jabesh in Gilead had buried Saul,

⁵ Then, David sent messengers to the men of Jabesh in Gilead, and said to them, "May you be blessed by Yahweh! For, you have showed this kindness to your lord, even to Saul, and you have buried him. ⁶ And now, may Yahweh show his steadfast love and his faithfulness to you! And I too shall treat you well because you have done this thing.

2 SAMUEL 2

- ¹ Hebron was the most important city in Judah. At the time of the conquest, it had been captured and occupied by the Calebites (Jos 15:13ff, Jg 1:20) but these had soon been absorbed by the tribe of Judah.
- ² NETB ends this verse, here following the NJB & NRSV, with, "and Abigail, formerly the wife of Nabal the Carmelite."
- ³ 'The towns of Hebron' were the villages dependent on it.
- ⁴ David had won supporters in Judah (1S 27:10-12, 20:26-31); he was later to be anointed by the elders of Israel (5:3).
- ⁵ An alternative reading for 'kindness' (here following the NJB) is 'loyalty' (as in the NRSV).
- ⁶ The NJB has 'kindness' in place of 'steadfast love', here following the NRSV.

הַזֶּה׃ ז' וְעַתָּה | תַּחֲזֹקְנָה יְדֵיכֶם וְהִיוּ לְבָנֵי־חֵיל כִּי־
מֵת אֲדֹנֵיכֶם שָׁאוּל וְגַם־אֹתִי מָשְׁחוּ בֵּית־יְהוּדָה
לְמֶלֶךְ עָלֵיהֶם׃ {פ}

ח' וַאֲבִנֵּר בֶּן־נֵר שַׂר־צָבָא אֲשֶׁר לְשָׁאוּל לָקַח אֶת־
אִישׁ בִּשְׁתַּב בֶּן־שָׁאוּל וַיַּעֲבֵרְהוּ מִחֲנַיִם׃ ט' וַיִּמְלֹכֵהוּ
אֶל־הַגִּלְעָד וְאֶל־הָאֲשֻׁרִי וְאֶל־יִזְרְעֵאל וְעַל־
אֶפְרַיִם וְעַל־בִּנְיָמִן וְעַל־יִשְׂרָאֵל כָּל־הָאָרֶץ׃ {פ}

י' בֶּן־אַרְבָּעִים שָׁנָה אִישׁ־בִּשְׁתַּב בֶּן־שָׁאוּל בְּמָלְכוֹ
עַל־יִשְׂרָאֵל וּשְׁתַּיִם שָׁנִים מָלַךְ אַךְ בֵּית יְהוּדָה הָיוּ
אַחֲרֵי דָוִד׃ יא' וַיְהִי מִסְפַּר הַיָּמִים אֲשֶׁר הָיָה דָּוִד
מֶלֶךְ בַּחֲבֵרֹן עַל־בֵּית יְהוּדָה שֶׁבַע שָׁנִים וּשְׁשֶׁה
חֳדָשִׁים׃ {ס}

יב' וַיֵּצֵא אֲבִנֵּר בֶּן־נֵר וְעַבְדֵי אִישׁ־בִּשְׁתַּב בֶּן־שָׁאוּל
מִמֲחֲנַיִם גִּבְעֹנָה׃ יג' וַיֹּאבֵב בֶּן־צִרוּיָה וְעַבְדֵי דָוִד

⁷ Therefore, let your hands be strong and be men of valour. For, Saul your lord is dead, but the House of Judah has anointed me to be king over them.”

⁸ Abner son of Ner, the commander of Saul’s army, had taken Ishbosheth son of Saul and brought him over to Mahanaim. ⁹ He had made him king of Gilead, of the Asherites, of Jezreel, of Ephraim, of Benjamin and indeed of all Israel.

¹⁰ Ishbosheth, the son of Saul, was forty years old when he began to reign over Israel and he reigned for two years. However, the House of Judah supported David. ¹¹ And the number of days during which David was king in Hebron over the House of Judah was seven years and six months.

¹² Abner son of Ner and the servants of Ishbosheth son of Saul went out from Mahanaim to Gibeon. ¹³ Joab son of Zeruiah with the servants of

⁷ At this point, David probably did not know that Israel had a new king (vv. 8–9), or the new king had not yet been appointed.

⁸ An alternative rendering of ‘Ishbosheth’ (meaning ‘Man of the Shame’), here and subsequently, following 1Ch 8:33, 9:39 and the LXX is ‘Ishbaal’ (meaning, ‘Man of the Lord’) – see #1S 14:49.

⁹ ‘Asherites’ (members of the tribe of Asher) follows the Tg (see Jg 1:32); the MT has ‘Assyrians’.

¹⁰ As so frequently in ancient works, biblical and non-biblical, the figures here and in v. 11 seem doubtful; Ishbosheth could not have been 40 – although he is mentioned in 1S 14:49 (called Ishvi there), he did not fight at Gilboa; therefore, he was probably a minor at this time.

¹¹ This verse is an editorial note.

¹² The NRSV, following 1Ch 8:33 & 9:39, has ‘Ishbaal’ in place of ‘Ishbosheth’, here following the MT (אִישׁ־בִּשְׁתַּב); see #8.

¹³ The ‘Pool of Gibeon’ was about 10 km north of Jerusalem (see Jr 41:12). ‘Joab’ was David’s nephew; both Saul (v. 8) and David had appointed relatives to be their commander-in-chief.

יֵצְאוּ וַיִּפְגְּשׁוּם עַל-בִּרְכַּת גִּבְעוֹן יַחְדָּו וַיֵּשְׁבוּ אֶלֶּה
עַל-הַבִּרְכָּה מִזֶּה וְאֶלֶּה עַל-הַבִּרְכָּה מִזֶּה: ^ד וַיֹּאמֶר
אַבְנֵר אֶל-יוֹאָב יָקוּמוּ נָא הַנְּעָרִים וַיִּשְׁחָקוּ לִפְנֵינוּ
וַיֹּאמֶר יוֹאָב יָקֻמוּ: ^{טו} וַיָּקֻמוּ וַיַּעֲבְרוּ בַּמִּסְפָּר שְׁנַיִם
עָשָׂר לַבְּנִימָן וְלֹאִישׁ בִּשְׁתִּי בֶן-שָׁאוּל וּשְׁנַיִם עָשָׂר
מֵעַבְדֵי דָוִד: ^{טז} וַיִּחָזְקוּ אִישׁ | בְּרֹאשׁ רֵעֵהוּ וַחֲרָבוֹ
בַּצֵּד רֵעֵהוּ וַיִּפְּלוּ יַחְדָּו וַיִּקְרָא לַמָּקוֹם הַהוּא חַלְקַת
הַצָּרִים אֲשֶׁר בְּגִבְעוֹן:

^{יז} וַתְּהִי הַמִּלְחָמָה קָשָׁה עַד-מָאֵד בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא וַיִּנָּגַף
אַבְנֵר וְאֲנָשֵׁי יִשְׂרָאֵל לִפְנֵי עַבְדֵי דָוִד: ^{יח} וַיְהִיו-שָׁם
שְׁלֹשָׁה בְנֵי צְרוּיָה יוֹאָב וְאַבִּישַׁי וְעִשָּׂהאֵל
וְעִשָּׂהאֵל קָל בְּרַגְלָיו כְּאַחַד הַצְּבִים אֲשֶׁר בַּשָּׂדֶה:
^{יט} וַיִּרְדֹּף עִשָּׂהאֵל אַחֲרֵי אַבְנֵר וְלֹא-נָטָה לָלֶכֶת עַל-
הַיָּמִין וְעַל-הַשְּׂמֹאל מֵאַחֲרֵי אַבְנֵר: ^כ וַיִּפֹּן אַבְנֵר
אַחֲרָיו וַיֹּאמֶר הֲאֵתָה זֶה עִשָּׂהאֵל וַיֹּאמֶר אָנֹכִי:

David went out and met them by the Pool of Gibeon. One party sat on one side of the pool, the other on the other side of the pool. ¹⁴ Abner said to Joab, "Let the young men come forward to hold a contest before us." Joab said, "Let them come forward." ¹⁵ So, they came forward and were numbered off, twelve from Benjamin for Ishbosheth son of Saul and twelve of David's servants. ¹⁶ Each caught his opponent by the head and drove his sword into his side so that they fell down together. Hence, the place was called the Field of Sides; it is at Gibeon.

¹⁷ That day, a very fierce battle took place and Abner and the men of Israel were defeated by the servants of David. ¹⁸ The three sons of Zeruiah were there, Joab, and Abishai, and Asahel. Now, Asahel was as swift-footed as one of the deer of the countryside. ¹⁹ Asahel set off in pursuit of Abner, turning neither to the right nor to the left as he went in pursuit of Abner. ²⁰ Then Abner looked back and said, "Is that you, Asahel?" He answered, "Yes, it is." ²¹ "Turn to your right or to your

¹⁴ Abner suggests that the dispute should be settled by a contest between a few warriors from each side (see 1S 17:8–9). However, since all are killed, the decision remains open and a general battle ensues (v. 17).

¹⁵ The NRSV has 'Ishbaal' in place of 'Ishbosheth' (see #8).

¹⁶ In place of 'Helkath-Hazzurim' (Field of Sword-Edges), the NJB has 'Field of Sides' (a conjectural translation of 'Helkath-Hassidim').

¹⁷ NETB has 'soldiers' in place of 'servants', here following the MT & NRSV.

¹⁸ 'Zeruiah' was a sister or half-sister of David (1Ch 2:13–16). 'Joab' and 'Abishai' (1S 26:6–9) play important parts in the history that follows.

¹⁹ For this verse, here following the NRSV & NJB, NETB reads, "Asahel chased Abner, without turning to the right or to the left as he followed Abner."

²⁰ The NJB has simply 'turned' in place of 'looked back', here following the NRSV.

²¹ The NJB ends this verse, here following the NRSV & NETB, with 'would not break off the pursuit'.

כא וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ אֲבִנֵּר נָטָה לְךָ עַל־יְמִינֶךָ אֹז עַל־שִׁמְאֶלְךָ וַאֲחֹז לְךָ אֶחָד מִהַנְּעָרִים וְקַח־לְךָ אֶת־חִלְצָתוֹ וְלֹא־אָבָה עֲשֵׂה־אֵל לְסוּר מֵאַחֲרָיו: **כב** וַיִּסָּף עוֹד אֲבִנֵּר לֵאמֹר אֶל־עֲשֵׂה־אֵל סוּר לְךָ מֵאַחֲרֵי לָמָּה אֶכְפֹּה אֶרְצָה וְאִידָּךְ אֲשָׂא פָנַי אֶל־יֹזָאב אֲחִידָּךְ: **כג** וַיִּמָּאֵן לְסוּר וַיַּכֵּהוּ אֲבִנֵּר בְּאַחֲרֵי הַחֲנִית אֶל־הַחֹמֶשׁ וַתֵּצֵא הַחֲנִית מֵאַחֲרָיו וַיִּפֹּל־שָׁם וַיָּמָת תַּחְתּוֹ וַיְהִי כָל־הַבָּא אֶל־הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר־נָפַל שָׁם עֲשֵׂה־אֵל וַיָּמָת וַיַּעֲמְדוּ:

כד וַיִּרְדְּפוּ יֹזָאב וְאַבִּישַׁי אַחֲרֵי אֲבִנֵּר וְהַשֶּׁמֶשׁ בָּאָה וְהָמָּה בָּאוּ עַד־גִּבְעַת אֲמָה אֲשֶׁר עַל־פְּנֵי־גִיחַ דֶּרֶךְ מִדְּבָר גִּבְעוֹן: **כה** וַיִּתְקַבְּצוּ בְנֵי־בְנִימִן אַחֲרֵי אֲבִנֵּר וַיְהִיו לְאַגְדָּה אַחַת וַיַּעֲמְדוּ עַל רֹאשׁ־גִּבְעָה אַחַת: **כו** וַיִּקְרָא אֲבִנֵּר אֶל־יֹזָאב וַיֹּאמֶר הֲלִנְצַח תֹּאכַל חֶרֶב הַלּוֹא יִדְעָתָה כִּי־מָרָה תִּהְיֶה בְּאַחֲרוֹנָהּ וְעַד־מָתִי לֹא־תֹאמַר לָעַם לָשׁוּב מֵאַחֲרֵי אֲחֵיהֶם: **כז** וַיֹּאמֶר יֹזָאב חַי הָאֱלֹהִים כִּי לֹא דִבַּרְתָּ כִּי אֹז

left,” Abner said to him, “and catch one of the soldiers and take his spoil.” Nevertheless, Asahel was not willing to turn away from following him. ²² Again, Abner spoke to Asahel, “Stop pursuing me, unless you want me to strike you to the ground; and then, how could I look your brother Joab in the face again?” ²³ However, he refused to turn away, so Abner struck him in the stomach with the butt of his spear so that the spear came out at his back; and he fell there and died on the spot. On coming to the place where Asahel had fallen and died, everyone halted.

²⁴ But Joab and Abishai took up the pursuit of Abner; and, as the sun went down, they reached the Hill of Ammah, which lies before Giah on the way to the desert of Gibeon. ²⁵ The Benjaminites gathered behind Abner and formed a single band; they took their stand at the top of a hill. ²⁶ Abner called out to Joab; he said, “Must the sword devour forever? Do you not realise that this will turn bitter in the end? When will you order these people to turn aside from pursuing their brothers?” ²⁷ “As God lives,” Joab replied, “if you had not spoken, these men would

²² Abner does not wish to draw blood-vengeance on himself; but see 3:27.

²³ In place of ‘stomach’, here following the NRSV, the NJB has ‘belly’ and NETB has ‘abdomen’.

²⁴ The NJB ends this verse with, “which is to the east of the valley, on the road to Giah;” the meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

²⁵ In place of ‘a hill’, here following NRSV & JPS, the NJB has ‘the Hill of Ammah’.

²⁶ For Abner’s 2nd question, here following NETB (the NRSV is similar), the NJB reads, “Do you not know that this will end in disaster?”

²⁷ The NJB, following the LXX (κύριος), has ‘Yahweh’ in place of ‘God’.

מִהַבְקֵר נִעְלָה הָעַם אִישׁ מֵאַחֲרֵי אָחִיו: כֹּחַ וַיִּתְקַע
יוֹאָב בַּשּׁוֹפָר וַיַּעֲמֵדוּ כָל־הָעָם וְלֹא־יָרְדּוּ עוֹד
אַחֲרֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְלֹא־יִסָּפּוּ עוֹד לְהִלָּחֵם: כֹּס וַאֲבִנֵּר
וְאֲנָשָׁיו הָלְכוּ בְּעֶרְבָה כָּל הַלַּיְלָה הַהוּא וַיַּעֲבְרוּ
אֶת־הַיַּרְדֵּן וַיֵּלְכוּ כָל־הַבֹּתְרוֹן וַיָּבֹאוּ מַחֲנֵי:

ל וַיּוֹאָב שָׁב מֵאַחֲרֵי אֲבִנֵּר וַיִּקְבֹּץ אֶת־כָּל־הָעָם
וַיִּפְקְדוּ מֵעַבְדֵי דָוִד תִּשְׁעֵה־עֶשֶׂר אִישׁ וַעֲשֵׂה־אֵל:
לא וְעַבְדֵי דָוִד הָכּוּ מִבְּנֵימִן וּבְאֲנָשֵׁי אֲבִנֵּר שְׁלֹשׁ־
מֵאוֹת וְשֵׁשִׁים אִישׁ מֵתוּ: לב וַיִּשְׂאוּ אֶת־עֲשֵׂה־אֵל
וַיִּקְבְּרוּהוּ בְּקֶבֶר אָבִיו אֲשֶׁר בֵּית לָחֶם וַיֵּלְכוּ כָל־
הַלַּיְלָה יוֹאָב וְאֲנָשָׁיו וַיָּאֵר לָהֶם בַּחֲבֵרוֹן:

not have given up their pursuit of their brothers until morning.” ²⁸ Joab then sounded the trumpet and all the troops halted; they pursued Israel no further and fought no more. ²⁹ All that night, Abner and his men made their way through the Arabah; they crossed the Jordan and, marching throughout the morning, came to Mahanaim.

³⁰ Joab, giving up the pursuit of Abner, mustered his whole force; David’s followers had lost nineteen men in addition to Asahel, ³¹ but David’s servants had killed three hundred and sixty of Benjamin, Abner’s men. ³² They took up Asahel and buried him in his father’s tomb, which is at Bethlehem. Then Joab and his men marched throughout the night and day dawned as they reached Hebron.

²⁸ Joab accepts the truce.

²⁹ ‘Arabah’ (literally ‘the desert’) here means the Jordan valley north of the Dead Sea. The NRSV uses ‘forenoon’ in place of ‘morning’; the meaning of the Hebrew (בֹּתְרוֹן) is uncertain – NETB interprets it as a place name, reading ‘through the whole region of Bitron’.

³⁰ Strangely, NETB groups vv. 30–32 with Ch. 3.

³¹ The NJB omits ‘David’s servants’, here following the NRSV.

³² The NRSV ends this verse, here following the NJB, with, “and the day broke upon them at Hebron.”

2 SAMUEL 3

שמואל ב פרק ג

א וַתְּהִי הַמִּלְחָמָה אַרְכָּה בֵּין בֵּית שָׁאוּל וּבֵין בֵּית
דָּוִד וְדָוִד הָלַךְ וְחָזַק וּבֵית שָׁאוּל הִלְכִים
וְדָלִים: {ס}

ב וַיֵּלְדוּ וַיִּוְלְדוּ לְדָוִד בָּנִים בַּחֲבֵרוֹן וַיְהִי בְכוֹרֹ
אֲמֹנֹן לְאֲחִינוֹעַם הַיִּזְרְעֵלִית: ג וּמִשְׁנֵהוּ כְּלָאֵב
לְאֲבִיגַיִל לְאֲשֶׁת נָבָל הַכַּרְמֶלִית וְהַשְׁלִשִׁי
אֲבִשָׁלוֹם בֶּן־מַעֲכָה בַת־תַּלְמִי מֶלֶךְ גִּשּׁוּר:
ד וְהָרְבִיעִי אֲדֹנִיָּה בֶן־חַגִּית וְהַחֲמִישִׁי שֶׁפְּטִיָּה בֶן־
אֲבִיטָל: ה וְהַשִּׁשִּׁי יִתְרֵעַם לְעִגְלָה אִשְׁתִּי דָּוִד אֵלֶּה
יָלְדוּ לְדָוִד בַּחֲבֵרוֹן: {פ}

ו וַיְהִי בַּהֲיוֹת הַמִּלְחָמָה בֵּין בֵּית שָׁאוּל וּבֵין בֵּית
דָּוִד וְאַבְנֵר הָיָה מְתַחַזֵּק בְּבֵית שָׁאוּל: ז וּלְשָׁאוּל
פְּלִגְשׁ וּשְׁמָהּ רִצְפָּה בַת־אִיָּה וַיֵּאמֶר אֶל־אַבְנֵר
מִדְּוַע בָּאתָה אֶל־פְּלִגְשׁ אִבִּי: ח וַיַּחֲרֹר לְאַבְנֵר מְאֹד

¹ The war dragged on between the House of Saul and the House of David; but David grew steadily stronger, and the House of Saul ever weaker.

² And sons were born to David at Hebron; and his firstborn was Amnon, by Ahinoam the Jezreelite; ³ and his second was Chileab, by Abigail the wife of Nabal, the Carmelite; and the third was Absalom the son of Maacah, daughter of Talmai, the king of Geshur; ⁴ and the fourth was Adonijah the son of Haggith; and the fifth was Shephatiah the son of Abital; ⁵ and the sixth was Ithream, by David's wife, Eglah. These were born to David at Hebron.

⁶ During the war between the House of Saul and the House of David, Abner was strengthening himself in the House of Saul. ⁷ Now Saul had a concubine named Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah. Ishbosheth said to Abner, "Why have you slept with my father's concubine?" ⁸ The words

2 SAMUEL 3

- ¹ In place of 'steadily stronger' and 'ever weaker', here following the NJB, the NRSV has, respectively, 'stronger and stronger' and 'weaker and weaker'.
² The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.
³ 'Geshur' is to the east of the Lake of Tiberias. The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.
⁴ Note the use of the pronoun 'his' for the 1st & 2nd sons but the definite article for the other 4.
⁵ The verb, 'was', is not present before any of the sons' names in vv. 2-5; it has been added here for stylistic reasons.
⁶ 'Abner was strengthening himself', may have a negative sense, suggesting Abner was overstepping the bounds of propriety in a self-serving way.
⁷ After 'Aiah', the NJB adds the phrase 'and Abner took her'; here, we follow the MT & NRSV.
⁸ The NJB, following the LXX, lacks 'for Judah'.

עַל־דְּבָרֵי אִישׁ־בֶּשֶׁת וַיֹּאמֶר הָרֹאשׁ כָּלֵב אֲנֹכִי
אֲשֶׁר לַיהוּדָה הַיּוֹם אֶעֱשֶׂה־חֹסֶד עִם־בֵּיתִי שָׂאוֹל
אֲבִיךָ אֶל־אֲחִיו וְאֶל־מֵרְעָהוּ וְלֹא הִמָּצִיתָךְ בְּיַד־
דָּוִד וַתִּפְקֹד עָלַי עֹנֵן הָאִשָּׁה הַיּוֹם: {ס}

ט כֹּה־יַעֲשֶׂה אֱלֹהִים לְאַבְנֵר וְכֹה יִסִּיף לוֹ כִּי כַּאֲשֶׁר
נִשְׁבַּע יְהוָה לְדָוִד כִּי־כֵן אֶעֱשֶׂה־לּוֹ: 'לְהַעֲבִיר
הַמַּמְלָכָה מִבֵּית שָׂאוֹל וּלְהָקִים אֶת־כִּסֵּא דָוִד עַל־
יִשְׂרָאֵל וְעַל־יְהוּדָה מִדָּן וְעַד־בְּאֵר שֶׁבַע: י' וְלֹא־
יָכַל עוֹד לְהַשִּׁיב אֶת־אַבְנֵר דָּבָר מִיִּרְאָתוֹ
אֹתוֹ: {ס}

יב וַיִּשְׁלַח אַבְנֵר מַלְאָכִים | אֶל־דָּוִד תַּחֲתוֹ לֵאמֹר
לְמִי־אֶרֶץ לֵאמֹר כִּרְתָּה בְּרִיתָךְ אִתִּי וְהִנֵּה יָדִי עִמָּךְ
לְהִסָּב אֵלֶיךָ אֶת־כָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל: יג וַיֹּאמֶר טוֹב אֲנִי
אֶכְרֹת אִתָּךְ בְּרִית אֲךָ דָּבָר אֶחָד אֲנֹכִי שְׂאוֹל
מֵאִתָּךְ לֵאמֹר לֹא־תִרְאֶה אֶת־פָּנַי כִּי | אִם־לִפְנֵי
הַבִּיָּאָךְ אֶת מִיכָל בַּת־שָׂאוֹל בְּבֹאָךְ לִרְאוֹת אֶת־
פָּנַי: {ס}

of Ishbosheth made Abner furious; he shouted, “Am I a dog’s head for Judah? Here I am full of goodwill towards the House of Saul your father, his brothers and his friends, not leaving you to the hands of David, and now you find fault with me about a woman!

⁹ “So may God do to Abner and so may he add to it! For, just what Yahweh has sworn to David, that will I accomplish for him, ¹⁰ to transfer the sovereignty from the House of Saul and to set up the throne of David over Israel and over Judah, from Dan to Beersheba.” ¹¹ And Ishbosheth dared not say a single word in answer to Abner, because he was afraid of him.

¹² And Abner sent messengers on his own behalf to David at Hebron, saying, “To whom does the land belong?” And he added, “Come to an agreement with me and I will give you my support and bring all Israel over to you.” ¹³ He said, “Very well I will come to an agreement with you. I impose one condition however: you will never appear in my presence unless you bring Saul’s daughter Michal when you come to visit me.”

⁹ At the end of this verse, the LXX (with the exception of the *Recension of Origen*) adds ‘in this day’ (ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ταύτῃ).

¹⁰ We are not told on what occasion this promise was made to David but see 5:2 and #1S 28:3.

¹¹ The MT has ‘he’ in place of ‘Ishbosheth’, here following NETB (the NJB & NRSV have ‘Ishbaal’).

¹² The NJB omits ‘at Hebron, ... land belong’, having an ellipsis in place of the question; the MT seems to be corrupt, reading ‘where he was’ in place of ‘at Hebron’ (here following the NRSV) and the LXX has ‘in Thailam’ (εἰς Θαιλαμ).

¹³ The words ‘when you come to visit me’, though in the MT, are redundant given earlier part of the verse; the words are not in the Peshitta.

^ד וַיִּשְׁלַח דָּוִד מַלְאָכִים אֶל-אִישׁ-בִּשֶׁת בֶּן-שָׁאוּל
 לֵאמֹר תֵּנָה אֶת-אִשְׁתִּי אֲשֶׁר אֶמְכַּל אֲשֶׁר אֶרְשָׁתִּי לִי
 בַמָּאָה עָרְלוֹת פְּלִשְׁתִּים: ^ט וַיִּשְׁלַח אִישׁ בִּשֶׁת
 וַיִּקְחָהּ מֵעַם אִישׁ מֵעַם פְּלִטְיָאֵל בֶּן-לִישׁ לֹוֹשׁ:
^{טז} וַיֵּלֶךְ אִתָּהּ אִשָּׁה הַלֹּוֹךְ וּבָכָה אַחֲרֶיהָ עַד-
 בַּחֲרִים וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו אַבְנֵר לֵךְ שׁוּב וַיֵּשֶׁב: ^{יז} וַדְּבַר-
 אַבְנֵר הָיָה עִם-זִקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר גַּם-תָּמוּל גַּם-
 שְׁלֹשׁ הַיְּיָתָם מִבְּקָשִׁים אֶת-דָּוִד לְמַלְךְ עָלֵיכֶם:
^{יח} וַעֲתָה עֲשׂוּ כִי יְהוָה אָמַר אֶל-דָּוִד לֵאמֹר בְּיַד
 דָּוִד עֲבָדֵי הוֹשִׁיעַ אֶת-עַמִּי יִשְׂרָאֵל מִיַּד פְּלִשְׁתִּים
 וּמִיַּד כָּל-אֹיְבֵיהֶם: ^{יט} וַיְדַבֵּר גַּם-אַבְנֵר בְּאַזְנֵי בְנֵימִן
 וַיֵּלֶךְ גַּם-אַבְנֵר לְדַבֵּר בְּאַזְנֵי דָוִד בְּחֶבְרוֹן אֶת כָּל-
 אֲשֶׁר-טוֹב בְּעֵינֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וּבְעֵינֵי כָל-בֵּית בְּנֵימִן:
^כ וַיָּבֹא אַבְנֵר אֶל-דָּוִד חֶבְרוֹן וְאִתּוֹ עֲשָׂרִים אָנָּשִׁים
 וַיַּעַשׂ דָּוִד לְאַבְנֵר וְלָאָנָּשִׁים אֲשֶׁר-אִתּוֹ מִשְׁתֶּה:
^{כא} וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְנֵר אֶל-דָּוִד אֲקוּמָה | וְאַלְכָּה וְאֶקְבְּצָה

¹⁴ David then sent messengers to Ishbosheth son of Saul; he said, "Give me back my wife Michal, to whom I was betrothed at the price of one hundred foreskins of the Philistines." ¹⁵ And Ishbosheth sent and took her from her husband, from Paltiel the son of Laish. ¹⁶ And her husband set off with her and followed her, weeping as he went, as far as Bahurim; but Abner said to him, "Go, return!" And he went back. ¹⁷ Now, Abner had communicated with the elders of Israel, saying, "For a long time now, you have been seeking David as king over you. ¹⁸ Now you must take action; for, Yahweh has given this promise about David, "By the hand of my servant David, I will deliver my people Israel from the hands of the Philistines and all their enemies."" ¹⁹ Abner also spoke directly to the men of Benjamin; and then Abner went to Hebron to tell David all that Israel and the whole House of Benjamin were ready to do. ²⁰ And Abner, accompanied by twenty men, came to David at Hebron, and David held a feast for Abner and the men who were with him. ²¹ And Abner said to David, "Let me get up and leave, so that I may go

¹⁴ The NJB has 'whom I won' in place of 'to whom I was betrothed', here loosely following the NRSV.

¹⁵ The Kethib/Qere difference here would benefit from an explanation. The name, 'Paltiel' (פְּלִטְיָאֵל), appears as 'Palti' (פְּלִטִי) in 1S 25:44.

¹⁶ The literal translation of 'go back' is 'go, return'.

¹⁷ Many in Israel favoured David even during Saul's lifetime (1S 18:7, 16, 28) and still more under Ishbosheth, Saul's colourless successor.

¹⁸ 'I will deliver' follows the LXX (σώσω), Peshitta & Vg (salvabo); the MT has 'he saved'.

¹⁹ It was particularly necessary to obtain the consent of Benjamin, Saul's own tribe, which was most likely to object.

²⁰ NETB has 'banquet' in place of 'feast', here following the NJB & NRSV.

²¹ After the cohortatives, the prefixed verbal form with the prefixed conjunction ('so that they may make') indicates purpose or result.

אֶל־אֲדֹנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶת־כָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּכְרְתוּ אֹתָךְ
בְּרִית וּמַלְכֶּת בְּכָל אֲשֶׁר־תֹּאמַר נַפְשִׁי וַיִּשְׁלַח דָּוִד
אֶת־אֲבִנֵּר וַיֵּלֶךְ בְּשָׁלוֹם: ^{כב} וְהָיָה עַבְדִּי דָוִד וַיֹּאב
בָּא מִהַגְדֻד וְשָׁלַל רַב עִמָּם הֵבִיאוּ וְאֲבִנֵּר אֵינָנו
עִם־דָּוִד בְּחֶבְרוֹן כִּי שָׁלְחוֹ וַיֵּלֶךְ בְּשָׁלוֹם: ^{כג} וַיֹּאב
וְכָל־הַצָּבָא אֲשֶׁר־אִתּוֹ בָּאוּ וַיִּגְדּוּ לַיֹּאב לֵאמֹר
בֶּן־אֲבִנֵּר בֶּן־נֵר אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ וַיִּשְׁלַחֵהוּ וַיֵּלֶךְ
בְּשָׁלוֹם: ^{כד} וַיָּבֹא יֹאב אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ וַיֹּאמֶר מָה
עָשִׂיתָ הִנֵּה־בָּא אֲבִנֵּר אֵלֶיךָ לְמַה־זֶּה שְׁלַחְתָּ
וַיֵּלֶךְ הַלּוֹךְ: ^{כה} יָדַעְתָּ אֶת־אֲבִנֵּר בֶּן־נֵר כִּי לִפְתָּתָךְ
בָּא וּלְדַעַת אֶת־מוֹצְאָךְ וְאֶת־מוֹבָאָךְ מִבּוֹאֵךְ
וּלְדַעַת אֵת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר אַתָּה עֹשֶׂה: ^{כו} וַיֵּצֵא יֹאב
מֵעַם דָּוִד וַיִּשְׁלַח מַלְאָכִים אַחֲרֵי אֲבִנֵּר וַיֵּשְׁבוּ אֹתוֹ
מִבּוֹר הַסֵּרָה וְדָוִד לֹא יָדָע: ^{כז} וַיֵּשֶׁב אֲבִנֵּר חֶבְרוֹן
וַיִּטְהֹר יֹאב אֶל־תּוֹךְ הַשָּׁעַר לְדַבֵּר אִתּוֹ בְּשָׁלִי
וַיַּכְּהוּ שָׁם הַחֹמֶשׁ וַיָּמָת בְּדָם עֲשֵׂהָאֵל אָחִיו:

and gather all Israel to my lord the king, so that they may make an agreement with you. Then you will rule over all you desire.” Therefore, David allowed Abner to go, and he went in peace. ²² Just then, the servants of David arrived with Joab from a raid, bringing much booty with them. Abner was no longer with David at Hebron, since David had allowed him to go, and he had gone in peace. ²³ When Joab and the whole army that was with him came, Joab was told, “Abner son of Ner has been to see the king and he has allowed Abner to go away in peace.” ²⁴ Then Joab went to the king. “What have you done?” he said. “Abner came to you; why did you allow him to go? ²⁵ Do you not know Abner son of Ner? He came to trick you, to know your every move, to find out what you are doing.” ²⁶ Joab left David’s presence and sent messengers after Abner and these, unknown to David, brought him back from the cistern of Sirah. ²⁷ When Abner reached Hebron, Joab took him aside in the town gate, to have a quiet word with him, and there stabbed him in the belly to avenge the blood of his brother Asahel. ²⁸ When David heard

²² The literal translation of ‘just then’ (here following the NRSV) is ‘and look’.

²³ In place of ‘in peace’, here following the NRSV & NETB, the NJB has ‘unmolested’ (as also in vv. 22 & 24).

²⁴ At the end of this verse, the NJB, following the LXX (ἐν εἰρήνῃ – ‘in peace’) adds ‘unmolested’ (see #23).

²⁵ The Kethib/Qere difference here would benefit from an explanation.

²⁶ For this verse, here following the NJB, the NRSV reads, “When Joab came out from David’s presence, he sent messengers after Abner, and they brought him back from the cistern of Sirah; but David did not know about it.”

²⁷ Before ‘blood’, the NRSV adds ‘shedding’.

²⁸ Joab was too powerful (v. 39) for David to order him executed, as had been done in the case of the Amalekite (1:15).

כח וַיִּשְׁמַע דָּוִד מֵאַחֲרֵי כֵן וַיֹּאמֶר נָקִי אָנֹכִי
וּמִמְלַכְתִּי מֵעַם יְהוָה עַד־עוֹלָם מִדְּמֵי אֲבִנֵּר בֶּן־נֵר:
כט יִחְלוּ עַל־רֹאשׁ יוֹאָב וְאֵל כָּל־בֵּית אָבִיו וְאֵל־
יִכָּרֵת מִבֵּית יוֹאָב זָב וּמִצָּרַע וּמַחֲזִיק בַּפֶּלֶךְ וְנֹפֵל
בַּחֶרֶב וְחֹסֵר־לֶחֶם: ל וַיּוֹאֲב וְאַבִּשָׁי אֶחָיו הֲרָגוּ
לְאַבְנֵר עַל־אֲשֶׁר הָמִית אֶת־עֲשָׂהאֵל אֶחְיָהֶם
בְּגִבְעוֹן בַּמִּלְחָמָה: {ס}

לא וַיֹּאמֶר דָּוִד אֶל־יוֹאָב וְאֵל־כָּל־הָעָם אֲשֶׁר־אִתּוֹ
קִרְעוּ בְּגָדֵיכֶם וְחַגְרוּ שָׁקִים וּסְפְדוּ לִפְנֵי אֲבִנֵּר
וְהַמֶּלֶךְ דָּוִד הִלֵּךְ אַחֲרֵי הַמָּטָה: לב וַיִּקְבְּרוּ אֶת־
אַבְנֵר בַּחֲבֵרוֹן וַיֵּשָׂא הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶת־קוֹלוֹ וַיִּבֶךְ אֶל־
קֶבֶר אֲבִנֵּר וַיִּבְכּוּ כָל־הָעָם: {ס}

לג וַיִּקְנֶן הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶל־אַבְנֵר וַיֹּאמֶר

הַפְּמוֹת נָבַל יָמוּת אֲבִנֵּר:

לד יָדָךְ לֹא־אֶסְרוֹת

וְרַגְלֶיךָ לֹא־לִנְחָשִׁתִּים הִגָּשׁוּ

כְּנָפוֹל לִפְנֵי בְנֵי־עוֹלָה נָפְלָתָ

of this later, he said, “I and my kingdom are innocent forever before Yahweh of the blood of Abner son of Ner; ²⁹ may it fall on the head of Joab and on all his family! May the House of Joab never be free of men afflicted with haemorrhage or leprosy, who hold a spindle, who fall by the sword, or who lack food! ³⁰ So, Joab and his brother Abishai murdered Abner because he killed their brother Asahel at the battle of Gibeon.

³¹ David then said to Joab and all the troops who were with him, “Tear your garments and put on sackcloth, and mourn before Abner;” and King David was walking behind the bier. ³² They buried Abner at Hebron, and the king wept aloud at Abner’s grave, and the people all wept too.

³³ The king made this lament over Abner:

“Should Abner have died as a fool dies?

³⁴ Your hands were not tied,

your feet were not chained;

you fell as a man falls at the hands of criminals.”

²⁹ The NJB & NRSV have the ‘may the guilt’ in place of ‘may it’, here following the MT. The ‘spindle’ is a derogatory reference to women’s work.

³⁰ The NJB places this entire verse in parentheses and lacks the opening ‘so’; here, we follow the NRSV & NETB.

³¹ The NJB has ‘walked’ in place of ‘was walking’, and the NRSV & NETB have ‘followed’.

³² The literal translation of ‘wept aloud’ is ‘lifted up his voice and wept’, a verbal hendiadys.

³³ The NJB has ‘brute’ in place of ‘fool’, here following the NRSV & NETB.

³⁴ The words, ‘all the people’, are not present (here) in 4QSam^a, which reads [כל לבכ] in place of כל־הָעָם לְבָכּוֹת.

וַיִּסְפוּ כָּל־הָעָם לִבְכּוֹת עָלָיו: ^לוַיָּבֹא כָל־הָעָם
 לְהַבְרֹת אֶת־דָּוִד לֶחֶם בְּעוֹד הַיּוֹם וַיִּשְׁבַּע דָּוִד
 לֵאמֹר כֹּה יַעֲשֶׂה־לִּי אֱלֹהִים וְכֹה יִסִּיף כִּי אִם־לִפְנֵי
 בּוֹא־הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ אֶטְעַם־לֶחֶם אוֹ כָּל־מְאֻמָּה: ^{לו}וְכָל־
 הָעָם הִכִּירוּ וַיִּיטֹב בְּעֵינֵיהֶם כָּכָל אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה
 הַמֶּלֶךְ בְּעֵינֵי כָל־הָעָם טוֹב: ^{לי}וַיֵּדְעוּ כָל־הָעָם וְכָל־
 יִשְׂרָאֵל בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא כִּי לֹא הָיְתָה מִן־הַמֶּלֶךְ לְהָמִית
 אֶת־אַבְנֵר בֶּן־נֶר: {ס}

^{לח}וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶל־עֲבָדָיו הֲלֹא תִדְּעוּ כִּי־שָׂר
 וְגָדוֹל נָפַל הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל: ^{לט}וַאֲנֹכִי הַיּוֹם רֹדֵף
 וּמִשׁוּחַ מֶלֶךְ וְהָאֲנָשִׁים הָאֵלֶּה בְּנֵי צְרוּיָה קָשִׁים
 מִמֶּנִּי יִשְׁלַם יְהוָה לַעֲשֵׂה הָרָעָה כְּרָעָתוֹ: {פ}

And all the people wept for him louder than ever. ³⁵ Then all the people came and encouraged David to have some food while it was still daylight; but David took an oath, saying, “May God do this to me and more if I taste bread or anything whatever before the sun goes down!”

³⁶ And all the people took notice of this and it pleased them, just as everything the king did pleased the people. ³⁷ That day, all the people and all Israel understood that the king had no part in the killing of Abner son of Ner.

³⁸ The king said to his officers, “Do you not know that in Israel a great prince has fallen today? ³⁹ Today I am powerless, even though I am anointed king; these men, the sons of Zeruah, are too ruthless for me. May Yahweh repay the criminal as his crime deserves!”

³⁵ Literally translated, the oath begins, “Thus God will do to me and thus he will add.”

³⁶ The literal translation of ‘it pleased them’ is ‘it was good in their eyes’.

³⁷ The people of Israel were convinced of David’s innocence of the murder, though naturally any idea of making him king of Israel was put aside for the time.

³⁸ The literal translation of ‘a great prince’ is ‘a prince, a great man’; the expression is a hendiadys.

³⁹ Literally translated, the last sentence reads, “May Yahweh repay the doer of the evil according to his evil.”

2 SAMUEL 4

שמואל ב פרק ד

- ^א וַיִּשְׁמַע בֶּן־שָׁאֹל כִּי מָת אַבְנֵר בַּחֲבֵרֹן וַיִּרְפוּ יָדָיו וְכָל־יִשְׂרָאֵל נִבְהָלוּ: ^ב וּשְׁנֵי אַנְשִׁים שְׂרִי־גְדוּדִים הָיוּ בֶן־שָׁאֹל שֵׁם הָאֶחָד בַּעְנָה וְשֵׁם הַשֵּׁנִי רֶכָב בְּנֵי רִמּוֹן הַבְּאֲרָתִי מִבְּנֵי בְנִימִן כִּי גַם־בְּאֲרוֹת תַּחֲשֵׁב עַל־בְּנִימִן: ^ג וַיִּבְרְחוּ הַבְּאֲרָתִים גִּתַּיִמָּה וַיְהִיו־שָׁם גָּרִים עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה: {ס}
- ^ד וַלִּיהוֹנָתָן בֶּן־שָׁאֹל בֶּן נָכָה רַגְלִים בֶּן־חֲמֵשׁ שָׁנִים הָיָה בָּבָא שְׁמַעְתָּ שָׁאֹל וַיְהוֹנָתָן מִיִּזְרְעֵאל וַתִּשָּׂאֵהוּ אִמָּתּוֹ וַתָּנֶס וַיְהִי בַּחֲפָזָה לָנוּס וַיִּפֹּל וַיִּפְסַח וּשְׁמוֹ מִפִּיבֹשֶׁת: ^ה וַיֵּלְכוּ בְנֵי־רִמּוֹן הַבְּאֲרָתִי רֶכָב וּבַעְנָה וַיָּבֹאוּ כָּחַם הַיּוֹם אֶל־בֵּית אִישׁ בֹּשֶׁת וְהוּא שֹׁכֵב אֶת מִשְׁכַּב הַצֹּהְרִים: ^ו וְהָיָה בָּאוּ עַד־תּוֹךְ הַבַּיִת לִקְחֵי חֲטִים וַיִּכְּהוּ אֶל־הַחֹמֶשׁ וְרֶכָב
- ¹ When Saul's son heard the news that Abner had died at Hebron, his courage failed and all Israel was alarmed. ² Saul's son had two freebooting chieftains; the name of the one was Baanah, the name of the other Rechab. They were the sons of Rimmon, a Benjaminite of Beeroth (for Beeroth is considered to belong to Benjamin). ³ The people of Beeroth had fled to Gittaim and are there as resident aliens to this day.
- ⁴ Jonathon son of Saul had a son with crippled feet. He was five years old when the news about Saul and Jonathon came from Jezreel. His nurse picked him up and fled, but as she hurried away, he fell and became lame. His name was Mephibosheth. ⁵ The sons of Rimmon of Beeroth, Rechab and Baanah, set out; they came to Ishbosheth's house at the hottest part of the day when he was taking his midday rest. ⁶ The doorkeeper of the house had been cleaning wheat, and he had drowsed

2 SAMUEL 4

- ¹ Most English translations name Saul's son (the NJB & NRSV have 'Ishbaal' and NETB has 'Ishbosheth') but the MT does not; 4QSam^a and the LXX mistakenly read 'Mephibosheth'. The literal translation of 'his courage failed' is 'his hand went slack'.
- ² 'Beeroth' was originally a city under Gibeonite control (Jos 9:17); but the Gibeonites had fled to Gittaim, probably during Saul's persecution (21:1-2, 5), thus making it possible for Rimmon and other Israelites to settle there.
- ³ The NJB has 'taken refuge in' in place of 'fled to', here following the NRSV.
- ⁴ The NJB, following 1Ch 8:34 & 9:40, has 'Meribbaal' ('he who strives for the Lord') in place of 'Mephibosheth', here and subsequently.
- ⁵ The NRSV has 'Ishbaal' in place of 'Ishbosheth' (see #2:8).
- ⁶ The meaning of the Hebrew of the first sentence is unclear; the NRSV reads: "They came inside the house as though to take wheat and they struck him in the stomach." Here, the verse is translated according to the LXX (ἡ θυρωρὸς τοῦ οἴκου ἐκάθαιρεν πυρρὸς καὶ ἐνύσταξεν καὶ ἐκάθευδεν).

וּבַעֲנָה אָחִיו נִמְלָטוּ: ^ז וַיָּבֹאוּ הַבֵּית וְהוּא שָׁכַב עַל-
מִטָּתוֹ בַּחֲדָר מִשְׁכָּבוֹ וַיַּכְהוּ וַיִּמָּתְהוּ וַיִּסְּרוּ אֶת-
רֹאשׁוֹ וַיִּקְחוּ אֶת-רֹאשׁוֹ וַיִּלְכוּ דֶּרֶךְ הָעֲרָבָה כָּל-
הַלַּיְלָה: ^ח וַיָּבֹאוּ אֶת-רֹאשׁ אִישׁ-בֶּשֶׁת אֶל-דָּוִד
חֶבְרוֹן וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֶל-הַמֶּלֶךְ הִנֵּה-רֹאשׁ אִישׁ-בֶּשֶׁת
בֶּן-שָׂאוּל אֵיבֶךָ אֲשֶׁר בָּקַשׁ אֶת-נַפְשִׁי וַיִּתֵּן יְהוָה
לְאֹדְנִי הַמֶּלֶךְ נִקְמוֹת הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה מִשָּׂאוּל וּמִזֶּרְעוֹ:
^ט וַיַּעַן דָּוִד אֶת-רֵכָב וְאֶת-בַּעֲנָה אָחִיו בְּנֵי רִמּוֹן
הַבְּאֵרְתִּי וַיֹּאמֶר לָהֶם חִי-יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר-פָּדָה אֶת-
נַפְשִׁי מִכָּל-צָרָה: ^י כִּי הַמַּגִּיד לִי לֵאמֹר הִנֵּה-מָת
שָׂאוּל וְהוּא-הִיָּה כַּמְבַשֵּׁר בְּעֵינָיו וְאַחֲזָה בּוֹ
וְאַהֲרָגְהוּ בְּצִקְלָג אֲשֶׁר לְתַתִּי-לּוֹ בְּשָׂרָה: ^{יא} אֲף־כִּי-
אֲנָשִׁים רָשָׁעִים הָרְגוּ אֶת-אִישׁ-צַדִּיק בְּבֵיתוֹ עַל-
מִשְׁכָּבוֹ וְעַתָּה הֲלוֹא אֲבַקֵּשׁ אֶת-דָּמּוֹ מִיָּדְכֶם
וּבְעֵרְתִּי אֶתְכֶם מִן-הָאָרֶץ: ^{יב} וַיִּצֹּד דָּוִד אֶת-הַנְּעָרִים
וַיַּהַרְגֵם וַיִּקְצְצוּ אֶת-יְדֵיהֶם וְאֶת-רַגְלֵיהֶם וַיִּתְּלוּ

off to sleep. Rechab and his brother Baanah escaped. ⁷ They entered the house where he was lying in his bedroom, on his bed. They struck and killed him and removed his head; and taking the head with them, they travelled all night by the road of the Arabah. ⁸ They brought Ishbaal's head to David at Hebron. "Here," they said to the king, "is the head of Ishbaal son of Saul, your enemy, who sought your life. Yahweh has avenged my lord the king today on Saul and on his seed." ⁹ David answered Rechab and his brother Baanah, the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, by saying, "As Yahweh lives, who has delivered me from all adversity, ¹⁰ the man who thought to bring me good news when he told me Saul was dead, this man I seized and killed at Ziklag: this was the reward I gave him for his good news. ¹¹ How much more then, when bandits have killed an honest man in his house, and on his bed! Am I not bound to demand account of his blood from you, and wipe you from the earth?" ¹² Then David gave an order to his soldiers, who put them to death, cut off their hands and feet, and hung them up beside the Pool

⁷ After the concluding disjunctive clause at the end of v. 6, the author now begins a more detailed account of the murder and its aftermath. The *Peshitta* & *Vg* lack the clause 'and removed his head'. 'Arabah' refers to the Jordan Valley (see 2:29).

⁸ By saying 'Yahweh has avenged my lord', the guilty pair try to justify what they have done. The *NJB* has 'offspring' in place of 'seed'.

⁹ The *NJB* omits the words 'the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite', here following the *MT* & *NRSV*.

¹⁰ The *NJB* ends this verse, here following the *NRSV*, with, "rewarding him for his good news."

¹¹ David's indignation is sincere. Nevertheless, Ishbosheth's death, following that of Abner, assures him the throne of Israel.

¹² *4QSam^a* & the *LXX* (*Μεμφιβοσθε*) mistakenly read 'Mephibosheth' in place of 'Ishbosheth' here. After 'Abner', the *LXX* adds 'the son of Ner' (*υἱοῦ Νηρ*), in conformity with common phraseology elsewhere, and some *MSS* lack the phrase 'at Hebron'.

עַל־הַבֵּרֶכָה בְּחֶבְרוֹן וְאֵת רֹאשׁ אִישׁ־בִּשְׁתַּל לָקְחוּ of Hebron. They took the head of Ishbosheth and buried it in the tomb
וַיִּקְבְּרוּ בְּקֶבֶר־אַבְנֵר בְּחֶבְרוֹן: {פ} of Abner at Hebron.

2 SAMUEL 5

שמואל ב פרק ה

א וַיָּבֹאוּ כָּל-שִׁבְטֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶל-דָּוִד חֶבְרוֹנָה
וַיֹּאמְרוּ לְאִמֵּר הֲנֵנוּ עֲצָמֶךָ וּבָשָׂרְךָ אֲנַחְנוּ: ב גַּם-
אֶתְמוֹל גַּם-שְׁלֹשׁוֹם בְּהֵיזֹת שְׂאוּל מֶלֶךְ עָלֵינוּ אַתָּה
הֵייתָ מוֹצִיא [הֵייתָ הַמוֹצִיא] וְהַמְּבִי אֶת-יִשְׂרָאֵל
וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה לְךָ אַתָּה תִּרְעָה אֶת-עַמִּי אֶת-יִשְׂרָאֵל
וְאַתָּה תִּהְיֶה לְנָגִיד עַל-יִשְׂרָאֵל: ג וַיָּבֹאוּ כָּל-זִקְנֵי
יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶל-הַמֶּלֶךְ חֶבְרוֹנָה וַיִּכְרֹת לָהֶם הַמֶּלֶךְ דָּוִד
בְּרִית בַּחֲבֵרוֹן לִפְנֵי יְהוָה וַיִּמְשְׁחוּ אֶת-דָּוִד לְמֶלֶךְ
עַל-יִשְׂרָאֵל: {ס}

ד בֶּן-שְׁלֹשִׁים שָׁנָה דָּוִד בָּמָלְכוֹ אַרְבָּעִים שָׁנָה מֶלֶךְ:
ה בַּחֲבֵרוֹן מֶלֶךְ עַל-יְהוּדָה שִׁבְעַת שָׁנִים וְשֵׁשָׁה
חֳדָשִׁים וּבִירוּשָׁלַם מֶלֶךְ שְׁלֹשִׁים וּשְׁלֹשׁ שָׁנָה עַל
כָּל-יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיְהוּדָה: ו וַיֵּלֶךְ הַמֶּלֶךְ וְאֲנָשָׁיו יְרוּשָׁלַם
אֶל-הַיִּבְסִי יוֹשֵׁב הָאָרֶץ וַיֹּאמֶר לְדָוִד לֵאמֹר לֹא-

1 Then all the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron and spoke, saying
“Look, we are your own flesh and blood. 2 In days past, when Saul was
king over us, it was you who led out Israel and you who brought it in;
and Yahweh said to you, “You are the man who shall be shepherd of
my people Israel, you shall be the prince over Israel.”” 3 And so, all the
elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron; and King David made a
covenant with them at Hebron in the presence of Yahweh, and they
anointed David king over Israel.

4 David was thirty years old when he began to reign and he reigned forty
years. 5 He reigned in Hebron over Judah seven years and six months;
and he reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel thirty-three years. 6 The king
and his men marched on Jerusalem against the Jebusites living there,
who said to David, “You will not get in here. The blind and the lame

2 SAMUEL 5

1 The literal translation of ‘your own flesh and blood’ is ‘your bone and your flesh’.

2 The Kethib/Qere difference here would benefit from an explanation.

3 The NJB has ‘pact’ in place of ‘covenant’, here following the NRSV.

4 The NJB has ‘became king’ in place of ‘began to reign’, here following the MT & NRSV.

5 David, already anointed king by the Judaeans (2:4), is now acknowledged by the Israelites. The two groups, however, remain distinct (David is king ‘of all Israel and Judah’) and internal tension troubles the dual monarchy until the schism provoked by the imprudent policies of Jeroboam I in about 931 BCE (see 1K 12).

6 The Jebusites considered their position impregnable: cripples could defend it.

תָּבוֹא הִנֵּה כִּי אִם־הִסִּירָךְ הָעוֹרִים וְהַפְּסָחִים
 לֵאמֹר לֹא־יָבוֹא דָּוִד הִנֵּה: ^ז וַיִּלְכֹּד דָּוִד אֶת מִצְדַּת
 צִיּוֹן הִיא עִיר דָּוִד: ^ח וַיֹּאמֶר דָּוִד בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא כָּל־
 מִכָּה יִבְסִי וַיַּגַּע בַּצִּנּוֹר וְאֶת־הַפְּסָחִים וְאֶת־הָעוֹרִים
 שָׁנְאוּ שְׁנוֹאֵי נַפֶּשׁ דָּוִד עַל־כֵּן יֹאמְרוּ עוֹר וּפֶסַח לֹא
 יָבוֹא אֶל־הַבַּיִת: ^ט וַיֵּשֶׁב דָּוִד בַּמִּצְדָּה וַיִּקְרָא־לָהּ
 עִיר דָּוִד וַיִּבֶן דָּוִד סָבִיב מִן־הַמְּלֹאָה וּבֵיתָהּ: ^י וַיִּלְדֻּךְ
 דָּוִד הַלְוִי וְגִדּוֹל וַיהוָה אֱלֹהֵי צְבָאוֹת עִמּוֹ: {פ}
^{יא} וַיִּשְׁלַח חֵירָם מֶלֶךְ־צֹר מִלְּאָכִים אֶל־דָּוִד וַעֲצֵי
 אֲרָזִים וְחֹרָשֵׁי עֵץ וְחֹרָשֵׁי אֲבֵן קִיר וַיְבַנּוּ־בֵית
 לְדָוִד: ^{יב} וַיַּדַּע דָּוִד כִּי־הִכִּינוּ יְהוָה לְמֶלֶךְ עַל־
 יִשְׂרָאֵל וְכִי נָשָׂא מִמְּלִכְתּוֹ בַּעֲבוּר עִמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל: {ס}
^{יג} וַיִּקַּח דָּוִד עוֹד פְּלִגְשִׁים וְנָשִׁים מִירוּשָׁלַם אַחֲרָי
 בָּאוּ מִחֶבְרוֹן וַיִּוָּלְדוּ עוֹד לְדָוִד בָּנִים וּבָנוֹת: ^{יד} וְאֵלֶּה
 שְׁמוֹת הַיִּלְדִּים לוֹ בִּירוּשָׁלַם שְׁמוֹעַ וְשׁוֹבָב וְנָתָן

will hold you off, saying, “David will never get in here.”” ⁷ But David captured the Citadel of Zion, which is now the City of David. ⁸ That day David said, “Whoever would strike down the Jebusites, let him get up the conduit to attack the lame and the blind, those who hate David.” (Thus, it is said: the blind and the lame shall not enter the Temple.) ⁹ David went to live in the citadel and called it the City of David. David then built a wall round it, from the Millo going inwards. ¹⁰ David grew greater and greater, for Yahweh, God of Sabaoth, was with him. ¹¹ Hiram, king of Tyre, sent messengers to David, along with cedar wood, and carpenters and masons, who built David a palace. ¹² David then perceived that Yahweh had established him as king over Israel, and that he had exalted his kingdom for the sake of his people Israel. ¹³ David took other concubines and wives in Jerusalem, after he had come down from Hebron, and sons and daughters were born to him. ¹⁴ These are the names of those born to him in Jerusalem: Shammua,

⁷ The NJB has ‘that is’ in place of ‘which is now’, here following the NRSV.

⁸ Another reading, following the *Ketiv* (שָׁנְאוּ) and the NRSV, ends the quote with ‘those whom David hates’; here, we follow the *Qere* (שְׁנוֹאֵי) & NJB, which omits much of this verse, replacing it with an ellipsis.

⁹ David’s choice is explained by Jerusalem’s central position between the northern and southern tribes.

¹⁰ 4QSam^a and the LXX lack the word ‘God’, probably due to harmonisation with the more common biblical phrase ‘Yahweh Sabaoth’.

¹¹ This is apparently the same ‘Hiram’ who much later helped Solomon in the building of the Temple (1K 5:1–12).

¹² The NJB has ‘confirmed’ in place of ‘established’, here following the NRSV & NETB.

¹³ The NJB has the clause ‘after he had come down from Hebron’ at the beginning of the verse; here, we follow the MT, NRSV & NETB.

¹⁴ For the 1st 2 names, the LXX reads Σαμμουϛ & Σωβαβ.

וּשְׁלֹמֹה: ^{טו} וַיִּבְחַר וְאֵלִישׁוּעַ וְנִפְגַּ וַיִּפְּעוּ:
^{טז} וְאֵלִישָׁמָע וְאֵלִידָע וְאֵלִיפָלֶט: {פ}

^{יז} וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ פְּלִשְׁתִּים כִּי־מָשְׁחוּ אֶת־דָּוִד לְמֶלֶךְ עַל־
יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיַּעֲלוּ כָל־פְּלִשְׁתִּים לְבַקֵּשׁ אֶת־דָּוִד וַיִּשְׁמַע
דָּוִד וַיֵּרֶד אֶל־הַמְּצוּדָה: ^{יח} וּפְלִשְׁתִּים בָּאוּ וַיִּנְטְשׁוּ
בְּעֶמֶק רַפְּאִים: ^{יט} וַיִּשְׁאַל דָּוִד בַּיהוָה לֵאמֹר
הֲאֶעֱלֶה אֶל־פְּלִשְׁתִּים הַתֹּנֶם בְּיָדִי {פ}

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־דָּוִד עֲלֶה כִּי־נָתַן אֲתָן אֶת־
הַפְּלִשְׁתִּים בְּיָדְךָ: ^כ וַיָּבֹא דָוִד בְּבַעַל־פְּרָצִים וַיִּכֶם
שָׁם דָּוִד וַיֹּאמֶר פָּרַץ יְהוָה אֶת־אִבֵּי לִפְנֵי כְּפָרֶץ
מִים עַל־כֵּן קָרָא שֵׁם־הַמָּקוֹם הַהוּא בְּעַל פְּרָצִים:
^{כא} וַיַּעֲזְבוּ שָׁם אֶת־עֲצֵבֵיהֶם וַיִּשְׁאֲם דָּוִד
וַאֲנָשָׁיו: {פ}

^{כב} וַיִּסְפּוּ עוֹד פְּלִשְׁתִּים לַעֲלוֹת וַיִּנְטְשׁוּ בְּעֶמֶק
רַפְּאִים: ^{כג} וַיִּשְׁאַל דָּוִד בַּיהוָה וַיֹּאמֶר לֹא תַעֲלֶה

Shobab, Nathan, Solomon, ¹⁵ and Ibhar, Elishua, Nepheg, Japhia, ¹⁶ and Elishama and Eliphelet.

¹⁷ When the Philistines heard that David had been anointed as king of Israel, they all marched up to seek him out. On hearing this, David went down to the stronghold. ¹⁸ When the Philistines arrived, they deployed in the Valley of the Rephaim. ¹⁹ David consulted Yahweh; “Shall I attack the Philistines?” he asked, “Will you deliver them into my power?”

Yahweh answered David, “Attack! I will surely deliver the Philistines into your power.” ²⁰ So, David went to Baal-Perazim and there defeated them. David said, “Yahweh has made a breach in my enemies like a breach the waters make.” For this reason, that place was called Baal-Perazim. ²¹ They had left their gods behind them there, and David and his men carried them off.

²² Again, the Philistines marched up and deployed in the Valley of the Rephaim. ²³ David consulted Yahweh, who answered, “Do not attack

¹⁵ For the last name, the LXX reads *Ιεφιεζ*.

¹⁶ The LXX adds: ^{16a} *Σαμαε, Ιεσσιβαθ, Ναθαν, Γαλαμααν, Ιεβααρ, Θεησους, Ελφαλατ, Ναγεδ, Ναφεκ, Ιαναθα, Λεασαμυς, Βααλιμαθ, Ελιφαλαθ*.

¹⁷ According to a footnote to the NJB, the ‘stronghold’ mentioned was, perhaps, Adullam (1S 22:1–5): Jerusalem was not yet captured (see #6).

¹⁸ The ‘Valley of the Rephaim’ is a sunken plain to the southwest of Jerusalem (Jos 15:8, 18:16 and see Dt 2:10).

¹⁹ The literal translation of ‘power’ is ‘hand’.

²⁰ ‘Baal-Perazim’ (בְּעַל פְּרָצִים) means, ‘Lord of Bursting Forth’ (see Gn 38:29).

²¹ The NRSV & NETB open with ‘the Philistines’ in place of ‘they’, here following the MT & NJB.

²² The NRSV & NETB have ‘spread out’ in place of ‘deployed’, here following the NJB.

²³ In place of ‘balsam trees’, here following the NJB & NRSV, NETB has simply ‘trees’; others have ‘mulberry trees’, ‘mastic trees’, or ‘aspens’.

הִסֵּב אֶל־אַחֲרֵיהֶם וּבָאתָ לָהֶם מִמּוֹל בְּכָאִים:
כִּי יִהְיֶה בְּשִׁמְעֶךָ כְּשִׁמְעֶךָ אֶת־קוֹל צַעֲדָהּ בְּרָאשֵׁי
הַבְּכָאִים אֲזִי תִּחְרָץ כִּי אֲזִי יֵצֵא יְהוָה לִפְנֵיךָ לְהַכּוֹת
בְּמַחֲנֶה פְּלִשְׁתִּים: כִּי וַיַּעַשׂ דָּוִד כִּן כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּהוּ
יְהוָה וַיִּדֹּל אֶת־פְּלִשְׁתִּים מִגִּבְעַ עַד־בֶּאֱדָן גִּזְרִי: {פ}

them from the front; go round to their rear and engage them opposite the balsam trees.²⁴ When you hear the sound of footsteps in the treetops, advance; for, Yahweh will be going ahead of you to rout the army of the Philistines.”²⁵ David did as Yahweh had ordered and routed the Philistines from Gibeon as far as Gezer.

²⁴ The *Kethib*/ *Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation. The ‘footsteps’ refer to the advancing footsteps of Yahweh.

²⁵ The *NJB* ends the verse with ‘the Pass of Gezer’ and the *NRSV* has ‘Geba’ in place of ‘Gibeon’.

שמואל ב פרק ו

א וַיִּסַּף עוֹד דָּוִד אֶת־כָּל־בְּחֹר בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל שְׁלֹשִׁים
אֶלֶף: ב וַיָּקֶם וַיֵּלֶךְ דָּוִד וְכָל־הָעָם אֲשֶׁר אִתּוֹ
מִבְּעַלֵי יְהוּדָה לְהַעֲלוֹת מִשָּׁם אֶת אֲרוֹן הָאֱלֹהִים
אֲשֶׁר־נִקְרָא שֵׁם יְהוָה עָבְאוֹת יֹשֵׁב הַכְּרֻבִּים
עָלָיו: ג וַיִּרְכְּבוּ אֶת־אֲרוֹן הָאֱלֹהִים אֶל־עֲגֹלָה
חֲדָשָׁה וַיִּשְׁאָהוּ מִבֵּית אֲבִינָדָב אֲשֶׁר בְּגִבְעָה וְעֻזָּא
וְאַחִיו בְּנֵי אֲבִינָדָב נְהָגִים אֶת־הָעֲגֹלָה חֲדָשָׁה:
ד וַיִּשְׁאָהוּ מִבֵּית אֲבִינָדָב אֲשֶׁר בְּגִבְעָה עִם אֲרוֹן
הָאֱלֹהִים וְאַחִיו הֵלֵךְ לִפְנֵי הָאֲרוֹן: ה וְדָוִד וְכָל־בֵּית
יִשְׂרָאֵל מְשַׁחֲקִים לִפְנֵי יְהוָה בְּכָל עֲצֵי בְרוֹשִׁים
וּבְכִנֹּרוֹת וּבִנְבָלִים וּבַתְּפִים וּבִמְנַעֲנָעִים
וּבַצִּלְצְלִים: ו וַיָּבֹאוּ עַד־גֶּרֶן נָכוֹן וַיִּשְׁלַח עֲזָה אֶל־
אֲרוֹן הָאֱלֹהִים וַיֵּאָחֲזוּ בּוֹ כִּי שָׁמְטוּ הַבָּקָר: ז וַיַּחֲרֶ־

2 SAMUEL 6

¹ David again gathered all the picked troops of Israel, thirty thousand in number. ² Setting off with all the people then with him, David went to Baalah of Judah, to bring up from there the Ark of God, which bears the name of Yahweh Sabaoth, who is enthroned on the cherubim. ³ They placed the Ark of God on a new cart, and brought it out from the house of Abinadab, which was on the hill. Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, were leading the new cart. ⁴ They brought it with the Ark of God up from the house of Abinadab on the hill. Ahio was walking in front of the Ark, ⁵ while David and all the House of Israel danced before Yahweh with all their might, singing to the accompaniment of lyres, harps, tambourines, castanets, and cymbals. ⁶ When they came to the threshing-floor of Nacon, Uzzah reached out his hand to the Ark of God and steadied it, as the oxen were making it tilt. ⁷ Then the anger of

2 SAMUEL 6

- ¹ The translation 'gathered' understands the verb to be a defective spelling of וַיִּאֶסֶף due to quiescence of the letter א; the root therefore is אסַף. The Masoretes pointed the verb as וַיִּסַּף, taking it as a form of יָסַף ('to add') but this does not fit the context, which calls for a verb of gathering.
- ² 'Baalah' (the NRSV has 'Baale-Judah') was the old name of Kiriath-Jearim (Jos 15:9, 15:60, 18:14), the place where the Ark was left (1S 6:21 – 7:2).
- ³ Another reading for 'and Ahio' is 'and his brother'.
- ⁴ For this verse, here following the MT & NETB, the NJB opens with the conjectural 'Uzzah walked' and the NRSV has merely 'with the Ark of God'.
- ⁵ 'With all their might, singing' follows 4QSam^a and the LXX (ἐν ἰσχύι καὶ ἐν ᾠδαῖς); the MT has 'fir trees'.
- ⁶ The MT lacks 'out his hand', here following the LXX (τῇ χειρὶ αὐτοῦ) and 1Ch 13:9.
- ⁷ The meaning of the Hebrew, here translated as 'for this crime' is very uncertain; the NRSV, following 4QSam^a and 1Ch 13:8, reads 'because he reached out his hand to the Ark'. The Ark was terrible to its foes (1S 5) or to those who treated it with disrespect (1S 6:19).

אִף יְהוָה בַּעֲזָה וַיִּכְהוּ שֵׁם הָאֱלֹהִים עַל־הַשָּׁל וַיִּמָּת
שֵׁם עִם אָרוֹן הָאֱלֹהִים: ^ח וַיַּחַר לְדָוִד עַל־אֲשֶׁר פָּרַץ
יְהוָה פָּרַץ בַּעֲזָה וַיִּקְרָא לַמָּקוֹם הַהוּא פָּרַץ עֲזָה
עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה: ^ט וַיֵּרָא דָוִד אֶת־יְהוָה בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא
וַיֹּאמֶר אֵיךְ יָבוֹא אֵלַי אָרוֹן יְהוָה: ^י וְלֹא־אֲבִה דָוִד
לְהִסִּיר אֵלָיו אֶת־אָרוֹן יְהוָה עַל־עֵיר דָּוִד וַיִּטְהַר
דָּוִד בֵּית עֲבֹד־אֲדָם הַגִּתִּית: ^{יא} וַיֵּשֶׁב אָרוֹן יְהוָה בֵּית
עֲבֹד אֲדָם הַגִּתִּית שְׁלֹשָׁה חֳדָשִׁים וַיְבָרֶךְ יְהוָה אֶת־
עֲבֹד אֲדָם וְאֶת־כָּל־בֵּיתוֹ:

^{יב} וַיֵּגֵד לַמֶּלֶךְ דָּוִד לֵאמֹר בָּרַךְ יְהוָה אֶת־בֵּית עֲבֹד
אֲדָם וְאֶת־כָּל־אֲשֶׁר־לּוֹ בַּעֲבוּר אָרוֹן הָאֱלֹהִים וַיִּלָּךְ
דָּוִד וַיַּעַל אֶת־אָרוֹן הָאֱלֹהִים מִבֵּית עֲבֹד אֲדָם עִיר
דָּוִד בְּשִׂמְחָה: ^{יג} וַיְהִי כִי צָעְדוּ נְשָׂאֵי אָרוֹן־יְהוָה
שֹׁשֶׁה צָעָדִים וַיִּזְבַּח שׁוֹר וּמְרִיא: ^{יד} וַדָּוִד מְכַרְכֵּר

Yahweh blazed out against Uzzah; and for this crime, God struck him down on the spot, and he died there beside the Ark of God. ⁸ David was displeased that Yahweh had broken out against Uzzah, and that place is called Perez-Uzzah to this day. ⁹ David went in fear of Yahweh that day. “How can the Ark of Yahweh come to me?” he said. ¹⁰ Therefore, David decided not to take the Ark into the Citadel of David and took it to the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite. ¹¹ The Ark of Yahweh remained in the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite for three months, and Yahweh blessed Obed-Edom and his whole family.

¹² King David was told that Yahweh had blessed the family of Obed-Edom and all that belonged to him because of the Ark of God. So, David went and joyfully brought the Ark of God up from Obed-Edom’s house to the Citadel of David. ¹³ When the bearers of the Ark of Yahweh had gone six paces, he sacrificed an ox and a fat calf. ¹⁴ David danced before

⁸ ‘Perez-Uzzah’ (פָּרַץ עֲזָה) means ‘Breach of Uzzah’ (see 5:20): Yahweh has brought destruction (literally, ‘broken through’) on Uzzah.

⁹ In place of ‘come to me’, here following the NJB & NETB, the NRSV has ‘come into my care’.

¹⁰ In place of ‘the Gittite’, here following the MT, NRSV & NETB, the NJB has ‘of Gath’ (‘Gath’ means ‘winepress’ and there were several towns in Israelite territory of that name, so ‘Obed-Edom’ was not necessarily from the Philistine town). On the other hand, he could have been a follower of David from the latter’s Philistine days (1S 27:2–4).

¹¹ The literal translation of ‘family’ is ‘house’ (as also in v. 12).

¹² No explanation is given for David’s change of heart from vv. 9–10.

¹³ The NJB has ‘fat sheep’ in place of ‘fat calf’ (here following NETB) and the NRSV has simply ‘fatling’. Note that it was perfectly possible for David to offer sacrifice (see also v. 17, cf. 1S 13:10–13); only later was this function restricted to priests.

¹⁴ The ‘linen ephod’ was a priestly garment; David has just given sacrifice and is about to give a blessing (v. 18).

בְּכָל־עֹז לִפְנֵי יְהוָה וְדָוִד חָגָר אֶפֻּד בָּד: ^{טו} וְדָוִד
וְכָל־בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל מַעֲלִים אֶת־אֲרוֹן יְהוָה בְּתִרְעָה
וּבִקּוֹל שׁוֹפָר: ^{טז} וְהָיָה אֲרוֹן יְהוָה בָּא עִיר דָּוִד
וּמִיכַל בַּת־שָׁאוּל נִשְׁקָפָה | בְּעַד הַחֲלוֹן וַתֵּרָא אֶת־
הַמֶּלֶךְ דָּוִד מִפָּנָיו וּמִכְרָכָר לִפְנֵי יְהוָה וַתִּבְזֶז לוֹ
בַּלְבָּה: ^{יז} וַיָּבֹאוּ אֶת־אֲרוֹן יְהוָה וַיַּצְגּוּ אֹתוֹ בְּמִקְוָמוֹ
בְּתוֹךְ הָאֹהֶל אֲשֶׁר נָטָה־לוֹ דָּוִד וַיַּעַל דָּוִד עֲלוֹת
לִפְנֵי יְהוָה וּשְׁלָמִים: ^{יח} וַיִּכַּל דָּוִד מִהַעֲלוֹת הָעוֹלָה
וְהַשְּׁלָמִים וַיִּבְרַךְ אֶת־הָעָם בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת:
^{יט} וַיַּחֲלֵק לְכָל־הָעָם לְכָל־הַמּוֹן יִשְׂרָאֵל לְמֵאִישׁ
וְעַד־אִשָּׁה לְאִישׁ חֶלֶת לֶחֶם אַחַת וְאַשְׁפָּר אֶחָד
וְאַשִּׁישָׁה אַחַת וַיֵּלֶךְ כָּל־הָעָם אִישׁ לְבֵיתוֹ: ^כ וַיָּשָׁב
דָּוִד לְבֵרֶךְ אֶת־בֵּיתוֹ {ס} וַתֵּצֵא מִיכַל בַּת־שָׁאוּל
לִקְרֹאת דָּוִד וַתֹּאמֶר מִה־נִּכְבַּד הַיּוֹם מֶלֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל
אֲשֶׁר נִגְלָה הַיּוֹם לְעֵינַי אֲמָהוּת עַבְדִּי כִּהְגָּלוֹת

Yahweh with all his might; David was girded with a linen ephod. ¹⁵ So, David and all the House of Israel brought up the Ark of Yahweh with acclaim and the sound of the horn. ¹⁶ As the Ark of Yahweh entered the Citadel of David, Michal the daughter of Saul watched from the window and saw King David leaping and dancing before Yahweh; and she despised him in her heart. ¹⁷ They brought the Ark of Yahweh in and put it in its place inside the tent that David had pitched for it; and David gave high-offerings before Yahweh and peace offerings. ¹⁸ When David had finished the high-offerings and peace offerings, he blessed the people in the name of Yahweh Sabaoth. ¹⁹ He then gave to all the people, the whole multitude of Israelites, men and women, a roll of bread to each, a portion of meat, and a raisin cake. Then they all went back to their homes. ²⁰ Then David came to bless his household; and Michal, the daughter of Saul, went out to meet him and said, “How the king of Israel has honoured himself today, exposing himself in the eyes

¹⁵ A few medieval Hebrew MSS and the Peshitta lack the words ‘the House’.

¹⁶ NETB lacks the words ‘in her heart’, here following the MT, NJB & NRSV; other readings for the expression are ‘she was filled with contempt for him’ (NLT) and ‘she hated him’ (NCV).

¹⁷ The Peshitta lacks the words ‘in its place’.

¹⁸ The NJB has ‘communion sacrifices’ in place of ‘peace offerings’, here following NETB, and the NRSV has ‘offerings of well-being’ (as also in v. 17).

¹⁹ The word אֶשְׁפָּר (‘a portion of meat’ – following the NRSV) is found in the OT only here and in the parallel passage found of 1Ch 16:3; its exact meaning is uncertain, although the context indicates that it was a food of some sort: the NJB has ‘a portion of dates’ and NETB has ‘a date cake’ (following the LXX).

²⁰ The literal translation of ‘any buffoon’ is ‘one of the foolish ones’.

נִגְלֹזֹת אֶחָד הָרָקִים: ^{כא} וַיֹּאמֶר דָּוִד אֶל־מִיכָל לִפְנֵי
 יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר בָּחַר־בִּי מֵאֲבִיךָ וּמִכָּל־בֵּיתוֹ לְצִוּת אֶתִּי
 נִגִּיד עַל־עַם יְהוָה עַל־יִשְׂרָאֵל וְשַׁחֲקֵתִי לִפְנֵי יְהוָה:
^{כב} וְנִקְלָתִי עוֹד מִזֹּאת וְהִיִּיתִי שָׁפֵל בְּעֵינֵי וְעַם־
 הָאֲמָהוּת אֲשֶׁר אֲמַרְתָּ עַמָּם אֲכַבְדָּהּ: ^{כג} וְלִמִּיכָל
 בַּת־שָׁאוּל לֹא־הָיָה לָהּ יֶלֶד עַד יוֹם מוֹתָהּ: {פ}

of his servant-maids, as any buffoon might.” ²¹ David said to Michal, “It was before Yahweh, who chose me over your father and his whole House to make me leader of Israel, Yahweh’s people, that I have danced before Yahweh, ²² and demean myself even more. In my eyes I may be base, but by the maids you speak of I shall be held in honour.” ²³ And to the day of her death Michal, the daughter of Saul, had no child.

²¹ The NJB, following the LXX (εὐλογητὸς κύριος), adds ‘(not for them.) As Yahweh lives,’ before ‘who chose me’; here, we follow the MT & NRSV.

²² The NJB, following the LXX (ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖς σου), has ‘in your eyes’ in place of ‘in my eyes’. This whole episode brings out the depth and simplicity of David’s religious faith.

²³ It is not clear whether Michal had no child because David put her away or because she was barren. Childlessness was considered a great misfortune; compare Gn 30:1, 1S 1:6–11.

2 SAMUEL 7

שמואל ב פרק ז

א וַיְהִי כִּי־יָשַׁב הַמֶּלֶךְ בְּבֵיתוֹ וַיְהוֶה הַנִּיחֹלֹם מִסָּבִיב מִכָּל־אֲיָבָיו: ב וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶל־נָתָן הַנָּבִיא רֵאָה נָא אֲנֹכִי יוֹשֵׁב בְּבֵית אֲרָזִים וְאֲרוֹן הָאֱלֹהִים יֹשֵׁב בְּתוֹךְ הִרִיעָה: ג וַיֹּאמֶר נָתָן אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ כֹּל אֲשֶׁר בָּלַבְבְּךָ לַךְ עָשָׂה כִּי יְהוָה עִמָּךְ: ד וַיְהִי בַלִּילָה הַהוּא {ס} וַיְהִי דְבַר־יְהוָה אֶל־נָתָן לֵאמֹר: ה לֵךְ וְאָמַרְתָּ אֶל־עַבְדִּי אֶל־דָּוִד {ס}

ו כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה הַאֲתָה תִּבְנֶה־לִּי בַּיִת לְשֹׁכְתִי: ז כִּי לֹא יִשְׁכַּתִּי בְּבֵית לְמַיִם הַעֲלֹתִי אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמִּצְרַיִם וְעַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה וְאֶהְיֶה מִתְהַלֵּךְ בְּאֶהָל וּבְמִשְׁכָּן: ח בְּכָל אֲשֶׁר־הִתְהַלַּכְתִּי בְּכָל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הִדְבַּר דְּבַרְתִּי אֶת־אֶחָד שְׂבָטֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִי לָרְעוֹת אֶת־עַמִּי אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר לָמָּה לֹא־בִנִיתֶם לִי בַּיִת אֲרָזִים: ט וְעַתָּה כֹּה־תֹאמַר לְעַבְדִּי

1 Now, the king had settled into his house, for Yahweh had given him rest from all the enemies surrounding him. 2 The king said to the prophet Nathan, "Look, I am living in a house made of cedar while the Ark of Yahweh dwells in the middle of a tent." 3 Nathan said to the king, "You should go and do all that is in your mind, for Yahweh is with you." 4 But, that same night, the word of Yahweh came to Nathan: 5 "Go and tell my servant David:

"Thus, Yahweh speaks: Are you the one to build me a house to live in? 6 I have never stayed in a house from the day I brought the children of Israel up out of Egypt until today but have always led a wanderer's life in a tent and a tabernacle. 7 In all my journeying with the whole people of Israel, did I say to any one of the tribal leaders of Israel, whom I had appointed as shepherds to take care of Israel my people: "Why have you not built me a house of cedar?" 8 Now, therefore, this is what you must

2 SAMUEL 7

1 The NJB has 'David' in place of 'the king', here following the MT & NRSV.

2 The NJB & NRSV lack the words 'the middle of', here following NETB.

3 Several medieval Hebrew MSS and the Peshitta lack 'go and'.

4 The *Setumah* ({ס}) in the middle of this verse is represented in the translation by 2 Em Space characters.

5 The *Setumah* ({ס}) in the middle of this verse is here taken as a paragraph break.

6 The writer here ignores the temple at Shiloh (1S 1:7, 3:3).

7 For 'tribal leaders' (following the NRSV), the NJB, following 1Ch 17:6, has 'judges'; the MT has 'tribes'.

8 The NRSV has 'prince over' in place of 'leader of', here following the NJB.

לְדוֹד כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת אֲנִי לִקְחָתִיךָ מִן־הַנֶּזֶחַ
מֵאַחֶר הֵצֵאנִי לְהִיטֹת נֶגִיד עַל־עַמִּי עַל־יִשְׂרָאֵל:
וְאֵהִיָּה עִמָּךְ בְּכָל אֲשֶׁר הִלַכְתָּ וְאַכְרַתָּה אֶת־כָּל־
אֹיְבֶיךָ מִפְּנֶיךָ וְעָשִׂיתִי־לְךָ שֵׁם גָּדוֹל כְּשֵׁם הַגְּדֹלִים
אֲשֶׁר בָּאָרֶץ: וְשִׁמַּתִּי מָקוֹם לְעַמִּי לְיִשְׂרָאֵל
וְנִטְעָתוֹ וְשָׁכַן תַּחְתּוֹ וְלֹא יִרְגֹז עוֹד וְלֹא־יִסִּיפוּ
בְּגִי־עוֹלָה לְעֲנֹתוֹ כְּאֲשֶׁר בְּרָאשׁוֹנָה: וְלִמֵּן־הַיּוֹם
אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִי שְׁפָטִים עַל־עַמִּי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְהִנִּיחָתִי לְךָ
מִכָּל־אֹיְבֶיךָ וְהִגִּיד לְךָ יְהוָה כִּי־בֵית יַעֲשֶׂה־לְךָ
יְהוָה: יִבְנֶה כִּי יִמְלֹאוּ יָמֶיךָ וְשָׁכַבְתָּ אֶת־אֲבֹתֶיךָ
וְהִקִּמַּתִּי אֶת־זֶרְעֶךָ אַחֲרֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר יֵצֵא מִמֶּעֶיךָ
וְהִכִּינֹתִי אֶת־מַמְלַכְתּוֹ: הִוא יִבְנֶה־בֵּית לְשָׁמַי
וְכִנְנֹתִי אֶת־כִּסֵּא מַמְלַכְתּוֹ עַד־עוֹלָם: וְאֲנִי אֶהִיָּה־
לּוֹ לְאָב וְהוּא יִהְיֶה־לִּי לְבֵן אֲשֶׁר בְּהַעוֹתוֹ וְהִכַּחֲתִיו
בְּשֶׁבֶט אַנְשִׁים וּבִגְגֵי בְנֵי אָדָם: וְחִסְדִּי לֹא־
יִסּוֹר מִמֶּנּוּ כְּאֲשֶׁר הִסְרָתִי מֵעַם שְׂאוֹל אֲשֶׁר

say to my servant David, “Yahweh Sabaoth says this: I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, to be leader of my people Israel; ⁹ I have been with you wherever you went; I have cut off all your enemies before you. I will give you fame as great as the fame of the greatest on earth. ¹⁰ I will provide a place for my people Israel; I will plant them there and they shall dwell in that place and be disturbed no more; and the wicked shall oppress them no more, as they did, ¹¹ in the days when I appointed judges over my people Israel; I will give you rest from all your enemies. Yahweh will make you great; Yahweh will make you a House. ¹² When your days are over and you lie down with your ancestors, I will preserve the offspring of your body after you and establish his kingdom. ¹³ He shall build a house for my name, and I will make his royal throne secure forever. ¹⁴ I will be as a father to him and he as a son to me; when he commits sins, I will punish him with the rod such as men use, with strokes such as those given by the children of men. ¹⁵ Yet, my favour shall not depart from him, as I withdrew it from

⁹ Literally translated, this verse ends, “and I will make for you a great name like the name of the great ones who are in the earth.”

¹⁰ The literal translation of ‘the wicked’ is ‘sons of violence’.

¹¹ The NJB has ‘give **them** rest from all **their** enemies’; here, we follow the MT, NRSV & NETB.

¹² The NJB ends this verse, here following the NRSV, with, “and make his sovereignty secure.”

¹³ This verse is often thought to be an addition; but there is no reason for supposing the prophecy to be more recent than the reign of David.

¹⁴ The opening clause is a formula for adoption, as in Ps 2:7 and 110:34 (LXX) but also the earliest expression of Davidic messianism.

¹⁵ The NRSV, following the LXX (οὐκ ἀποστήσω) & 1Ch 17:13, has ‘I shall not take (my favour)’ for ‘my favour shall not depart’; here with the MT.

הַסִּרְתִּי מִלְפָּנֶיךָ: ^{טז} וְנֶאֱמַן בֵּיתְךָ וּמַמְלַכְתְּךָ עַד-
 עוֹלָם לְפָנֶיךָ כְּסֶאֱךָ יִהְיֶה נָכוֹן עַד-עוֹלָם: ^{יז} כָּכָל
 הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה וּכְכֹל הַחֲזִיוִן הַזֶּה כֵּן דִּבֶּר נָתָן אֶל-
 דָּוִד: {פ}

^{יח} וַיָּבֹא הַמֶּלֶךְ דָּוִד וַיֵּשֶׁב לִפְנֵי יְהוָה וַיֹּאמֶר מִי אֲנִכִּי
 אֲדֹנִי יְהוָה וּמִי בֵיתִי כִּי הִבֵּאתָנִי עַד-הַלֵּם:
^{יט} וַתִּקְטֹן עוֹד זֹאת בְּעֵינֶיךָ אֲדֹנִי יְהוָה וַתְּדַבֵּר גַּם
 אֶל-בֵּית-עַבְדְּךָ לְמַרְחֹק וְזֹאת תּוֹרַת הָאָדָם אֲדֹנִי
 יְהוָה: ^כ וּמַה-יּוֹסִיף דָּוִד עוֹד לְדַבֵּר אֵלֶיךָ וְאַתָּה
 יָדַעְתָּ אֶת-עַבְדְּךָ אֲדֹנִי יְהוָה: ^{כא} בַּעֲבוּר דְּבָרְךָ
 וּכְלַבְּךָ עָשִׂיתָ אֶת כָּל-הַגְּדוּלָּה הַזֹּאת לְהוֹדִיעַ אֶת-
 עַבְדְּךָ: ^{כב} עַל-כֵּן גִּדַּלְתָּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים כִּי-אֵין כָּמוֹךָ
 וְאֵין אֱלֹהִים זֹלָתְךָ בְּכָל אֲשֶׁר-שָׁמַעְנוּ בְּאָזְנוֹנוּ:
^{כג} וּמִי כַעֲמָךְ בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל גּוֹי אֶחָד בְּאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר הִלְכוּ-

Saul, your predecessor. ¹⁶ Your House and your sovereignty will ever stand firm before me and your throne will be forever secure.”

¹⁷ According to all these words and all this vision, so Nathan spoke to David.

¹⁸ King David then went in, sat down before Yahweh, and said: “Who am I, Lord Yahweh, and what is my House, that you have led me thus far? ¹⁹ “And yet, in your eyes, Lord Yahweh, this seemed so little, and now you extend your promises for your servant’s family into the distant future. Such is human destiny, Lord Yahweh! ²⁰ What more can David say to you, since you, Lord Yahweh, know all about your servant?

²¹ Because of your word and as you chose, you have had the generosity to reveal this to your servant. ²² That is why you are great, Lord Yahweh; there is none like you, no God but you alone, according to all our own ears have heard. ²³ Is there another people on the earth like your people,

¹⁶ ‘Before me’ follows the LXX (ἐνώπιον ἐμοῦ); the MT has ‘before him’ – likely the result of dittography of the כ at the beginning of the next form.

¹⁷ For this verse, here following the NRSV/MT, the NJB reads, “Nathan related all these words to David and this whole revelation.”

¹⁸ Vv. 18–29 comprise a prayer of praise and thanksgiving for the promise of vv. 8–16.

¹⁹ The translation of the 2nd sentence is uncertain; the NRSV reads: “May this be instruction for the people, O Lord GOD!”

²⁰ The verb ‘know’ here refers to recognising another in a special way and giving them special treatment (see 1Ch 17:18).

²¹ The NRSV reads, “Because of your promise, and according to your own heart, you have wrought all this greatness, so that your servant may know it.”

²² The phrase translated ‘according to all’ (following the NRSV) is an emendation of the MT’s בְּכָל (‘in all’) to כָּכָל.

²³ To avoid giving the impression that these gods actually existed, the scribal tradition modified the MT (here restored in accordance with 1Ch 17:21) by relating everything to Yahweh (‘God’ instead of ‘a god’) and Israel (‘your people whom you have redeemed from Egypt’ instead of ‘his people’). The NRSV maintains the scribal tradition.

אֱלֹהִים לְפָדוֹת-לֹו לְעַם וּלְשׁוֹם לֹו שֵׁם וּלְעֲשׂוֹת
 לָכֶם הַגְדוֹלָה וְנִרְאֻת לְאַרְצָךְ מִפְּנֵי עַמֶּךָ אֲשֶׁר
 פָּדִיתָ לָךְ מִמִּצְרַיִם גּוֹיִם וְאֱלֹהֵיוֹ: כִּי וּתְכוֹנֶנָּה לָךְ אֶת-
 עַמֶּךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל | לָךְ לְעַם עַד-עוֹלָם וְאַתָּה יְהוָה הָיִיתָ
 לָהֶם לֵאלֹהִים: {ס}

כֹּה וַעֲתָה יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים הַדְּבַר אֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתָּ עַל-
 עַבְדְּךָ וְעַל-בֵּיתוֹ הַקָּם עַד-עוֹלָם וַעֲשֵׂה כַּאֲשֶׁר
 דִּבַּרְתָּ: כִּי וַיִּגְדַּל שְׁמֶךָ עַד-עוֹלָם לֵאמֹר יְהוָה
 צְבָאוֹת אֱלֹהִים עַל-יִשְׂרָאֵל וּבֵית עַבְדְּךָ דָּוִד יִהְיֶה
 נָכוֹן לְפָנֶיךָ: כִּי כִּי-אַתָּה יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
 גָּלִיתָ אֶת-אֶזְנוֹ עַבְדְּךָ לֵאמֹר בֵּית אֲבִנָּה-לָךְ עַל-
 כֵּן מֵצָא עַבְדְּךָ אֶת-לִבּוֹ לְהִתְפַּלֵּל אֵלֶיךָ אֶת-
 הַתְּפִלָּה הַזֹּאת: כֹּה וַעֲתָה | אֲדַנִּי יְהוָה אַתָּה-הוּא
 הָאֱלֹהִים וּדְבַרְיָךְ יִהְיֶה אֱמֶת וּתְדַבֵּר אֶל-עַבְדְּךָ
 אֶת-הַטּוֹבָה הַזֹּאת: כֹּס וַעֲתָה הוּא | וּבֵרַךְ אֶת-בֵּית
 עַבְדְּךָ לְהִיּוֹת לְעוֹלָם לְפָנֶיךָ כִּי-אַתָּה אֲדַנִּי יְהוָה
 דִּבַּרְתָּ וּמְבַרְכְּתָךְ יְבָרַךְ בֵּית-עַבְדְּךָ לְעוֹלָם: {פ}

like Israel, whom a god proceeded to redeem, to make them his people
 and to make a name for himself by performing great and terrible things
 on their behalf, by driving out nations and their gods before his people?
 24 You have constituted your people Israel to be your own people
 forever; and you, Yahweh, have become their God.

25 “Now, Lord Yahweh, always keep the promise you have made your
 servant and his House and do as you have said. 26 Thus, your name will
 be exalted forever in the saying, “Yahweh Sabaoth is God over Israel.”
 And the House of your servant David will be made secure in your
 presence. 27 For you yourself, O Yahweh Sabaoth, God of Israel, have
 made this revelation to your servant, “I will build you a House;”
 therefore, your servant has found the courage to offer this prayer to you.
 28 Yes, Lord Yahweh, you are God indeed, may your words prove to be
 true! You have made this fair promise to your servant. 29 What is more,
 you have deigned to bless your servant’s dynasty, so that it may remain
 forever before you; for you, Lord Yahweh, have spoken; and may your
 servant’s dynasty be blessed with your blessing forever.

24 Literally translated, this verse opens, “And you established for yourself your people Israel for yourself for a people permanently.”

25 The NRSV & NETB have ‘promised’ in place of ‘said’, here following the MT (literally, ‘spoken’) & NJB.

26 The NJB has ‘and men will say’ in place of ‘in the saying’, here following the MT & NRSV.

27 The Literal translation of ‘the courage’ is ‘his heart’.

28 The translation ‘may your words prove to be true’ (here following NETB) understands the prefixed verb form as a jussive, indicating David’s wish or prayer; another option is to take the form as an imperfect and translate ‘your words are true’ (as NJB & NRSV).

29 The literal translation of ‘dynasty’ (twice in this verse) is ‘house’.

2 SAMUEL 8

שמואל ב פרק ח

א ויהי אחרי־כן ויך דוד את־פְּלִשְׁתִּים ויכניעם ויקח דוד את־מֶתֶג אֲמָה מִיַּד פְּלִשְׁתִּים: ב ויך את־מוֹאָב וימדדם בַּחֲבֹל השָׁכַב אותם אֶרְצָה וימדד שְׁנֵי־חֲבָלִים לַהֲמִית וּמֵלֶא הַחֲבֹל לַחַיִּוֹת וַתְּהִי מוֹאָב לְדוֹד לַעֲבָדִים נִשְׁאִי מִנָּחָה: ג ויך דוד את־הַדְּדַעְזֹר בֶּן־רֶחָב מֶלֶךְ צוּבָה בְּלַכְתּוֹ לַהֲשִׁיב יָדוֹ בְּנֶהֱר [בְּנֶהֱר־פָּרַת]: ד וילכד דוד מִמֶּנּוּ אֶלֶף וּשְׁבַע־מֵאוֹת פָּרָשִׁים וְעֹשָׁרִים אֶלֶף אִישׁ רִגְלִי וַיַּעֲקֹר דוד אֶת־כָּל־הָרֶכֶב וַיֹּתֵר מִמֶּנּוּ מֵאָה רֶכֶב: ה וַתָּבֹא אֲרָם דֹּמֶשֶׁק לַעְזֹר לַהֲדַדְעֹזֶר מֶלֶךְ צוּבָה ויך דוד בְּאֲרָם עֹשָׁרִים־וּשְׁנָיִם אֶלֶף אִישׁ: ו וַיֵּשֶׁם דוד נָצִבִים בְּאֲרָם דֹּמֶשֶׁק וַתְּהִי אֲרָם לְדוֹד לַעֲבָדִים נִשְׁאִי מִנָּחָה וַיֵּשַׁע יְהוָה אֶת־דָּוִד בְּכָל

¹ Later, David attacked the Philistines and subdued them. David took Metheg-Ammah from the hand of the Philistines. ² He also defeated the Moabites and, making them lie down on the ground, measured them off by the line; he measured two lines to be put to death and one full line to be spared. The Moabites became subject to David, paying him tribute. ³ David defeated Hadadezer son of Rehob, king of Zobah, on his way to extend his power over the River Euphrates. ⁴ David took from him one thousand seven hundred charioteers and twenty thousand foot soldiers; David hamstringed all the chariot horses, keeping only a hundred of them. ⁵ The Aramaeans of Damascus came to the help of Hadadezer king of Zobah, but David killed twenty-two thousand men of the Aramaeans. ⁶ Then David imposed governors on Aram of Damascus, and the Aramaeans became subject to David, paying him tribute.

2 SAMUEL 8

- ¹ 'Metheg-Ammah' (מֶתֶג אֲמָה) means 'the bridle of one cubit'; many English versions treat this as a place name because the parallel text in 1Ch 18:1 reads 'Gath' (which is used by NJB & NLT here). It is possible that phrase is to be understood as the token of surrender, referring to the Philistine's defeat rather than a specific place (cf. TEV, CEV).
- ² The slaughter of two-thirds of the Moabites does not accord well with the friendly relations implied by 1S 22:3–4. Perhaps something happened to revive the old enmity (1S 14:47).
- ³ The Ketiv does not include the name 'Euphrates', here following the Qere (פָּרַת) and the LXX (Εὐφράτην).
- ⁴ In place of 'one thousand seven hundred charioteers', here following the MT, the LXX has 'one thousand chariots and seven thousand charioteers' (χιλῖα ἄρματα καὶ ἑπτὰ χιλιάδας ἵππῳ). Before the time of Solomon, the Israelite army had no chariots.
- ⁵ The LXX reads 'Syrians' (Σύροι) for 'Arameans'.
- ⁶ The literal translation of 'gave him victory' is 'delivered him'.

אֲשֶׁר הָלַךְ: ^ז וַיִּקַּח דָּוִד אֶת שְׁלֹטֵי הַזֶּהָב אֲשֶׁר הָיוּ
 אֵל עֲבָדֵי הַדָּדָעֶזֶר וַיְבִיֵּאֵם יְרוּשָׁלַם: ^ח וּמִבֶּטַח
 וּמִבְרַתִּי עָרֵי הַדָּדָעֶזֶר לָקַח הַמֶּלֶךְ דָּוִד נְחֹשֶׁת
 הַרְבֵּה מְאֹד: {ס}

^ט וַיִּשְׁמַע תָּעִי מֶלֶךְ חֲמַת כִּי הִבֵּה דָוִד אֶת כָּל-חֵיל
 הַדָּדָעֶזֶר: ^י וַיִּשְׁלַח תָּעִי אֶת-יֹרָם-בְּנוֹ אֶל-הַמֶּלֶךְ-
 דָּוִד לְשָׂאֵל-לּוֹ לְשָׁלוֹם וּלְבָרְכּוֹ עַל אֲשֶׁר נִלְחַם
 בַּהַדָּדָעֶזֶר וַיִּזְהֹוּ כִּי-אִישׁ מִלְחָמוֹת תָּעִי הָיָה
 הַדָּדָעֶזֶר וּבִידּוֹ הָיוּ כָּל־כֶּסֶף וְכָל־זָהָב וְכָל־
 נְחֹשֶׁת: ^{יא} גַּם-אַתָּם הַקְדִּישׁ הַמֶּלֶךְ דָּוִד לַיהוָה עִם-
 הַכֶּסֶף וְהַזָּהָב אֲשֶׁר הַקְדִּישׁ מִכָּל-הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר
 כָּבַשׁ: ^{יב} מֵאֲרָם וּמִמוֹאָב וּמִבְּנֵי עַמּוֹן וּמִפְּלִשְׁתִּים
 וּמִעַמְלָק וּמִשָּׁלַל הַדָּדָעֶזֶר בְּנִרְחֹב מֶלֶךְ צֹבָה:
^{יג} וַיַּעַשׂ דָּוִד שָׁם בְּשִׁבּוֹ מִהַכּוֹתוֹ אֶת-אֲרָם בְּגִיא-
 מֶלֶךְ שְׁמוֹנָה עָשָׂר אֲלָף: ^{יד} וַיֵּשֶׁם בְּאֵדוֹם נֹצְבִים

Wherever David went, Yahweh gave him victory. ⁷ David took the gold shields carried by the guards of Hadadezer and brought them to Jerusalem. ⁸ From Betah and Berothai, towns belonging to Hadadezer, King David took a great quantity of bronze.

⁹ When Toi king of Hamath heard that David had defeated the entire army of Hadadezer, ¹⁰ Toi sent his son Joram to King David to greet him and to congratulate because he had fought against Hadadezer and defeated him, since Hadadezer had often fought battles against Toi. Joram brought with him articles of silver, gold and bronze, ¹¹ which King David also consecrated to Yahweh as he had already consecrated the silver and gold taken from all the nations he had subjugated: ¹² Aram, Moab, the Ammonites, the Philistines, Amalek; from the spoil, too, of Hadadezer son of Rehob, king of Zobah. ¹³ So, David won fame for himself. On his return, he defeated eighteen thousand Aramaeans in the Valley of Salt. ¹⁴ He put garrisons in Edom; throughout all Edom, he

⁷ At the end of this verse, the LXX (& 4QSam^a) adds 'and Sousakim king of Egypt took them when he came up to Jerusalem in the days of Rehoboam the son of Solomon' (καὶ ἔλαβεν αὐτὰ Σουσακιμ βασιλεὺς Αἰγύπτου ἐν τῷ ἀναβῆναι αὐτὸν εἰς Ἱερουσαλημ ἐν ἡμέραις Ροβοαμ υἱοῦ Σολομῶντος).

⁸ NETB 'corrects' the name 'Betah' to 'Tebah' (cf. 1Ch 18:8); here, we follow the MT, NJB & NRSV.

⁹ The NJB, following 1Ch 18:9, has 'Tou' in place of 'Toi'; here, we follow the MT (תָּעִי) & NRSV.

¹⁰ The NJB, following 1Ch 18:10, has 'Hadoram' in place of 'Joram', here following the MT & NRSV – changing a gentile into a Yahwist name.

¹¹ An alternative reading for 'consecrated' is 'dedicated'.

¹² The NJB & NSRV following the LXX, Peshitta and a few Hebrew MSS, have 'Edom' in place of 'Aram', here following the MT & NETB.

¹³ In place of 'Arameans', here following the MT & NETB, the NJB & NRSV, following the LXX (Ἰδομαῖαν) & 1Ch 18:12, have 'Edomites' (see #12).

¹⁴ The NJB, following 1Ch 18:13, lacks, 'throughout all Edom he put garrisons', here following the MT & NRSV.

בְּכָל־אֲדָוָם שֵׁם נִצְבִּים וַיְהִי כָל־אֲדָוָם עֲבָדִים לְדָוִד
וַיֹּשֶׁעַ יְהוָה אֶת־דָּוִד בְּכָל אֲשֶׁר הָלַךְ: ^{טו} וַיִּמְלֹךְ דָּוִד
עַל־כָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיְהִי דָוִד עֹשֶׂה מִשְׁפָּט וְצִדְקָה
לְכָל־עַמּוֹ: ^{טז} וַיֹּאב בֶּן־צִרוּיָה עַל־הַצָּבָא וַיְהוֹשָׁפָט
בֶּן־אֲחִילֹוד מִזְכִּיר: ^{יז} וְצָדֹק בֶּן־אֲחִיטוֹב וְאַחִימֶלֶךְ
בֶּן־אֲבִיתָר כֹּהֲנִים וּשְׂרָיָה סֹפֵר: ^{יח} וּבְנֵיהוּ בֶן־
יְהוֹיָדָע וְהַכֹּהֲנִי וְהַפְּלִתִי וּבְנֵי דָוִד כֹּהֲנִים הָיוּ: {ס}

put garrisons, and all the Edomites became David's subjects. Yahweh protected David wherever he went. ¹⁵ David ruled over all Israel, administering law and justice to all his people. ¹⁶ Joab son of Zeruiah was over the army; Jehoshaphat son of Ahilud was recorder; ¹⁷ Zadok son of Ahitub and Ahimelech son Abiathar of were priests; Seraiah was scribe; ¹⁸ Benaiah son of Jehoiada was over the Cherethites and Pelethites; and David's sons were priests.

¹⁵ In place of 'law and justice', here following the *NJB*, the *NRSV* has 'justice and equity'.

¹⁶ Another version of the list of vv. 16–18 appears in 20:23–26. 'Zadok' appears here (v. 17) historically for the first time (1S 2:35). His earlier history is not known, though later his ancestry is traced back to Aaron (1Ch 6:3–8).

¹⁷ The *NJB* reads: "Zadok and Abiathar son of Abimelech, son of Ahitub, were priests," thus restoring the genealogy of Abiathar in accordance with 1S 22:20. The *MT* (preserved here) was probably intended to give Zadok a lineage to which he had no claim (see also 1Ch 5:34, 6:37–38). However, Zadok was a 'new' man and later supplanted Abiathar (1K 2:26–27, 35), thus fulfilling the prophecy against the descendants of Eli (1S 2:30–36); his family enjoyed a monopoly of the priesthood in Jerusalem until the exile. The name 'Seraiah' seems original in this ancient list but reappears as 'Shiya' or 'Shuwa' in 20:25, 'Shisha' in 1K 4:3 and 'Shusha' in 1Ch 18:16. Since his father's name is not given, he was probably a foreigner. Perhaps the variant forms are corruptions of his Egyptian title, 'scribe'.

¹⁸ The *MT* lacks 'was over', here following the *Peshitta*, *Tg* & 1Ch 18:17. The 'Cherethites' and 'Pelethites' were foreign mercenaries from Philistia who constituted David's bodyguard (15:18, 20:7, 23, 1K 1:38, 44); some interpreters consider these alternative names for 'Cretans' and 'Philistines'. The end of the verse is an odd statement, probably meaning that David's sons assisted or deputised for him in those priestly functions exercised by the king (see 6:13–20).

2 SAMUEL 9

שמואל ב פרק ט

א וַיֹּאמֶר דָּוִד הֲכִי יֵשְׁעוּד אֲשֶׁר נֹתַר לְבֵית שָׁאוּל
וְאֶעֱשֶׂה עִמּוֹ חֶסֶד בְּעֶבְרַת יְהוֹנָתָן: ב וּלְבֵית שָׁאוּל
עָבַד וּשְׁמוֹ צִיבָא וַיִּקְרְאוּ לוֹ אֶל־דָּוִד וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ
אֵלָיו הֲאֵתָה צִיבָא וַיֹּאמֶר עֲבָדְךָ: ג וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ
הָאִפֶּס עוֹד אִישׁ לְבֵית שָׁאוּל וְאֶעֱשֶׂה עִמּוֹ חֶסֶד
אֱלֹהִים וַיֹּאמֶר צִיבָא אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ עוֹד בֶּן לַיהוֹנָתָן
נָכָה רַגְלָיִם: ד וַיֹּאמְרוּ לוֹ הַמֶּלֶךְ אֵיפֹה הוּא וַיֹּאמֶר
צִיבָא אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ הִנֵּה־הוּא בֵּית מַכִּיר בֶּן־עַמִּיאל
בְּלוֹ דְּבָר: ה וַיִּשְׁלַח הַמֶּלֶךְ דָּוִד וַיִּקְחֵהוּ מִבֵּית מַכִּיר
בֶּן־עַמִּיאל מִלּוֹ דְּבָר: ו וַיָּבֹא מִפִּיבִשֶׁת בֶּן־יהוֹנָתָן
בֶּן־שָׁאוּל אֶל־דָּוִד וַיִּפֹּל עַל־פָּנָיו וַיִּשְׁתַּחוּ וַיֹּאמֶר
דָּוִד מִפִּיבִשֶׁת וַיֹּאמֶר הִנֵּה עֲבָדְךָ: ז וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ דָּוִד
אֶל־תִּירָא כִּי עָשָׂה אֲנִי עִמָּךְ חֶסֶד בְּעֶבְרַת
יְהוֹנָתָן אֲבִיךָ וְהִשְׁבַּתִּי לְךָ אֶת־כָּל־שָׂדֶה שָׁאוּל

¹ David asked, "Is there anyone still left of Saul's family so that I can show him kindness for Jonathon's sake?" ² Now Saul's family had a servant whose name was Ziba, and they called him to David. "You are Ziba?" the king asked. "At your service," he answered. ³ The king said, "Is there no one still left of Saul's family for me to show him God's kindness?" "There is still one of Jonathon's sons," Ziba answered the king, "a man with crippled feet." ⁴ "Where is he?" the king asked. Ziba replied, "He is living in the household of Machir son of Ammiel at Lo-Debar." ⁵ Then King David sent to have him brought from the house of Machir son of Ammiel at Lo-Debar. ⁶ On entering David's presence, Mephibosheth son of Jonathon, son of Saul, fell on his face and did homage. Davis said, "Mephibosheth!" He answered, "I am at your service." ⁷ Then David said, "Do not be afraid; I intend to show you kindness for your father Jonathon's sake. I will restore all the land of

2 SAMUEL 9

¹ The literal translation of 'family' is 'house'.

² The literal translation of 'at your service' (following the NJB, NRSV & NETB) is 'your servant'.

³ 'God's kindness' is a stronger term than the 'kindness' of v. 1, meaning 'obligation under God'.

⁴ NETB uses the spelling 'Makir' for 'Machir' (מַכִּיר), here following the NJB & NRSV.

⁵ The literal translation of 'sent to have him brought' is 'sent and took him'.

⁶ The NJB uses the name 'Meribbaal' in place of 'Mephibosheth' (see #4:4).

⁷ Probably one reason that Mephibosheth might be afraid was what had happened to two of his half-brothers and five of his nephews (21:8-9).

אָבִיךָ וְאַתָּה תֹאכַל לֶחֶם עַל־שֻׁלְחָנִי תָמִיד:
 ח וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה וַיֹּאמֶר מָה עֲבָדְךָ כִּי פָנִיתִי אֶל־הַכָּלָב
 הַמֵּת אֲשֶׁר כָּמוֹנִי: ט וַיִּקְרָא הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶל־צִיבָא גֵּעַר
 שָׂאוּל וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו כֹּל אֲשֶׁר הָיָה לְשָׂאוּל וְלִכְל־
 בֵּיתוֹ נָתַתִּי לְבֶן־אֲדֹנֶיךָ: י וְעַבַּדְתָּ לוֹ אֶת־הָאֲדָמָה
 אֲתָהּ וּבְנֶיךָ וְעַבְדֶּיךָ וְהִבֵּאתָ וְהָיָה לְבֶן־אֲדֹנֶיךָ לֶחֶם
 וְאָכְלוּ וּמִפִּיבִשֶׁת בֶּן־אֲדֹנֶיךָ יֹאכַל תָּמִיד לֶחֶם עַל־
 שֻׁלְחָנִי וּלְצִיבָא חֲמִשָּׁה עָשָׂר בָּנִים וְעֲשָׂרִים
 עַבְדִּים: יא וַיֹּאמֶר צִיבָא אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ כָּל־אֲשֶׁר יִצְוָה
 אֲדֹנִי הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶת־עַבְדּוֹ כֵּן יַעֲשֶׂה עַבְדְּךָ וּמִפִּיבִשֶׁת
 אֲכַל עַל־שֻׁלְחָנִי כְּאַחַד מִבְּנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ: יב וְלִמִּפִּיבִשֶׁת
 בֶּן־קֶטָן וְשֵׁמוֹ מִיכָא וְכֹל מוֹשֵׁב בֵּית־צִיבָא עַבְדִּים
 לִמִּפִּיבִשֶׁת: יג וּמִפִּיבִשֶׁת יָשָׁב בִּירוּשָׁלַם כִּי עַל־
 שֻׁלְחָן הַמֶּלֶךְ תָּמִיד הוּא אֲכָל וְהוּא פֶּסַח שְׁתֵּי
 רַגְלָיו: {פ}

Saul your father to you and you shall always eat at my table.” ⁸ He then did homage. “What is your servant,” he said, “that you should show favour to a dead dog like me?” ⁹ Then the king summoned Ziba, Saul’s servant, and said, “Everything that belonged to Saul and to his family I give to your master’s grandson. ¹⁰ You must work the land for him: you, your sons and your slaves; you must harvest the produce and it will be food for your master’s grandson to eat. But Mephibosheth, your master’s grandson, shall always take his meals at my table.” (Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty slaves.) ¹¹ Then Ziba said to the king, “According to all that my lord the king commands his servant, so your servant will do.” Mephibosheth ate at David’s table like one of the king’s sons. ¹² Mephibosheth had a young son whose name was Mica. All the members of Ziba’s household entered Mephibosheth’s service. ¹³ Mephibosheth lived in Jerusalem, since he always ate at the king’s table. Now he was lame in both his feet.

⁸ The NJB opens with the name ‘Meribbaal’ in place of ‘he’, here following the MT & NRSV.

⁹ The NJB has ‘son’ in place of ‘grandson’, here following the NRSV & NETB.

¹⁰ The words ‘and it will be’, though present in the MT, are absent from the LXX, Peshitta & Vg.

¹¹ In place of ‘David’s table’, the MT has ‘my table’, but the 1st person reference to David is awkward here since the quotation of David’s words has already been concluded in v. 10; nor does the ‘my’ refer to Ziba, since the latter part of v. 11 does not seem to be part of Ziba’s response to the king. The ancient versions are not unanimous in the way that they render the phrase. The LXX has ‘the table of David’ (τῆς τραπέζης Δαυὶδ); the Peshitta has ‘the table of the king’ and the (original) Vg has ‘your table’ (*mensam tuam*, but the Clementine Vg has ‘my table’, *mensam meam*).

¹² The NJB & NRSV have ‘all those who lived in Ziba’s house’ in place of ‘all the members of Ziba’s household’, here following NETB.

¹³ ‘Ziba’ (v. 12) claimed later that Meribbaal was disloyal (16:1–4), but the claim seems to have been false (19:24–30).

2 SAMUEL 10

שמואל ב פרק י

א ויהי אחר־יָמָיו וַיָּמָת מֶלֶךְ בְּנֵי עַמּוֹן וַיִּמְלֹךְ חֲנָנוּ בְּנוֹ תַּחְתָּיו: ב וַיֹּאמֶר דָּוִד אֶעֱשֶׂה־חֶסֶד עִם־חֲנָנוּ בֶן־נָחָשׁ כַּאֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה אָבִיו עִמָּדִי חֶסֶד וַיִּשְׁלַח דָּוִד לְנַחֲמוֹ בְּיַד־עֲבָדָיו אֶל־אֲבִיו וַיָּבֹאוּ עֲבָדֵי דָוִד אֶרֶץ בְּנֵי עַמּוֹן: ג וַיֹּאמְרוּ שָׁרֵי בְנֵי־עַמּוֹן אֶל־חֲנָנוּ אֲדֹנֵיהֶם הֲמֹכֵבֵד דָּוִד אֶת־אָבִיךָ בְּעֵינֶיךָ כִּי־שָׁלַח לְךָ מִנַּחֲמִים הֲלוֹא בַעֲבוּר חֶקֶר אֶת־הָעִיר וּלְרַגְלָהּ וּלְהַפְכָּהּ שָׁלַח דָּוִד אֶת־עֲבָדָיו אֵלֶיךָ: ד וַיִּקַּח חֲנָנוּ אֶת־עֲבָדֵי דָוִד וַיַּגְלַח אֶת־חֲצֵי זָקָנָם וַיַּכְרֹת אֶת־מְדוּיָהֶם בַּחֲצֵי עַד שְׁתּוֹתֵיהֶם וַיִּשְׁלַח־ם: ה וַיָּגִדוּ לְדָוִד וַיִּשְׁלַח לִקְרָאתָם כִּי־הָיוּ הָאֲנָשִׁים נִכְלָמִים מְאֹד וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ שָׁבוּ בִּירְחוֹ עַד־יִצְמַח זָקָנְכֶם וַיִּשְׁבְּתֶם: ו וַיֵּרְאוּ בְנֵי עַמּוֹן כִּי נִבְאָשׁוּ בְּדָוִד וַיִּשְׁלְחוּ בְנֵי־עַמּוֹן וַיִּשְׁכְּרוּ אֶת־אֲרָם בֵּית־רְחוֹב וְאֶת־אֲרָם

¹ Later, the king of the Ammonites died and his son Hanun succeeded him. ² David thought, "I will deal loyally with Hanun son of Nahash as his father dealt loyally with me." So, David sent envoys to console him concerning his father. When David's envoys reached the land of the Ammonites, ³ the Ammonite leaders said to their lord Hanun, "Do you imagine David means to honour your father when he sends messengers of sympathy? On the contrary, David has sent his envoys to you to explore the city, to reconnoitre it and so overthrow it." ⁴ So Hanun seized David's envoys, shaved off half of each man's beard, cut their clothes halfway up to the buttocks, and sent them away. ⁵ When David was told, he sent to meet them, for the men were greatly ashamed. "Stay in Jericho," the king said, "until your beards have grown again, and come back then." ⁶ When the Ammonites saw that they had become odious to David, they sent and hired twenty thousand foot soldiers from

2 SAMUEL 10

¹ The literal translation of 'succeeded him' is 'reigned in his place'.

² There is no record of the covenant between David and Nahash (cf. 17:27); relations between Saul and Nahash had been hostile (1S 11).

³ The 'city' mentioned is 'Rabbah', the capital (11:1, 12:26), the modern Amman.

⁴ Mutilation of the beard, the symbol of a man's honour, and forcible indecent exposure were the worst insults imaginable in those days.

⁵ After 'sent', the NJB adds 'someone'; here, we follow the NRSV.

⁶ 'Zobah' and 'Beth-Rehob', to the north of the sources of the Jordan, were united under Hadadezer's suzerainty. 'Maacah' and 'Tob' lay to the north of Transjordan. NETB, following the LXX (Ιστωβ), Peshitta & Vg (Istob), has 'Ish-Tob' in place of 'Tob', but it is likely that 'Ish' (אִישׁ) is dittographic; here, we follow the NJB & NRSV.

צוֹבָא עֲשָׂרִים אֶלֶף רִגְלֵי וְאֶת־מֶלֶךְ מַעַכָּה אֶלֶף
אִישׁ וְאִישׁ טֹב שְׁנַיִם־עָשָׂר אֶלֶף אִישׁ: ^ז וַיִּשְׁמַע
דָּוִד וַיִּשְׁלַח אֶת־יֹאָב וְאֶת כָּל־הַעֲבָא הַגִּבֹּרִים:
^ח וַיֵּצְאוּ בְנֵי עֲמֹן וַיַּעֲרְכוּ מִלְחָמָה פֶּתַח הַשָּׁעַר
וְאִלֵּם צוֹבָא וְרֶחֹב וְאִישׁ־טֹב וּמַעַכָּה לְבָדָם
בַּשָּׂדֶה: ^ט וַיֵּרָא יֹאָב כִּי־הִיתָה אֵלָיו פְּנֵי הַמִּלְחָמָה
מִפְּנִים וּמֵאֲחֹר וַיִּבְחַר מִכָּל בַּחוּרֵי בִישְׂרָאֵל
יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיַּעֲרֹךְ לִקְרֹאת אָרָם: ^י וְאֵת יֵתֶר הָעָם נָתַן
בְּיַד אֲבִשָׁי אָחִיו וַיַּעֲרֹךְ לִקְרֹאת בְּנֵי עֲמֹן: ^{יא} וַיֹּאמֶר
אֶסְתַּחֲזֶק אָרָם מִמֶּנִּי וְהִיתָה לִּי לִישׁוּעָה וְאֶסְבִּי
עֲמֹן יַחֲזִקוּ מִמֶּךָ וְהִלַּכְתִּי לְהוֹשִׁיעַ לָךְ: ^{יב} חֲזַק
וְנִתְחַזַּק בְּעַד־עַמְּנוּ וּבְעַד עָרֵי אֱלֹהֵינוּ וַיְהִי וַיַּעֲשֶׂה
הַטֹּב בְּעֵינָיו: ^{יג} וַיִּגֶשׁ יֹאָב וְהָעָם אֲשֶׁר עִמּוֹ
לְמִלְחָמָה בְּאָרָם וַיִּנָּסוּ מִפָּנָיו: ^{יד} וּבְנֵי עֲמֹן רָאוּ כִּי־

Aram Beth-Rehob and Aram Zobah; also the king of Maacah (one thousand men) and the men of Tob (twelve thousand men). ⁷ When David heard this, he sent Joab with the whole army, the warriors. ⁸ The Ammonites marched out and drew up in battle array at the entrance to the gate, but the men from Aram Zobah and Rehob and the men of Tob and Maacah were alone in the field. ⁹ When Joab saw that he had to fight to his front and to his rear, he chose from Israel's best men and set them in line facing Aram. ¹⁰ He entrusted the rest of the army to his brother Abishai and arrayed them against the Ammonites. ¹¹ He said, "If Aram proves too strong for me, you must help me; if the Ammonites prove too strong for you, I will help you. ¹² Take courage and stand firm for the sake of our people and the towns of our God; may Yahweh do as he thinks right." ¹³ Joab and the force with him joined battle with Aram, who fled before him. ¹⁴ When the Ammonites saw that Aram had fled,

⁷ The apposition indicates that in this first battle only the mercenary troops went into action. The volunteers took part in the second phase of the first campaign (v. 17) and in the second campaign (11:1).

⁸ The NJB ends this verse, with, "kept their distance in the open country" and the NRSV has "were by themselves in the open country."

⁹ Before 'to his front', the NJB adds 'on two fronts'; here, we follow the NRSV (NETB has 'on two fronts' but lacks 'to his front and to his rear'). The Kethib/Qere difference here would benefit from an explanation.

¹⁰ The literal translation of 'army' is 'people'.

¹¹ The NJB & NRSV have 'the Aramaeans' in place of 'Aram', here following the MT (אַרָם) & NETB.

¹² Literally translated, this verse ends, "and Yahweh will do what is good in his eyes."

¹³ The NJB & NRSV have 'the Aramaeans' in place of 'Aram', here following the MT.

¹⁴ Literally translated, this verse ends, "and Joab returned from against the sons of Ammon and entered Jerusalem."

נִסּוּ אֲרָם וַיִּנָּסוּ מִפָּנֵי אֲבִישָׁי וַיָּבֹאוּ הָעִיר וַיֵּשֶׁב יוֹאָב
מֵעַל בְּנֵי עַמּוֹן וַיָּבֹאוּ יְרוּשָׁלַם: ^{טו} וַיֵּרָא אֲרָם כִּי נִגַף
לִפְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיֵּאסְפוּ יַחַד: ^{טז} וַיִּשְׁלַח הַדְּדַעְזֹר וַיַּעֲזֹר
אֶת־אֲרָם אֲשֶׁר מֵעֵבֶר הַנָּהָר וַיָּבֹאוּ חֵילָם וְשׁוֹבַךְ
שָׂר־צָבָא הַדְּדַעְזֹר לִפְנֵיהֶם: {ס}

^{יז} וַיִּגַּד לְדָוִד וַיֵּאסֹף אֶת־כָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיַּעֲבֹר אֶת־
הַיַּרְדֵּן וַיָּבֹאוּ חֲלָאֲמָה וַיַּעֲרֹכוּ אֲרָם לִקְרַאת דָּוִד
וַיִּלָּחֲמוּ עִמּוֹ: ^{יח} וַיִּנָּס אֲרָם מִפָּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיַּהַרְג דָּוִד
מֵאֲרָם שֶׁבַע מֵאוֹת רָכֶב וְאַרְבַּעַיִם אֶלֶף פָּרָשִׁים
וְאֵת שׁוֹבַךְ שָׂר־צָבָאוֹ הִכָּה וַיָּמָת שָׁם: ^{יט} וַיֵּרְאוּ כָל־
הַמְּלָכִים עֲבָדֵי הַדְּדַעְזֹר כִּי נִגְפוּ לִפְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
וַיִּשְׁלְמוּ אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיַּעֲבֹדוּם וַיֵּרְאוּ אֲרָם לְהוֹשִׁיעַ
עוֹד אֶת־בְּנֵי עַמּוֹן: {פ}

they too fled before Abishai and entered the town. Then Joab returned from the war with the Ammonites and came back to Jerusalem. ¹⁵ When Aram saw that Israel had defeated them, they gathered together. ¹⁶ Hadadezer sent for Aram from beyond the river; they came to Helam with Shobach, commander of Hadadezer's army, at their head.

¹⁷ David, being informed of this, mustered all Israel, crossed the Jordan and reached Helam. Aram drew up in line facing David and engaged him. ¹⁸ Aram fled from Israel, and David killed seven hundred of their chariot teams and forty thousand horsemen; he also struck down Shobach their general, who died there. ¹⁹ When all the kings who were servants of Hadadezer saw that Israel had defeated them, they made peace with the Israelites and became subject to them. Aram was afraid to give any more help to the Ammonites.

¹⁵ The short narrative of vv. 15–19 seems to come from a different source.

¹⁶ The NRSV has 'Euphrates' in place of 'river', here following the MT & NJB.

¹⁷ After 'Jordan', NETB adds 'River', for clarity, though the word is not in the MT.

¹⁸ The NJB, following 1Ch 19:18, has 'men' in place of 'horsemen', here following the MT & NRSV; other readings are 'foot soldiers' (LXX, Lucianic Recension) and 'charioteers' (1Ch 19:18 in the NRSV).

¹⁹ In place of 'the kings who were servants of Hadadezer', here following the NRSV, the NJB has 'the vassal kings of Hadadezer'.

שמואל ב פרק יא

^א וַיְהִי לְתִשְׁבֹּת הַשָּׁנָה לָעֵת | צָאת הַמְּלָאכִים
וַיִּשְׁלַח דָּוִד אֶת־יֹאבָב וְאֶת־עֲבָדָיו עִמּוֹ וְאֶת־כָּל־
יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּשְׁחָתוּ אֶת־בְּנֵי עַמּוֹן וַיִּצְרוּ עַל־רַבָּה וְדָוִד
יֹשֵׁב בִּירוּשָׁלַם: {ס}

^ב וַיְהִי לָעֵת הָעֶרֶב וַיָּקָם דָּוִד מֵעַל מִשְׁכְּבוֹ וַיֵּתֶּהֱלֹךְ
עַל־גֹּג בֵּית־הַמֶּלֶךְ וַיֵּרָא אִשָּׁה רַחֲצָת מַעַל הַגֹּג
וְהָאִשָּׁה טוֹבַת מְרֹאָה מְאֹד: ^ג וַיִּשְׁלַח דָּוִד וַיְדַרְשׁ
לָאִשָּׁה וַיֹּאמֶר הֲלוֹא־זֹאת בֵּת־שֶׁבַע בַּת־אֱלִיעֶזֶר
אִשְׁתִּי אֲוִרְיָה הַחֲתָי: ^ד וַיִּשְׁלַח דָּוִד מְלָאכִים וַיִּקְחָהּ
וַתָּבֹא אֵלָיו וַיִּשְׁכַּב עִמָּהּ וְהִיא מִתְקַדְּשֶׁת
מִטְּמֵאתָהּ וַתָּשָׁב אֶל־בֵּיתָהּ: ^ה וַתֵּהָרֶה הָאִשָּׁה
וַתִּשְׁלַח וַתַּגֵּד לְדָוִד וַתֹּאמֶר הִרָה אֲנִכִּי: ^ו וַיִּשְׁלַח
דָּוִד אֶל־יֹאבָב שֹׁלַח אֵלַי אֶת־אֲוִרְיָה הַחֲתָי וַיִּשְׁלַח

2 SAMUEL 11

¹ At the turn of the year, the time when kings go campaigning, David sent Joab and with him his own guards and the whole of Israel. They massacred the Ammonites and laid siege to Rabbah. David however remained in Jerusalem.

² It happened towards evening when David had risen from his couch and was strolling on the palace roof, that he saw from the roof a woman bathing: the woman was very beautiful. ³ David made inquiries about this woman and was told, "Why, that is Bathsheba, daughter of Eliam and wife of Uriah the Hittite." ⁴ Then David sent messengers and had her brought; she came to him and he slept with her. (Now she had just purified herself from her period.) She then went home again. ⁵ The woman conceived and sent word to David, "I am with child." ⁶ Then David sent Joab a message, "Send me Uriah the Hittite," whereupon

2 SAMUEL 11

- ¹ The 'turn of the year' is the Vernal equinox. In place of 'kings' (הַמְּלָאכִים), *Codex Leningradensis* has here 'messengers' (הַמְּלָאכִים), probably as the result of contamination from the occurrence of that word in v. 4. The present translation follows most *Hebrew MSS* and the ancient versions.
- ² The disjunctive clause at the end of the verse highlights the observation and builds the tension of the story.
- ³ 'Uriah the Hittite' was a foreign mercenary. On the Hittites, see footnotes to Dt 7:1 and 1S 26:6.
- ⁴ The parenthetical disjunctive clause further heightens the tension by letting the reader know that Bathsheba, having just completed her menstrual cycle, is ripe for conception; see Lv 15:19–24 for the later codification of the law on the purification from a woman's period.
- ⁵ The NRSV & NETB have 'I am pregnant' in place of 'I am with child', here following the NJB.
- ⁶ In place of 'whereupon', here following the NJB, the NRSV has 'and' and NETB has 'so'.

יֹאב אֶת־אוּרִיָּה אֶל־דָּוִד: ז' וַיָּבֹא אוּרִיָּה אֵלָיו
 וַיִּשְׁאַל דָּוִד לְשָׁלוֹם יֹאב וְלְשָׁלוֹם הָעָם וְלְשָׁלוֹם
 הַמִּלְחָמָה: ח' וַיֹּאמֶר דָּוִד לְאוּרִיָּה רֵד לְבֵיתְךָ וְרַחֵץ
 רַגְלֶיךָ וַיֵּצֵא אוּרִיָּה מִבֵּית הַמֶּלֶךְ וַתֵּצֵא אַחֲרָיו
 מִשָּׁנַת הַמֶּלֶךְ: ט' וַיִּשְׁכַּב אוּרִיָּה פֶתַח בֵּית הַמֶּלֶךְ
 אֶת כָּל־עַבְדֵי אֲדֹנָיו וְלֹא יָרַד אֶל־בֵּיתוֹ: י' וַיִּגְדּוּ
 לְדָוִד לֵאמֹר לֹא־יָרַד אוּרִיָּה אֶל־בֵּיתוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר דָּוִד
 אֶל־אוּרִיָּה הֲלוֹא מִדֶּרֶךְ אַתָּה בָּא מִדּוֹעַ לֹא־יִרְדָּתָ
 אֶל־בֵּיתְךָ: י"א וַיֹּאמֶר אוּרִיָּה אֶל־דָּוִד הֲאֲרוֹן
 וַיִּשְׂרָאֵל וַיהוּדָה יֹשְׁבִים בְּסֻכּוֹת וְאֲדֹנִי יֹאב וְעַבְדֵי
 אֲדֹנִי עַל־פְּנֵי הַשָּׂדֶה חֲנִים וְאֲנִי אָבוֹא אֶל־בֵּיתִי
 לֵאכֹל וּלְשִׁתּוֹת וּלְשֹׁכַב עִם־אִשְׁתִּי חֵף וְחִי נִפְשֶׁךָ
 אִם־אֶעֱשֶׂה אֶת־הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה: י"ב וַיֹּאמֶר דָּוִד אֶל־
 אוּרִיָּה שֵׁב בֵּזָה גִּם־הַיּוֹם וּמָחָר אֶשְׁלַחְךָ וַיֵּשֶׁב
 אוּרִיָּה בִירוּשָׁלַם בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא וּמִמָּחָרָת: י"ג וַיִּקְרָא־
 לוֹ דָּוִד וַיֹּאכַל לִפְנָיו וַיִּשְׂתֵּי וַיִּשְׁכְּרוּ וַיֵּצֵא בַּעֲרֵב

Joab sent Uriah to David. ⁷ When Uriah came into his presence, David asked after Joab and the army and how the war was going. ⁸ David then said to Uriah, "Go down to your house and wash your feet." Uriah left the palace, and there followed him a present from the king's table. ⁹ Uriah however slept by the palace door with all the servants of his lord and did not go down to his house. ¹⁰ When they told David; 'Uriah did not do down to his house,' David asked Uriah, "Have you not just arrived from a journey? Why do you not go to your home?" ¹¹ Uriah answered, "Are not the Ark and the men of Israel and Judah lodged in tents; and my master Joab and the bodyguard of my lord, are they not in the open fields? Am I to go to my house, then, and eat and drink and sleep with my wife? As Yahweh lives, and as you yourself live, I will do no such thing!" ¹² Then David said to Uriah, "Stay on here today; tomorrow I shall send you back." Therefore, Uriah stayed that day in Jerusalem. ¹³ The next day David invited him to eat and drink in his presence and made him drunk. In the evening, Uriah went out and lay

⁷ Literally, this verse ends, "David asked concerning the peace of Joab and concerning the peace of the people and concerning the peace of the battle."

⁸ The invitation to 'wash your feet' (the NJB has 'enjoy yourself') was standard custom after a journey (Gn 18:4, 19:2, 24:32). It may also be a euphemism for sexual intercourse, in view of David's secret plan (v. 11).

⁹ The Lucianic recension of the Old Greek translation lacks the word 'all'.

¹⁰ For David's 2nd question, here following the NJB, the NRSV (translating the MT more literally) has, "Why did you not go down to your house?"

¹¹ Continence while on active service was a religious obligation (1S 21:6); Uriah sees himself as still on campaign and refused to violate the rule.

¹² On the chronology involved here see P. K. McCarter, *II Samuel* (AB), 287.

¹³ In place of 'the servants of his lord', here following the NRSV & NETB, the NJB has 'his master's bodyguard'.

לִשְׁכָּב בַּמִּשְׁכָּבוֹ עִם־עַבְדֵי אֲדֹנָיו וְאֶל־בֵּיתוֹ לֹא
יֵרֵד: יד וַיְהִי בַּבֹּקֶר וַיִּכְתֹּב דָּוִד סֵפֶר אֶל־יוֹאָב
וַיִּשְׁלַח בְּיַד אֹרִיָּה: טו וַיִּכְתֹּב בַּסֵּפֶר לֵאמֹר הִבּוּ
אֶת־אֹרִיָּה אֶל־מוֹל' פְּנֵי הַמִּלְחָמָה הַחֲזָקָה וְשַׁבְתֶּם
מֵאַחֲרָיו וְנָכָה וּמָת: {ס}

טז וַיְהִי בְשִׁמּוֹר יוֹאָב אֶל־הָעִיר וַיִּתֵּן אֶת־אֹרִיָּה
אֶל־הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר יָדַע כִּי אַנְשֵׁי־חֵיל שָׁם: יז וַיֵּצְאוּ
אַנְשֵׁי הָעִיר וַיִּלָּחֲמוּ אֶת־יוֹאָב וַיִּפֹּל מִן־הָעַם
מֵעַבְדֵי דָוִד וַיָּמָת גַּם אֹרִיָּה הַחֲתִי: יח וַיִּשְׁלַח יוֹאָב
וַיַּגֵּד לְדָוִד אֶת־כָּל־דִּבְרֵי הַמִּלְחָמָה: יט וַיֵּצֵא אֶת־
הַמֶּלֶךְ לֵאמֹר כָּכִלּוּתָם אֶת כָּל־דִּבְרֵי הַמִּלְחָמָה
לְדַבֵּר אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ: כ וְהָיָה אִם־תַּעֲלֶה חֲמַת הַמֶּלֶךְ
וְאָמַר לָךְ מִדּוֹעַ נִגַּשְׁתָּם אֶל־הָעִיר לְהִלָּחֵם הֲלוֹא
יָדַעְתָּם אֶת אֲשֶׁר־יָרְוּ מֵעַל הַחוֹמָה: כא מִי־הָכָה
אֶת־אַבִּימֶלֶךְ בֶּן־יִרְבֶּשֶׁת הַלּוֹא־אִשָּׁה הַשְׁלִיכָה
עָלָיו פֶּלֶא רָכַב מֵעַל הַחוֹמָה וַיָּמָת בְּתַבָּץ לְמָה

on his couch with the servants of his lord, but he did not go down to his house. ¹⁴ In the morning, it came to pass that David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it by the hand of Uriah. ¹⁵ In the letter he wrote, "Station Uriah in the thick of the fight and then draw back from him so that he may be struck down and die."

¹⁶ Joab, then besieging the town, posted Uriah in a place where he knew there were fierce fighters. ¹⁷ The men of the town sallied out and engaged Joab; the army suffered casualties, including some of David's servants; and Uriah the Hittite was killed as well. ¹⁸ Joab sent David a full account of the battle. ¹⁹ To the messenger he gave this order: "When you have finished telling the king all the news of the battle, ²⁰ the king's anger may rise; he may say, "Why did you go so near the town to fight? Did you not know that they would shoot from the wall? ²¹ Who killed Abimelech son of Jerubbesheth? Was it not a woman who dropped a millstone on him from the ramparts, causing his death at Thebez? Why did you go so near the ramparts?" If so, you are to say, "Your servant

¹⁴ The NJB opens with 'next morning' in place of 'in the morning', here following the NRSV & NETB.

¹⁵ The NJB has 'fall back behind him' in place of 'fall back from him', here following the NRSV.

¹⁶ The phrase 'fierce fighters' refers in context to the strongest or most valiant defenders of the city Joab and the Israelite army were besieging.

¹⁷ The NJB has 'bodyguard' in place of 'servants', here following the NRSV & NETB.

¹⁸ For this verse, here following the NJB, the NRSV reads, "Then Joab sent and told David all the news about the fighting."

¹⁹ The NJB has 'details' in place of 'news', here following the NRSV.

²⁰ The NJB has 'ramparts' in place of 'wall', here following the NRSV & NETB.

²¹ The NJB & NRSV have 'Jerubbaal' in place of 'Jerubbesheth', here following the MT & NETB (see #1S 2:8 and #2S 4:4).

נִגְשָׁתָם אֶל־הַחוֹמָה וְאָמְרָתָּ גַם עַבְדְּךָ אֹרִיָּה
הַחֲתִי מָתָּ: כִּי וַיֵּלֶךְ הַמֶּלֶךְ וַיָּבֹא וַיֵּגֵד לְדָוִד אֵת
כָּל־אֲשֶׁר שָׁלְחוּ יוֹאָב: כִּי וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶל־דָּוִד
כִּי־גִבְרוּ עָלֵינוּ הָאֲנָשִׁים וַיֵּצְאוּ אֵלֵינוּ הַשָּׂדֶה וְנָהִיָּה
עָלֵיהֶם עַד־פֶּתַח הַשָּׁעַר: כִּי וַיֵּרְאוּ הַמּוֹרָאִים אֶל־
עַבְדֶּיךָ מֵעַל הַחוֹמָה וַיָּמוּתוּ מֵעַבְדֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ וְגַם
עַבְדְּךָ אֹרִיָּה הַחֲתִי מָתָּ: {ס}

כִּי וַיֹּאמֶר דָּוִד אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ כֹּה־תֹאמַר אֶל־יוֹאָב
אֶל־יָרֵעַ בְּעֵינֶיךָ אֶת־הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה כִּי־כֹזֶה וְכֹזֶה
תֹּאכַל הַחֶרֶב הַחֹזֶק מִלַּחְמָתְךָ אֶל־הָעִיר וְהָרְסָהּ
וְחִזְקָהּ: כִּי וַתִּשְׁמַע אִשְׁתּוֹ אֹרִיָּה כִי־מָתָה אֹרִיָּה
אִשָּׁה וַתִּסְפָּד עַל־בַּעְלָהּ: כִּי וַיַּעֲבֹר הָאֲבֵל וַיִּשְׁלַח
דָּוִד וַיֹּאסְפֶהָ אֶל־בֵּיתוֹ וַתִּהְיֶה לּוֹ לְאִשָּׁה וַתֵּלֶד לּוֹ בֶּן
וַיֵּרַע הַדָּבָר אֲשֶׁר־עָשָׂה דָּוִד בְּעֵינֵי יְהוָה: {פ}

Uriah the Hittite has been killed too.”” 22 The messenger left, and on his arrival told David all that Joab had instructed him to say. 23 The messenger answered David, “Because their men made a show of force against us and sallied out against us in the open. We drove them back to the entrance of the gate, 24 but the bowmen shot at your servants from the ramparts; some of the king’s servants perished, and your servant Uriah the Hittite was killed too.”

25 David said to the messenger, “Say this to Joab, “Do not take the matter to heart; the sword devours now one and now another; press your attack on the town and overthrow it.” Encourage him.” 26 When Uriah’s wife heard that her husband Uriah was dead, she mourned for her husband. 27 When the period of mourning was over, David sent to have her brought to his house; she became his wife and bore him a son. However, what David had done displeased Yahweh.

22 At the end of this verse, the NJB, following the LXX, adds the following:

καὶ ἐθυμώθη Δαυὶδ πρὸς Ἰωάβ καὶ εἶπεν πρὸς τὸν ἄγγελον “Ἵνα τί προσηγάγετε πρὸς τὴν πόλιν τοῦ πολεμῆσαι; οὐκ ἤδεσθε ὅτι πληγήθησε σθε ἀπὸ τοῦ τείχους; τίς ἐπάταξεν τὸν Αβιμελεχ υἱὸν Ἱερροβααλ; οὐχὶ γυνὴ ἔρριψεν ἐπ’ αὐτὸν κλάσμα μύλου ἀπὸ τοῦ τείχους καὶ ἀπέθανεν ἐν Θαμασι; ἵνα τί προσηγάγετε πρὸς τὸ τεῖχος

David flew into a rage. “Why did you go so near the ramparts?” he said to the messenger. “Who killed Abimelech son of Jerubbaal? Was it not a woman who dropped a millstone on him from the ramparts, causing his death at Thebez? Why did you go so near the ramparts?”

23 The NJB has ‘approaches’ in place of ‘entrance’, here following the NRSV.

24 According to a footnote in NETB, the Kethib has ‘servant’ in place of the 2nd instance of ‘servants’, here following the Qere.

25 Before ‘encourage him’, the NJB adds ‘that is the way to’; here, we follow the MT & NRSV.

26 The literal translation of ‘husband’ is ‘lord’.

27 Note the moral condemnation by the author in the name of God.

שמואל ב פרק יב

^א וַיִּשְׁלַח יְהוָה אֶת־נָתָן אֶל־דָּוִד וַיָּבֹא אֵלָיו וַיֹּאמֶר
לֹא שְׁנֵי אַנְשִׁים הָיוּ בְּעִיר אַחַת אֶחָד עָשִׂיר וְאֶחָד
רֹאשׁ: ^ב לַעֲשִׂיר הָיָה צֹאן וּבָקָר הִרְבֵּה מְאֹד:
^ג וְלֹרֶשׁ אֶין־כָּל כִּי אִם־כֶּבֶשֶׂה אַחַת קִטְנָה אֲשֶׁר
קָנָה וַיַּחֲיֶיהָ וַתִּגְדַּל עִמּוֹ וְעַם־בָּנָיו יֹחֲדוּ מִפֶּתֹו
תֹאכֵל וּמִכֶּסֶׁו תִּשְׁתֶּה וּבְחִיקוֹ תִּשְׁכָּב וַתְּהִי־לּוֹ
כַּבֵּת: ^ד וַיָּבֹא הַלֵּךְ לְאִישׁ הָעֹשִׂיר וַיַּחְמַל לִקְחַת
מִצֹּאֲנוֹ וּמִבָּקָרוֹ לַעֲשׂוֹת לְאֹרַח הַבָּא־לּוֹ וַיִּקַּח אֶת־
כֶּבֶשֶׂת הָאִישׁ הָרֹאשׁ וַיַּעֲשֶׂה לְאִישׁ הַבָּא אֵלָיו:
^ה וַיַּחֲרֹאֲף דָּוִד בְּאִישׁ מְאֹד וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל־נָתָן חִי־
יְהוָה כִּי בֶן־מָוֶת הָאִישׁ הָעֹשֶׂה זֹאת: ^ו וְאֶת־
הַכֶּבֶשֶׂה יִשְׁלַם אַרְבַּעַתַּיִם עֹקֵב אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה אֶת־
הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה וְעַל אֲשֶׁר לֹא־חָמַל: {ס}

2 SAMUEL 12

¹ Yahweh sent the prophet Nathan to David. He came to him and said: "In the same town were two men, one rich, the other poor. ² The rich man had very many flocks and herds. ³ But the poor man had nothing but a ewe lamb, only a single little one that he had bought. He fostered it and it grew up with him and his children, eating his bread, drinking from his cup, sleeping in his arms; it was like a daughter to him. ⁴ When there came a traveller to stay, the rich man would not take anything from his own flock or herd to provide for the wayfarer who had come to him. Instead, he stole the poor man's lamb and prepared that for his guest." ⁵ David flew into a great rage with the man. "As Yahweh lives," he said to Nathan, "the man who did this deserves to die! ⁶ He must make fourfold restitution for the lamb, for doing such a thing and showing no compassion."

2 SAMUEL 12

- ¹ Possibly, Nathan's intervention (vv. 1-15) did not figure in the original narrative: in v. 22, David seems unaware of the child's doom. Both traditions, however, are of equal antiquity and display the same religious sentiment: David's crime is condemned but his repentance wins forgiveness. Later, Nathan became an active supporter of Bathsheba (1K 1:5-14).
- ² The NJB ends this verse, here following the NRSV & NETB, with 'flocks and herds in great abundance'.
- ³ The three Hebrew imperfect verbal forms in this sentence have a customary nuance; they describe past actions that were repeated or typical.
- ⁴ NETB has 'cooked' in place of 'prepared', here following the MT, NJB & NRSV.
- ⁵ Literally translated, this verse ends, "the man who did this is a son of death."
- ⁶ With the exception of the Lucianic recension, the LXX has 'sevenfold' (ἐπταπλασίονα) in place of 'fourfold' – a reading that some consider the original; however, Ex 21:37 specifies fourfold repayment for a stolen sheep, which is consistent with the MT here.

וַיֹּאמֶר נָתַן אֶל־דָּוִד אַתָּה הָאִישׁ {ס} כֹּה־אָמַר
 יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲנֹכִי מִשְׁחַתִּיךָ לְמַלְכְּ עַל־
 יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאֲנֹכִי הַצַּלְתִּיךָ מִיַּד שָׂאוּל: ^ח וְאַתָּנָה לָךְ
 אֶת־בֵּית אֲדֹנֶיךָ וְאֶת־נָשֵׁי אֲדֹנֶיךָ בְּחִיקָךְ וְאַתָּנָה
 לָךְ אֶת־בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל וְיְהוּדָה וְאִם־מַעֲט וְאִסְפָּה לָךְ
 כֶּהֱנָה וְכַהֲנָה: ^ט מִדּוֹעַ בְּזִית | אֶת־דָּבָר יְהוָה
 לַעֲשׂוֹת הָרַע בְּעֵינַי אֶת אֹרִיָּה הַחִתִּי הַכִּיתָ
 בַּחֶרֶב וְאֶת־אִשְׁתּוֹ לָקַחְתָּ לָךְ לְאִשָּׁה וְאַתָּה הִרְגַתָּ
 בַּחֶרֶב בְּנֵי עַמּוֹן: ^י וְעַתָּה לֹא־תִסּוּר חֶרֶב מִבֵּיתְךָ
 עַד־עוֹלָם עֲקֹב כִּי בִזְתִּי וְתִקַּח אֶת־אִשְׁתִּי אֹרִיָּה
 הַחִתִּי לְהִיזֹת לָךְ לְאִשָּׁה: {ס} ^{יא} כֹּה | אָמַר יְהוָה
 הִנְנִי מִקִּים עָלֶיךָ רָעָה מִבֵּיתְךָ וְלִקְחֹתִי אֶת־נָשֶׁיךָ
 לְעֵינֶיךָ וְנָתַתִּי לָרַעִיָּה וְשָׁכַב עִם־נָשֶׁיךָ לְעֵינֵי
 הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ הַזֹּאת: ^{יב} כִּי אַתָּה עָשִׂיתָ בְּסֶתֶר וְאֲנִי
 אֶעֱשֶׂה אֶת־הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה נֶגֶד כָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל וְנֶגֶד
 הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ: {ס} ^{יג} וַיֹּאמֶר דָּוִד אֶל־נָתַן חַטָּאתִי לִיהוָה

⁷ Then Nathan said to David, “You are the man. Yahweh, the God of Israel, says this, “I anointed you king over Israel and I delivered you from the hand of Saul; ⁸ and I gave your master’s house to you, and your master’s wives into your arms; I gave you the House of Israel and of Judah; and if this were not enough, I would add as much again for you. ⁹ Why, therefore, have you shown contempt for the word of Yahweh, doing what is evil in my sight? You have struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword, taken his wife for your own wife, and killed him with the sword of the children of Ammon. ¹⁰ So, now, the sword will never be far from your House, since you have shown contempt for me and taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.” ¹¹ Yahweh speaks thus, “I will stir up evil for you out of your own House. Before your very eyes, I will take your wives and give them to your neighbour, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this sun. ¹² You worked in secret; I will work this in the face of all Israel and in the face of the sun.”” ¹³ David said to Nathan, “I have sinned against Yahweh.”

⁷ The NJB has ‘hands’ in place of ‘hand’, here following the MT, NRSV & NETB.

⁸ There is no other hint that David took over Saul’s wives, though such was the custom (16:21–22, 1K 2:17–25).

⁹ The NJB omits ‘the word of’ before ‘Yahweh’. In place of בְּעֵינַי (‘my’), here following the Qere, the Kethib has בְּעֵינָיו (‘his’).

¹⁰ This verse alludes to the violent deaths of Amnon (13:28–29), Absalom (18:9–15) and Adonijah (1K 2:22–25), three of David’s sons.

¹¹ The prediction of ‘evil out of your own House’ is very exact; it points to subsequent episodes in which David’s sons carry out similar deeds.

¹² The expression ‘in the face of the sun’ (literally, ‘before the sun’) corresponds to the more familiar English saying, ‘in broad daylight’.

¹³ The literal translation of ‘forgiven’ is ‘removed’.

{ס} וַיֹּאמֶר נָתָן אֶל־דָּוִד גַּם־יְהוָה הָעֶבֶר חָטְאָתָךְ לֹא תָמוּת: יִדְּ אִפְס כִּי־נֶאֱסָנָה אֶת־אִבִּי יְהוָה בַּדְּבָר הַזֶּה גַּם הַבֵּן הַיֵּלֹד לָךְ מוֹת יָמוּת: טו וַיֵּלֶךְ נָתָן אֶל־בֵּיתוֹ וַיִּגַּף יְהוָה אֶת־הַיֵּלֶד אֲשֶׁר יָלְדָה אִשְׁת־אֹוּרִיָּה לְדָוִד וַיֵּאֲנָשׁ: טז וַיִּבְקֶשׁ דָּוִד אֶת־הָאֱלֹהִים בַּעַד הַנֶּגֶר וַיֵּצֵא דָוִד צוֹם וּבָא וּלָן וּשְׁכַב אָרְצָה: יז וַיִּקְמוּ זִקְנֵי בֵיתוֹ עָלָיו לְהַקִּימוֹ מִן־הָאָרֶץ וְלֹא אָבָה וְלֹא־בָרָא אֹתָם לֶחֶם: יח וַיְהִי בַיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי וַיָּמָת הַיֵּלֶד וַיִּרְאוּ עֲבָדֵי דָוִד לְהַגִּיד לוֹ כִּי־מָת הַיֵּלֶד כִּי אָמְרוּ הִנֵּה בְהִיּוֹת הַיֵּלֶד חַי דְּבִרְנוֹ אֵלָיו וְלֹא־שָׁמַע בְּקוֹלָנוּ וַאֲיֵךְ נֹאמַר אֵלָיו מָת הַיֵּלֶד וַעֲשֵׂה רָעָה: יט וַיִּרְא דָּוִד כִּי עֲבָדָיו מִתְלַחֲשִׁים וַיִּבֶן דָּוִד כִּי מָת הַיֵּלֶד וַיֹּאמֶר דָּוִד אֶל־עֲבָדָיו הֲמָת הַיֵּלֶד וַיֹּאמְרוּ מָת: כ וַיִּקֶּם דָּוִד מִהָאָרֶץ וּיְרַחֵץ וַיִּסְךְ וַיַּחֲלֵף שִׁמְלָתוֹ וַיָּבֹא בֵּית־יְהוָה וַיִּשְׁתַּחוּ וַיָּבֹא אֶל־

Then Nathan said to David, “Yahweh has forgiven your sin; you are not to die.¹⁴ Nevertheless, because you have outraged Yahweh by doing this, the child that will be born to you shall surely die.”¹⁵ Then Nathan went home. Yahweh struck the child that Uriah’s wife had borne to David and it fell very ill.¹⁶ David pleaded with God for the child; he fasted, went home, and lay all night on the ground.¹⁷ The elders of his house stood beside him, urging him to rise from the ground; but he would not, nor would he take food with them.¹⁸ On the seventh day the child died. David’s officers were afraid to tell him the child was dead. They said, “When the child was alive, we spoke to him and he would not listen to us. How can we tell him the child is dead? He will do himself harm.”¹⁹ But David noticed that his officers were whispering among themselves and realised that the child was dead. “Is the child dead?” he asked the officers. They said, “He is dead.”²⁰ Then David rose from the ground, bathed, anointed himself and put on fresh

¹⁴ In place of ‘outraged Yahweh’, the MT has ‘outraged the enemies of Yahweh’, one of the so-called *tiqqune sopherim* (‘emendation of the scribes’) to avoid a blasphemy.

¹⁵ In place of ‘it’, here following the MT, NJB & NRSV, NETB repeats ‘the child’.

¹⁶ At the end of this verse, the NJB adds ‘covered with sacking’.

¹⁷ The NJB has ‘officials of his household’ in place of ‘elders of his house’, here following the NRSV & NETB.

¹⁸ Literally translated, this verse ends ‘he will do harm’; the object (‘himself’) is not stated in the MT (the statement may be intentionally vague, meaning that he might harm himself or them).

¹⁹ Before ‘realised’, the MT repeats ‘David’, but this is rather clumsy in modern English.

²⁰ For the 2nd sentence, here following the NRSV & NETB, the NJB reads, “He went into the sanctuary of Yahweh and prostrated himself.”

בֵּיתוֹ וַיִּשְׁאַל וַיִּשְׁמְרוּ לוֹ לֶחֶם וַיֹּאכֵל: ^{כא} וַיֹּאמְרוּ
עֲבָדָיו אֵלָיו מִה־הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתָה בְּעַבְדְּךָ
הַיֶּלֶד חֵי צָמָת וְתָבֵד וְכֹאֲשֶׁר מֵת הַיֶּלֶד קָמָת
וְתֹאכֵל לֶחֶם: ^{כב} וַיֹּאמֶר בְּעוֹד הַיֶּלֶד חֵי צָמָתִי
וְאֶבְכֶּה כִּי אֶמְרָתִי מִי יוֹדֵעַ יַחֲנִי וְחַנְנִי יִהְיֶה וְחֵי
הַיֶּלֶד: ^{כג} וַעֲתָה מֵת לָמָּה זֶה אֲנִי צֹם הַאוֹכֵל
לְהָשִׁיבוֹ עוֹד אֲנִי הִלֵּךְ אֵלָיו וְהוּא לֹא־יָשׁוּב אֵלָי: ^{כד}
וַיִּנָּחֶם דָּוִד אֶת בַּת־שֶׁבַע אִשְׁתּוֹ וַיָּבֵא אֵלֶיהָ
וַיִּשְׁכַּב עִמָּה וַתֵּלֶד בֶּן וַיִּקְרָא וַתִּקְרָא אֶת־שְׁמוֹ
שְׁלֹמֹה וַיִּהְיֶה אֲהָבּוֹ: ^{כה} וַיִּשְׁלַח בֵּיד נָתָן הַנָּבִיא
וַיִּקְרָא אֶת־שְׁמוֹ יְדִידְיָה בְּעַבְדּוֹ יִהְיֶה: {פ}

^{כו} וַיִּלָּחֶם יוֹאָב בְּרַבַּת בְּנֵי עַמּוֹן וַיִּלְכֹּד אֶת־עִיר
הַמְּלוּכָה: ^{כז} וַיִּשְׁלַח יוֹאָב מַלְאָכִים אֶל־דָּוִד וַיֹּאמְרוּ
נִלְחַמְתִּי בְּרַבָּה גַם־לִכְבֹּדְתִי אֶת־עִיר הַמַּיִם:

clothes. He went into the house of Yahweh and worshipped. On returning to his house, he asked that food be set before him, and ate.

²¹ His officers said, “Why are you acting like this? While the child was alive you fasted and wept; now the child is dead you get up and take food.” ²² He said, “When the child was alive, I fasted and wept, for I thought, “Who knows? Yahweh may take pity on me and the child will live.” ²³ Now he is dead, why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him but he will not return to me.” ²⁴ David consoled his wife Bathsheba. He went to her and slept with her. She gave birth to a son whom she named Solomon. Yahweh loved him ²⁵ and sent word through the prophet Nathan that he should be named Jedidiah, because of Yahweh.

²⁶ Joab attacked Rabbah of the Ammonites and captured the royal city.

²⁷ Joab sent messengers to David, “I have stormed Rabbah and captured the water city. ²⁸ So now muster the rest of the troops and pitch camp

²¹ ‘While’ is a conjectural translation, reading בְּעוֹד for the MT’s בְּעַבְדּוֹ (‘for the sake of’).

²² The Kethib/Qere difference here would benefit from an explanation.

²³ This verse reflects the idea of Sheol, the cavity under the earth where all the dead go, and from where there is no return (Job 7:9–10).

²⁴ The Kethib/Qere difference here would benefit from an explanation.

²⁵ The birth of Solomon, Bathsheba’s son, ‘beloved of Yahweh’ (the meaning of ‘Jedidiah’), is the assurance of God’s pardon.

²⁶ The NJB has ‘water town’ (cf. v. 27) in place of ‘royal city’, here following the NRSV & NETB.

²⁷ The expression ‘water city’ apparently refers to that part of the fortified city that guarded the water supply of the entire city; Joab had already captured this part of the city.

²⁸ Joab now defers to King David for the capture of the rest of the city, so that the king will receive the credit for the achievement.

כח וַעֲתָה אֲסֹף אֶת־יֵתֶר הָעָם וְחָנָה עַל־הָעִיר
וּלְכַדָּהּ פֶּן־אֶלְכָּד אֲנִי אֶת־הָעִיר וְנִקְרָא שְׁמִי עָלֶיהָ:
כט וַיֹּאסֹף דָּוִד אֶת־כָּל־הָעָם וַיִּלְךְ רַבָּתָהּ וַיִּלְחֶם בָּהּ
וַיִּלְכְּדָהּ: ל וַיִּקַּח אֶת־עֹטֶר־מַלְכָּם מֵעַל רֹאשׁוֹ
וּמִשְׁקָלָהּ כֶּכֶר זָהָב וְאַבֶּן יָקָרָה וַתְּהִי עַל־רֹאשׁ דָּוִד
וּשְׁלָל הָעִיר הוֹצִיא הֲרֵבָה מְאֹד: לא וְאֶת־הָעָם
אֲשֶׁר־בָּהּ הוֹצִיא וַיַּשֵּׂם בְּמִגְרָהּ וּבַחֲרָצֵי הַבְּרִזָּל
וּבַמִּגְזָזֹת הַבְּרִזָּל וַהֲעִבִיר אוֹתָם בַּמֶּלֶךְ בַּמִּלִּין וְכֵן
יַעֲשֶׂה לְכָל עָרֵי בְנֵי־עַמּוֹן וַיֵּשֶׁב דָּוִד וְכָל־הָעָם
יְרוּשָׁלַם: {פ}

against the town and take it, unless you want me to capture the town and give it my name.” ²⁹ So, David mustered the whole army and marched on Rabbah; he stormed the town and captured it. ³⁰ He took the crown from the head of their king; it weighed one talent of gold, and in it was set a precious stone, which was placed on David’s head. He carried off great quantities of spoil from the town. ³¹ He brought away its population, and set them to work with saws, iron picks and iron axes, and employed them in brick making. He treated all the Ammonite towns in the same way. Then David and the whole army returned to Jerusalem.

²⁹ The literal translation of ‘the whole army’ is ‘all the people’.

³⁰ The NJB & NRSV, following the LXX (Μελχολ), have ‘Milcom’ (the Ammonite idol, 1K 11:5) in place of ‘their king’, here following the MT (מלכם) & NETB. The weight of the crown was around 35 Kg.

³¹ The Kethib/Qere difference here would benefit from an explanation.

2 SAMUEL 13

שמואל ב פרק יג

^א ויהי אחר־יָכֵן וְלִאֲבִשָׁלוֹם בֶּן־דָּוִד אָחוֹת יָפָה וְשֵׁמָּה תָמָר וַיֵּאֱהָבֶהָ אֲמֹנֹן בֶּן־דָּוִד: ^ב וַיֵּצֵר לְאֲמֹנֹן לְהִתְחַלֹּת בַּעֲבוּר תָּמָר אָחִיתוֹ כִּי בְתוּלָה הִיא וַיִּפְלֹא בְעֵינָי אֲמֹנֹן לַעֲשׂוֹת לָהּ מְאוּמָּה: ^ג וְלֹא־אֲמֹנֹן רָע וְשִׁמוֹ יֹנְדָב בֶּן־שִׁמְעָה אֲחִי דָוִד וַיֹּנְדָב אִישׁ חָכָם מְאֹד: ^ד וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ מְדוּעַ אָתָּה כָכָה דָל בֶּן־הַמֶּלֶךְ בִּבְקָר בִּבְקָר הֲלוֹא תִגִּיד לִי וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ אֲמֹנֹן אֶת־תָּמָר אָחוֹת אֲבִשָׁלָם אֲחִי אֲנִי אֶהָב: ^ה וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ יְהוֹנָדָב שֹׁכֵב עַל־מִשְׁכַּבְּךָ וְהִתְחַל וּבֹא אֲבִיךָ לְרְאוֹתְךָ וְאָמַרְתָּ אֵלָיו תָּבֹא נָא תָמָר אָחוֹתִי וְתַבְרַנִּי לֶחֶם וְעָשִׂתָּה לְעֵינִי אֶת־הַבְּרִיָּה לְמַעַן אֲשֶׁר אֶרְאֶה וְאֶכְלָתִי מִיָּדָה: ^ו וַיִּשְׁכַּב אֲמֹנֹן וַיִּתְחַל וַיָּבֹא הַמֶּלֶךְ לְרְאוֹתוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר אֲמֹנֹן אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ תָּבֹא־נָא תָמָר אָחִיתִי וְתִלַּבֵּב לְעֵינִי שְׂתִי לִבְבוֹת

¹ Some time passed. Absalom son of David had a beautiful sister whose name was Tamar; Amnon son of David fell in love with her. ² Amnon was so obsessed with his sister Tamar that it made him ill. For she was a virgin and it seemed to Amnon impossible to do anything to her. ³ But Amnon had a friend called Jonadab son of Shimeah, David's brother, and Jonadab was a very crafty man. ⁴ "Son of the king," he said, "tell me why, morning after morning, you look so worn? Will you not tell me?" Amnon answered, "I am in love with Tamar, my brother Absalom's sister." ⁵ Then Jonadab said, "Lie down on your bed, pretend to be sick and when your father comes to visit you, say, 'Let my sister Tamar come and give me something to eat; let her prepare the food before my eyes for me to see; only at her hands will I eat.'"⁶ Therefore, Amnon lay down and pretended to be ill. Then the king came to visit him and Amnon said to the king, "Please let my sister Tamar come and make a

2 SAMUEL 13

¹ For the 1st sentence, here following the NRSV, the NJB reads, "After this, the following events happened."

² For the 1st sentence, here following the NJB, the NRSV reads, "Amnon was so tormented that he made himself ill because of his sister Tamar;" and NETB has, "But Amnon became frustrated because he was so lovesick over his sister Tamar."

³ The NJB has 'shrewd' in place of 'crafty', here following the NRSV & NETB.

⁴ Amnon was the half-brother of Tamar; Absalom was her full blood-brother.

⁵ The verb translated 'be sick' is used in the Hitpael only in this chapter of the OT; with the exception of v. 2, it describes not a real sickness but one pretended in order to entrap Tamar (the Hitpael sometimes describes the subject making oneself appear to be a certain way).

⁶ In place of 'a cake or two', here following the NJB, the NRSV & NETB have 'a couple of cakes'.

וַאֲבָרָה מִיָּדָהּ: ^ז וַיִּשְׁלַח דָּוִד אֶל-תָּמָר הַבִּיתָה
 לֵאמֹר לְכִי נָא בֵּית אֲמֹנֹן אַחִידָּ וַעֲשִׂי-לִי הַבִּרְיָה:
^ח וַתֵּלֶךְ תָּמָר בֵּית אֲמֹנֹן אָחִיהָ וְהוּא שָׁכַב וַתִּקַּח
 אֶת-הַבֶּצֶק וְתִלוּשׁ וַתִּלֵּשׁ וַתִּלְבֹּב לְעֵינָיו וַתְּבַשֵּׁל
 אֶת-הַלֶּבָבוֹת: ^ט וַתִּקַּח אֶת-הַמִּשְׁרָת וַתַּצֵּק לִפְנֵי
 וַיִּמָּאֵן לֶאֱכֹל וַיֹּאמֶר אֲמֹנֹן הוֹצִיאוּ כָל-אִישׁ מֵעָלַי
 וַיֵּצְאוּ כָל-אִישׁ מֵעָלָיו: ^י וַיֹּאמֶר אֲמֹנֹן אֶל-תָּמָר
 הַבִּיאי הַבִּרְיָה הַחֹדֶר וַאֲבָרָה מִיָּדָּךְ וַתִּקַּח תָּמָר
 אֶת-הַלֶּבָבוֹת אֲשֶׁר עָשְׂתָה וַתָּבֵא לְאֲמֹנֹן אָחִיהָ
 הַחֹדֶרָה: ^{יא} וַתִּגַּשׁ אֵלָיו לֶאֱכֹל וַיַּחֲזֹק-בָּהּ וַיֹּאמֶר לָהּ
 בּוֹאי שְׁכְבִי עִמִּי אַחֹתִי: ^{יב} וַתֹּאמֶר לוֹ אֶל-אָחִי אֵל-
 תַּעֲנֵנִי כִּי לֹא-יַעֲשֶׂה בֶן בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל אֶל-תַּעֲשֶׂה אֶת-
 הַנְּבִלָה הַזֹּאת: ^{יג} וְאָנִי אָנָּה אוֹלִידָּ אֶת-חַרְפְּתִי
 וְאַתָּה תִּהְיֶה כְּאֶחָד הַנְּבִלִים בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל וְעַתָּה דַּבֵּר-
 נָא אֶל-הַמֶּלֶךְ כִּי לֹא יִמְנַעֲנִי מִמֶּךָ: ^{יד} וְלֹא אָבָה
 לִשְׁמֹעַ בְּקוֹלָהּ וַיַּחֲזֹק מִמֶּנָּה וַיַּעֲנֶה וַיִּשְׁכַּב אֹתָהּ:

cake or two; I will eat at her hands.” ⁷ David then sent word to Tamar at the palace, “Go to your brother Amnon’s house and prepare some food for him.” ⁸ Tamar went to the house of her brother Amnon who was lying there in bed. She took dough and kneaded it, and she made cakes there before his eyes and baked the cakes. ⁹ Then she took the pan and dished them up in front of him, but he refused to eat. “Let everyone leave me,” he said; so, everyone left. ¹⁰ Then Amnon said to Tamar, “Bring the food into the chamber so that I can eat at your hands.” Tamar took the cakes she had made and brought them to her brother Amnon in the chamber. ¹¹ As she was offering the food to him, he caught hold of her and said, “Come to bed with me, my sister.” ¹² She answered him, “No, my brother! Do not violate me; men do not do such a thing in Israel. Do not commit such an outrage. ¹³ Wherever should I go, bearing my shame? As for you, you would become an outcast in Israel. Go now and speak to the king; he will not refuse to give me to you.” ¹⁴ But he would not listen to her; he overpowered her and forcefully raped her.

⁷ For the opening clause, here following the NJB, the NRSV has ‘then David sent home to Tamar’ and NETB has ‘so David sent Tamar to the house’.

⁸ The *Kethib/Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

⁹ In place of ‘so everyone left’, a few medieval Hebrew MSS have ‘and they removed everyone’ (Hiphil rather than Qal).

¹⁰ The NJB has ‘inner room’ in place of ‘chamber’ (twice in this verse), here following the NRSV, and NETB has ‘bedroom’.

¹¹ The literal translation of ‘come to bed with me’ is ‘lie with me’.

¹² For the last sentence, here following the NJB, the NRSV reads, “Do not do anything so vile” and NETB has “Don’t do this foolish thing!”

¹³ According to ancient custom (Gn 20:12), Amnon could marry his half-sister but such marriages were forbidden by Lv 18:9, 20:17 & Dt 27:22.

¹⁴ For the last sentence, here following NETB, the NRSV reads, “and being stronger than she, he forced her and lay with her.”

^{טו} וַיִּשְׁנֶאֱהָ אֲמֹנֹן שִׁנְאָה גְדוֹלָה מֵאֹד כִּי גְדוֹלָה
הַשִּׁנְאָה אֲשֶׁר שִׁנְאָה מֵאֲהָבָה אֲשֶׁר אֲהָבָה
וַיֹּאמֶר-לָהּ אֲמֹנֹן קוּמִי לְכִי: ^{טז} וַתֹּאמֶר לוֹ אֶל-
אוֹדֹת הָרָעָה הַגְּדוֹלָה הַזֹּאת מֵאַחֲרֵת אֲשֶׁר-עָשִׂיתָ
עִמִּי לְשַׁלְּחָנִי וְלֹא אָבָה לְשָׁמֹעַ לָהּ: ^{יז} וַיִּקְרָא אֶת-
נַעֲרוֹ מִשְׁרָתּוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר שְׁלַחֲנִי אֶת-זֹאת מִעָלֶי
הַחוּצָה וְנָעַל הַדֶּלֶת אַחֲרָיָהּ: ^{יח} וְעָלֶיהָ כְּתָנֹת פָּסִים
כִּי כֵן תִּלְבָּשֵׁן בְּנוֹת-הַמֶּלֶךְ הַבְּתוּלוֹת מְעִילִים וַיַּצֵּא
אוֹתָהּ מִשְׁרָתּוֹ הַחוּץ וְנָעַל הַדֶּלֶת אַחֲרָיָהּ: ^{יט} וַתִּקַּח
תָּמָר אֶפֶר עַל-רֹאשָׁהּ וּכְתָנֹת הַפָּסִים אֲשֶׁר עָלֶיהָ
קָרָעָה וַתִּשֶׂם יָדָהּ עַל-רֹאשָׁהּ וַתֵּלֶךְ הַלּוֹךְ וּזְעָקָה:
^כ וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלֶיהָ אַבְשָׁלוֹם אָחִיהָ הָאֲמִינוֹן אָחִיךָ הִיא
עִמָּךְ וְעַתָּה אָחוֹתִי הַחֲרִישִׁי אָחִיךָ הוּא אֶל-תִּשְׁתִּי
אֶת-לִבְךָ לְדַבֵּר הַזֶּה וַתֵּשֶׁב תָּמָר וְשָׁמְמָה בֵּית
אַבְשָׁלוֹם אָחִיהָ: ^{כא} וְהַמֶּלֶךְ דָּוִד שָׁמַע אֶת כָּל-

¹⁵ Then Amnon was seized with extreme hatred for her; the hatred he now felt for her was greater than his earlier love for her. And Ammon said to her, "Get up and go." ¹⁶ And Tamar said to him, "No, my brother! This new evil, sending me away, would be worse than the earlier wrong you have done me." However, Ammon would not listen to her. ¹⁷ He called the soldier who was his servant and said, "Remove this woman from my presence: throw her out and bolt the door after her." ¹⁸ (She was wearing a long-sleeved gown, for this how the king's unmarried daughters were clothed in days gone by.) Therefore, the servant put her out and bolted the door after her. ¹⁹ Then Tamar took dust and put it on her head and tore the long-sleeved gown she was wearing; she laid her hand on her head and went away, uttering cries as she went. ²⁰ Her brother Absalom said to her, "Has Amnon, your brother, been with you? Be quiet now, my sister; he is your brother; do not take this so much to heart." Therefore, Tamar remained disconsolate in her brother

¹⁵ Literally translated, the 1st sentence reads, "And Amnon hated her with very great hatred; for, greater was the hatred with which he hated her than the love with which he loved her."

¹⁶ The translation of this verse follows the LXX (καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῇ Θημαρ Μή, ἄδελφε, ὅτι μεγάλη ἡ κακία ἢ ἐσχάτη ὑπὲρ τὴν πρώτην, ἣν ἐποίησας μετ' ἐμοῦ, τοῦ ἐξαποστειλαί με. καὶ οὐκ ἠθέλησεν Αμνων ἀκοῦσαι τῆς φωνῆς αὐτῆς.); the MT is dubious: "No, because this great evil is (worse) than the other which you did with me, by sending me away." (Perhaps the broken syntax reflects her hysteria and outrage.)

¹⁷ The literal translation of 'remove this woman from my presence: throw her out' is 'send this (one) from upon me to the outside'.

¹⁸ 'In days gone by' is a conjectural translation; the MT has 'robes'.

¹⁹ Tamar's actions are the gestures of mourning and grief (see 1:2, 15:32, 2K 5:7, Est 4:1, Jr 2:37).

²⁰ Literally translated, this verse ends, "don't set your heart to this thing."

הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה וַיַּחַר לוֹ מְאֹד: ^{כב} וְלֹא־דָבַר
אֲבִשָׁלוֹם עִם־אֲמֹנֹן לְמַרְעֵ וְעַד־טוֹב כִּי־שָׁנָא
אֲבִשָׁלוֹם אֶת־אֲמֹנֹן עַל־דְּבַר אֲשֶׁר עָנָה אֶת תָּמָר
אֶחָתָּו: {פ}

^{כג} וַיְהִי לְשָׁנָתִים יָמִים וַיְהִיו גִּזְזִים לְאֲבִשָׁלוֹם בְּבַעַל
חֲצוֹר אֲשֶׁר עִם־אֶפְרַיִם וַיִּקְרָא אֲבִשָׁלוֹם לְכָל־בְּנֵי
הַמֶּלֶךְ: ^{כד} וַיָּבֵא אֲבִשָׁלוֹם אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ וַיֹּאמֶר הִנֵּה־
נָא גִזְזִים לְעִבְדְּךָ יִלְד־נָא הַמֶּלֶךְ וְעִבְדִּיו עִם־עִבְדְּךָ:
^{כה} וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶל־אֲבִשָׁלוֹם אֶל־בְּנֵי אֶל־נָא גִלְדִּי
כָּלְנֹו וְלֹא נִכְבֵּד עָלֶיךָ וַיִּפְרֹץ־בּוֹ וְלֹא־אָבָה לָלֶכֶת
וַיִּבְרָכְהוּ: ^{כו} וַיֹּאמֶר אֲבִשָׁלוֹם וְלֹא יִלְד־נָא אֶתְנֹו
אֲמֹנֹן אָחִי וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ הַמֶּלֶךְ לָמָּה יִלְדִּי עַמָּד:
^{כז} וַיִּפְרֹץ־בּוֹ אֲבִשָׁלוֹם וַיִּשְׁלַח אֹתוֹ אֶת־אֲמֹנֹן וְאֶת
כָּל־בְּנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ: {ס} ^{כח} וַיֵּצֵאוּ אֲבִשָׁלוֹם אֶת־נַעֲרָיו

Absalom's house. ²¹ And, when King David heard about all these events, he was very angry. ²² However, Absalom spoke to Amnon neither good nor bad; for, Absalom hated Amnon for having raped his sister Tamar.

²³ And it came to pass that, two full years later, Absalom had sheep shearers at Baal-Hazor, which is near Ephraim, and Absalom invited all the king's sons. ²⁴ Absalom went to the king and said, "Your servant has the sheep shearers. Will the king and his officers be pleased to come with your servant?" ²⁵ "No, my son," the king replied, "we must not all come and be a burden to you." Though he pressed him, he would not go; but he dismissed him. ²⁶ Absalom persisted, "If not, please let my brother Amnon go with us." The king said, "Why should he go with you?" ²⁷ But Absalom pressed him, so he allowed Amnon and all the king's sons to go with him. ²⁸ Then Absalom gave this command to

²¹ At the end of this verse, the NRSV & NJB, following the LXX (καὶ οὐκ ἐλύπησεν τὸ πνεῦμα Αμνων τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ, ὅτι ἡγάπα αὐτόν, ὅτι πρωτότοκος αὐτοῦ ἦν), add, "But he had no wish to harm his son Amnon, since he loved him; he was his first-born."

²² The NJB opens this verse, here following the NRSV, with, "Absalom, however, would not so much as speak to Amnon..."

²³ In place of 'all the king's sons', here following the NRSV & NETB, the NJB has 'the entire royal household'.

²⁴ At the beginning of Absalom's speech, the NJB adds 'at this moment'.

²⁵ Here and in v. 27 the translation follows 4QSam^a, in reading וַיִּצְפֹּר ('and he pressed') rather than the MT's וַיִּפְרֹץ ('and he broke through'); this emended reading seems also to underlie the translations of the LXX (καὶ ἐβιάσατο), the Peshitta and Vg (cogeret eum).

²⁶ In place of 'if not, (please)', here following the MT & NRSV, the NJB has 'then at least'.

²⁷ At the end of this verse, both the NJB & NRSV, following 4QSam^a, add, "Absalom prepared a royal banquet;" here, we follow the MT.

²⁸ Literally translated, this verse ends, "become sons of valour."

לֵאמֹר רְאוּ נָא כְּטוֹב לִב־אַמְנוֹן בַּיּוֹם וְאִמְרָתִי
 אֲלֵיכֶם הִכּוּ אֶת־אַמְנוֹן וְהַמָּתָם אֹתוֹ אֶל־תִּירְאוּ
 הַלּוֹא כִּי אֲנֹכִי צִוִּיתִי אֶתְכֶם חֲזָקוּ וְהָיוּ לִבְנֵי־חַיִּל:
 כֹּס וַיַּעֲשׂוּ נַעֲרֵי אַבְשָׁלוֹם לְאַמְנוֹן כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה
 אַבְשָׁלוֹם וַיִּקְמוּ | כָּל־בְּנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ וַיִּרְכְּבוּ אִישׁ עַל־
 פָּרָדוֹ וַיָּנֶסוּ: ל' וַיְהִי הַמָּה בַּדֶּרֶךְ וְהַשְׁמָעָה בָּאָה אֶל־
 דָּוִד לֵאמֹר הִכָּה אַבְשָׁלוֹם אֶת־כָּל־בְּנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ וְלֹא־
 נֹתַר מֵהֶם אֶחָד: {פ}

לֹא וַיִּקֶם הַמֶּלֶךְ וַיִּקְרַע אֶת־בְּגָדָיו וַיִּשְׁכַּב אֶרְצָה
 וְכָל־עַבְדָּיו נִצְבִּים קִרְעֵי בְּגָדִים: {ס} יֵב וַיַּעַן יוֹנָדָב |
 בֶּן־שֹׁמֶעַה אֲחִי־דָוִד וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל־יֹאמֶר אֲדֹנָי אֵת
 כָּל־הַנְּעָרִים בְּנֵי־הַמֶּלֶךְ הִמָּיתוּ כִּי־אַמְנוֹן לִבְדּוֹ מֵת
 כִּי־עַל־פִּי אַבְשָׁלוֹם הִיָּתָה שׁוּמָה מִיּוֹם עָנָתָהּ אֵת
 תִּמָּר אָחִתּוֹ: ל"ג וַעֲתָה אֶל־יֵשֶׁם אֲדֹנָי הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶל־
 לְבֹ דְבַר לֵאמֹר כָּל־בְּנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ מָתוּ כִּי־אִם־
 אַמְנוֹן לְבִדּוֹ מֵת: {פ}

his servants: "Listen carefully; when Amnon's heart is merry with wine and I say, "Strike Amnon down," then kill him. Do not be afraid: I myself have given you the order. Be courageous and valiant." ²⁹ So, the servants of Absalom treated Amnon exactly as Absalom had commanded. Then all the king's sons rose, and each mounted his mule and took flight. ³⁰ While they were on the road, the following rumour reached David, "Absalom has killed all the king's sons; not one of them is left."

³¹ The king rose, tore his garments, and lay down on the ground. All his officers who were standing by tore their garments too. ³² However, Jonadab son of Shimeah, David's brother, spoke up. "Let not my lord imagine," he said, "that they have killed all the young men, the sons of the king; Amnon alone is dead, for this has been determined by Absalom ever since he violated his sister Tamar. ³³ Therefore, let not my lord the king imagine that all the king's sons are dead; Amnon alone is dead."

²⁹ The NJB & NRSV lacks 'exactly', here following NETB.

³⁰ The NJB & NRSV lack 'following', here following NETB.

³¹ In place of 'who were standing by', here following the NRSV, the NJB has 'in attendance'.

³² The literal translation of 'this has been determined by Absalom' (here following the NRSV) is 'it was placed on the mouth of Absalom'. The NJB & NETB have 'Amnon violated' in place of 'he violated', here following the MT.

³³ The Qere lacks אִם, here following the Ketiv.

לֹד וַיִּבְרַח אֲבִשָׁלֹם וַיֵּשָׂא הַנַּעַר הַצֶּפֶה אֶת־עֵינָיו
וַיֵּרָא וְהִנֵּה עַם־רַב הַלֵּכִים מִדֶּרֶךְ אַחֲרָיו מֵעֵד
הָהָר: ^לוַיֹּאמֶר יֹנָדָב אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ הִנֵּה בְנֵי־הַמֶּלֶךְ
בָּאוּ כְדַבֵּר עֲבָדָךְ כֵּן הָיָה: ^{לו}וַיְהִי כִכְלָתוֹ לְדַבֵּר
וְהִנֵּה בְנֵי־הַמֶּלֶךְ בָּאוּ וַיִּשְׁאוּ קוֹלָם וַיִּבְכוּ וְגַם־
הַמֶּלֶךְ וְכָל־עֲבָדָיו בָּכוּ בְּכִי גָדוֹל מְאֹד: ^{לז}וַאֲבִשָׁלֹם
בָּרַח וַיֵּלֶךְ אֶל־תַּלְמִי בֶן־עַמִּיהוּד עַמִּיחֹר מֶלֶךְ
גִּשְׁשׁוּר וַיִּתְאַבֵּל עַל־בָּנוּ כָּל־הַיָּמִים: ^{לח}וַאֲבִשָׁלֹם
בָּרַח וַיֵּלֶךְ גִּשְׁשׁוּר וַיְהִי־שָׁם שָׁלֹשׁ שָׁנִים: ^{לט}וַתִּכַּל
דָּוִד הַמֶּלֶךְ לָצֵאת אֶל־אֲבִשָׁלֹם כִּי־נָחַם עַל־אֲמָנוֹן
בִּיָּמָת: {ס}

³⁴ But Absalom fled. When the young man on sentry duty looked up, he saw a large troop coming along the road from Horonaim by the side of the mountain. ³⁵ Then Jonadab said to the king, “See, the king’s sons have come; as your servant said, so it has turned out.” ³⁶ He had scarcely finished speaking when the king’s sons arrived, and they cried aloud and wept; and the king and all his officers also wept very bitterly. ³⁷ Absalom, however, had fled and had gone to Talmai son of Ammihud, king of Geshur. David mourned for his son day after day. ³⁸ Absalom, having fled to Geshur, stayed there for three years. ³⁹ The king longed to go to Absalom, for he had since been consoled over the death of Amnon.

³⁴ At the end of this verse, the LXX adds the following text:

καὶ ἰδὼν λαὸς πολὺς πορευόμενος ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ ὅπισθεν αὐτοῦ ἐκ πλευρᾶς τοῦ ὄρους ἐν τῇ καταβάσει καὶ παρεγένετο ὁ σκοπὸς καὶ ἀπήγγειλεν τῷ βασιλεῖ καὶ εἶπεν Ἄνδρας ἐώρακα ἐκ τῆς ὁδοῦ τῆς Ὠρωνην ἐκ μέρους τοῦ ὄρους

And the watchman came and reported to the king and said, “I have seen men coming down the road from Horonaim, on the side of mountain.”

³⁵ The NJB opens Jonadab’s speech, here following the NRSV, with, “Here come the king’s sons.”

³⁶ The literal translation of ‘cried aloud and wept’ is ‘raised their voices and wept’.

³⁷ The MT of vv. 37–38 is confused: here, we follow the NRSV. In place of עַמִּיחֹר, here following the Qere, the Kethib has עַמִּיהוּד.

³⁸ Absalom fled to the land of his maternal grandfather (3:3); as an Aramaean kingdom (15:8), Geshur was under David’s military control (8:3–8, 10:6–19).

³⁹ The translation here follows 4QSam^a in reading רוּחַ הַמֶּלֶךְ (‘the spirit of the king’) rather than the MT’s דָּוִד הַמֶּלֶךְ (‘David the king’); the understanding reflected is that David, though alienated during this time from his son Absalom, still had an abiding love and concern for him, and longed for reconciliation with him. A rather different interpretation of the verse supposes that David’s interest in taking military action against Absalom grew slack with the passing of time, and this enabled David’s advisers to encourage him toward reconciliation.

2 SAMUEL 14

שמואל ב פרק יד

^א וַיֵּדַע יוֹאָב בֶּן־זְרוּיָה כִּי־לֵב הַמֶּלֶךְ עַל־אַבְשָׁלוֹם:
^ב וַיִּשְׁלַח יוֹאָב תְּקוּעָה וַיִּקַּח מִשָּׁם אִשָּׁה חֲכָמָה
וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלֶיהָ הִתְאַבְּלִי־נָא וּלְבַשִּׁי־נָא בְּגָדֵי־אַבֵּל
וְאַל־תְּסוּכִי שֶׁמֶן וְהָיִית כְּאִשָּׁה זֹה יָמִים רַבִּים
מִתְאַבֵּלֶת עַל־מֵת: ^ג וּבֹאֲת אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ וְדִבַּרְתְּ אֵלָיו
כַּדָּבָר הַזֶּה וַיֵּשֶׁם יוֹאָב אֶת־הַדְּבָרִים בְּפִיהָ:
^ד וְתֹאמַר הָאִשָּׁה הַתְּקַעִית אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ וַתִּפֹּל עַל־
אַפֶּיהָ אֶרְצָה וַתִּשְׁתָּחוּ וַתֹּאמֶר הוֹשָׁעָה
הַמֶּלֶךְ: {ס}

^ה וַיֹּאמֶר־לָהּ הַמֶּלֶךְ מִה־לָּךְ וַתֹּאמֶר אֲבֵל אִשָּׁה־
אֶלְמָנָה אֲנִי וַיָּמָת אִישִׁי: ^ו וְלִשְׁפָחְתְּךָ שְׁנֵי בָנִים
וַיִּנָּצוּ שְׁנֵיהֶם בַּשָּׂדֶה וְאִין מַצִּיל בֵּינֵיהֶם וַיָּכּוּ הָאֶחָד
אֶת־הָאֶחָד וַיָּמָת אֹתוֹ: ^ז וְהִנֵּה קָמָה כָּל־הַמִּשְׁפָּחָה
עַל־שְׁפָחְתְּךָ וַיֹּאמְרוּ תָּנִי | אֶת־מִכָּה אָחִיו וְנָמַתְהוּ

¹ Now Joab son of Zeruiah observed that the king was favourably inclined to Absalom, ² so Joab sent to Tekoa and brought from there a quick-witted woman. "Pretend to be in mourning," he said to her, "Put on mourning garments; do not anoint yourself with oil; act like a woman who has been mourning for the dead for many days. ³ Go then to the king and say this to him." And Joab put into her mouth the words she had to say. ⁴ So, the woman of Tekoa went to the king; she fell with her face to the ground and did homage. "Help, O king!" she said.

⁵ The king said, "What is the matter?" She replied, "I am a widow; my husband is dead. ⁶ Your servant had two sons and, out in the fields where there was no one to intervene, they fought with each other; and one struck the other and killed him. ⁷ Now the whole clan has risen against your servant. They say, "Give up the man who killed his

2 SAMUEL 14

¹ For 'the king', here following the LXX (ἡ καρδιά τοῦ βασιλέως – literally, 'the king's heart'), the MT has 'David the king'.

² 'Tekoa' is about 18 Km south of Jerusalem and was the home of the prophet Amos.

³ Like Nathan (12:1ff), Joab puts an imaginary case to get the king to commit himself.

⁴ The translation here follows many medieval Hebrew MSS in reading וַתֵּבֵא ('and she went') rather than the MT's וַתֹּאמֶר ('and she said'); the MT shows confusion with וַתֹּאמֶר later in the verse and the emendation is supported by the LXX (καὶ εἰσῆλθεν), Peshitta and some Tg MSS.

⁵ Literally translated, the king's question is, "What to you?"

⁶ Here and elsewhere (vv. 7, 12, 15^a, 17, 19), the woman uses a term which suggests a low-level female servant.

⁷ The Kethib/Qere difference here would benefit from an explanation.

בַּנֶּפֶשׁ אֶחָיו אֲשֶׁר הָרַג וְנִשְׁמִידָה גַם אֶת־הַיּוֹרֵשׁ
וְכָבוּ אֶת־גַּחְלָתִי אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁאַרָה לְבִלְתִּי שׁוֹם שִׁים־
לְאִישִׁי שֵׁם וְשִׁאֲרִית עַל־פְּנֵי הָאֲדָמָה: {פ}

ח וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶל־הָאִשָּׁה לְכִי לְבֵיתְךָ וְאֲנִי אֲצוּהָ
עֲלֶיךָ: ט וְתֹאמַר הָאִשָּׁה הַתְּקוּעִית אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ עָלִי
אֲדֹנָי הַמֶּלֶךְ הָעוֹן וְעַל־בֵּית אָבִי וְהַמֶּלֶךְ וְכִסְאוֹ
נָקִי: {ס} י וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ הַמְדַּבֵּר אֵלָיו וְהִבֵּאתוּ
אֵלַי וְלֹא־יִסִּיף עוֹד לִגְעַת בְּךָ: יא וְתֹאמַר יִזְכֶּר־נָא
הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ מִהֶרְבֵּית מִהֶרְבֶּת גֹּאֵל
הַדָּם לְשַׁחַת וְלֹא יִשְׁמִידוּ אֶת־בְּנִי וַיֹּאמֶר חִי־יְהוָה
אִם־יִפֹּל מִשְׁעֶרֶת בְּנֶךָ אֶרֶצָה: יב וְתֹאמַר הָאִשָּׁה
תְּדַבֵּר־נָא שִׁפְחָתְךָ אֶל־אֲדֹנָי הַמֶּלֶךְ דָּבָר וַיֹּאמֶר
דְּבָרִי: {ס} יג וְתֹאמַר הָאִשָּׁה וְלִמָּה חֲשַׁבְתָּה כְּזֹאת
עַל־עַם אֱלֹהִים וּמִדְּבַר הַמֶּלֶךְ הַדְּבָר הַזֶּה כְּאִשֶּׁם
לְבִלְתִּי הָשִׁיב הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶת־נִדְחוֹ: יד כִּי־מוֹת נָמוֹת
וְכַמִּים הַנִּגְרִים אֶרֶצָה אֲשֶׁר לֹא יֵאָסְפוּ וְלֹא־יִשָּׂא

brother, so we may kill him for the life of the brother he murdered and so destroy the heir too.” Thus, they will quench my last coal and leave my husband neither name nor survivor on the face of the earth.”

⁸ The king told the woman, “Go to your house; I myself will give orders concerning your case.” ⁹ The Tekoan woman said to the king, “My lord king! May the guilt be on me and my father’s house; the king and his throne are innocent.” ¹⁰ And the king said, “Bring to me whoever threatened you and he shall never hurt you again.” ¹¹ Then she said, “Let the king remember Yahweh his God, so the avenger of blood shall not do greater harm and destroy my son.” He said, “As Yahweh lives, not one hair of your son shall fall to the ground.” ¹² And the woman said, “Allow your servant to say something else to my lord the king.” “Go on,” he said. ¹³ The woman said, “Why have you planned such a thing against the people of God? In giving this decision, the king is guilty; for, the king does not bring back his banished one. ¹⁴ We must all die; we are like water spilt on the ground that can never be gathered up,

⁸ The literal translation of ‘your case’ is simply ‘you’.

⁹ In place of ‘my father’s house’, here following the MT, NRSV & NETB, the NJB has ‘my family’.

¹⁰ The NRSV opens the speech, here following the NJB, with, “If anyone says anything to you, bring him to me.”

¹¹ The Kethib/Qere difference here would benefit from an explanation.

¹² In place of ‘go on’, here following the NJB, the NRSV has ‘speak’ and NETB has ‘tell me’.

¹³ In place of ‘in giving this decision the king’, here following the NRSV, NETB has ‘when the king speaks in this fashion’.

¹⁴ The NRSV has ‘but God will not take away a life’ in place of ‘nor does God raise up a corpse’; the meaning of the MT is uncertain.

אֱלֹהִים נָפֵשׁ וְחַשָּׁב מַחְשְׁבוֹת לְבַלְתִּי יָדַח מִמֶּנּוּ
נִדַּח׃ ^{טו} וְעַתָּה אֲשֶׁר-בָּאתִי לְדַבֵּר אֶל-הַמֶּלֶךְ אֲדֹנִי
אֶת-הַדְּבָר הַזֶּה כִּי יֵרְאֵנִי הָעָם וְתֹאמַר שִׁפְחַתְךָ
אֲדַבְּרָה-נָא אֶל-הַמֶּלֶךְ אוֹלִי יַעֲשֶׂה הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶת-
דְּבַר אָמְתּוֹ׃ ^{טז} כִּי יִשְׁמַע הַמֶּלֶךְ לְהַצִּיל אֶת-אָמְתּוֹ
מִכַּף הָאִישׁ לְהַשְׁמִיד אֹתִי וְאֶת-בְּנֵי יֶחֱד מִנַּחֲלַת
אֱלֹהִים׃ ^{יז} וְתֹאמַר שִׁפְחַתְךָ יְהִי־הֵנָּה דְּבַר-אֲדֹנִי
הַמֶּלֶךְ לְמִנְחָה כִּי כַּמְלֹאךְ הָאֱלֹהִים בֶּן אֲדֹנִי
הַמֶּלֶךְ לִשְׁמַע הַטּוֹב וְהָרַע וַיהוָה אֱלֹהֵיךָ יְהִי
עִמָּךְ׃ {פ}

nor does God raise up a corpse; instead, he devises ways for the banished one to be restored. ¹⁵ “Now the reason why I have come to speak about this to my lord the king is because people have frightened me, and your servant thought, “I will speak to the king; perhaps the king will do what his servant asks. ¹⁶ For the king may consent to deliver his servant from the hands of the man who would cut us off, myself and my son with me, from God’s heritage. ¹⁷ May the word of my lord the king,” your servant thought, “set me at rest. For my lord the king is like the Angel of God for discerning good and evil.” May Yahweh your God be with you!”

¹⁵ The LXX (*ὁψεταιί με*) has misunderstood the Piel perfect, יִרְאֵנִי (*‘they have frightened me’*), taking the verb to be a form of the verb רָאָה (*‘to see’*) rather than the verb יָרָא (*‘to fear’*); the fact that the Greek translators had an un-pointed text made them susceptible to this type of error.

כ לְבַעְבוֹר סִבֵּב אֶת־פָּנָי הַדָּבָר עָשָׂה עֲבָדְךָ יוֹאָב
אֶת־הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה וְאֲדָנִי חָכֵם כַּחֲכֹמֶת מֶלֶךְ
הָאֱלֹהִים לִדְעוֹת אֶת־כָּל־אֲשֶׁר בָּאָרֶץ: {ס}

כא וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶל־יוֹאָב הִנֵּה־נָא עָשִׂיתִי אֶת־
הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה וְלֹךְ הָשֵׁב אֶת־הַנָּעַר אֶת־אֲבִשְׁלוֹם:
כב וַיִּפֹּל יוֹאָב אֶל־פָּנָיו אֶרְצָה וַיִּשְׁתַּחוּ וַיְבָרֶךְ אֶת־
הַמֶּלֶךְ וַיֹּאמֶר יוֹאָב הַיּוֹם יָדַע עֲבָדְךָ כִּי־מָצָאתִי חֵן
בְּעֵינֶיךָ אֲדָנִי הַמֶּלֶךְ אֲשֶׁר־עָשָׂה הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶת־דְּבַר
עֲבָדוֹ עֲבָדְךָ: כג וַיֵּקֶם יוֹאָב וַיֵּלֶךְ גִּשְׁשׁוּרָה וַיָּבֵא אֶת־
אֲבִשְׁלוֹם יְרוּשָׁלַם: {ס}

כד וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ יֹסֵב אֶל־בֵּיתוֹ וּפָנָי לֹא יֵרָאֶה וַיֹּסֵב
אֲבִשְׁלוֹם אֶל־בֵּיתוֹ וּפָנָי הַמֶּלֶךְ לֹא רָאָה: {ס}

כה וּכְאֲבִשְׁלוֹם לֹא־הָיָה אִישׁ־יִפֶּה בְּכָל־יִשְׂרָאֵל
לְהֵלֵל מְאֹד מִכָּף רַגְלוֹ וְעַד קִדְקְדוֹ לֹא־הָיָה בּוֹ
מוֹם: כו וּבְגִלְחוֹ אֶת־רֹאשׁוֹ וְהָיָה מְקַץ יָמִים | לַיָּמִים
אֲשֶׁר יִגְלַח כִּי־כִבֵּד עָלָיו וּגְלָחוֹ וְשָׁקַל אֶת־שֹׁעַר

servant Joab acted in this way to disguise the matter, but my lord has wisdom like the wisdom of the Angel of God; he knows all that takes place in the land."

²¹ The king then said to Joab, "Very well, I will grant this suit. Go and bring the young man Absalom back." ²² Joab prostrated himself with his face to the ground and did homage and blessed the king. "My lord king," Joab said, "today your servant knows that he has found favour in your sight, since the king has granted the request of your servant."

²³ So, Joab set off and went to Geshur and brought Absalom back to Jerusalem.

²⁴ The king said, "Let him go to his own house; he may not see my face." So, Absalom went to his own house; he did not see the king's face.

²⁵ In the whole of Israel there was no man who could be praised for his beauty as much as Absalom; from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head there was not a blemish on him. ²⁶ When he cut the hair on his head – and he would cut it every year; he would cut it then because it grew

²¹ Many Medieval Hebrew MSS have 'you will grant' in place of 'I will grant'.

²² In place of 'your servant', here following the Qere (עֲבָדְךָ), the Ketiv has 'his servant' (עֲבָדוֹ).

²³ The NJB has 'Joab then set off' in place of 'so Joab set off', here following the NRSV & NETB.

²⁴ In place of 'he may not see my face', here following the MT & NETB, the NJB has 'he is not to come into my presence'.

²⁵ Vv. 25–27 interrupt the story and come from another source.

²⁶ There were at least two standards of weight at that time, the common and the royal, or king's weight. The latter was somewhat heavier; two hundred shekels would have been about 2.2 Kg.

רָאשׁוּ מֵאֲתֵי־שָׁקְלִים בְּאֶבֶן הַמֶּלֶךְ: כִּי וַיּוֹלְדוּ
לְאַבְשָׁלוֹם שְׁלוֹשָׁה בָנִים וּבֵת אַחַת וְשֵׁמָּה תָמָר
הִיא הָיְתָה אִשָּׁה יָפֶת מֵרָאָה: {פ}

כִּי וַיֵּשֶׁב אַבְשָׁלוֹם בִּירוּשָׁלַם שְׁנַת־יָמִים וּפְנֵי
הַמֶּלֶךְ לֹא רָאָה: כִּסְ וַיִּשְׁלַח אַבְשָׁלוֹם אֶל־יֹאָב
לְשַׁלַּח אֹתוֹ אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ וְלֹא אָבָה לָבוֹא אֵלָיו
וַיִּשְׁלַח עוֹד שְׁנִית וְלֹא אָבָה לָבוֹא: לִי וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל־
עֲבָדָיו רְאוּ חִלְקַת יֹאָב אֶל־יְדֵי וְלוֹ־שֵׁם שְׁעָרִים
לָכֹן וְהוּצְתִיה וְהִצִּיתוּהָ בָאֵשׁ וַיֵּצְאוּ עֲבָדֵי אַבְשָׁלוֹם
אֶת־הַחֲלָקָה בָּאֵשׁ: {פ}

לֹא וַיָּקָם יֹאָב וַיָּבֹא אֶל־אַבְשָׁלוֹם הַבֵּיתָה וַיֹּאמֶר
אֵלָיו לָמָּה הִצִּיתוּ עֲבָדֶיךָ אֶת־הַחֲלָקָה אֲשֶׁר־לִי
בָּאֵשׁ: לִבִּי וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְשָׁלוֹם אֶל־יֹאָב הִנֵּה שְׁלַחְתִּי
אֵלֶיךָ | לֵאמֹר בֹּא הִנֵּה וְאֶשְׁלַחָה אֹתְךָ אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ

too heavy for him – he would weigh the hair; two hundred shekels, king’s weight. ²⁷ To Absalom were born three sons and one daughter called Tamar; she was a beautiful woman.

²⁸ So it was that Absalom lived in Jerusalem for two full years without coming into the king’s presence. ²⁹ Then Absalom summoned Joab, intending to send him to the king, but Joab was not willing to come to him. He sent for him a second time, but Joab still was not willing to come. ³⁰ Then he said to his servants, “Look, Joab’s field is next to mine and he has barley in it; go and set fire to it.” Absalom’s servants set fire to the field.

³¹ At this, Joab went off to Absalom at his house. “Why,” he asked him, “have your servants set fire to the field belonging to me?” ³² Absalom answered Joab, “Look now, I sent word to you to say I wanted you to go to the king with this message, “Why did I come back from Geshur?

²⁷ Absalom seems to have named his daughter after his ravished sister, Tamar. The information about sons should be contrasted with 18:18. At the end of this verse, the LXX adds ‘and she became a wife to Rehoboam the son of Solomon and bore to him Abia’ (καὶ γίνεται γυνὴ τῷ Ροβοαμ υἱῷ Σαλωμων καὶ τίττει αὐτῷ τὸν Αβια).

²⁸ It was likely during this period that Absalom began to plot revolt; some have blamed David for delaying the reconciliation too long.

²⁹ In place of ‘was not willing to come’, here following NETB, the NJB & NRSV have ‘would not come’ (twice in this verse).

³⁰ The Kethib/Qere difference here would benefit from an explanation. After ‘set fire to it’, the LXX adds ‘and the servants of Absalom burned them up, and the servants of Joab came to him, rending their garments; they said’ (καὶ ἐνέπρησαν αὐτὰς οἱ παῖδες Αβεσσαλωμ. καὶ παραγίνονται οἱ δοῦλοι Ἰωαβ πρὸς αὐτὸν διερχομένης τὰ ἱμάτια αὐτῶν καὶ εἶπαν).

³¹ In place of ‘the field’, here following the NJB & NRSV, NETB has ‘the portion of the field’ (as also in v. 30).

³² The literal translation of ‘I wish to be received by the king’ is ‘I wish to see the king’s face’.

לֵאמֹר לָמָּה בָּאתִי מִגֶּשׁוֹר טוֹב לִי עַד אֲנִי־שָׁם
וְעַתָּה אֶרְאֶה פָנַי הַמֶּלֶךְ וְאִם־יִשְׁכְּבִי עָוֹן וְהִמָּתְנִי:
לִי וַיָּבֹא יוֹאָב אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ וַיִּגְדֵּלֹו וַיִּקְרָא אֶל־
אַבְשָׁלוֹם וַיָּבֹא אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ וַיִּשְׁתַּחוּ לוֹ עַל־אַפּוֹ
אֶרְצָה לִפְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ וַיִּשָּׁק הַמֶּלֶךְ לְאַבְשָׁלוֹם: {ס}

It would be better for me to be there still. Now I wish to be received by the king, and if I am guilty, let him put me to death.””” ³³ Joab went to the king and told him this. He then summoned Absalom who went to the king and bowed low before him, throwing himself on his face to the ground before the king; and the king kissed Absalom.

³³ For this verse, here following the NJB, the NRSV reads, “Then Joab went to the king and told him; and he summoned Absalom. So, he came to the king and prostrated himself with his face to the ground before the king; and the king kissed Absalom.”

שמואל ב פרק טו

א ויהי מאחרי כן ויעש לו אבשלום מרכבה וססים וחמשים איש רצים לפניו: ב והשבים אבשלום ועמד על־יד דרך השער ויהי כל־האיש אשר יהיה־לז־רִיב לבוא אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ לִמְשָׁפֵט ויקרא אבשלום אליו ויאמר אי־מזה עיר אתה ויאמר מאחד שבטי־ישראל עבדך: ג ויאמר אליו אבשלום ראה דבר־ךְ טובים ונכחים ושמע אין לך מאת המלך: ד ויאמר אבשלום מי־ישמני שֹׁפֵט בָּאָרֶץ וְעָלִי יבוא כל־איש אשר־יהיה־לז־רִיב ומשפט והצדקתיו: ה והיה בקרב־איש להשתתחות לו ושלח את־ידו והחזיק לו ונשק לו: ו ויעש אבשלום כדבר הזה לכל־ישראל אשר יבאו לִמְשָׁפֵט אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ ויגנב אבשלום את־לב אנשי ישראל: {פ}

2 SAMUEL 15

¹ After this, Absalom procured for himself a chariot and horses, with fifty men to run ahead of him. ² Absalom would rise early and stand beside the road leading to the gate; and, whenever a man with some lawsuit had to come before the king's court, Absalom would call out to him and ask, "Which town are you from?" If he answered, "Your servant is from one of the tribes of Israel," ³ then Absalom would say, "Look, your case is sound and just, but there is not one of the king's deputies who will listen to you." ⁴ Absalom would go on to say, "Oh, who will appoint me judge in the land? Then anyone with a judicial complaint could come to me and I would see he had justice." ⁵ Whenever anyone came up to do homage to him, he would stretch out his hand and take him and kiss him. ⁶ Thus, Absalom acted with all the Israelites who came to the king for justice, and so Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel.

2 SAMUEL 15

- ¹ Primogeniture was the normal practice in Israel (2:8–10, Dt 21:15–17) but there were exceptions (1Ch 5:1–2, 26:10). David himself had established a new dynasty and had failed to lay down a law of succession (1K 1:27). Absalom, knowing that he had once been out of favour with his father, may have feared that something similar would happen again.
- ² The 'tribes of Israel' here presumably means the northern tribes, as opposed to Judah.
- ³ In place of 'sound and just', here following the NJB, the NRSV has 'good and right' and NETB has 'legitimate and appropriate'.
- ⁴ The literal translation of 'a judicial complaint' (here following NETB) is 'a complaint and a judgment'; the expression is a hendiadys.
- ⁵ The NRSV has 'obedience' in place of 'homage', here following the NJB.
- ⁶ The NJB has 'seduced' in place of 'stole', here following the MT & NRSV.

וַיְהִי מִקֵּץ אַרְבָּעִים שָׁנָה וַיֹּאמֶר אֲבִשָׁלוֹם אֶל-
הַמֶּלֶךְ אֵלֶכָה זֶה וְאֶשְׁלֵם אֶת-נִדְרֵי אֲשֶׁר-נִדְרָתִי
לַיהוָה בְּחֶבְרוֹן: ^ח כִּי-נִדַּר נָדַר עֲבָדְךָ בְּשִׁבְתִּי
בְּגֶשׁוּר בְּאֶרֶם לֵאמֹר אִם-יָשׁוּב יִשִּׁיב יְהוָה
יְרוּשָׁלַם וְעַבַדְתִּי אֶת-יְהוָה: ^ט וַיֹּאמֶר-לּוֹ הַמֶּלֶךְ לֵךְ
בְּשָׁלוֹם וַיֵּקֶם וַיֵּלֶךְ חֶבְרוֹנָה: {פ}

וַיִּשְׁלַח אֲבִשָׁלוֹם מְרַגְלִים בְּכָל-שִׁבְטֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
לֵאמֹר כְּשִׁמְעֵכֶם אֶת-קוֹל הַשֹּׁפָר וְאָמַרְתֶּם מֶלֶךְ
אֲבִשָׁלוֹם בְּחֶבְרוֹן: ^{יא} וְאֶת-אֲבִשָׁלוֹם הָלְכוּ מֵאֵתִים
אִישׁ מִירוּשָׁלַם קִרְאִים וְהַלְכִים לְתָמָם וְלֹא יָדְעוּ
כָּל-דָּבָר: ^{יב} וַיִּשְׁלַח אֲבִשָׁלוֹם אֶת-אֲחִיתֹפֶל הַגִּילֹנִי
יֹעֵץ דָּוִד מֵעִירוֹ מִגִּלְהָ בְּזַבְחוֹ אֶת-הַזִּבְחִים וַיְהִי
הַקֶּשֶׁר אִמָּץ וְהָעָם הוֹלֵךְ וְרַב אֶת-אֲבִשָׁלוֹם:
^{יג} וַיָּבֹא הַמֶּגִּיד אֶל-דָּוִד לֵאמֹר הִנֵּה לְבַאיִשׁ
יִשְׂרָאֵל אַחֲרֵי אֲבִשָׁלוֹם: ^{יד} וַיֹּאמֶר דָּוִד לְכָל-עַבְדָּיו

⁷ At the end of four years Absalom said to the king, "Please allow me to go to Hebron to fulfil the vow I made to Yahweh; ⁸ for, when I lived at Geshur in Aram, your servant made this vow: "If Yahweh indeed brings me back to Jerusalem," I said, "I will offer worship to Yahweh in Hebron."" ⁹ The king said to him, "Go in peace." Therefore, Absalom set off and went to Hebron.

¹⁰ But Absalom sent secret messengers throughout all the tribes of Israel saying, "When you hear the trumpet sound you are to say, "Absalom has become king at Hebron!"" ¹¹ With Absalom, there went two hundred men from Jerusalem; they were invited guests and came in all innocence, quite unaware of the matter. ¹² Absalom sent for Ahithopel the Gilonite, David's counsellor, from Giloh his town, and had him with him while he was offering the sacrifices. The conspiracy grew in strength and Absalom's supporters grew in number. ¹³ A messenger came to tell David, "The hearts of the men of Israel are now with

⁷ The MT has 'forty' in place of 'four' but this is presumably a scribal error, as the context will not tolerate a period of forty years prior to the rebellion of Absalom. The *Lucianic* recension of the LXX (τέσσαρα ἔτη) and the *Peshitta* have the expected reading, 'four years'.

⁸ The MT lacks 'in Hebron' (here following the LXX). The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

⁹ In place of 'Absalom', here following the MT, the NJB & NRSV have 'he'.

¹⁰ In place of 'secret messengers', here following the NRSV, the NJB has 'couriers' and NETB has 'spies'.

¹¹ Literally translated, this verse ends, "...being invited and going naively and they did not know anything."

¹² The MT has 'Absalom sent' in place of 'Absalom sent for', here following the LXX (ἀπέστειλεν Ἀβессαλωμ καὶ ἐκάλεσεν). The NRSV, following the MT, omits, 'and had him with him'.

¹³ The NRSV has 'have gone after' in place of 'are now with', here following the NJB.

אֲשֶׁר-אֵתוֹ בִּירוּשָׁלַם קוּמוּ וְנִבְרָחָה כִּי לֹא-תִהְיֶה-
לָנוּ פְּלִיטָה מִפָּנֵי אֲבִשָׁלָם מֵהָרָוּ לָלֶכֶת פֶּן-יִמָּהֵר
וְהִשְׁגָּנוּ וְהָדִיחַ עָלֵינוּ אֶת-הָרָעָה וְהָפָה הָעִיר לִפְנֵי-
חֶרֶב: ^{טו} וַיֹּאמְרוּ עַבְדֵי-הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶל-הַמֶּלֶךְ כָּכָל
אֲשֶׁר-יִבְחָר אֲדֹנָי הַמֶּלֶךְ הִנֵּה עֹבְדֶיךָ: ^{טז} וַיֵּצֵא
הַמֶּלֶךְ וְכָל-בֵּיתוֹ בְּרִגְלָיו וַיַּעֲזֹב הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶת עֶשֶׂר
נָשִׁים פְּלִגְשִׁים לְשֹׁמֵר הַבַּיִת: ^{יז} וַיֵּצֵא הַמֶּלֶךְ וְכָל-
הָעָם בְּרִגְלָיו וַיַּעֲמֵדוּ בֵּית הַמֶּרְחָק: ^{יח} וְכָל-עַבְדָּיו
עֹבְרִים עָלֵידוֹ וְכָל-הַפְּרִתִּי וְכָל-הַפְּלִתִּי וְכָל-
הַגִּתִּים שִׁש־מֵאוֹת אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר-בָּאוּ בְּרִגְלָם מִגָּת
עֹבְרִים עַל-פָּנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ: {ס}

^{יט} וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶל-אֶתִּי הַגִּתִּי לָמָּה תֵּלֵךְ גַּם-אֲתָה
אֲתָנּוּ שׁוּב וְשֹׁב עִם-הַמֶּלֶךְ כִּי-נֹכְרִי אַתָּה וְגַם-גִּלְיָה
אַתָּה לְמִקְוֶמֶךָ: ^כ תִּמְוֹל | בּוֹאָךְ וְהַיּוֹם אֲנוּעַךְ אֲנִיעֶךָ
עַמָּנוּ לָלֶכֶת וְאֲנִי הוֹלֵךְ עַל אֲשֶׁר-אֲנִי הוֹלֵךְ שׁוּב

Absalom.” ¹⁴ So, David said to all his officers who were with him in Jerusalem, “Let us be off, let us fly, or we shall never escape from Absalom. Leave as quickly as you can in case he mounts a sudden attack, overcomes us and puts the city to the sword.” ¹⁵ The king’s officers answered, “Whatever my lord the king decides, we are at your service.” ¹⁶ The king left on foot with his entire household, leaving ten women, concubines, to look after the palace. ¹⁷ The king left on foot with all the people and stopped at the last house. ¹⁸ All his officers marched past him; and all the Cherethites and all the Pelethites, and all the six hundred Gittites who had come into his retinue from Gath, marched past the king.

¹⁹ Then the king said to Ittai the Gittite, “You, why are you coming with us? Go back and stay with the king; for, you are a foreigner and also an exile from your homeland. ²⁰ Now, you came only yesterday; should I take you wandering about with us today, when I do not know myself

¹⁴ David does not consider that all is lost, since he leaves supporters behind (vv. 27ff, 34ff); caught between the northern and southern tribes, however, he makes a strategic withdrawal.

¹⁵ Literally translated, the officers’ answer reads, “According to all that my lord the king will choose, behold your servants!”

¹⁶ The NJB, NRSV & NETB omit ‘women’, here following the MT.

¹⁷ In place of ‘the last house’, here following the NJB & NRSV, NETB has ‘a spot some distance away’.

¹⁸ The NJB opens the verse with, “All his officers stood at his side,” and inserts ‘with Ittai’ after ‘Pelethites’.

¹⁹ The 2nd instance of the word ‘king’ (in David’s speech) refers to Absalom.

²⁰ The MT lacks ‘and may Yahweh show you’, here following the LXX (καὶ κύριος ποιήσει μετὰ σοῦ); the NJB has ‘kindness’ in place of ‘steadfast love’. The Kethib/Qere difference here would benefit from an explanation.

והשב את־אחיד עמך חסד ואמת: ^{כא} ויען אתי
את־המלך ויאמר חי־יהוה וחי אדני המלך: כי
(אם) במקום אשר יהי־שם אדני המלך אם־
למות אם־לחיים כִּי־שם יהי עבדך: ^{כב} ויאמר
דוד אל־אתי לך ועבר ויעבר אתי הגת וכל־
אנשיו וכל־הטף אשר אתו: ^{כג} וכל־הארץ בוכים
קול גדול וכל־העם עברים והמלך עבר בנחל
קדרון וכל־העם עברים על־פני־דרך את־
המדבר: ^{כד} והנה גם־צדוק וכל־הלויים אתו
נשאים את־ארון ברית האלהים ויצקו את־ארון
האלהים ויעל אביתר עד־תם כִּל־העם לעבור מן־
העיר: {ס} ^{כה} ויאמר המלך לצדוק השב את־ארון
האלהים העיר אם־אמצא חן בעיני יהוה והשבני
והראני אתו ואת־נוהו: ^{כו} ואם כה יאמר לא
חפצתי בך הנני יעשה־לי כאשר טוב בעיניו: {ס}
^{כז} ויאמר המלך אל־צדוק הכהן הרוא אתה
שבה העיר בשלום ואחימֶעץ בנך ויהונתן בן־

where I am going? Go back and take your fellow countrymen with you; and may Yahweh show you steadfast love and faithfulness.” ²¹ But Ittai answered the king, “As Yahweh lives, and as my lord the king lives, wherever my lord the king may be, for death or life, there will your servant be too.” ²² So, David said to Ittai, “Go then, pass on.” Therefore, Ittai of Gath passed on with all the little ones who were with him. ²³ The whole country wept aloud as the king took his stand in the Wadi Kidron, and all the people marched past him, making their way towards the desert. ²⁴ And see: Zadok was there, too! And all the Levites were with him, carrying the Ark of the covenant of God. They set down the Ark of God beside Abiathar until the people had all passed out of the city. ²⁵ Then the king said to Zadok, “Take the Ark of God back to the city. If I find favour in Yahweh’s sight, he will bring me back and permit me to see it and its dwelling place again. ²⁶ But should he say, “I take no pleasure in you,” then here I am, let him deal with me as he likes.” ²⁷ The king said to Zadok the priest, “Look, go back in peace to the city, you and Abiathar, with your two sons, Ahimaaz your own

²¹ The Qere suggests dropping the אם, here following the Ketiv.

²² The NJB has ‘all his retinue’ in place of ‘all the little ones who were with him’, here following the MT & NRSV.

²³ The MT of vv. 23–24 is uncertain. The ‘Wadi Kidron’ marked the eastern boundary of the city.

²⁴ The literal translation of ‘passed out of’ is ‘crossed from’.

²⁵ The NJB has ‘should I win the favour of Yahweh’ in place of ‘if I find favour in Yahweh’s sight’, here following the MT & NRSV.

²⁶ The literal translation of ‘as he likes’ is ‘as is good in his eyes’.

²⁷ The NJB does not name ‘Ahimaaz’.

אֲבִיתָר שְׁנֵי בְנֵיכֶם אִתְּכֶם: כח רְאוּ אֲנֹכִי מִתְמַהֲמָה
 בְּעִבְרוֹת בְּעִרְבּוֹת הַמִּדְבָּר עַד בּוֹא דְבַר מֵעַמְכֶם
 לְהִגִּיד לִי: כט וַיֵּשֶׁב צְדוֹק וְאַבִּיתָר אֶת־אֲרוֹן
 הָאֱלֹהִים יְרוּשָׁלַם וַיֵּשְׁבוּ שָׁם: ל וְדָוִד עָלָה בַּמַּעֲלָה
 הַזֵּיתִים עָלָה וּבּוֹכָה וְרֹאשׁ לֹ חָפּוּי וְהוּא הִלְךְ יַחַף
 וְכָל־הָעָם אֲשֶׁר־אִתּוֹ חָפּוּ אִישׁ רֹאשׁוֹ וְעָלוּ עָלָה
 וּבָכָה: לא וְדָוִד הִגִּיד לֵאמֹר אַחִיתּוֹפֶל בִּקְשָׁרִים עִם־
 אֲבִשָׁלוֹם וַיֹּאמֶר דָּוִד סִכְלָנָא אֶת־עֵצַת אַחִיתּוֹפֶל
 יִהְיֶה: לב וַיְהִי דָוִד בָּא עַד־הָרֹאשׁ אֲשֶׁר־יִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה
 שָׁם לָאֱלֹהִים וְהִנֵּה לִקְרָאתוֹ חוּשַׁי הָאֲרָכִי קָרוֹעַ
 כְּתָנָיו וְאֶדְמָה עַל־רֹאשׁוֹ: לג וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ דָּוִד אִם
 עֲבַרְתָּ אִתִּי וְהָיִתָּ עָלַי לְמַשָּׂא: לד וְאִם־הָעִיר תָּשׁוּב
 וְאִמַּרְתָּ לְאַבְשָׁלוֹם עֲבֹדֵךְ אֲנִי הַמִּלֵּךְ אֵלֶּיָּה עֹבֵד
 אֲבִיךָ וְאֲנִי מֵאִזְ וְעַתָּה וְאֲנִי עֹבֵדֵךְ וְהִפְרַתָּה לִּי אֵת
 עֵצַת אַחִיתּוֹפֶל: לה וְהָלֹא עִמָּךְ שָׁם צְדוֹק וְאַבִּיתָר

son and Jonathon son of Abiathar. ²⁸ I intend to wait in the plains of the wilderness until word comes from you bringing me news.” ²⁹ Therefore, Zadok and Abiathar took the Ark of God back to Jerusalem and remained there. ³⁰ David then made his way up the Mount of Olives, weeping as he went, his head covered and his feet bare; and all the people with him had their heads covered and made their way up, weeping as they went. ³¹ Then David was told that Ahithopel was among the conspirators with Absalom. David said, “Yahweh, turn Ahithopel’s advice to folly.” ³² As David reached the summit, where God is worshipped, he saw Hushai the Archite, David’s friend, coming to meet him with his coat torn and with earth on his head. ³³ David said, “If you go on with me, you will be a burden to me. ³⁴ However, if you go back to the city and say to Absalom, “I will be your servant, O king; once I was in your father’s service, but now I will serve you,” you will be able to thwart the counsels of Ahithopel for me. ³⁵ Will not the priests

²⁸ The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

²⁹ The NRSV has ‘carried’ in place of ‘took’, here following the NJB & NETB.

³⁰ The covered head and bare feet were mourning customs (19:5, Ezk. 24:17), generally expressive of grief (Est. 6:12, Jr 14:3ff, Mi 1:8).

³¹ The translation ‘David was told’ follows 4QSam^a, part of the Greek tradition, the *Peshitta*, *Tg*, and *Vg* in reading ‘and to David’, rather than MT’s וַיִּדְּוֹ (‘and David’); the Hebrew verb הִגִּיד never uses the accusative for the person to whom something is told.

³² The NRSV, following the MT, omits ‘David’s friend’ (see v. 37).

³³ The literal translation of ‘go on’ (here following the NJB & NRSV) is ‘cross over’.

³⁴ The NJB has ‘my lord king’ (a conjectural translation) in place of ‘O king’.

³⁵ The rhetorical question draws attention to the fact that Hushai will not be alone.

הַכֹּהֲנִים וְהָיָה כָּל־הַדְּבָר אֲשֶׁר תִּשְׁמַע מִבֵּית
הַמֶּלֶךְ תִּגִּיד לְצִדּוֹק וּלְאַבִּיָּתָר הַכֹּהֲנִים: ^לוְהָיָה־שָׁם
עִמָּם שְׁנֵי בְנֵיהֶם אַחִימֶעַץ לְצִדּוֹק וַיהוֹנָתָן לְאַבִּיָּתָר
וּשְׁלַחְתֶּם בְּיָדָם אֵלַי כָּל־דְּבָר אֲשֶׁר תִּשְׁמָעוּ:
^לוְיָבֹא חוּשֵׁי רַעָה דָּוִד הָעֵיר וְאַבְשָׁלוֹם יָבוֹא
יְרוּשָׁלַם: {ס}

Zadok and Abiathar be with you? Anything you hear from the palace you must report to the priests Zadok and Abiathar. ³⁶ With them, you will find, are their two sons, Zadok's son Ahimaaz, and Abiathar's son Jonathon; through them you are to send me word of all you hear."
³⁷ Hushai, the companion of David, re-entered the city just as Absalom was reaching Jerusalem.

³⁶ All three instances of the 2nd person verb forms in this verse are plural with Zadok, Abiathar, and Hushai being the understood subjects.

³⁷ The NRSV & NETB have 'friend' in place of 'companion', here following the NJB.

שמואל ב פרק טז

א וְדָוִד עָבַר מֵעַט מִהָרָאשׁ וְהָנָה צִיבָא נֶעַר
מִפִּיבִשֶׁת לִקְרָאתוֹ וְצִמָּד חֲמֹרִים חֲבֻשִׁים וְעֲלֵיהֶם
מֵאֲתִים לֶחֶם וּמֵאָה צִמּוּקִים וּמֵאָה קִיץ וְנָבֶל יִין:
ב וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶל־צִיבָא מִה־אַלֶּה לָּךְ וַיֹּאמֶר
צִיבָא הַחֲמֹרִים לְבֵית־הַמֶּלֶךְ לָרֶכֶב וּלְהִלָּחֵם
וְהַלֶּחֶם וְהַקִּיץ לֶאֱכֹל הַנְּעָרִים וְהַיֵּין לְשִׁתּוֹת הַיָּעָף
בַּמִּדְבָּר: ג וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ וְאַיֶּה בֶן־אֲדֹנֶיךָ וַיֹּאמֶר
צִיבָא אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ הִנֵּה יוֹשֵׁב בִּירוּשָׁלַם כִּי אָמַר
הַיּוֹם יָשִׁיבוּ לִי בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת מַמְלְכוֹת אָבִי:
ד וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ לְצִבָּא הִנֵּה לָּךְ כָּל אֲשֶׁר לְמִפִּיבִשֶׁת
וַיֹּאמֶר צִיבָא הִשְׁתַּחֲוִיתִי אֲמָצֶא־חֵן בְּעֵינֶיךָ אֲדֹנִי
הַמֶּלֶךְ: ה וּבָא הַמֶּלֶךְ דָּוִד עַד־בַּחֲוָרִים וְהָנָה מִשָּׁם
אִישׁ יוֹצֵא מִמִּשְׁפַּחַת בֵּית־שָׁאוּל וְשָׁמוּ שְׁמַעִי בֶן־
גֵּרָא יוֹצֵא יִצְאָא וּמִקֵּלָל: ו וַיִּסְקַל בְּאֲבָנִים אֶת־דָּוִד

2 SAMUEL 16

1 When David had passed a little beyond the summit, Ziba the servant of Mephibosheth came to meet him with a pair of donkeys, saddled and laden with two hundred loaves of bread, a hundred bunches of raisins, a hundred summer fruits and a skin of wine. 2 The king said to Ziba, "Why did you bring these?" Ziba replied, "The donkeys, are for the king's family to ride, the bread and the fruit for the soldiers to eat, the wine is for those to drink who faint in the wilderness." 3 The king said, "And where is your master's son?" Ziba answered the king, "He stayed in Jerusalem; for he said, 'The House of Israel will give me back my father's kingdom today.'" 4 Then the king said to Ziba, "All that Mephibosheth owned is now yours." Ziba said, "My homage, lord king! May I deserve your favour!" 5 As David was reaching Bahurim, out came a man of the same clan as Saul's family. His name was Shimei son of Gera, and as he came, he uttered curse after curse 6 and threw stones

2 SAMUEL 16

- ¹ The NJB has 'Meribbaal' in place of 'Mephibosheth', here following the MT (מִפִּיבִשֶׁת), NRSV & NETB.
- ² The translation '(and) the bread' follows the Qere (וְהַלֶּחֶם) rather than the Ketiv, which has 'and to the bread' (וּלְהִלָּחֵם); the syntax of the MT is confused here by the needless repetition of the preposition, probably taken from the preceding word.
- ³ The NJB & NETB have 'grandfather' in place of 'father', here following the MT & NJB.
- ⁴ The NJB has 'Meribbaal' in place of 'Mephibosheth', here following the MT, NRSV & NETB.
- ⁵ Literally translated, this verse ends, "and look, from there a man was coming out from the clan of the house of Saul and his name was Shimei son of Gera, continually going out and cursing."
- ⁶ The NRSV ends this verse, here following the NJB, with, "now all the people and all the warriors were on his right and on his left."

וְאֶת־כָּל־עַבְדֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ דָּוִד וְכָל־הָעָם וְכָל־הַגִּבּוֹרִים
מִיְמִינוֹ וּמִשְׁמָאלוֹ: ^ז וְכֹה־אָמַר שְׁמַעִי בְקָלְלוֹ צֵא
צֵא אִישׁ אִישׁ הַדָּמִים וְאִישׁ הַבְּלִיעַל: ^ח הַשִּׁיב עָלֶיךָ
יְהוָה כָּל־דְּמֵי בֵית־שָׂאוֹל אֲשֶׁר מָלַכְתָּ תַּחְתּוֹ וְיִתֵּן
יְהוָה אֶת־הַמְּלוּכָה בְיָד אַבְשָׁלוֹם בֶּנְךָ וְהִנֵּךְ
בְּרַעְתְּךָ כִּי אִישׁ דָּמִים אַתָּה: ^ט וַיֹּאמֶר אֲבִישַׁי בֶּן־
צְרוּיָה אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ לָמָּה יְקַלֵּל הַכָּלָב הַמֵּת הַזֶּה אֶת־
אֲדֹנָי הַמֶּלֶךְ אֲעֲבֹרָה־נָּא וְאֶסִּירָה אֶת־רֹאשׁוֹ: {ס}
^י וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ מַה־לִּי וְלָכֶם בְּנֵי צְרוּיָה כִּי כָה יְקַלֵּל
וְכִי כִי יְהוָה אָמַר לוֹ קַלֵּל אֶת־דָּוִד וּמִי יֹאמֶר מַדּוּעַ
עָשִׂיתָה בֶּן־: {ס} ^{יא} וַיֹּאמֶר דָּוִד אֶל־אֲבִישַׁי וְאֶל־
כָּל־עַבְדָּיו הִנֵּה בְנִי אֲשֶׁר־יָצָא מִמֶּעִי מִבֶּקֶשׁ אֶת־
נַפְשִׁי וְאֵף כִּי־עָתָה בֶּן־הַיְמִינִי הִנָּחוּ לוֹ וַיְקַלֵּל כִּי
אָמַרְלוּ יְהוָה: ^{יב} אֲוִלִי יֵרָאֶה יְהוָה בְּעוֹנֵי בְעֵינַי
וְהַשִּׁיב יְהוָה לִי טוֹבָה תַּחַת קִלְלָתוֹ הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה:

at David and all King David's officers, though the whole army and all the champions flanked the king right and left. ⁷ The words of his curse were these, "Be off, be off, man of blood, scoundrel! ⁸ Yahweh has paid you back for all the spilt blood of the House of Saul, whose sovereignty you have usurped; and Yahweh has transferred that same sovereignty to Absalom your son. Now your doom has overtaken you, man of blood that you are." ⁹ Abishai son of Zeruiah said to the king, "Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? Let me go over and cut his head off." ¹⁰ But the king said, "What business is it of mine and yours, sons of Zeruiah? If Yahweh said to him, "Curse David," what right has anyone to say, "Why have you done this?"" ¹¹ David said to Abishai and all his officers, "Why, my own son, sprung from my body, is now seeking my life; so how much the more the Benjaminite? Let him curse on if Yahweh has told him to. ¹² Perhaps Yahweh will look on my wretchedness and repay me with good for his curse today." ¹³ Therefore,

⁷ For the words of the curse, here following the NJB, the NRSV has, "Out! Out! Murderer! Scoundrel!"

⁸ This verse is probably an allusion to the massacre of 21:1–14, taking place at the beginning of the reign (see 9:1).

⁹ The dog being regarded as an unclean animal, served as a term of reproach; 'dead dog' was a common expression.

¹⁰ The *Kethib*/*Qere* differences here would benefit from an explanation.

¹¹ The literal translation of 'sprung from my body' is 'who came out from my entrails'; David's point is that is his own son, his child whom he himself had fathered, was now wanting to kill him.

¹² For 'wretchedness', here following the NJB, the NRSV uses 'distress' and NETB has 'affliction'; the texts follow the LXX (ταπεινώσει μου) – the MT has 'my eyes' (בְּעֵינַי – *Qere*) or 'iniquity' (בְּעוֹנֵי – *Ketiv*).

¹³ After, 'throwing stones', the MT repeats 'opposite him'.

י' וַיֵּלֶךְ דָּוִד וְאֲנָשָׁיו בַּדֶּרֶךְ {ס} וְשִׁמְעִי הָלַךְ בְּצִלָּע
הָהָר לְעִמָּתּוֹ הַלּוֹךְ וְיִקְלֹל וְיִסְקֹל בְּאֲבָנִים לְעִמָּתּוֹ
וְעָפָר בְּעַפָּר: {פ}

י"ד וַיָּבֹא הַמֶּלֶךְ וְכָל־הָעָם אֲשֶׁר־אִתּוֹ עֵיפִים וַיִּנָּפֶשׁ
שָׁם: טו' וְאַבְשָׁלוֹם וְכָל־הָעָם אִישׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל בָּאוּ
יְרוּשָׁלַם וְאַחִיתֹפֶל אִתּוֹ: טז' וַיְהִי כֹאֲשֶׁר־בָּא חוּשִׁי
הָאַרְכִּי רֶעֱה דָוִד אֶל־אַבְשָׁלוֹם וַיֹּאמֶר חוּשִׁי אֶל־
אַבְשָׁלוֹם יַחִי הַמֶּלֶךְ יַחִי הַמֶּלֶךְ: יז' וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְשָׁלוֹם
אֶל־חוּשִׁי זֶה חֲסִדְךָ אֶת־רַעְךָ לְמָה לֹא־הִלַּכְתָּ אֶת־
רַעְךָ: יח' וַיֹּאמֶר חוּשִׁי אֶל־אַבְשָׁלוֹם לֹא כִי אֲשֶׁר
בָּחַר יְהוָה וְהָעָם הַזֶּה וְכָל־אִישׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא לוֹ
אֶהְיֶה וְאִתּוֹ אֲשָׁב: יט' וְהַשְׁנִית לְמִי אֲנִי אֶעֱבֹד הֲלוֹא
לִפְנֵי בְנוֹ כֹּאֲשֶׁר עֲבַדְתִּי לִפְנֵי אָבִיךָ כֵּן אֶהְיֶה
לִפְנֶיךָ: {פ}

כ' וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְשָׁלוֹם אֶל־אַחִיתֹפֶל הֲבֹ לָכֶם עֲצָה
מִה־נַּעֲשֶׂה: כא' וַיֹּאמֶר אַחִיתֹפֶל אֶל־אַבְשָׁלוֹם בּוֹא

David and his men went on their way; but Shimei continued along the mountainside opposite him, cursing as he went, throwing stones and flinging earth.

¹⁴ The king and all the people who were with him arrived exhausted at the Jordan and, there, they drew breath. ¹⁵ Absalom entered Jerusalem with all the people, the men of Israel; with him was Ahithopel. ¹⁶ When Hushai the Archite, the companion of David, came to Absalom, Hushai said to Absalom, "Long live the king! Long live the king!" ¹⁷ Absalom said to Hushai, "Is this your affection for your friend? Why did you not leave with your friend?" ¹⁸ Hushai answered Absalom, "No, I will be loyal to the man whom Yahweh and these people and all the men of Israel have chosen, and on his side I will remain. ¹⁹ Besides, whom should I serve, if not his son? As I served your father, so I shall serve you."

²⁰ Absalom said to Ahithopel, "Give us your counsel. What shall we do?" ²¹ Ahithopel answered Absalom, "Go to your father's concubines

¹⁴ The NJB, following the MT, lacks, 'the Jordan', having only an ellipsis and a footnote highlighting the omission; here, we follow the NRSV.

¹⁵ The NJB & NRSV lack the words 'the people', here following the MT.

¹⁶ The NRSV & NETB have 'friend' in place of 'companion', here following the NJB.

¹⁷ Absalom's 1st question is distinctly sarcastic.

¹⁸ The translation 'I will be' follows the Qere (לֹא) rather than the Ketiv, which has '(I will) not be' (לֹא־), which makes very little sense here.

¹⁹ Literally translated, the last sentence reads, "Just as I served before your father, so I will be before you."

²⁰ In place of 'give us your counsel', here following the NRSV, the NJB has 'think carefully'.

²¹ Absalom's action is more than an indecent exhibition; by usurping his father's harem, he asserts his right to the throne (#3:7 & 1K 2:13-25).

אֶל־פִּלְגֶשִׁי אָבִיךָ אֲשֶׁר הִנִּיחַ לְשֹׁמֵר הַבַּיִת וְשָׁמַע
 כָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל כִּי־נִבְאֲשָׁתָה אֶת־אָבִיךָ וַחֲזָקוּ יָדַי כָּל־
 אֲשֶׁר אֶתָּךְ: ^{כב} וַיָּטוּ לְאַבְשָׁלוֹם הָאֶהָל עַל־הַגֹּג וַיָּבֹא
 אֲבִשָׁלוֹם אֶל־פִּלְגֶשִׁי אָבִיו לְעֵינָי כָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל:
^{כג} וַעֲצָתָה אֲחִיתֹפֶל אֲשֶׁר יָעַץ בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם כְּאִשֹּׁר
 יִשְׂאֵל־[אִישׁ] בַּדָּבָר הָאֱלֹהִים בֶּן כָּל־עֲצָתָה
 אֲחִיתֹפֶל גַּם־לְדָוִד גַּם לְאַבְשָׁלוֹם: {ס}

whom he left to look after the palace; then all Israel will hear that you
 have incurred you father's enmity, and the resolution of all your
 supporters will be strengthened." ²² Therefore, they pitched a tent for
 Absalom on the housetop and in the sight of all Israel Absalom went to
 his father's concubines. ²³ In those days, the advice that Ahithopel gave
 was as if one had consulted the oracle of God; and so was all Ahithopel's
 advice respected, as by David, so by Absalom.

²² The flat roof of the palace would have been visible to the public.

²³ The *Ketiv* lacks אִישׁ, here following the *Qere*.

שמואל ב פרק יז

א וַיֹּאמֶר אֲחִיתֹפֶל אֶל-אַבְשָׁלוֹם אֲבַחֲרָה נָא שְׁנַיִם-
עָשָׂר אֲלֵף אִישׁ וְאֶקְוֶמָה וְאֶרְדָּפָה אַחֲרֵי-דָוִד
הַלַּיְלָה: ב וְאִבּוֹא עָלָיו וְהוּא יִגַּע וִרְפָּה יָדָיו
וְהִחַרְדָּתִי אֹתוֹ וְנָס כָּל-הָעָם אֲשֶׁר-אִתּוֹ וְהִבִּיתִי
אֶת-הַמֶּלֶךְ לְבִדּוֹ: ג וְאֶשִׁיבָה כָּל-הָעָם אֵלַי כְּשׁוֹב
הַכֹּל הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר אִתָּה מִבְּקֵשׁ כָּל-הָעָם יִהְיֶה
שָׁלוֹם: ד וַיִּישֶׁר הַדָּבָר בְּעֵינַי אַבְשָׁלוֹם וּבְעֵינַי כָּל-
זִקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: {ס} ה וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְשָׁלוֹם קְרָא נָא גַם
לְחוּשֵׁי הָאֲרָכִי וְנִשְׁמָעָה מִה-בְּפִיו גַּם-הוּא: ו וַיִּבֹּא
חוּשֵׁי אֶל-אַבְשָׁלוֹם וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְשָׁלוֹם אֵלָיו לֵאמֹר
כַּדְבָּר הַזֶּה דַּבֵּר אֲחִיתֹפֶל הַנֶּעֱשָׂה אֶת-דְּבָרוֹ אִם-
אֵין אִתָּה דְבָר: {ס} ז וַיֹּאמֶר חוּשֵׁי אֶל-אַבְשָׁלוֹם
לֹא-טוֹבָה הָעֲצָה אֲשֶׁר-יַעַן אֲחִיתֹפֶל בַּפֶּעַם

2 SAMUEL 17

1 And Ahithopel said to Absalom, "Let me now choose twelve thousand men, and I shall arise and set off this very night in pursuit of David.
2 When I catch up with him, he will be is tired and dispirited; I shall strike terror into him, and all the people who are with him will take flight. Then I shall strike down the king alone³ and bring all the people back to you, like a bride returning to her husband. You seek the life of one individual only; the people as a whole will have peace."⁴ The suggestion appealed to Absalom and all the elders of Israel.⁵ Then Absalom said, "Call for Hushai the Archite also, and let us hear too what he has to say."⁶ When Hushai came to Absalom, Absalom said to him, "This is what Ahithopel has said; are we to do as he suggests? If not, say something yourself."⁷ Then Hushai answered Absalom, "On this occasion the advice that Ahithopel has offered is not good."⁸ You know,"

2 SAMUEL 17

¹ The NRSV ends this verse, here following the NJB, with, "and I will set out and pursue David tonight."

² The literal translation of 'dispirited' (here following the NJB – the NRSV has 'discouraged') is 'slack of hands'.

³ The text, "like a bride ... one individual only," follows the LXX (ὃν τρόπον ἐπιστρέφει ἡ νύμφη πρὸς τὸν ἄνδρα αὐτῆς· πλὴν ψυχὴν ἑνὸς ἀνδρὸς σὺ ζητεῖς); the MT uncertain ("like the return of the whole (is) the man whom you seek").

⁴ In place of 'the suggestion appealed to', here following the NJB, the NRSV has 'the advice pleased' and NETB has 'this seemed like a good idea'.

⁵ In the MT, the verb 'call for' is singular, but in the LXX, Peshitta and Vg it is plural.

⁶ The NRSV has 'advises' in place of 'suggests', here following the NJB.

⁷ Literally translated, Hushai's answer reads, "Not good is the advice which Ahithopel has advised at this time."

⁸ After 'robbed of her cubs', the LXX (but not Origen or Lucian) adds 'and as a wild boar in the field' (καὶ ὡς ὕς τραχεῖα ἐν τῷ πεδίῳ).

הַזֹּאת: ^ח וַיֹּאמֶר חוּשִׁי אֶתָּה יִדְעַת אֶת־אֲבִיךָ וְאַתָּה־
אֲנִשְׁיוּ כִּי גִבֹּרִים הֵמָּה וּמָרִי נָפֶשׁ הֵמָּה כְּדָב שֶׁכּוֹל
בַּשָּׂדֶה וְאֲבִיךָ אִישׁ מִלְחָמָה וְלֹא יִלִּין אֶת־הָעַם:
^ט הֲנֵה עֲתָה הוּא־נִחַבָּא בְּאַחַת הַפְּחָתִים אוֹ
בְּאַחַד הַמְּקוֹמֹת וְהִיָּה כְּנִפֹּל בָּהֶם בַּתְּחִלָּה וְשָׁמַע
הַשָּׁמַע וְאָמַר הִיתָה מִגִּפָּה בָּעַם אֲשֶׁר אַחֲרֵי
אַבְשָׁלִים: ^י וְהוּא גַם־בֶּן־חֵיל אֲשֶׁר לָבּוֹ כָּל־בְּהֶמְתָּי הָאֲרִיָּה
הַמָּס יָמָס כִּי־יִדְעֵה כָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל כִּי־גִבּוֹר אֲבִיךָ וּבְנֵי־
חֵיל אֲשֶׁר אִתּוֹ: ^{יא} כִּי יַעֲצִיתִי הָאֶסְף יֶאֱסֹף עָלֶיךָ
כָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל מִדָּן וְעַד־בְּאֵר שָׁבַע כָּחוֹל אֲשֶׁר־עַל־
הַיָּם לָרֹב וּפָנִיךָ הַלֵּכִים בִּקְרֹב: ^{יב} וּבִבְאֵנוּ אֵלָיו
בְּאַחַת בְּאַחַד הַמְּקוֹמֹת אֲשֶׁר נִמְצָא שָׁם וְנִחַנּוּ
עָלָיו כְּאֲשֶׁר יִפֹּל הַטֵּל עַל־הָאֲדָמָה וְלֹא־נֹתֵר בּוֹ
וּבְכָל־הָאֲנָשִׁים אֲשֶׁר־אִתּוֹ גַּם־אַחַד: ^{יג} וְאִם־אֵל־
עִיר יֶאֱסֹף וְהִשְׂיָאוּ כָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶל־הָעִיר הַהִיא
חֲבָלִים וְסָחֲבֻנוּ אֹתוֹ עַד־הַנָּחַל עַד אֲשֶׁר־לֹא־
נִמְצָא שָׁם גַּם־צִרּוֹר: {פ}

Hushai went on, “that your father and his men are champions and as angry as a bear out in the wild, robbed of her cubs. Besides, your father is used to warfare; he will not let the army rest during the night. ⁹ At this very moment, he has hidden himself in one of the caves or in some other place. If, at the outset, there are casualties among our troops, whoever hears it will say, “There has been a slaughter among the troops who follow Absalom.” ¹⁰ Then even the valiant, with a heart like the heart of a lion, will be quite unmanned; for, all Israel knows that your father is a champion and that the men with him are valiant. ¹¹ For my part, I offer this advice: Summon all Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, to rally to you, as numerous as the sand on the seashore, and you go to battle in person. ¹² So, we shall come up with him in whatever place he is to be found; we shall fall on him as the dew falls on the ground, and not leave him or one of the men with him alive. ¹³ Moreover, should he retire into a town, then all Israel will take ropes to that town and we will drag it into the riverbed until not a single small stone of it is to be found there.”

⁹ In place of ‘one of the caves’, here following NETB, the NJB has ‘a hollow’ and the NRSV has ‘one of the pits’.

¹⁰ In place of ‘champion’, here following the NJB, the NRSV & NETB have ‘warrior’.

¹¹ The NJB ends the verse with, “... and you take the field in person with them.” The mustering will involve delay and David, now waiting for news (15:28), will have time to make good his escape.

¹² The Kethib/Qere difference here would benefit from an explanation.

¹³ The word ‘take’ follows the LXX (λῆμψεται); the MT has ‘raise’.

י¹⁴ וַיֹּאמֶר אֲבִשָּׁלוֹם וְכָל־אִישׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל טוֹבָה עֲצַת
 חוּשִׁי הָאֲרָכִי מֵעֲצַת אַחִיתֹפֶל {ס} וַיְהִי כֵּן
 לְהַפִּיר אֶת־עֲצַת אַחִיתֹפֶל הַטּוֹבָה לְבַעֲבוֹר הַבִּיָּא
 יְהוָה אֶל־אֲבִשָּׁלוֹם אֶת־הָרָעָה: {ס} וַיֹּאמֶר
 חוּשִׁי אֶל־צָדוֹק וְאֶל־אֲבִיָּתָר הַכֹּהֲנִים כִּזְאת
 וְכִזְאת יַעַן אַחִיתֹפֶל אֶת־אֲבִשָּׁלוֹם וְאֵת זִקְנֵי
 יִשְׂרָאֵל וְכִזְאת וְכִזְאת יַעֲצֵתִי אֲנִי: טו וַעֲתָה שְׁלָחוּ
 מִהֶרָה וְהִגִּידוּ לְדָוִד לֵאמֹר אֶל־תֵּלֶן הַלַּיְלָה
 בְּעֶרְבוֹת הַמִּדְבָּר וְגַם עֲבוֹר תַּעֲבוֹר פֶּן יִבְלַע לַמֶּלֶךְ
 וְלִכְל־הָעָם אֲשֶׁר אִתּוֹ: י¹⁵ וַיְהִי כֵּן וְאַחִימֵעַץ עֲמָדִים
 בְּעִין־רֹגֵל וְהַלְכָה הַשִּׁפְחָה וְהִגִּידָה לָהֶם וְהֵם יָלְכוּ
 וְהִגִּידוּ לַמֶּלֶךְ דָּוִד כִּי לֹא יוּכְלוּ לְהִרְאוֹת לְבֹא
 הָעִירָה: יי¹⁶ וַיֵּרָא אֹתָם נָעַר וַיִּגֵּד לְאֲבִשָּׁלוֹם וַיָּלְכוּ
 שְׁנֵיהֶם מִהֶרָה וַיָּבֹאוּ אֶל־בֵּית־אִישׁ בְּבַחוּרִים וְלוֹ
 בְּאֵר בַּחֲצֵרוֹ וַיִּרְדּוּ שָׁם: יט וַתִּקַּח הָאִשָּׁה וַתִּפְרֹשׁ
 אֶת־הַמֶּסֶךְ עַל־פְּנֵי הַבְּאֵר וַתִּשְׁטַח עָלָיו הָרַפּוֹת
 וְלֹא נֹדַע דְּבָר: כ¹⁷ וַיָּבֹאוּ עֲבָדֵי אֲבִשָּׁלוֹם אֶל־הָאִשָּׁה

¹⁴ Then Absalom and all the people of Israel said, “The advice of Hushai the Archite is better than the advice of Ahithopel.” For, Yahweh had determined to thwart Ahithopel’s shrewd advice in order that Yahweh would bring disaster on Absalom. ¹⁵ Hushai then told the priests Zadok and Abiathar, “Ahithopel gave such and such advice to Absalom and to the elders of Israel but I have advised them thus and thus. ¹⁶ Now, therefore, send quickly and tell David, “Do not camp at the fords of the desert tonight but cross to the other side as fast as you can, or the king and all the army with him will be annihilated.”” ¹⁷ Now, Jonathon and Ahimaaz were stationed at En-Rogel and a maidservant used to go and warn them and they, in turn, went to warn King David; for, they dared not let themselves be seen entering the town. ¹⁸ But a young man saw them and told Absalom. Then both of them hastily made off and came to the house of a man of Bahurim. In his courtyard was a well and they got down into it. ¹⁹ His wife then took a covering and, spreading it over the mouth of the well, scattered crushed grain on it so that nothing showed. ²⁰ Absalom’s servants came to the woman in

¹⁴ The last sentence of this verse reminds the reader that all things are determined by God.

¹⁵ The NRSV ends this verse with, “Thus and so did Ahithophel counsel Absalom and the elders of Israel; and thus and so I have counselled.”

¹⁶ The NJB has ‘in the plains’ in place of ‘at the fords’, here following the NRSV & NETB.

¹⁷ The NJB translates the name ‘En-Rogel’ (עִין־רֹגֵל) into ‘Fuller’s Spring’; here, we follow the NRSV & NETB.

¹⁸ The NJB has ‘cistern’ in place of ‘well’, here following the NRSV & NETB.

¹⁹ In place of ‘his wife’, here following NETB, the NRSV has ‘the man’s wife’ and the NJB has ‘the woman’.

²⁰ The NRSV reads: “They have crossed over the brook of water.” The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

הַבֵּיתָה וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵיךָ אַחִימַעַץ וַיהוֹנָתָן וַתֹּאמֶר
לָהֶם הָאִשָּׁה עָבְרוּ מִכָּל הַמַּיִם וַיִּבְקְשׁוּ וְלֹא מָצְאוּ
וַיָּשׁוּבוּ יְרוּשָׁלַם: {ס} כֹּא וַיְהִי אַחֲרֵי לִכְתָּם וַיַּעֲלוּ
מִהַבְּאֵר וַיֵּלְכוּ וַיַּגִּדוּ לַמֶּלֶךְ דָּוִד וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֶל-דָּוִד
קוּמוּ וְעָבְרוּ מִהֶרָה אֶת-הַמַּיִם כִּי-כָכָה יַעַץ עָלֵיכֶם
אַחִיתּוֹפֶל: כִּב וַיִּקֶם דָּוִד וְכָל-הָעָם אֲשֶׁר אִתּוֹ
וַיַּעֲבְרוּ אֶת-הַיַּרְדֵּן עַד-אֹר הַבֹּקֶר עַד-אֶחָד לֹא
נִעְדָּר אֲשֶׁר לֹא-עָבַר אֶת-הַיַּרְדֵּן: כִּב וַאֲחִיתּוֹפֶל רָאָה
כִּי לֹא נִעְשְׂתָה עֲצָתוֹ וַיַּחֲבֹשׂ אֶת-הַחֲמֹר וַיִּקֶם
וַיֵּלֶךְ אֶל-בֵּיתוֹ אֶל-עֵירוֹ וַיֵּצֵא אֶל-בֵּיתוֹ וַיַּחֲנֹק וַיָּמָת
וַיִּקְבֹּר בַּקֶּבֶר אָבִיו: {ס} כִּד וְדָוִד בָּא מִחֲנִימָה
וְאַבְשָׁלֹם עָבַר אֶת-הַיַּרְדֵּן הוּא וְכָל-אִישׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל
עִמּוֹ: כִּה וְאֶת-עַמְשָׂא שֵׁם אַבְשָׁלֹם תַּחַת יוֹאָב עַל-
הָעָבָא וְעַמְשָׂא בֶן-אִישׁ וּשְׁמוֹ יִתְרָא הַיִּשְׂרָאֵלִי
אֲשֶׁר-בָּא אֶל-אַבְיָגַל בַּת-נָחָשׁ אַחֹת צְרוּיָה אִם
יוֹאָב: כִּו וַיַּחֲן יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאַבְשָׁלֹם אֶרֶץ הַגִּלְעָד: {ס}

the house and said, "Where are Ahimaaz and Jonathon?" "They have gone further on towards the water," the woman answered. They searched, but finding nothing went back to Jerusalem. ²¹ When they had gone, the men climbed out of the well and went to warn King David. They told David, "Go and cross the water quickly, for Ahithopel has given such and such advice about you." ²² So, David and all the troops with him set off and crossed the Jordan. By daybreak, no one remained who had not crossed the Jordan. ²³ When Ahithopel saw that his advice had not been followed, he saddled his donkey, went off home to his own town, set his house in order, and hanged himself and so died. He was buried in his father's tomb. ²⁴ David had reached Mahanaim when Absalom crossed the Jordan with all the men of Israel. ²⁵ Absalom had put Amasa in command of the army in place of Joab. This Amasa was the son of a man called Ithra the Ishmaelite, who had married Abigail the daughter of Nahash and sister of Zeruiah, Joab's mother. ²⁶ Israel and Absalom pitched camp in the land of Gilead.

²¹ The expression 'such and such' is narrative shorthand, referring to the plan outlined by Ahithophel (see vv. 1-3).

²² The NJB & NETB have 'dawn' in place of 'daybreak', here following the NRSV.

²³ This is the only case of suicide mentioned in the Old Testament, apart from those of soldiers killing themselves to avoid capture in battle (Jg 9:54, 1S 31:4ff, 1K 16:18, 2M 14:41ff) and the very exceptional case of Samson (Jg 16:28ff). See also #1S 31:5.

²⁴ For this verse, here following the NJB, the NRSV has, "Then David came to Mahanaim, while Absalom crossed the Jordan with all the men of Israel."

²⁵ 'Ishmaelite' follows 1Ch 2:17; the MT has 'Israelite'. The NJB, following the LXX, has 'Jesse' in place of 'Nahash', here following the MT (probably an error) and NRSV. Amasa is thus Joab's cousin; both are cousins of Absalom and nephews of David.

²⁶ In place of 'Israel', here following the MT & NJB, the NRSV has 'the Israelites'.

כז וַיְהִי כִּבְּוֹא דָּוִד מַחֲנֵימָה וְשׁוּבִי בֶן־נַחֲשׁ מִרְבַּת
 בְּנֵי־עַמּוֹן וּמַכִּיר בֶּן־עַמְיָאֵל מִלֹּא־דֶּבָר וּבְרַזְלִי
 הַגִּלְעָדִי מִרֹּגֵלִים: כח מִשְׁכָּב וְסִפּוֹת וְכֵלֵי יוֹצֵר
 וְחֲטִים וְשְׁעָרִים וְקֶמַח וְקֵלִי וּפֹל וְעֵדָשִׁים וְקֵלִי:
 כט וְדִבְשׁ וְחֶמְאָה וְצֹאן וְשִׁפּוֹת בָּקָר הִגִּישׁוּ לְדָוִד
 וְלָעָם אֲשֶׁר־אִתּוֹ לֶאֱכֹל כִּי אָמְרוּ הָעָם רָעַב וְעִיָּף
 וְצָמָא בַּמִּדְבָּר: {ס}

²⁷ When David reached Mahanaim, Shobi son of Nahash from Rabbah of the Ammonites, Machir son of Ammiel from Lo-Debar, and Barzillai the Gileadite from Rogelim ²⁸ brought mattresses, rugs, bowls and crockery, wheat, barley, meal, roasted grain, beans, lentils, ²⁹ honey, curds and cheese, sheep and oxen, which they presented to David and the people with him for them to eat. “The army,” they said, “has been hungry and tired and thirsty in the wilderness.”

²⁷ ‘Shobi’, unlike his brother Hanun, was friendly to David. It has even been proposed that David had deposed Hanun after the events of Ch. 10, putting Shobi in his place. On ‘Machir’, see 9:4. The Aramaean name of ‘Barzillai’ shows him to have been a non-Israelite.

²⁸ The NRSV, following the MT, lacks ‘rugs’, here from the LXX (καὶ ἀμφοιτάπους) & NJB. ‘Lentils’ is uncertain; another reading has ‘lentils and parched grain’.

²⁹ ‘Cheese’ (literally, ‘cheese of the herd’) probably refers to cheese from cow’s milk (rather than goat’s milk).

2 SAMUEL 18

שמואל ב פרק יח

^א וַיִּפְקֹד דָּוִד אֶת־הָעָם אֲשֶׁר אִתּוֹ וַיִּשֶׁם עֲלֵיהֶם שָׂרֵי אֲלָפִים וְשָׂרֵי מֵאוֹת: ^ב וַיִּשְׁלַח דָּוִד אֶת־הָעָם הַשְּׁלִישִׁית בְּיַד־יֹאָב וְהַשְּׁלִישִׁית בְּיַד אֲבִישַׁי בֶּן־צְרוּיָה אָחִי יֹאָב וְהַשְּׁלִישִׁת בְּיַד אֶתִּי הַגִּתִּי {ס} וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶל־הָעָם יֵצֵא אֵצֶא גַם־אֲנִי עִמָּכֶם: ^ג וַיֹּאמֶר הָעָם לֹא תֵצֵא כִּי אִם־נָס נָנוּס לֹא־יֵשִׁימוּ אֵלֵינוּ לָב וְאִם־יָמָתוּ חֲצִינוּ לֹא־יֵשִׁימוּ אֵלֵינוּ לָב כִּי־עַתָּה כָּמָנּוּ עֲשָׂרָה אֲלָפִים וְעַתָּה טוֹב כִּי־תִהְיֶה־לָּנוּ מַעִיר לְעִזִּיר לְעֶזְרוֹ: {ס} ^ד וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵיהֶם הַמֶּלֶךְ אֲשֶׁר־יֵיטֵב בְּעֵינֵיכֶם אַעֲשֶׂה וַיַּעֲמֵד הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶל־יַד הַשָּׁעַר וְכָל־הָעָם יֵצְאוּ לְמֵאוֹת וּלְאֲלָפִים: ^ה וַיֵּצֵא הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶת־יֹאָב וְאֶת־אֲבִישַׁי וְאֶת־אֶתִּי לֵאמֹר לֹא־טֹלִי לַנָּעַר לְאַבְשָׁלוֹם וְכָל־הָעָם שָׁמְעוּ בְּצִוּת הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶת־כָּל־הַשָּׂרִים עַל־דָּבָר אַבְשָׁלוֹם: ^ו וַיֵּצֵא הָעָם הַשָּׂדֶה לִקְרֹאת יִשְׂרָאֵל וְתִהְיֶה

¹ David mustered the troops that were with him and set over them captains of thousands and captains of hundreds. ² David then sent out the army, a third under the command of Joab, a third under the command of Abishai son of Zeruiah, Joab's brother, and a third under the command of Ittai the Gittite. The king said to the troops, "I too will march with you." ³ But the troops replied, "You must not go. For, if we flee, they will not care about us; and if half of us die, they will not care about us; but you are worth ten thousand of us. Besides, it is better for you to be ready to reinforce us from the town." ⁴ Then the king said to them, "I will do whatever you think is best." And the king stood by the city gate as the troops marched out by their hundreds and by their thousands. ⁵ The king gave this order to Joab, Abishai and Ittai, "For my sake, treat the young man Absalom gently." And the entire army was listening when the king gave this order concerning Absalom to all the commanders. ⁶ Thus, the troops marched out to the field to

2 SAMUEL 18

¹ In place of 'mustered', here following the NRSV, the NJB has 'reviewed'.

² The NJB & NRSV, following the LXX, open this verse with, "And David divided the army into three groups."

³ The translation 'you are worth' follows the LXX (except for the Lucianic recension), Symmachus, and the Vg in reading אַתָּה ('you') rather than MT's עַתָּה ('now'). The Kethib/Qere difference here would benefit from an explanation.

⁴ The NJB opens with 'David said' rather than 'then the king said', here following the MT, NRSV & NETB.

⁵ In spite of Absalom's complete apostasy, David still loved him and wished that his life might be saved.

⁶ The location of the 'Forest of Ephraim' is uncertain.

הַמִּלְחָמָה בַּיַּעַר אֶפְרַיִם: ^ז וַיִּגְּפוּ שָׁם עִם יִשְׂרָאֵל
לִפְנֵי עֲבָדֵי דָוִד וַתְּהִי־שָׁם הַמִּגָּפָה גְדוֹלָה בַּיּוֹם
הַהוּא עֲשָׂרִים אֲלָף: ^ח וַתְּהִי־שָׁם הַמִּלְחָמָה נִפְצוֹת
נִפּוֹצַת עַל־פְּנֵי כָל־הָאָרֶץ וַיִּרְבַּ הַיַּעַר לֶאֱכֹל בָּעָם
מֵאֲשֶׁר אָכְלָה הַחֶרֶב בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא: ^ט וַיִּקְרָא
אַבְשָׁלוֹם לִפְנֵי עֲבָדֵי דָוִד וְאַבְשָׁלוֹם רָכַב עַל־
הַפֶּרֶד וַיָּבֹא הַפֶּרֶד תַּחַת שׁוֹבֵךְ הָאֵלֶּה הַגְּדוֹלָה
וַיַּחֲזֹק רֹאשׁוֹ בָּאֵלֶּה וַיִּתֵּן בֵּין הַשָּׁמַיִם וּבֵין הָאָרֶץ
וַהֲפֹרֵד אֲשֶׁר־תַּחֲתָיו עָבַר: ^י וַיֵּרָא אִישׁ אֶחָד וַיֵּגֵד
לְיוֹאָב וַיֹּאמֶר הִנֵּה רָאִיתִי אֶת־אַבְשָׁלוֹם תָּלוּי
בָּאֵלֶּה: ^{יא} וַיֹּאמֶר יוֹאָב לְאִישׁ הַמַּגִּיד לוֹ וְהִנֵּה רָאִיתָ
וּמִדּוּעַ לֹא־הִפִּיתוֹ שָׁם אֶרֶצָה וְעָלִי לְתֵת לָךְ עֶשְׂרֵה
כֶּסֶף וַחֲגֶרֶה אַחַת: ^{יב} וַיֹּאמֶר הָאִישׁ אֶל־יוֹאָב וְלֹא
וְלֹא אֲנֹכִי שֹׁקֵל עַל־כַּפִּי אֵלַי כֶּסֶף לֹא־אֶשְׁלַח יָדִי
אֶל־בֶּן־הַמֶּלֶךְ כִּי בְּאֲזַנֵּינוּ צִוָּה הַמֶּלֶךְ אֹתְךָ וְאֶת־
אַבִּישִׁי וְאֶת־אֶתִּי לֵאמֹר שְׁמְרוּ־מִי בַּנֶּעַר

fight against Israel, and the battle was fought in the Forest of Ephraim.

⁷ There, the followers of David defeated the men of Israel; it was a great defeat that day: twenty thousand soldiers were killed. ⁸ The fighting spread over the face of all the country and, of the troops, the forest claimed more victims that day than the sword. ⁹ Absalom happened to run into David's followers. Absalom was riding a mule and the mule passed under the thick branches of a great oak. Absalom's head caught fast in the oak, and he hung between heaven and earth, while the mule he was riding went on. ¹⁰ One of the men saw this and told Joab. "I have just seen Absalom hanging from an oak." ¹¹ Joab said to the man who told him, "You saw him! Why did you not strike him to the ground then and there? I would have been glad to give you ten silver shekels and a belt." ¹² But the man answered Joab, "Even if I were to feel the weight of a thousand silver shekels in my hand, I would not lift my hand against the king's son. In our own hearing the king gave you, Abishai and Ittai these orders, "For my sake spare young Absalom." ¹³ If I had risked my

⁷ The number of 20,000 is an overgenerous estimate; there was no counting before or after the battle (see #1S 4:10).

⁸ The Kethib/Qere difference here would benefit from an explanation.

⁹ 'He hung' follows the LXX (ἐκρεμάσθη), Tg and Peshitta texts; the MT has 'was put'.

¹⁰ 4QSam^a lacks 'one of'.

¹¹ 10 shekels would have been about 114 grams of silver.

¹² For 'even if', here following the Qere (וְלֹא), the Ketiv has 'and not' (וְלֹא). 'For my sake' follows the Tg & Peshitta; the MT has, 'for anybody's sake'.

¹³ For this verse, here following the NJB, the NRSV reads: "On the other hand, if I had dealt treacherously against his life (and there is nothing hidden from the king), then you yourself would have stood aloof." In place of 'my life', here following the Qere (בְּנַפְשִׁי) the Ketiv has 'his life' (בְּנַפְשׁוֹ).

בַּאֲשָׁלוֹם: י' אוֹ-עֲשִׂיתִי בִנְפֹשׁוֹ בְּנִפְשִׁי שֶׁקֶר וְכָל-
דָּבָר לֹא-יִכָּחַד מִן-הַמֶּלֶךְ וְאַתָּה תִּתִּיּוֹב מִנֶּגֶד:
י" וַיֹּאמֶר יוֹאָב לֹא-כֵן אֲחִילָה לִפְנֵיךָ וַיִּקַּח שְׁלֹשָׁה
שִׁבְטִים בְּכַפּוֹ וַיִּתְקַעֵם בְּלֵב אֲבִשָׁלוֹם עוֹדְנֵנוּ חִי
בְּלֵב הָאֱלֹהִים: טו וַיִּסְבּוּ עֲשָׂרָה נְעָרִים נְשָׂאֵי כָלִי
יוֹאָב וַיִּכּוּ אֶת-אֲבִשָׁלוֹם וַיִּמָּתֶהוּ: טז וַיִּתְקַע יוֹאָב
בְּשֹׁפָר וַיֵּשֶׁב הָעָם מִרְדֵּף אַחֲרֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל כִּי-חֲשָׂדָה
יוֹאָב אֶת-הָעָם: יז וַיִּקְחוּ אֶת-אֲבִשָׁלוֹם וַיִּשְׁלְכוּ אֹתוֹ
בְּיַעַר אֶל-הַפֶּחַח הַגָּדוֹל וַיַּצְבּוּ עָלָיו גִּלְ-אֲבָנִים
גָּדוֹל מְאֹד וְכָל-יִשְׂרָאֵל נָסוּ אִישׁ לְאֹהֲלוֹ:
יח וַאֲבִשָׁלוֹם לָקַח וַיַּצְבֵּהוּ בַּחֲזֵי אֶת-מִצְבֶּתָהּ אֲשֶׁר
בְּעִמְקֵי-הַמֶּלֶךְ כִּי אָמַר אֲיוֹלִי בֶן בַּעֲבֹר הַזִּכִּיר
שְׁמִי וַיִּקְרָא לְמִצְבֶּתָהּ עַל-שְׁמוֹ וַיִּקְרָא לָהּ יָד
אֲבִשָׁלוֹם עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה: {ס} יט וַאֲחִימֶעַץ בֶּן-צְדוֹק
אָמַר אֲרוּצָה נָא וַאֲבִשָׁרָה אֶת-הַמֶּלֶךְ כִּי-שִׁפְטֻ
יְהוָה מִיַּד אֹיְבָיו: כ וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ יוֹאָב לֹא אִישׁ בְּשָׂרָה

life, nothing stays hidden from the king and you would have dissociated yourself from me.” ¹⁴ Then Joab said, “I cannot waste time arguing with you!” He took three spears in his hand and thrust them into Absalom’s heart while he was still alive there in the oak tree. ¹⁵ Then ten soldiers, Joab’s armour-bearers, stepped forward, cut Absalom down and killed him. ¹⁶ Then Joab sounded the trumpet and the troops stopped pursuing Israel, for Joab held the troops back. ¹⁷ They took Absalom, flung him into a deep pit in the forest and reared a great cairn over him. All the Israelites had fled, each man to his tent. ¹⁸ Now Absalom during his lifetime had undertaken the erection of a pillar to himself, which is in the Valley of the King. “I have no son,” he said, “to preserve the memory of my name;” he called the pillar by his own name, and today it is still called Absalom’s Monument. ¹⁹ Ahimaaz son of Zadok said, “I must run and tell the good news to the king that Yahweh has vindicated him from the hand of his enemies.” ²⁰ But Joab said, “Today you will not bear good news, some other day you will be; but today you would not

¹⁴ The NJB has ‘darts’ in place of ‘spears’; the Hebrew word means throwing sticks, tipped with metal.

¹⁵ In place of ‘soldiers’, here following the NJB & NETB, the NRSV has ‘young men’.

¹⁶ ‘Trumpet’ translates שֹׁפָר, a ram’s horn.

¹⁷ Absalom’s tomb was very different from what he had intended – he had prepared himself for a showy monument near Jerusalem (v. 18).

¹⁸ The ‘Monument’ (literally ‘the hand of Absalom’) was not the Hellenistic (or possibly Roman) tomb still to be seen in the Valley of the Kidron, but a funerary stele (see Gn 35:20). The statement about his having ‘no son’ seems inconsistent with 14:27.

¹⁹ The NRSV ends this verse, here following NETB, with, “that the LORD has delivered him from the power of his enemies.”

²⁰ The Ketiv lacks כֵּן, here following the Qere.

אֶתֶּה הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה וּבִשְׂרֵת בְּיוֹם אַחֵר וְהַיּוֹם הַזֶּה לֹא
 תְּבַשֵּׂר כִּי־עַל־[כֵּן] בֶּן־הַמֶּלֶךְ מָתָּה: ^{כא} וַיֹּאמֶר יוֹאָב
 לַכּוּשִׁי לֵךְ הַגֵּד לַמֶּלֶךְ אֲשֶׁר רָאִיתָה וַיִּשְׁתַּחוּ כּוּשִׁי
 לְיוֹאָב וַיֵּרֶץ: ^{כב} וַיִּסֹּף עוֹד אַחִימַעַץ בֶּן־צְדוֹק וַיֹּאמֶר
 אֶל־יוֹאָב וַיְהִי מָה אֲרָצָה־נָּא גַם־אֲנִי אַחֲרֵי הַכּוּשִׁי
 וַיֹּאמֶר יוֹאָב לְמַה־זֶּה אַתָּה רָץ בְּנִי וּלְכָה אִין־
 בְּשׁוֹרָה מִצָּאתָ: ^{כג} וַיְהִי־מָה אַרְוֶן וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ רוֹץ
 וַיֵּרֶץ אַחִימַעַץ דֶּרֶךְ הַכְּפָר וַיַּעֲבֹר אֶת־הַכּוּשִׁי:
^{כד} וְדוֹד יוֹשֵׁב בֵּין־שְׁנֵי הַשְּׁעָרִים וַיֵּלֶךְ הַצֹּפֶה אֶל־גֹּגַ
 הַשְּׁעָרִים אֶל־הַחֹמָה וַיִּשָּׂא אֶת־עֵינָיו וַיֵּרָא וְהִנֵּה־
 אִישׁ רָץ לְבַדּוֹ: ^{כה} וַיִּקְרָא הַצֹּפֶה וַיַּגֵּד לַמֶּלֶךְ וַיֹּאמֶר
 הַמֶּלֶךְ אִם־לְבַדּוֹ בְּשׁוֹרָה בָּפְיוֹ וַיֵּלֶךְ הַלּוֹךְ וּקְרַב:
^{כו} וַיֵּרָא הַצֹּפֶה אִישׁ־אַחֵר רָץ וַיִּקְרָא הַצֹּפֶה אֶל־
 הַשְּׁעָרִים וַיֹּאמֶר הִנֵּה־אִישׁ רָץ לְבַדּוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ
 גַּם־זֶה מְבַשֵּׂר: ^{כז} וַיֹּאמֶר הַצֹּפֶה אֲנִי רָאִיתִי אֶת־
 מְרוֹצֶת הָרָאשׁוֹן כְּמָרָצַת אַחִימַעַץ בֶּן־צְדוֹק וַיֹּאמֶר

be bringing good news, for the king's son is dead." ²¹ Then Joab said to the Cushite, "Go and tell the king what you have seen." The Cushite bowed to Joab and ran off. ²² Then Ahimaaz son of Zadok said to Joab, "Come what may, I must myself run after the Cushite." "My son," Joab said, "why run? You will get no reward for your news." ²³ He replied, "Come what may, I am going to run." "Then run," Joab said; and Ahimaaz set off to run by way of the plain and passed the Cushite. ²⁴ David was sitting between the two gates. The lookout had gone up to the roof of the gate, on the ramparts; he looked up and saw a man running all by himself. ²⁵ The watch called out to the king and told him. The king said, "If he is by himself, he has good news to tell." As the man drew still nearer, ²⁶ the sentry saw another man running; and the sentry called to the gatekeeper and said, "Here comes another man running by himself." David said, "He too is a bearer of good news." ²⁷ The watchman said, "I recognise the way the first man runs; Ahimaaz son of Zadok runs like that." "He is a good man," the king said, "and he

²¹ The 'Cushite' was an Ethiopian slave (Cush is Ethiopia), and therefore black and considered to be an ill-omened messenger.

²² A bringer of good news gets a present (4:10).

²³ In place of 'Joab said', here following the NJB & NETB, the MT & NRSV have 'he said'.

²⁴ The 'two gates' were the city's inner and outer gates.

²⁵ Defeat would have been signalled by a group of fugitives.

²⁶ In place of 'good news', here following the NJB, the NRSV has 'tidings' (as also in vv. 25 & 27).

²⁷ Literally translated, the watchman's remark is, "I am seeing the running of the first one like the running of Ahimaaz son of Zadok."

הַמֶּלֶךְ אִישׁ-טוֹב זֶה וְאֶל-בְּשׂוֹרָה טוֹבָה יָבֹוא׃
 כֹּחַ וַיִּקְרָא אַחִימַעַץ וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל-הַמֶּלֶךְ שָׁלוֹם
 וַיִּשְׁתַּחוּ לַמֶּלֶךְ לְאַפְיוֹ אֶרְצָה {ס} וַיֹּאמֶר בְּרוּךְ
 יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר סָגַר אֶת-הָאֲנָשִׁים אֲשֶׁר-נִשְׂאוּ
 אֶת-יָדָם בְּאֹדְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ׃ {ס} כֹּחַ וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ שָׁלוֹם
 לְנֹעַר לְאַבְשָׁלוֹם וַיֹּאמֶר אַחִימַעַץ רָאִיתִי הַהֲמוֹן
 הַגָּדוֹל לְשַׁלַּח אֶת-עַבְדְּ הַמֶּלֶךְ יוֹאָב וְאֶת-עַבְדֵּךְ
 וְלֹא יָדַעְתִּי מָה׃ ל וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ סֵב הַתֵּיצֵב כֹּה
 וַיִּסֵּב וַיַּעֲמֵד׃ לֹא וְהִנֵּה הַכּוֹשִׁי בָּא וַיֹּאמֶר הַכּוֹשִׁי
 יִתְבַּשֵּׁר אֹדְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ כִּי-שִׁפְטָהּ יְהוָה הַיּוֹם מִיָּד כָּל-
 הַקָּמִים עָלֶיךָ׃ {ס} לֵב וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶל-הַכּוֹשִׁי
 הַשָּׁלוֹם לְנֹעַר לְאַבְשָׁלוֹם וַיֹּאמֶר הַכּוֹשִׁי יְהִיו כְּנֹעַר
 אִיבֵי אֹדְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ וְכָל אֲשֶׁר-קָמוּ עָלֶיךָ לָרַע׃ {ס}

comes with good news.” ²⁸ Ahimaaz approached the king. “All hail!” he said and bowed down before the king with his face to the earth. “Blessed be Yahweh your God,” he said, “who has handed over the men who rebelled against my lord the king!” ²⁹ “Is all well with young Absalom?” the king asked. Ahimaaz replied, “When Joab sent the king’s servant, your servant, I saw a great commotion, but I do not know what it was.” ³⁰ The king said, “Move aside and stand here.” He moved aside and waited. ³¹ Then the Cushite came; the Cushite said, “Good news for my lord the king! Yahweh has vindicated you today by ridding you of all who rebelled against you.” ³² “Is all well with young Absalom?” the king asked the Cushite. “May the enemies of my lord the king,” the Cushite answered, “and all who rebelled against you to your hurt, share the lot of that young man.”

²⁸ The literal translation of ‘all hail’ is ‘peace’, the normal greeting on such occasions.

²⁹ A discreet lie: Ahimaaz leaves the bad news to the second messenger.

³⁰ In place of ‘stand here’, following the NRSV & NETB, the NJB has ‘stand there’.

³¹ The NJB has ‘vindicated your cause’ in place of ‘vindicated you’, here following the NRSV & NETB.

³² The literal translation of ‘rebelled against you’ is ‘rose against you for evil’.

2 SAMUEL 19

שמואל ב פרק יט

א וַיִּרְגַּז הַמֶּלֶךְ וַיַּעַל עַל־עֲלִית הַשַּׁעַר וַיֵּבֶד וְכָה |
אָמַר בְּלִכְתּוֹ בְּנֵי אֲבִשָׁלוֹם בְּנֵי בְנֵי אֲבִשָׁלוֹם מִי־
יִתֵּן מוֹתִי אֲנִי תַּחְתִּידָּ אֲבִשָׁלוֹם בְּנֵי בְנֵי: ב וַיָּגֵד
לְיוֹאָב הִנֵּה הַמֶּלֶךְ בֹּכָה וַיִּתְאַבֵּל עַל־אֲבִשָׁלוֹם:
ג וַתְּהִי הַתְּשֻׁעָה בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא לְאַבְל לְכָל־הָעָם כִּי־
שָׁמַע הָעָם בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא לֵאמֹר נַעֲצֹב הַמֶּלֶךְ עַל־
בְּנוֹ: ד וַיִּתְגַּנֵּב הָעָם בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא לְבֹא הָעִיר כְּאִשֶּׁר
יִתְגַּנֵּב הָעָם הַנִּכְלָמִים בְּנוֹסִם בַּמִּלְחָמָה: ה וְהַמֶּלֶךְ
לֹאֵט אֶת־פָּנָיו וַיִּזְעַק הַמֶּלֶךְ קוֹל גָּדוֹל בְּנֵי אֲבִשָׁלוֹם
אֲבִשָׁלוֹם בְּנֵי בְנֵי: {ס}

ו וַיָּבֹא יוֹאָב אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ הַבַּיִת וַיֹּאמֶר הַבִּשְׁתָּ הַיּוֹם
אֶת־פָּנָי כָּל־עַבְדֶּיךָ הַמְּמַלְטִים אֶת־נַפְשְׁךָ הַיּוֹם
וְאֵת נַפְשׁ בְּנֶיךָ וּבְנֹתֶיךָ וְנַפְשׁ נְשִׁיךָ וְנַפְשׁ פְּלִגְשֶׁיךָ:
ז לֹא־הִבָּה אֶת־שִׁנְאֶיךָ וְלֹשְׁנָא אֶת־אֲהֲבֶיךָ כִּי

¹ The king shuddered. He went up to the room over the gate and burst into tears and, as he went, he kept saying, "My son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! If only I had died instead of you! O Absalom, my son, my son!" ² Word was brought to Joab, "The king is now weeping and mourning for Absalom." ³ Therefore, the day's victory was turned to mourning for all the troops, because they learned that the king was grieving for his son. ⁴ The troops returned stealthily that day to the town, as troops creep back ashamed when routed in battle. ⁵ The king had veiled his face and was crying aloud, "My son Absalom! Absalom, my son, my son!"

⁶ Then Joab went indoors to the king and said, "Today, you cover the faces of all your servants with shame when they have saved your life today, and the lives of your sons and daughters, your wives and your concubines, ⁷ for love of those who hate you and hatred for those who

2 SAMUEL 19

- ¹ This verse is included as 18:33 in the NRSV, NETB and many other English versions; here, we follow the numbering scheme of the MT & NJB. The NJB, following the LXX (ἐν τῷ πορεύεσθαι αὐτόν) has 'as he wept' in place of 'as he went'.
- ² The NRSV & NETB open with 'it was told Joab' in place of 'word was brought to Joab', here following the NJB.
- ³ NETB has 'grieved' in place of 'grieving', here following the NJB & NRSV.
- ⁴ In place of 'ashamed', here following the NJB & NRSV, NETB has 'embarrassed'.
- ⁵ The literal translation of 'crying aloud' is 'cried with a great voice'.
- ⁶ The MT repeats 'the lives of' before 'your wives and concubines'; here, we follow the NJB.
- ⁷ The translation 'if' follows the Qere (לֹא) and 4QSam^a, rather than the Ketiv (לא - 'not').

הַגִּדְתָּ הַיּוֹם כִּי אֵין לְךָ שָׂרִים וְעַבְדִּים כִּי יִדְעֹתִי
הַיּוֹם כִּי לֹא לֹו אֲבַשְׁלוֹם חַי וְכָלְנוּ הַיּוֹם מֵתִים כִּי־
אֲזַי שָׁר בְּעֵינֶיךָ: ^ח וְעַתָּה קוֹם צֵא וּדְבַר עַל־לֵב
עַבְדֶּיךָ {ס} כִּי בִיהוָה נִשְׁפָּעֵתִי כִי־אֵינֶךָ יוֹצֵא אִם־
יֵלֵין אִישׁ אֶתְּךָ הַלַּיְלָה וְרָעָה לְךָ זֹאת מִכָּל־הָרָעָה
אֲשֶׁר־בָּאָה עָלֶיךָ מִנְעֻרֶיךָ עַד־עַתָּה: {ס}

^ט וַיִּקָּם הַמֶּלֶךְ וַיֵּשֶׁב בַּשַּׁעַר וּלְכָל־הָעָם הִגִּידוּ
לֵאמֹר הִנֵּה הַמֶּלֶךְ יוֹשֵׁב בַּשַּׁעַר וַיָּבֹא כָל־הָעָם
לִפְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ וַיִּשְׂרָאֵל נָס אִישׁ לְאֹהֲלָיו: {ס}

^י וַיְהִי כָל־הָעָם נִדּוֹן בְּכָל־שִׁבְטֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר
הַמֶּלֶךְ הִצִּילָנוּ מִכַּף אֹיְבֵינוּ וְהוּא מִלְטָנוּ מִכַּף
פְּלִשְׁתִּים וְעַתָּה בָּרַח מִן־הָאָרֶץ מֵעַל אֲבַשְׁלוֹם:
^{יא} וְאֲבַשְׁלוֹם אֲשֶׁר מָשַׁחְנוּ עָלֵינוּ מֵת בַּמִּלְחָמָה
וְעַתָּה לָמָּה אַתֶּם מַחְרְשִׁים לְהָשִׁיב אֶת־
הַמֶּלֶךְ: {ס}

^{יב} וַהֲמֶלֶךְ דָּוִד שָׁלַח אֶל־צְדוֹק וְאֶל־אַבִּיָּתָר
הַכֹּהֲנִים לֵאמֹר דַּבְּרוּ אֶל־זִקְנֵי יְהוּדָה לֵאמֹר לָמָּה

love you. Today you have made it plain that commanders and soldiers are nothing to you, for I see that if Absalom were alive and all of us were dead today, you would be pleased. ⁸ Now get up, come out and reassure your soldiers; for, if you do not come, I swear by Yahweh not one man will stay with you tonight; and this will be a worse misfortune for you than all that has happened to you from your youth until now.”

⁹ Then the king rose and took his seat at the gate. The troops were all told, “The king is sitting at the gate;” and the whole army assembled in front of the king. Israel had fled, each man to his tent.

¹⁰ Throughout the tribes of Israel, all were quarrelling, saying “The king delivered us from the power of our enemies, he saved us from the hands of the Philistines, and now he has fled the land because of Absalom; ¹¹ while Absalom, whom we had anointed to reign over us, has now died in battle. Now, therefore, why do you say nothing about bringing the king back?”

¹² Then King David sent this message to the priests Zadok and Abiathar, “Speak to the elders of Judah, saying “Why should you be the last to

⁸ The literal translation of ‘reassure’ is ‘speak to the heart of’.

⁹ In place of ‘Israel’, here following the MT & NJB, then NRSV has ‘the Israelites’ and NETB has ‘the Israelite soldiers’.

¹⁰ In place of ‘has fled the land because of Absalom’, here following the NRSV, the NJB has ‘has had to flee the country to escape Absalom’.

¹¹ At the end of this verse, the LXX adds ‘and the word of all Israel came to the king’ (καὶ τὸ ῥῆμα παντὸς Ἰσραηλ ἦλθεν πρὸς τὸν βασιλέα); the words are misplaced from v. 12 (although they appear there in the LXX as well).

¹² The NJB transposes the last sentence to the beginning of the verse (see #11). The NRSV and the NJB, following the LXX, lack ‘to his house’.

תָּהִיוּ אַחֲרָנִים לְהָשִׁיב אֶת־הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶל־בֵּיתוֹ וּדְבַר כָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל בָּא אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶל־בֵּיתוֹ: י' אַחִי אַתָּם עַצְמִי וּבִשְׂרִי אַתָּם וְלָמָּה תָּהִיוּ אַחֲרָנִים לְהָשִׁיב אֶת־הַמֶּלֶךְ: י"ד וְלַעֲמָשָׂא תִּמְרוּ הֲלוֹא עַצְמִי וּבִשְׂרִי אַתָּה כֹּה יַעֲשֶׂה־לִּי אֱלֹהִים וְכֹה יוֹסִיף אִם־לֹא שֶׁר־צָבָא תִּהְיֶה לִּפְנֵי כָל־הַיָּמִים תַּחַת יוֹאָב: טו וַיֵּט אֶת־לִבָּב כָּל־אִישׁ־יְהוּדָה כְּאִישׁ אֶחָד וַיִּשְׁלְחוּ אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ שׁוֹב אַתָּה וְכָל־עַבְדֶּיךָ: טז וַיָּשָׁב הַמֶּלֶךְ וַיָּבֹא עַד־הַיַּרְדֵּן וַיְהוּדָה בָּא הַגִּלְגָּל לְלַכֹּת לְקִרְאֵת הַמֶּלֶךְ לְהַעֲבִיר אֶת־הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶת־הַיַּרְדֵּן: יז וַיִּמָּהֵר שְׁמַעִי בֶן־גֵּרָא בֶן־הַיְמִינִי אֲשֶׁר מִבְּחוּרִים וַיֵּרֶד עִם־אִישׁ יְהוּדָה לְקִרְאֵת הַמֶּלֶךְ דָּוִד: יח וְאַלְף אִישׁ עַמּוֹ מִבְּנֵי־מֶן וְצִיָּבָא נָעַר בֵּית שָׁאוּל וְחַמֶּשֶׁת עָשָׂר בָּנָיו וְעֹשָׂרִים עַבְדָּיו אֹתוֹ וְצִלְחוּ הַיַּרְדֵּן לִפְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ: יט וְעַבְרָה הָעַבְרָה לְעַבִּיר אֶת־בֵּית הַמֶּלֶךְ וְלַעֲשׂוֹת הַטּוֹב בְּעֵינָיו וְשְׁמַעִי בֶן־גֵּרָא נָפַל לִפְנֵי

bring the king back to his house? For, the talk of all Israel has come to the king, to his house. ¹³ You are my brothers; you are my own flesh and blood. Why, then, should you be the last to bring the king back?" ¹⁴ Say to Amasa too, "Are you not my own flesh and blood? May God do this to me and more, if you are not the commander of my army from now on, in place of Joab."" ¹⁵ Then he swayed the hearts of all the men of Judah as one man, sending word to the king, "Come back, you and all who serve you." ¹⁶ Therefore, the king turned about and reached the Jordan. Judah, coming to meet the king to escort the king across the Jordan, had arrived at Gilgal. ¹⁷ And Shimei son of Gera the Benjaminite from Bahurim came down quickly with the men of Judah to meet King David. ¹⁸ With him were a thousand men from Benjamin. Ziba, the servant of the House of Saul, with his fifteen sons and twenty servants, rushed down to the Jordan ahead of the king, ¹⁹ while the crossing was taking place, to ferry the king's family across and to do whatever he required. As the king was about to cross the Jordan, Shimei son of Gera

¹³ The literal translation of 'my own flesh and blood' is 'my bone and my flesh'.

¹⁴ 'Amasa' (עַמָּשָׂא) was the military leader of the rebellion (17:25); he especially must be won over. David mistrusts the bloodthirsty Joab and is prepared to dismiss him, but Joab gets rid of his rival (20:8-13) and remains at his post until David's death (1K 2:5ff, 28ff).

¹⁵ The referent of the opening 'he' is not entirely clear: the NJB, NRSV & NLT have 'Amasa', but the NCV and TEV have 'David'.

¹⁶ After 'Jordan', NETB adds the word 'River', for clarity; here, we follow the MT, NJB & NRSV.

¹⁷ In place of 'came down quickly', here following NETB, the NJB & NRSV have 'hurried down'.

¹⁸ In place of 'ahead of', here following the NRSV (the NJB has 'before'), NETB has 'within sight of'.

¹⁹ The NJB, following the LXX (καὶ ἐλειτουργήσαν τὴν λειτουργίαν), has 'working manfully' in place of 'while the crossing was taking place'.

הַמֶּלֶךְ בַּעֲבָרוֹ בִּירְדֹּן: ^כ וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶל־
יַחֲשֹׁב־לִי אֲדֹנָי עֹון וְאֶל־תִּזְכֹּר אֶת אֲשֶׁר הָעוֹה
עַבְדְּךָ בַּיּוֹם אֲשֶׁר־יֵצֵא אֲדֹנִי־הַמֶּלֶךְ מִירוּשָׁלַם
לָשׁוּם הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶל־לְבֹ: ^{כא} כִּי יָדַע עַבְדְּךָ כִּי אָנִי
חָטָאתִי וְהִנֵּה־בָאתִי הַיּוֹם רֹאשׁוֹן לְכָל־בֵּית יוֹסֵף
לָרֶדֶת לִקְרֹאת אֲדֹנִי הַמֶּלֶךְ: {ס}

^{כב} וַיַּעַן אֲבִישַׁי בֶּן־צְרוּיָה וַיֹּאמֶר הֲתַחַת זֹאת לֹא
יוֹמַת שְׁמַעִי כִּי קָלַל אֶת־מָשִׁיחַ יְהוָה: {ס}

^{כג} וַיֹּאמֶר דָּוִד מִה־לִּי וְלָכֶם בְּנֵי צְרוּיָה כִּי־תִהְיוּ־לִי
הַיּוֹם לְשָׁטָן הַיּוֹם יוֹמַת אִישׁ בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל כִּי הֲלוֹא
יָדַעְתִּי כִּי הַיּוֹם אָנִי־מֶלֶךְ עַל־יִשְׂרָאֵל: ^{כד} וַיֹּאמֶר
הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶל־שְׁמַעִי לֹא תָמוּת וַיִּשָּׁבַע לוֹ הַמֶּלֶךְ: {ס}
^{כה} וּמִפְּבֹשֶׁת בֶּן־שָׁאוּל יָרַד לִקְרֹאת הַמֶּלֶךְ וְלֹא־
עָשָׂה רְגָלָיו וְלֹא־עָשָׂה שְׁפָמוֹ וְאֶת־בְּגָדָיו לֹא כָבַס
לְמִן־הַיּוֹם לְכַת הַמֶּלֶךְ עַד־הַיּוֹם אֲשֶׁר־בָּא בְּשָׁלוֹם:
^{כו} וַיְהִי כִּי־בָא יְרוּשָׁלַם לִקְרֹאת הַמֶּלֶךְ וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ

fell down at his feet ²⁰ and he said to the king, “Let not my lord hold me guilty; and do not remember the wrong your servant did, on the day that my lord the king left Jerusalem. May the king not bear it in mind.

²¹ For, I, your servant admit that I have sinned; therefore, here I am today, as the first of all the House of Joseph to come down and meet my lord the king.”

²² Then Abishai son of Zeruiah spoke out. “Does not Shimei deserve death for cursing Yahweh’s anointed?”

²³ However, David said, “What is there between me and you, sons of Zeruiah, for you to be my enemies today? Could anyone be put to death in Israel today? Today I know for sure that I am king over Israel. ²⁴ The king said to Shimei, “you shall not die,” and the king gave him his oath.

²⁵ Mephibosheth son of Saul came down to meet the king. He had not cared for his feet, nor trimmed his beard nor washed his clothes from the day the king left to the day he came back in peace. ²⁶ When he arrived from Jerusalem to greet the king, the king asked him, “Why did you not

²⁰ Though the verb translated ‘left’ is 3MS in the MT, it should probably be read as 2MS. It is one of 15 cases of *puncta extrordinaria*, where the Masoretes placed a dot over each letter of the word. Their concern here is that the verb and the preceding alternate from 3rd person to 2nd.

²¹ The expression, ‘House of Joseph’ sometimes includes Benjamin, making it an alternative name for the northern tribes, or Israel.

²² For this verse, NETB has “Abishai son of Zeruiah replied, “For this should not Shimei be put to death? After all, he cursed the Lord’s anointed!”

²³ The literal translation of ‘what is there between me and you’ is ‘what to me and you’.

²⁴ However, David made sure that vengeance was exacted after his death: 1K 2:8ff, 36–46.

²⁵ The NJB uses the name ‘Meribbaal’ in place of ‘Mephibosheth’ (see #4:4) and, after ‘feet’, adds ‘or his hands’ (from the LXX - οὐδὲ ὠνυχίστατο).

²⁶ ‘From Jerusalem’ follows the LXX; the MT has ‘in Jerusalem’.

הַמֶּלֶךְ לָמָּה לֹא־הִלַּכְתָּ עִמִּי מִפִּיבִשֶׁת׃ כו וַיֹּאמֶר
אֲדֹנָי הַמֶּלֶךְ עֲבָדִי רַמְנִי כִּי־אָמַר עֲבָדְךָ אֶחְבְּשֶׁה־
לִי הַחֲמֹר וְאֶרְכַּב עָלָיו וְאֵלֶךְ אֶת־הַמֶּלֶךְ כִּי פֶסַח
עֲבָדְךָ׃ כז וַיִּרְגַּל בְּעֲבָדְךָ אֶל־אֲדֹנָי הַמֶּלֶךְ וְאֲדֹנָי
הַמֶּלֶךְ כָּמֻלְאָךְ הָאֱלֹהִים וַעֲשֵׂה הַטּוֹב בְּעֵינָיִךְ׃
כט כִּי לֹא הָיָה כָּל־בֵּית אָבִי כִּי אִם־אֲנָשֵׁי־מָוֶת
לֵאדֹנָי הַמֶּלֶךְ וְתָשֶׁת אֶת־עֲבָדְךָ בְּאֹכְלֵי שֻׁלְחָנְךָ
וּמִה־יֵשׁ־לִי עוֹד צְדָקָה וְלִזְעַק עוֹד אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ׃ {פ}
ל וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ הַמֶּלֶךְ לָמָּה תִּדְבָּר עוֹד דְּבַרֶּיךָ אֲמַרְתִּי
אִתָּה וְצִיבָא תַחֲלִקוּ אֶת־הָשָׂדֶה׃ לא וַיֹּאמֶר
מִפִּיבִשֶׁת אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ גַּם אֶת־הַכֹּל יִקַּח אַחֲרֵי
אֲשֶׁר־בָּא אֲדֹנָי הַמֶּלֶךְ בְּשָׁלוֹם אֶל־בֵּיתוֹ׃ {ס}
לב וּבְרִזְלֵי הַגִּלְעָדִי יָרַד מִרְגְּלִים וַיַּעֲבֹר אֶת־הַמֶּלֶךְ
הַיַּרְדֵּן לְשַׁלְּחוֹ אֶת־הַיַּרְדֵּן בִּירְדֵּן׃ לג וּבְרִזְלֵי זִקֵּן
מְאֹד בֶּן־שְׁמֹנִים שָׁנָה וְהוּא־כָּלְכָל אֶת־הַמֶּלֶךְ
בְּשִׁיבָתוֹ בְּמַחֲנֵים כִּי־אִישׁ גָּדוֹל הוּא מְאֹד׃

go with me, Mephibosheth?" ²⁷ He answered, "My lord king, my servant deceived me. Your servant said to him, "Saddle my donkey; I shall ride it and go with the king," for your servant is lame. ²⁸ He has slandered your servant to my lord the king. However, my lord the king is like the Angel of God; do as you think right. ²⁹ For, all my father's family earned no better than death from the hands of my lord the king, and yet you have admitted your servant among those who eat at your table. What right have I to make further appeal to the king?"

³⁰ The king said, "Why speak any more of your affairs? I have decided that you and Ziba are to share the country." ³¹ Mephibosheth said to the king, "Let him take it all, since my lord the king has come home in peace."

³² Now Barzillai the Gileadite, too, had gone down from Rogelim and had stayed with the king to escort him as far as the Jordan. ³³ Barzillai was man of great age; he was eighty years old. He had kept the king in provisions during his stay at Mahanaim, for he was a very wealthy man.

²⁷ 'Saddle my donkey' follows the LXX (Ἐπίσαξόν μοι τὴν ὄνον) and Peshitta; the MT has 'I shall saddle my donkey'.

²⁸ David is once again accorded divine wisdom (see #14:17).

²⁹ The literal translation of 'make further appeal' is 'cry out'.

³⁰ In place of 'why speak any more of your affairs', here following the NRSV, the NJB has simply 'why say any more'.

³¹ The NRSV & NETB have 'safely' in place of 'in peace', here following the MT & NJB.

³² The Kethib/Qere difference here would benefit from an explanation: the reading אֶת־הַיַּרְדֵּן ('in the Jordan') is odd syntactically, as the use of the preposition after the object marker (אֶת) is difficult to explain.

³³ The literal translation of 'wealthy' is 'great'.

לֹא וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶל־בָּרְזַלַּי אַתָּה עֶבֶר אֲתִי
וְכָל־כֹּלְתִי אִתְּךָ עִמָּדִי בִירוּשָׁלַם: לֹא וַיֹּאמֶר בָּרְזַלַּי
אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ כַּמָּה יָמִי שְׁנֵי חַיִּי כִי־אֵעֲלֶה אֶת־הַמֶּלֶךְ
יְרוּשָׁלַם: לֹא בֶן־שָׁמָנִים שָׁנָה אֲנִכִּי הַיּוֹם הָאֵדַע
בֵּין־טוֹב לְרָע אִם־יִטְעַם עֲבָדְךָ אֶת־אֲשֶׁר אֲכַל
וְאֶת־אֲשֶׁר אֲשָׁתָה אִם־אֲשַׁמַּע עוֹד בְּקוֹל שָׂרִים
וְשִׁרֹת וְלִמָּה יִהְיֶה עֲבָדְךָ עוֹד לְמִשָּׂא אֶל־אֲדָנִי
הַמֶּלֶךְ: לֹא כִמָּעַט יַעֲבֹר עֲבָדְךָ אֶת־הַיַּרְדֵּן אֶת־
הַמֶּלֶךְ וְלִמָּה יִגְמְלֵנִי הַמֶּלֶךְ הַגְּמוּלָה הַזֹּאת:
לֹא יֵשֶׁב־נָא עֲבָדְךָ וְאָמַת בְּעִירִי עִם קֶבֶר אָבִי וְאִמִּי
וְהִנֵּה עֲבָדְךָ כִּמְהֵם יַעֲבֹר עִם־אֲדָנִי הַמֶּלֶךְ וַעֲשֵׂה־
לֹא אֶת אֲשֶׁר־טוֹב בְּעֵינֶיךָ: {ס} לֹא וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ
אֲתִי יַעֲבֹר כִּמְהֵם וְאֲנִי אַעֲשֶׂה־לּוֹ אֶת־הַטּוֹב
בְּעֵינֶיךָ וְכָל אֲשֶׁר־תִּבְחַר עָלַי אַעֲשֶׂה־לָּךְ: מ וַיַּעֲבֹר
כָּל־הָעָם אֶת־הַיַּרְדֵּן וְהַמֶּלֶךְ עָבַר וַיִּשָּׁק הַמֶּלֶךְ
לְבָרְזַלַּי וַיְבָרְכֵהוּ וַיָּשֶׁב לְמִקְמוֹ: {ס} מֵא וַיַּעֲבֹר

³⁴ “Cross over with me,” the king said to Barzillai, “and I will provide for your old age in Jerusalem with me.” ³⁵ But Barzillai answered the king, saying, “How many years have I still left to live, for me to go up to Jerusalem with the king? ³⁶ I am eighty years old now; can I discern between the good from the bad? Can your servant taste his food and what he drinks? Can I still hear the voices of singing men and singing women? Why should your servant be a further burden to my lord the king? ³⁷ Your servant will just cross the Jordan with the king; why should the king recompense me with such a reward? ³⁸ Allow your servant, I pray, to go back to die in my own town near the grave of my father and mother. But here is your servant Chimham; let him go with my lord the king; treat him as you think right.” ³⁹ And the king said, “Chimham shall go with me; I will do for him whatever pleases you, and anything you request I will do for you.” ⁴⁰ And all the people then crossed over the Jordan and the king crossed over, too; he kissed Barzillai and blessed him, and the latter returned to his home. ⁴¹ The

³⁴ The NRSV & NETB have ‘you’ in place of ‘your old age’, here following the NJB.

³⁵ A more literal translation of ‘have I still left to live’ is ‘do I have left to my life’.

³⁶ In place of ‘I’ in the 2nd question, the MT repeats ‘your servant’.

³⁷ The translation of the last sentence is uncertain (although there is complete agreement between the NRSV and NJB).

³⁸ It is usually assumed that ‘Chimham’ (כִּמְהָם) was Barzillai’s son, though the text does not explicitly state this (compare 1K 2:7).

³⁹ In place of ‘I will do for you’, here following the NRSV & NETB, the NJB ends with ‘I will do for him for your sake’.

⁴⁰ The MT has simply ‘he’ for ‘the latter’ (here following the NJB); the referent of the pronoun is slightly ambiguous.

⁴¹ The MT in this verse alone spells the name ‘Chimham’ with *nun-sofit* (כִּמְהָנוּ) rather than as elsewhere with *mem-sofit* (כִּמְהָם); the conventional

הַמֶּלֶךְ הַגִּלְגָּלָה וְכַמְהָן עָבְרָ עִמּוֹ וְכָל־עַם יְהוּדָה
וַיַּעֲבֵרוּ הָעֹבְרִים אֶת־הַמֶּלֶךְ וְגַם חֲצִי עַם יִשְׂרָאֵל:
מִבְּ וְהָנָה כָּל־אִישׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל בָּאִים אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ וַיֹּאמְרוּ
אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ מַדּוּעַ גָּנְבוּךָ אֶחָינוּ אִישׁ יְהוּדָה וַיַּעֲבֵרוּ
אֶת־הַמֶּלֶךְ וְאֶת־בֵּיתוֹ אֶת־הַיַּרְדֵּן וְכָל־אֲנָשֵׁי דָוִד
עִמּוֹ: {ס} מִג וַיַּעַן כָּל־אִישׁ יְהוּדָה עַל־אִישׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל
כִּי־קָרֹב הַמֶּלֶךְ אֵלַי וְלָמָּה זֶה חָרָה לָךְ עַל־הַדָּבָר
הַזֶּה הָאֲכֹל אָכַלְנוּ מִן־הַמֶּלֶךְ אִם־נִשְׂאֵת נִשְׂאָה
לָנוּ: {ס} מִד וַיַּעַן אִישׁ־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־אִישׁ יְהוּדָה
וַיֹּאמֶר עֲשֵׂר־יְדוֹת לִי בַּמֶּלֶךְ וְגַם־בְּדוֹד אָנִי מִמֶּךָ
וּמַדּוּעַ הִקְלַתָּנִי וְלֹא־הָיָה דְבָרִי רָאשׁוֹן לִי לְהַשִּׁיב
אֶת־מַלְכִּי וַיִּקֶּשׁ דְּבַר־אִישׁ יְהוּדָה מִדְּבַר אִישׁ
יִשְׂרָאֵל: {ס}

king went on the Gilgal and Chimham went with him. And all the people of Judah, and half the people of Israel, helped the king cross over.
⁴² Then all the men of Israel came to the king. “Why,” they asked the king, “have our brothers, the men of Judah, carried you off and brought the king and his family across the Jordan, and all David’s men with him?”
⁴³ All the men of Judah answered the men of Israel, “Because the king is of near kin to us. Why do you take offence at this? Have we been eating at the king’s expense? Have we taken portions for ourselves?”
⁴⁴ The men of Israel answered the men of Judah, “We have ten shares in the king and we have more in David than you, so why do you slight us? Were we not the first to suggest bringing back our king?” But the words of the men of Judah were fiercer than those of the men of Israel.

spelling has been used in this translation to avoid confusion. The translation ‘*helped the king cross over*’ follows the *Qere* in reading the Hiphil verb הָעֹבְרִים (*‘they caused to cross over’*) rather than the Qal verb וַיַּעֲבֵרוּ (*‘they crossed over’*) of the *Ketiv*.

⁴² The antagonism between Israel and Judah breaks out again. In the light of this passage, it can be seen that the final division of the kingdom after the death of Solomon (1K 12:16–20) had its roots in an old cleavage.

⁴³ The translation of the last sentence is uncertain; the *NRSV* has, “*Or has he given us any gift?*”

⁴⁴ In place of ‘*we have more in David than you*’, here following the *MT* & *NRSV*, the *NJB*, following the *LXX* (καὶ πρωτότοκος ἐγώ), has ‘*what is more, we are you elder brothers*’.

2 SAMUEL 20

שמואל ב פרק כ

¹ Now a scoundrel called Sheba son of Bichri, a Benjaminite, happened to be there; he sounded the trumpet and cried, "We have no share in David, no share in the son of Jesse. Every man to his tents, O Israel!" ² At this, all the men of Israel deserted David and followed Sheba son of Bichri; but the men of Judah stayed with their king on his way from the Jordan to Jerusalem. ³ David came to his palace at Jerusalem; and he took the ten concubines he had left to look after the palace and put them under guard. He provided for their upkeep but never went to them again; they were shut away until the day they died, widows, as it were, of a living man. ⁴ Then the king said to Amasa, "Summon the men of Judah to me within three days and be here yourself." ⁵ So Amasa went to summon Judah, but he delayed beyond the set time that had been appointed for him. ⁶ David then said to Abishai, "Sheba son of

2 SAMUEL 20

- ¹ The expression, **יְמִינִי**, is a short form of the more common 'Benjamin'; it appears elsewhere in 1S 9:4 and Est 2:5. An ancient scribal tradition understands the MT reading **לְאֵהָלָיו** ('to his tents') to be **לְאֵלֹהָיו** ('to his gods'); the word is a *tiqqun sopherim* and the scribes indicate that they changed the word from 'gods' to 'tents' so as to soften its theological implications.
- ² The literal translation of 'deserted' is 'went up from after'.
- ³ In place of 'never went to them', here following the NJB, the NRSV has 'did not go in to them'.
- ⁴ The translation here follows the Masoretic accentuation (and the NRSV & NETB), with the major mark of disjunction placed at the word 'days'; however, some scholars (including the translators of the NJB) have suggested moving the mark to 'Judah', a couple of words earlier, yielding: "Three days, and you be present here with them." The difference in meaning is slight, and the MT is acceptable as it stands.
- ⁵ The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.
- ⁶ The words, 'and elude us', follow the LXX (*σκιώσει τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς ἡμῶν* – literally, 'he shall shadow our eyes'); the meaning of the MT is uncertain.

אֲבִישַׁי עָתָה יֵרַע לָנוּ שִׁבְעַת בְּנֵי-בִכְרִי מִן-אֲבִשָּׁלוֹם
 אֲתָה קָח אֶת-עַבְדִּי אֲדֹנָיִךְ וְרֹדְף אַחֲרָיו פֶּן-מֵצֵא
 לּוֹ עָרִים בְּצֻרוֹת וְהֵצִיל עֵינָיו: ^ז וַיֵּצְאוּ אַחֲרָיו אַנְשֵׁי
 יוֹאָב וְהַכְרָתִי וְהַפְלָתִי וְכָל-הַגִּבּוֹרִים וַיֵּצְאוּ
 מִירוּשָׁלַם לְרֹדְף אַחֲרֵי שִׁבְעַת בְּנֵי-בִכְרִי: ^ח הֵם עִם-
 הָאֲבֵן הַגְּדוֹלָה אֲשֶׁר בְּגִבְעוֹן וַעֲמָשָׂא בָּא לִפְנֵיהֶם
 וַיּוֹאֲב חָגוּר | מָדוּ לְבָשׁוּ וְעָלוּ חָגוּר חָרֵב מִצְמַדָּת
 עַל-מִתְנֵיוֹ בְּתַעֲרָה וְהוּא יָצָא וַתִּפֹּל: {ס} ^ט וַיֹּאמֶר
 יוֹאָב לַעֲמָשָׂא הַשָּׁלוֹם אֲתָה אַחִי וַתִּחַז יַד-יָמִין
 יוֹאָב בְּזֶקֶן עַמָּשָׂא לְנִשְׁק־לּוֹ: ^י וַעֲמָשָׂא לֹא-נִשְׁמַר
 בַּחֲרָב | אֲשֶׁר בִּיד־יוֹאָב וַיִּפְּהוּ בָּהּ אֶל-הַחֹמֶשׁ
 וַיִּשְׁפֹּךְ מֵעֵי אֶרֶצָה וְלֹא-שָׁנָה לּוֹ וַיָּמָת וַיּוֹאֲב
 וְאֲבִישַׁי אַחִיו רָדְף אַחֲרֵי שִׁבְעַת בְּנֵי-בִכְרִי: ^{יא} וַאִישׁ
 עָמַד עָלָיו מִנְעָרֵי יוֹאָב וַיֹּאמֶר מִי אֲשֶׁר חָפֵץ בַּיּוֹאֲב
 וּמִי אֲשֶׁר-לִדְּוֹד אַחֲרֵי יוֹאָב: ^{יב} וַעֲמָשָׂא מִתְגַּלְל
 בְּדָם בְּתוֹךְ הַמָּסְלָה וַיֵּרָא הָאִישׁ כִּי-עָמַד כָּל-הָעָם
 וַיִּסֹּב אֶת-עַמָּשָׂא מִן-הַמָּסְלָה הַשָּׂדֶה וַיִּשְׁלַךְ עָלָיו

Bichri is more dangerous to us than ever Absalom was, so take your master's guards and be after him, or he may reach fortified towns and elude us." ⁷ So, Joab's men, along with the Cherethites, the Pelethites and all the champions, marched from Jerusalem in pursuit of Sheba son of Bichri. ⁸ They were near the great stone at Gibeon when Amasa came face to face with them. Joab was wearing his uniform, over which he had buckled on a sword hanging from his waist in its scabbard; the sword came out and fell. ⁹ Joab said to Amasa, "Are you well, my brother?" Then, with his right hand, he took Amasa by the beard to kiss him. ¹⁰ Amasa did not notice the sword in Joab's hand, and he struck him in the belly and spilled his entrails on the ground. He did not strike a second blow; and so, Amasa died. Joab and Abishai hurried on in pursuit of Sheba son of Bichri. ¹¹ One of Joab's soldiers stood on guard beside Amasa and said, "Whoever favours Joab, whoever is for David, let him follow Joab." ¹² Amasa lay in the middle of the road in pools of blood. Since everyone was stopping, the man dragged Amasa off the road into the field and threw a cloak over him, because he saw that

⁷ The NJB opens this verse with, "Behind Abishai marched Joab;" here, we follow the MT, NRSV & NETB.

⁸ 'The sword came out and fell' follows the LXX (ἡ μάχα ἔξῃλθεν καὶ ἔπεσεν); the MT has 'he came out and fell'.

⁹ In place of 'how are you', here following the NJB & NETB, the NRSV has 'is it well with you'.

¹⁰ Before 'strike a second blow', the NJB & NETB add 'need to'.

¹¹ The literal translation of 'favours' is 'takes delight in'.

¹² The MT has just 'he' in place of 'the man', here specified for clarity.

בַּגָּד כַּאֲשֶׁר רָאָה כָּל־הַבָּא עָלָיו וְעַמָּד: ^ג כַּאֲשֶׁר
הִגָּה מִן־הַמָּסָלָה עָבַר כָּל־אִישׁ אַחֲרֵי יוֹאָב לְרֹדְף
אַחֲרֵי שִׁבְעַ בֶּן־בִּיחִי: ^ד וַיַּעֲבֹר בְּכָל־שִׁבְטֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
אַבְלָה וּבֵית מַעֲכָה וְכָל־הַבְּרִים {ס} וַיִּקְלְהוּ
וַיִּקְהֲלוּ וַיָּבֹאוּ אַף־אַחֲרָיו: ^{טו} וַיָּבֹאוּ וַיַּצְרוּ עָלָיו
בְּאַבְלָה בֵּית הַמַּעֲכָה וַיִּשְׁפְּכוּ סִלְלָה אֶל־הָעִיר
וַתַּעֲמֹד בַּחֹל וְכָל־הָעָם אֲשֶׁר אֶת־יוֹאָב מִשְׁחִיתָם
לְהַפִּיל הַחוּמָּה: ^{טז} וַתִּקְרָא אִשָּׁה חֲכָמָה מִן־הָעִיר
שָׁמְעוּ שָׁמְעוּ אֲמָרוּ־נָא אֶל־יוֹאָב קָרֵב עַד־הִנֵּה
וְאִדְבָּרָה אֵלֶיךָ: ^{יז} וַיִּקְרַב אֵלֶיהָ וַתֹּאמֶר הָאִשָּׁה
הָאֵתָּה יוֹאָב וַיֹּאמֶר אָנֹכִי וַתֹּאמֶר לוֹ שְׁמַע דְּבָרִי
אֲמַתְּךָ וַיֹּאמֶר שְׁמַע אֲנֹכִי: ^{יח} וַתֹּאמֶר לֵאמֹר דִּבֶּר
יְדִבְרוּ בְּרֹאשֹׁנָה לֵאמֹר שְׂאוֹל יִשְׁאָלוּ בְּאַבְלָה וְכֵן
יִתְּמוּ: ^{יט} אֲנֹכִי שְׁלָמִי אִמּוֹנִי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֵתָּה מְבַקֵּשׁ
לְהָמִית עִיר וְאִם בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל לָמָּה תִּבְלַע נַחֲלַת
יְהוָה: {פ}

everyone stopped on reaching him. ¹³ Once Amasa had been taken off the road, the men all went on their way, following Joab in pursuit of Sheba son of Bichri. ¹⁴ Sheba went all through the tribes of Israel as far as Abel of Beth-Maacah; and the Berites ... all assembled and went in after him. ¹⁵ Besieging him in Abel of Beth-Maacah, they threw up earthworks against the city. As all the troops who were with Joab were battering the wall to bring it down, ¹⁶ a wise woman stood on the outer wall and shouted from the town, "Listen! Listen! Say to Joab, "Come here, I want to speak to you."" ¹⁷ He came forward, and the woman said, "Are you Joab?" "I am," he replied. She said to him, "Listen to what your servant says." He said, "I am listening." ¹⁸ Then she spoke as follows: "In olden days, people used to say, "Abel and Dan are where you should enquire ¹⁹ whether a tradition established by the faithful of Israel has finally dies out." Yet, you are trying to destroy a town, a mother city of Israel. Why do you wish to devour the heritage of Yahweh?"

¹³ 'Taken off' is a conjectural translation (following the NJB) of uncertain Hebrew text; the NRSV has 'removed from'.

¹⁴ The *Setumah* in the MT between 'Berites' and 'all' suggests that some words have been lost. The translation 'all assembled' follows the *Qere* (וַיִּקְהֲלוּ) – 'and they were gathered') rather than the *Ketiv*, which has 'and they cursed' (וַיִּקְלְהוּ); the *Ketiv* reading is the result of metathesis.

¹⁵ The NJB includes the last (partial) sentence as part of v. 16.

¹⁶ In place of 'wise', here following the NRSV & NETB, the NJB has 'quick-witted'.

¹⁷ The NRSV has 'he came near her' in place of 'he came forward', here following the NJB.

¹⁸ Vv. 18-19 here follow the LXX (the MT being uncertain).

¹⁹ The expression 'mother city' means one that had dependent villages called 'daughters' (cf. Nb 21:25, 32, Jos 15:45, Jg 11:26).

כ וַיַּעַן יוֹאָב וַיֹּאמֶר חָלִילָה חָלִילָה לִּי אִם־אֶבְלַע
וְאִם־אֶשְׁחִית: כֹּא לֹא־כֵן הַדָּבָר כִּי אִישׁ מֵהָר
אֶפְרַיִם שָׁבַע בֶּן־בִּיחִרִי שָׁמוֹ נָשָׂא יָדוֹ בַּמֶּלֶךְ בְּדוֹד
תְּנוּ־אֹתוֹ לְבָדּוֹ וְאַל־כָּה מַעַל הָעִיר וְתֹאמַר הָאִשָּׁה
אֶל־יוֹאָב הִנֵּה רֹאשׁוֹ מִשְׁלָךְ אֵלַיךְ בַּעַד הַחוֹמָה:
כב וַתְּבוֹא הָאִשָּׁה אֶל־כָּל־הָעָם בַּחֲכֻמָּתָהּ וַיִּכְרְתוּ
אֶת־רֹאשׁ שָׁבַע בֶּן־בִּיחִרִי וַיִּשְׁלְכוּ אֶל־יוֹאָב וַיִּתְקַע
בַּשֹּׁפָר וַיִּפְצְצוּ מַעַל־הָעִיר אִישׁ לְאֹהֲלָיו וַיּוֹאֲב שָׁב
יְרוּשָׁלַם אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ: {ס} כג וַיּוֹאֲב אֶל כָּל־הַצָּבָא
יִשְׂרָאֵל וּבְנֵיהֶם בֶּן־יְהוֹיָדָע עַל־הַכֹּהֵן הַכֹּהֵן וְעַל־
הַפְּלִתִי: כד וְאַדְרָם עַל־הַמָּס וַיְהוֹשָׁפָט בֶּן־אֲחִילוּד
הַמְּזִכִּיר: כה וּשְׂיָא וּשְׂוָא סֹפֵר וְצָדוֹק וְאַבִּיָּתָר
כֹּהֲנִים: כו וְגַם עִירָא הַיֵּאֲרִי הָיָה כֹהֵן לְדָוִד: {ס}

²⁰ Joab said, “Far, far be it from me, that I should devour or destroy.

²¹ This is not the issue; but a man of the highlands of Ephraim called Sheba son of Bichri has revolted against King David. Give him up alone and I will leave the town.” The woman said to Joab, “Look, his head shall be thrown over the wall to you.” ²² The woman spoke to all the people as her intelligence dictated. They cut off the head of Sheba son of Bichri and threw it down to Joab. He had the trumpet sounded and they withdrew from the town, each man to his tents. Joab himself returned to the king in Jerusalem.

²³ Joab commanded the whole army of Israel; Benaiah son of Jehoiada commanded the Cherethites and Pelethites; ²⁴ Adoram was in charge of forced labour; Jehoshaphat son of Ahilud was recorder; ²⁵ Shiya was secretary; Zadok and Abiathar were priests. ²⁶ Ira the Jairite was also a priest of David.

²⁰ Joab’s opening expression is clearly emphatic, as may be seen in part by the repetition; some, however, understand it to be coarser than the translation adopted here, rendering, “I’ll be damned if...” which, while not a literal translation, may be the way a soldier might have spoken.

²¹ The literal translation of ‘revolted’ is ‘lifted up his hand’.

²² The story continues in 1K Chs 1–2.

²³ The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation. The *NJB* omits ‘of Israel’, dismissing it as a gloss; the word ‘of’ is conjectural, not actually present in the *MT*.

²⁴ ‘Adoram’ (or ‘Adoniram’) kept his position under Solomon (1K 4:6). The institution of forced labour was one of the causes of the final division of the kingdom (1K 12:18–19).

²⁵ The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

²⁶ ‘Ira the Jairite’ was from Gilead, a territory that had welcomed David when he was in flight before Absalom (compare Nb 32:40–41).

2 SAMUEL 21

שמואל ב פרק כ

א ויהי רעב בימי דוד שלש שנים שנה אחרי שנה
ויבקש דוד את־פני יהוה {ס} ויאמר יהוה אל־
שאול ואל־בית הדמים על אשר־המית את־
הגבעונים: ב ויקרא המלך לגבעונים ויאמר אליהם
והגבעונים לא מבני ישראל המה כי אם־מיתר
האמרי ובני ישראל נשבעו להם ויבקש שאול
להכרתם בקנאתו לבני־ישראל ויהודה: ג ויאמר
דוד אל־הגבעונים מה אעשה לכם ובמה אכפר
וברכו את־נחלת יהוה: ד ויאמרו לו הגבעונים אין־
לנו לי כסף וזהב עם־שאול ועם־ביתו ואין־לנו
איש להמית בישראל ויאמר מה־אתם אמרים
אעשה לכם: ה ויאמרו אל־המלך האיש אשר
כלנו ואשר דמה־לנו נשמדנו מהתיצב בכל־גבל
ישראל: ו ינתן יתן־לנו שבעה אנשים מבניו
והוקענום ליהוה בגבעת שאול בחיר יהוה {פ}

¹ In the time of David there was a famine lasting three whole years. David consulted Yahweh and Yahweh said, "There is blood on Saul and his house because he put the Gibeonites to death." ² So, the king called the Gibeonites and spoke to them. (Now the Gibeonites were not Israelites, they were a remnant of the Amorites to whom the Israelites had sworn an oath; but Saul in his zeal for the Israelites and for Judah had tried to crush them.) ³ David asked the Gibeonites, "What must I do for you? How shall I make amends, for you to bless the heritage of Yahweh?" ⁴ The Gibeonites said, "It is not a matter of silver or gold between us and Saul and his family; nor is it for us to put any man in Israel to death." He said, "Say what you want me to do for you." ⁵ So, they told the king, "It is about the man who decimated us and planned to annihilate us so that we should no longer exist anywhere in Israelite territory. ⁶ Let seven of his sons be handed over to us, for us to impale them before Yahweh at Gibeah of Saul, the chosen of Yahweh."

2 SAMUEL 21

¹ 'David consulted Yahweh' – literally, 'sought the face of Yahweh', just as one seeks audience of a king (1K 10:24).

² The account of Saul's attempts to crush the Gibeonites has not been preserved.

³ The Gibeonites have laid Israel under a curse and only they can reverse its effects by pronouncing a contrary blessing (Jg 17:2, 1K 2:33, 44–45).

⁴ The translation 'between us' follows the Qere (לָנוּ – 'to us') rather than the Kethib (לִי – 'to me').

⁵ In place of 'decimated', here following the NJB, the NRSV has 'consumed' and NETB has 'exterminated'.

⁶ The Kethib/Qere difference here would benefit from an explanation. The NJB & NRSV, following some Greek MSS, end with 'at Gibeon on the mountain of Yahweh' in place of 'at Gibeah of Saul, the Chosen of Yahweh', here following the MT.

וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ אֲנִי אֶתֵּן: וַיַּחְמֵל הַמֶּלֶךְ עַל-
מִפְּיִבֹשֶׁת בֶּן-יְהוֹנָתָן בֶּן-שָׁאוּל עַל-שְׁבַעַת יְהוָה
אֲשֶׁר בֵּינָתָם בֵּין דָּוִד וּבֵין יְהוֹנָתָן בֶּן-שָׁאוּל: ^ח וַיִּקַּח
הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶת-שְׁנֵי בָנֵי רִצְפָּה בַת-אִיָּה אֲשֶׁר יָלְדָה
לְשָׁאוּל אֶת-אַרְמוֹנִי וְאֶת-מִפְּיֹשֶׁת וְאֶת-חֲמִשָּׁת
בָּנֵי מִיכָל בַּת-שָׁאוּל אֲשֶׁר יָלְדָה לְעַדְרִיאֵל בֶּן-
בְּרִזְקִי הַמַּחֲלָתִי: ^ט וַיִּתְּנֵם בְּיַד הַגִּבְעֹנִים וַיְקִיעֵם
בְּהָר לִפְנֵי יְהוָה וַיָּפְלוּ שִׁבְעָתָם שְׁבַעֲתָם יָחַד וְהֵם
וְהָמָּה הָמָתוּ בַּיּוֹם קָצִיר בְּרֵאשִׁימִים תַּחֲלַת בְּתַחֲלַת
קָצִיר שְׁעָרִים: ^י וַתִּקַּח רִצְפָּה בַת-אִיָּה אֶת-הַשֶּׁקַּיִם
וַתֵּטֶהוּ לָהּ אֶל-הַצּוּר מִתַּחֲלַת קָצִיר עַד נִתְּד־מִים
עֲלֵיהֶם מִן-הַשָּׁמַיִם וְלֹא-נָתְנָה עֹזֶף הַשָּׁמַיִם לָנוּחַ
עֲלֵיהֶם יוֹמָם וְאֶת-חַיֵּית הַשָּׂדֶה לַלַּיָּל: ^{יא} וַיֵּגֶד לְדָוִד
אֶת אֲשֶׁר-עָשְׂתָה רִצְפָּה בַת-אִיָּה פֶלֶגֶשׁ שָׁאוּל:
^{יב} וַיֵּלֶךְ דָּוִד וַיִּקַּח אֶת-עַצְמוֹת שָׁאוּל וְאֶת-עַצְמוֹת
יְהוֹנָתָן בְּנוֹ מֵאֵת בְּעָלֵי יָבִישׁ גִּלְעָד אֲשֶׁר גָּנְבוּ
אֹתָם מִרְחַב בֵּית-שָׁן אֲשֶׁר תְּלוּם שֵׁם הַפְּלִשְׁתִּים

“I will hand them over,” the king said. ⁷ The king spared Mephibosheth the son of Jonathon, the son of Saul, because of the oath by Yahweh that bound them together, between David and Jonathon the son of Saul. ⁸ The king took the two sons that Rizpah the daughter of Aiah had borne Saul, Armoni, and Mephibosheth; also, the five sons that Merab the daughter of Saul had borne Adriel son of Barzillai, of Meholah. ⁹ He handed these over to the Gibeonites who impaled them on the mountain before Yahweh. The seven of them perished together; they were put to death in the first days of the harvest, at the beginning of the barley harvest. ¹⁰ Rizpah the daughter of Aiah took sackcloth and spread it for herself on the rock from the beginning of the barley harvest until the rain fell from the sky on them; she did not allow the birds of heaven to come at them by day nor the wild beasts by night. ¹¹ When David was told what Rizpah the daughter of Aiah, Saul’s concubine, had done, ¹² David went and took the bones of Saul and his son Jonathon from the chief men of Jabesh-Gilead. These had stolen them from the square in Beth-Shan where Philistines had hung them when the Philistines had

⁷ The NJB uses the name, ‘Meribbaal’ in place of ‘Mephibosheth’ (see #4:4).

⁸ The name ‘Merab’ follows 2 Hebrew MSS and some recensions of the LXX; the MT has ‘Michal’ (מִיכָל).

⁹ ‘Seven of them’ follows the Qere (שְׁבַעֲתָם) rather than the Ketiv (שִׁבְעָתָם – ‘seventy’). The Kethib/Qere differences here would benefit from an explanation.

¹⁰ The beginning of the harvest was in late April or May; rain does not fall in Palestine from then until late autumn.

¹¹ The NJB omits the opening ‘when’, making this verse a separate sentence from v. 12; here, we follow the MT, NRSV & NETB.

¹² In place of תְּלוּם שֵׁם הַפְּלִשְׁתִּים, here following the Qere, the Ketiv has תְּלוּם שֵׁם הַפְּלִשְׁתִּים (the result of incorrect word division).

[תִּלְאוּם שָׁמָּה פְּלִשְׁתִּים] בַּיּוֹם הַכּוֹת פְּלִשְׁתִּים
 אֶת־שָׂאוֹל בַּגִּלְבָּעַ: י¹³ וַיַּעַל מֹשֶׁם אֶת־עַצְמוֹת
 שָׂאוֹל וְאֶת־עַצְמוֹת יְהוֹנָתָן בְּנוֹ וַיֹּאסְפוּ אֶת־
 עַצְמוֹת הַמוֹקְעִים: י¹⁴ וַיִּקְבְּרוּ אֶת־עַצְמוֹת־שָׂאוֹל
 וַיְהוֹנָתָן־בְּנוֹ בָּאָרֶץ בְּנֵימָן בְּצִלְעַ בְּקֶבֶר קִישׁ אֲבִיו
 וַיַּעֲשׂוּ כָּל אֲשֶׁר־צִוָּה הַמֶּלֶךְ וַיַּעֲתֶר אֱלֹהִים לָאָרֶץ
 אַחֲרֵי־כֵן: {פ}

טו וַתְּהִי־עוֹד מִלְחָמָה לַפְּלִשְׁתִּים אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיֵּרֶד
 דָּוִד וַעֲבָדָיו עִמּוֹ וַיִּלָּחֲמוּ אֶת־פְּלִשְׁתִּים וַיַּעַף דָּוִד:
 טז וַיֵּשְׁבוּ וַיֵּשְׁבִי בִנְבַּ אֲשֶׁר בִּילִידֵי הָרָפָה וּמִשְׁקַל
 קִינוֹ שְׁלֹשׁ מֵאוֹת מִשְׁקַל נְחֹשֶׁת וְהוּא חָגוֹר חֲדָשָׁה
 וַיֹּאמֶר לַהֲכֹת אֶת־דָּוִד: י¹⁷ וַיַּעֲזֹר־לוֹ אֲבִישַׁי בֶּן־
 צְרוּיָה וַיִּךְ אֶת־הַפְּלִשְׁתִּי וַיִּמָּתֶהוּ אֹז נִשְׁבְּעוּ אַנְשֵׁי־
 דָּוִד לֹא לֵאמֹר לֹא־תֵצֵא עוֹד אֲתָנּוּ לַמִּלְחָמָה וְלֹא
 תִּכָּבֵה אֶת־נֵר יִשְׂרָאֵל: {פ}

יח וַיְהִי אַחֲרֵי־כֵן וַתְּהִי־עוֹד הַמִּלְחָמָה בִּגְבוֹב עַם־
 פְּלִשְׁתִּים אֹז הֵכָּה סִבְכַּי הַחֲשָׁתִי אֶת־סֶף אֲשֶׁר

defeated Saul at Gilboa. ¹³ David brought the bones of Saul and his son Jonathon from there and put them together with the bones of those who had been impaled. ¹⁴ They buried the bones of Saul, and of his son Jonathon, in the land of Benjamin at Zela in the tomb of Saul's father, Kish. They did all that the king commanded; and after that, God heeded supplications for the land.

¹⁵ Once again, the Philistines made war on Israel. David went down with his guards and fought the Philistines; and David grew weary. ¹⁶ Then Ishbi-Benob, a descendant of Rapha, whose spear weighed three hundred shekels of bronze, and who was wearing new weapons, said he could kill David. ¹⁷ However, Abishai son of Zeruiah went to his rescue; he struck down the Philistine and killed him. It was then that David's men urged him, "You must never again go into battle with us," they said, "You must not quench the lamp of Israel."

¹⁸ And it came to pass that, after this, there was another battle with the Philistines, this time at Gob. This was when Sibbecai of Hushah killed

¹³ The NJB has 'dismembered' in place of 'impaled', here following the NRSV.

¹⁴ After 'Jonathon', the NJB, following the LXX (καὶ τῶν ἡλίσσθεντων, cf. v. 13) adds 'and of those who had been dismembered'.

¹⁵ The episodes of vv. 15–22 (of the Philistine wars) would be better placed after 5:17–25, at the beginning of David's reign.

¹⁶ The NJB has 'Dodo son of Joash' in place of 'Ishbi-Benob'. Compare the figure of 'three hundred shekels' with that in 1S 17:7.

¹⁷ The NJB has 'in case you put out' in place of 'you must not quench', here following the NRSV.

¹⁸ The NRSV has 'the giants' in place of 'Rapha' (as also in v. 16).

בִּילְדֵי הַרְפָּה: {ס} יִתְּהִי־עוֹד הַמִּלְחָמָה בְּגֹב
 עַם־פְּלִשְׁתִּים וַיָּךְ אֶלְחָנָן בֶּן־יֵעָרִי אֲרָגִים בֵּית
 הַלַּחְמִי אֶת גְּלִית הַגָּתִי וְעַן חֲנִיתוֹ כַּמְנֹר
 אֲרָגִים: {ס} כִּי יִתְּהִי־עוֹד מִלְחָמָה בְּגַת וַיְהִי אִישׁ
 מִדִּין מְדוֹן וְאַצְבָּעַת יָדָיו וְאַצְבָּעַת רַגְלָיו שֵׁשׁ וְשֵׁשׁ
 עֲשָׂרִים וְאַרְבַּע מִסְפָּר וְגַם־הוּא יָלַד לַהֲרָפָה:
 כֹּא וַיַּחֲרֹף אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּכְהוּ יְהוֹנָתָן בֶּן־שִׁמְעָה
 שִׁמְעִי אָחִי דָּוִד: כִּבֵּן אֶת־אַרְבַּעַת אֱלֹהֵי יִלְדוֹ לַהֲרָפָה
 בְּגַת וַיִּפְּלוּ בַיַּד־דָּוִד וּבַיַּד עַבְדָּיו:
 {ש}

Saph, a descendant of Rapha. ¹⁹ Then there was another battle with the Philistines at Gob, and Elhanan son of Jair from Bethlehem killed Goliath of Gath, the shaft of whose spear was like a weaver's beam. ²⁰ There was yet another battle at Gath, where there was a man of huge stature with six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot, twenty-four in all. He too was a descendant of Rapha. ²¹ Jonathon, son of David's brother, Shimeah, killed him when he defied Israel. ²² These four were descended from Rapha of Gath and fell at the hands of David and his servants.

¹⁹ 'Son of Jair' follows 1Ch 20:5; the MT is dubious, having 'son of Jaare-Oregim', which the NRSV follows; the 2nd word (אֲרָגִים = 'weavers') is probably accidentally included, appearing also at the end of the verse.

²⁰ 'Of huge stature' follows 1Ch 20:6; the MT has 'of strife'. The Kethib/Qere difference here would benefit from an explanation.

²¹ The Kethib/Qere difference here would benefit from an explanation.

²² The NJB has 'guards' in place of 'servants', here following the MT & NRSV.

2 SAMUEL 22

שמואל ב פרק כב

- ^א וַיִּדְבֹּר דָּוִד לַיהוָה אֶת־דִּבְרֵי הַשִּׁירָה הַזֹּאת {ס} ¹ David addressed the words of this song to Yahweh, on the day when Yahweh had delivered him from all his enemies and from the hands of Saul. ² He said:
- יְהוָה סִלְעִי וּמִצְדָּתִי {ר} Yahweh is my rock and my fortress,
וּמִפְּלִטִי־לִי: and my deliverer.
- ^ג אֱלֹהֵי צוּרִי אַחֲסֶה־בּוֹ {ס} ³ My God, my rock, in whom I take refuge;
מִגְנִי וְקֶרֶן יִשְׁעֵי {ר} my shield, the horn of my salvation,
מִשְׁגָּבִי וּמְנוּסִי {ס} my stronghold and my refuge;
מִשְׁעֵי מַחֲמָס תִּשְׁעֵנִי: {ר} my Saviour, you save me from violence.
- ^ד מְהֵלֵל אֶקְרָא יְהוָה {ס} ⁴ I call to Yahweh, who is worthy of praise,
וּמֵאֵיבֵי אוֹשַׁע: {ר} and I am saved from my foes.
- ^ה כִּי אֶפְפָּנִי מִשְׁבְּרֵי־מוֹת {ס} ⁵ The waves of death encircled me;
נַחֲלֵי בְלִיעַל יִבְעֲתֵנִי: {ר} the torrents of perdition assailed me.
- ^ו חֲבִלֵי שְׁאוֹל סָבְנוּ {ס} ⁶ The snares of Sheol surrounded me;

2 SAMUEL 22

- ¹ With minor variants, this song is the same as Ps 18 (see the footnotes to that Psalm, which forms the basis for the correction to this frequently corrupt text). The song is ancient, but its attribution to David is uncertain.
- ² The NJB includes the last line as part of v. 3.
- ³ The opening 'My God' (as NJB, NRSV & NETB) follows the LXX (θεός μου) in reading אֱלֹהֵי rather than MT's אֱלֹהֵי ('the God of'): see Ps 18:2.
- ⁴ Some take מְהֵלֵל ('worthy of praise') with what precedes and translate, 'the praiseworthy one', or 'praiseworthy'; however, the various epithets in vv. 1-2 have the 1P pronominal suffix, unlike מְהֵלֵל. If one follows the traditional verse division and takes מְהֵלֵל with what follows, it is best understood as substantive and as appositional to 'Yahweh'.
- ⁵ The NJB leaves 'perdition' untranslated ('Belial') and NETB has 'chaos'; the noun בְּלִיעַל is used here as an epithet for death.
- ⁶ 'Sheol' (שְׁאוֹל), personified here as David's enemy, is the underworld, place of the dead in primitive Hebrew cosmology.

קִדְמָנִי מִקְשֵׁי מוֹת: {ר}
 ז בַּצֶּרֶלִי אֶקְרָא יְהוָה וְאֶל־אֱלֹהֵי אֶקְרָא {ס}
 וַיִּשְׁמַע מֵהִיכָל קוֹלִי וּשְׁוַעְתִּי בְּאָזְנוֹ: {ר}
 ח וַתִּגַּעַשׁ וַיִּתְגַּעַשׁ וַתִּרְעַשׁ הָאָרֶץ {ס}
 מוֹסְדוֹת הַשָּׁמַיִם
 י רָגְזוּ וַיִּתְגַּעַשׁוּ כִּי־חָרָה לוֹ: {ר}
 ט ט עָלָה עָשָׁן בְּאַפּוֹ וְאֵשׁ מִפִּי תֹאכַל {ס}
 י גַּחְלִים בָּעֲרוּ מִמֶּנּוּ: {ר}
 וַיֵּט שָׁמַיִם וַיֵּרֶד {ס}
 יא וַעֲרַפֵּל תַּחַת רַגְלָיו: {ר}
 וַיִּרְכַּב עַל־כְּרוּב וַיַּעֲף {ס}
 וַיֵּרָא עַל־כַּנְפֵי־רוּחַ: {ר}
 וַיִּשֶׁת חֹשֶׁךְ סְבִיבֹתָיו סָכּוֹת {ס}
 חֲשֶׁרֶת־מַיִם עָבִי שְׁחָקִים: {ר}
 יג מִנֹּגַה נִגְדּוּ בָּעֲרוּ גַחְלֵי־אֵשׁ: {ס}

the traps of death were before me.
 7 In my anguish, I called to Yahweh; to my God I called;
 from his Temple, he heard my voice; my cry came to his ears.
 8 Then the earth quaked and rocked,
 the foundations of the heavens shuddered;
 they quaked at his blazing anger.
 9 Smoke rose from his nose and devouring fire from his mouth;
 glowing coals flamed forth from him.
 10 He parted the heavens and came down,
 a storm cloud underneath his feet.
 11 He mounted a cherub and flew,
 and soared on the wings of the wind.
 12 He wrapped himself in darkness,
 his tent a watery darkness and dense cloud.
 13 From the brightness in front of him came coals of fire.

7 In this poetic narrative the 2 prefixed verbal forms in the 1st line are best understood as preterites indicating past tense, not imperfects.

8 The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

9 For the 2nd line, here following the NRSV, the NJB reads, “coals were kindled at it.”

10 The NRSV has ‘thick darkness’ in place ‘storm cloud’, here following the NJB, and NETB has ‘thick cloud’.

11 In place of ‘a cherub’, the NJB has ‘one of the winged creatures’.

12 The parallel text in Ps 18:11 reads ‘he made darkness his hiding place around him, his covering’; here, the text omits ‘his hiding place’ and pluralises ‘covering’. Ps 18:11 may include a conflation of synonyms (‘his hiding place’ and ‘his covering’) or 2S 22:12 may be the result of haplography/homoioarcton (note that 3 successive words in Ps 18:11 begin with the letter ס: סָכּוֹתוֹ סְבִיבֹתָיו סָכּוֹתוֹ).

13 The parallel text in Ps 18:12 reads ‘from the brightness in front of him his clouds came, hail and coals of fire’; the Lucianic family of texts within the

יד יִרְעַם מִן־שָׁמַיִם יְהוָה {ר}
 וְעֲלִיזֹן יִתֵּן קוֹלוֹ: {ס}
 טו וַיִּשְׁלַח חֲצִצִּים וַיְפִיצֵם בָּרֶק וַיהִמֶם וַיהִם: {ר}
 טז וַיֵּרְאוּ אַפְקֵי יָם יִגְלוּ מַסְדּוֹת תַּבַּל {ס}
 בָּגַעְרַת יְהוָה מִנְּשֵׁמַת רוּחַ אָפוֹ: {ר}
 יז יִשְׁלַח מִמָּרוֹם יִקְחֵנִי {ס}
 יַמְּשֵׁנִי מִמַּיִם רַבִּים: {ר}
 יח יִצִּילֵנִי מֵאִיְבֵי עָז {ס}
 מִשְׁנָאֵי כִי אִמְצֹו מִמֶּנִּי: {ר}
 ט יִקְדָּמֵנִי בַיּוֹם אִידִי וַיהִי יְהוָה מִשְׁעֵן לִי: {ס}

- 14 Yahweh thundered from the heavens,
 the Most High made his voice heard.
 15 He shot arrows and scattered them, lightning and routed them.
 16 The sea's springs were seen, the world's foundations laid bare
 at the battle cry of Yahweh, at the blast of breath from his nose.
 17 He reached from on high and took me;
 he pulled me from the mighty waters.
 18 He rescued me from my mighty foe,
 from those who hate me, who were stronger than I was.
 19 They assailed me on my day of disaster but Yahweh helped me.

Greek tradition of 2S 22:13 seems to assume the underlying Hebrew text: מִנְּגִה נִגְדוּ עָבְרוּ בָרֶד וְגַחְלֵי אֵשׁ ('from the brightness in front of him came hail and coals of fire'), which is the basis for the present translation (following NETB). The textual situation is perplexing and the identity of the original text uncertain; the verbs עָבְרוּ (Ps 18:12) and בָּעָרוּ (2S 22:13) appear to be variants involving a transposition of the first two letters; the noun עָבְיוּ ('his clouds', Ps 18:12) may be virtually dittographic (note the following עָבְרוּ), or it could have accidentally dropped from the text of 2S 22:13 by virtual haplography (note the preceding בָּעָרוּ, which might have originally read עָבְרוּ); and the term בָּרֶד ('hail', Ps 18:12) may be virtually dittographic (note the preceding עָבְרוּ), or it could have dropped from 2S 22:13 by virtual haplography (note the preceding בָּעָרוּ, which might have originally read עָבְרוּ).

- 14 The divine title, 'Most High' (עֲלִיזֹן), pictures God as the exalted ruler of the universe who vindicates the innocent and judges the wicked.
 15 The Kethib/Qere difference here would benefit from an explanation.
 16 In place of 'battle cry', here following NETB, the NRSV has 'rebuke' and the NJB has 'roaring'; the noun is derived from the verb גָּעַר which is often understood to mean 'rebuke': in some cases, it is apparent that scolding or threatening is in view (Gn 37:10, Rt 2:16, Zc 3:2), but in militaristic contexts this translation is inadequate, as the verb refers in this setting to the warrior's battle cry, which terrifies the enemy.
 17 The waters of the sea symbolise the psalmist's powerful enemies, as well as the realm of death they represent (see v. 5 and Ps 144:7).
 18 The singular, 'foe', refers either to personified death or collectively to the psalmist's enemies; the clause, 'those who hate me', favours the latter.
 19 In this poetic narrative context, the prefixed verbal form translated 'they assailed' is best understood as a preterite indicating past tense, not imperfect. The literal translation of 'helped me', here following NETB, is 'became my support'.

כ	וַיֵּצֵא לַמֶּרְחָב אֹתִי {ר}	20	He brought me out into a wide open place; he rescued me, because he delighted in me.
כא	יִחְלָצֵנִי כִּי־חָפֵץ בִּי: {ס}	21	Yahweh rewarded me for my uprightness, as my hands are pure, so he repaid me.
כב	יְגַמְלֵנִי יְהוָה בְּצִדְקָתִי {ר}	22	For I have kept the ways of Yahweh, and not wickedly departed from my God.
כג	כָּבֵר יָדַי יָשִׁיב לִי: {ס}	23	His ordinances were all before me, his statutes I did not put away from me.
כד	כִּי שָׁמַרְתִּי דִּרְכֵי יְהוָה {ר}	24	I am blameless before him and I kept myself clear of sin.
כה	וְלֹא רָשַׁעְתִּי מֵאֱלֹהִי: {ס}	25	Hence, Yahweh repaid me for acting uprightly, because he could see I was pure.
כו	כִּי כָל־מִשְׁפָּטָיו לִנְגִדִּי	26	You are faithful to the faithful follower;
	וַחֲקָתָיו לֹא־אֲסֹר מִמֶּנָּה: {ר}		
	וְאֵהִיָּה תָמִים לוֹ {ס}		
	וְאֶשְׁתַּמְרָה מֵעֲוֹנִי: {ר}		
	וַיֵּשֶׁב יְהוָה לִי בְּצִדְקָתִי {ס}		
	כָּבֵרִי לִנְגִיד עֵינָיו: {ר}		
	עִם־חֲסִיד תִּתְחַסֵּד {ס}		

²⁰ For the 1st line, here following NETB, the NJB has, "He freed me, set me at large." In place of 'delighted in', here following the MT & NRSV, the NJB has 'loves' and NETB has 'was pleased with'.

²¹ As vv. 22–25 make clear, David refers here to his unwavering obedience to God's commands; he explains that Yahweh was pleased with him and willing to deliver him because he had been loyal to God and obedient to his commandments.

²² In place of 'wickedly departed from', here following the MT & NRSV, the NJB has 'fallen away from' and NETB has 'rebelled against'; the statement is elliptical, the idea being, "I have not acted wickedly and, in so doing, departed from my God."

²³ The term מִשְׁפָּטָיו ('his ordinances') refers to God's covenantal requirements, especially those which the king is responsible to follow, cf. Dt 17:18–20, and also Ps 19:9, 89:30, 147:20, as well as the numerous uses of the term in Ps 119.

²⁴ Leading a 'blameless' life meant that the king would be loyal to God's covenant, purge the government and society of evil and unjust officials, and reward loyalty to Yahweh (see Ps 101).

²⁵ The literal translation of the 2nd line is, "according to my purity before his eyes."

²⁶ In the 2nd line, the parallel text in Ps 18:25 reads, probably correctly, גִּבּוֹר ('man') instead of גִּבּוֹר ('warrior')

עִם־גִּבּוֹר תָּמִים תִּתָּמַם: {ר}		you are innocent with the innocent warrior.
כו עִם־נָבֵר תִּתְּבֵר {ס}	27	With the pure, you are pure
וְעִם־עֵקֶשׁ תִּתְּפֹל: {ר}		but deceptive to the perverse.
כח וְאַתָּה עֲנִי תוֹשִׁיעַ {ס}	28	You save a humble people,
וְעֵינֶיךָ עַל־דָּרְמִים תִּשְׁפִּיל: {ר}		but your eyes are upon the proud to bring them low.
כט כִּי־אַתָּה נִירִי יְהוָה {ס}	29	Yahweh, you yourself are my lamp;
וְיְהוָה יִגְיֶה חֹשֶׁכִי: {ר}		Yahweh lightens my darkness.
ל כִּי בָכָה אֲרוּץ גִּדּוּד {ס}	30	With you, I storm the rampart;
בְּאֱלֹהֵי אֲדָלְג־שׁוּר: {ר}		with my God, I can scale any wall.
לא הָאֵל תָּמִים דֶּרֶכּוֹ	31	This God, his way is blameless,
אִמְרַת יְהוָה צְרוּפָה {ס}		the word of Yahweh is purified.
מִגֵּן הוּא לְכָל הַחֹסִים בּוֹ: {ר}		He is a shield for all who take refuge in him.
לב כִּי מִי־אֵל מִבִּלְעָדִי יְהוָה {ס}	32	For, who is God but Yahweh,
וּמִי צוּר מִבִּלְעָדִי אֱלֹהֵינוּ: {ר}		and who is a rock but our God?

²⁷ The translation ‘deceptive’ (as NETB – the NJB has ‘cunning’) follows 2 medieval Hebrew MSS in reading תִּתְּפֹל (from the root פתל, ‘to twist’) rather than the MT’s תִּתְּפֹל (from the root תפל, ‘to be tasteless’, ‘behave silly’; cf. KJV ‘unsavoury’); see also Ps 18:26. The verb פתל is used in only 3 other texts: in Gn 30:8, it means ‘to wrestle’, or ‘to twist’; in Job 5:13, it refers to devious individuals; and, in Pr 8:8, to deceptive words.

²⁸ For the 2nd line, the parallel text in Ps 18:27 reads “but proud eyes you bring low.”

²⁹ The Lucianic recension of the LXX and the Vg understand the verb ‘lightens’ to be 2P rather than 3P as in the MT but this is probably the result of reading the preceding word as a vocative under the influence of the vocative in the 1st part of the verse.

³⁰ ‘I can scale any wall’ follows the LXX (ὑπερβήσομαι τεῖχος); the MT has ‘I go off hunting’.

³¹ Yahweh’s ‘word’ probably refers here to his oracles of victory delivered to David before the battles described in the following context; he frequently received such oracles before going into battle (see 1S 23:2, 4–5, 10–12, 30:8, 2S 5:19). God’s word of promise is absolutely reliable; it is compared to metal that has been refined in fire and cleansed of impurities.

³² ‘Rock’ (literally, ‘rocky cliff’) is used here as a metaphor of protection.

ג	הָאֵל מְעוֹזי חֵיל {ס}	33	The God who has girded me with strength makes my way free from blame.
ד	וַיִּתֵּר תַּמִּים דְּרָכָיו {ר}	34	He made my feet like the deer's and set me firmly on the heights.
ה	מְשׁוֹה רַגְלָיו רַגְלֵי כְּאַיִלוֹת {ס}	35	He trains my hands for battle, so that my arms can bend a bow of bronze.
ו	וְעַל בְּמַתִּי יַעֲמִדֵנִי: {ר}	36	You gave me your invincible shield and you never ceased to listen to me.
ז	מִלְמַד יָדַי לַמִּלְחָמָה {ס}	37	You widened my stride; and my feet did not slip.
ח	וְנַחַת קֶשֶׁת-נְחוּשָׁה זָרַעְתִּי: {ר}	38	I pursued my enemies and destroyed them; I did not turn back until they were consumed.
ט	וַתִּתֶּן-לִי מִגֶּן יִשְׁעֶךָ	39	I consumed them, struck them down, so they could not rise, they fell under my feet.
י	וַעֲנִתֶךָ תִּרְבֵּנִי: {ס}		
יא	תִּרְחִיב צַעְדִּי תַּחְתָּנִי		
יב	וְלֹא מָעַדוּ קַרְסָלָי: {ר}		
יג	אֶרְדָּפָה אֹיְבֵי וְאַשְׁמִידֵם {ס}		
יד	וְלֹא אָשׁוּב עַד-כָּלוּתָם: {ר}		
טו	וְאֶכְלֵם וְאֶמְחָצֵם וְלֹא יִקְוּמוּן {ס}		
טז	וַיִּפְּלוּ תַּחַת רַגְלֵי: {ר}		

³³ 'Who has girded me with strength' follows 4QSam^a (מְאַזְרֵנִי), the LXX (κραταιῶν με δυνάμει), Peshitta and Ps 18:32; the MT (מְעוֹזִי) has, 'is my strong refuge'. For the 2nd line, the NRSV has, "... has opened wide my path" – the meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain, and the Ketiv has 'his way' (דְּרָכָיו) in place of 'my way', here following the Qere (דְּרָכָי).

³⁴ The translation here follows the Qere in reading 'my feet' (רַגְלֵי), rather than the 'his feet' of the Ketiv (רַגְלָיו).

³⁵ The psalmist attributes his skill with weapons to divine enabling (Egyptian reliefs picture gods teaching the king how to shoot a bow).

³⁶ The translation of the 2nd line is uncertain (literally, 'you multiply for me favourable answers'); the NRSV, following 4QSam^a, has: "and your help has made me great."

³⁷ The literal translation of 'stride' is 'step', which NETB assumes refers metonymically to the path on which the psalmist walks. For this verse, the NJB reads, "you give me the strides of a giant, give me ankles that never weaken."

³⁸ The NJB & NETB have the main verbs in this verse in the present tense; here, we follow the NRSV.

³⁹ The NJB lacks 'consumed them', here following the MT & NRSV.

מ	וּתְזַרְנִי חֵיל לַמִּלְחָמָה {ס}	40	You girded me with strength for the fight,
	תִּכְרִיעַ קָמִי תַּחְתָּנִי: {ר}		made my assailants kneel before me.
מא	וְאַיְבֵי תַּתָּה לִי עָרַף	41	You made my enemies retreat before me,
	מִשֹּׁנְאֵי וְאַצְמִיתֵם: {ס}		and those who hate me I destroyed.
מב	יִשְׁעוּ וְאֵין מִשִּׁיעַ	42	They cried out, there is no one to save,
	אֱלֹהֵיהֶּה וּלֹא עָנָם: {ר}		to Yahweh, but no answer came.
מג	וְאַשְׁחַקֵם כַּעֲפַר־אָרֶץ {ס}	43	I crumbled them like the dust of the earth;
	כְּטִיט־חוּצוֹת אֲדָקֵם אֲרָקֵם: {ר}		trampled them like the mud of the streets.
מד	וּתְפַלֵּטֵנִי מִרִיבֵי עַמִּי	44	You freed me from the quarrels of my people,
	תִּשְׁמְרֵנִי לְרֹאשׁ גּוֹיִם {ס}		you placed me at the head of the nations,
	עַם לֹא־יָדַעְתִּי יַעֲבֹדֵנִי: {ר}		and a people I did not know served me.
מה	בְּנִי נָכַר יִתְכַּחֲשׁוּ־לִי	45	Foreigners came wooing my favour,
	לִשְׁמוֹעַ אֶזֶן יִשְׁמְעוּ לִי: {ס}		no sooner did they hear of me than they obeyed me.
מו	בְּנִי נָכַר יִבְלוּ	46	Foreigners lost heart;
	וַיִּחְגְּרוּ מִמִּסְגְּרוֹתֵם: {ר}		and came trembling out of their strongholds.

⁴⁰ The literal translation of the 2nd line is, “you make those who rise against me kneel beneath me.”

⁴¹ Literally translated, the 1st line reads, “and (as for) my enemies, you give to me (the) back;” the idiom ‘give (the) back’ means ‘to cause to turn the back and run away’ (see Ex 23:27).

⁴² The translation ‘they cried out’ follows 1 medieval Hebrew MS and the LXX (βοήσονται) in reading the Piel יִשְׁעוּ rather than the MT’s Qal, יִשְׁעוּ (‘they looked about’); see also Ps 18:41.

⁴³ The NJB has ‘of the squares’ in place of ‘of the earth’ (following the MT); Ps 18:42 has ‘in the wind’.

⁴⁴ The NRSV, following the LXX (λαῶν) and Tg has ‘of the peoples’ in place of ‘of my people’, here following the MT.

⁴⁵ The report of David’s exploits is so impressive that those who hear it submit to his command without putting up a fight.

⁴⁶ The translation ‘and came trembling’ assumes a reading וַיִּחְגְּרוּ, rather than the MT’s וַיִּחְגְּרוּ (‘and girded themselves’); see also #Ps 18:45.

מו חִי־יְהוָה וּבָרוּךְ צוּרִי {ס}
 וַיִּרָם אֱלֹהֵי צוּר יִשְׁעִי: {ר}
 מח הָאֵל הַנִּתֵּן נִקְמַת לִי {ס}
 וּמָרִיד עַמִּים תַּחְתָּנִי: {ר}
 מט וּמוֹצִיאֵי מַאֲיָבִי
 וּמִקְמִי תָרוּמָמְנִי {ס}
 מֵאִישׁ חֲמָסִים תַּצִּילֵנִי: {ר}
 נ עַל־כֵּן אֹדֶךָ יְהוָה בְּגוֹיִם {ס}
 וּלְשִׁמְךָ אֶזְמָר: {ר}
 נא מַגְדִּיל מַגְדֹּל יִשׁוּעוֹת מַלְכוֹ
 וְעֹשֶׂה־חֶסֶד לְמִשְׁיְחוֹ {ס}
 לְדָוִד וּלְזֶרְעוֹ עַד־עוֹלָם: {ר}
 {ש}

47 Yahweh lives! Blessed be my rock,
 and exalted be the God of my salvation:
 48 The God who gave me vengeance,
 and brought down the peoples under me,
 49 rescued me from my enemies.
 You lifted me above my enemies;
 you delivered me from the violent.
 50 So, I will praise you, Yahweh, among the nations,
 and sing praise to your name.
 51 He is a tower of salvation for his king,
 and displays faithful love for his anointed,
 for David and his heirs forever.

47 Elsewhere, the construction חִי־יְהוָה ('Yahweh lives') is used exclusively as an oath formula, but this is not the case here, as no oath follows; here, the statement is an affirmation of Yahweh's active presence and intervention (in contrast to pagan deities, he demonstrates that he is the living God by rescuing and empowering the psalmist).

48 The NJB has 'crushes' in place of 'brought down' (וּמָרִיד), a conjectural translation with different vowel pointing.

49 The NJB includes the 1st line as part of v. 48.

50 The phrase 'among the nations' probably alludes to the fact that David will praise Yahweh in the presence of the defeated nations when they, as his subjects, bring their tribute payments; ideally, God's chosen king was to testify to the nations of God's greatness.

51 The translation 'he is a tower' follows the Qere (מַגְדֹּל), rather than the Ketiv, which has 'he magnifies' (מַגְדִּיל).

שמואל ב פרק כג

2 SAMUEL 23

- א וְאֵלֶּה דְּבַרֵּי דָוִד 1 These are the last words of David:
הָאֲחֵרִים נֹאֵם דָּוִד בֶּן־יִשִׁי
וְנֹאֵם הַגִּבֹּר הַקָּם עַל
מְשִׁיחַ אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב
וְנָעִים זִמְרוֹת יִשְׂרָאֵל:
ב רוּחַ יְהוָה דִּבֶּר־בִּי 2 The spirit of Yahweh spoke through me;
וּמִלְתּוֹ עַל־לְשׁוֹנִי:
ג אָמַר אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל 3 The God of Israel has spoken,
לִי דָבָר צוֹר יִשְׂרָאֵל
מוֹשֵׁל בָּאָדָם צַדִּיק
מוֹשֵׁל יִרְאֵת אֱלֹהִים:
ד וּכְאוֹר בֹּקֶר יִזְרַח־שֶׁמֶשׁ 4 is like morning light at sunrise
בֹּקֶר לֹא עָבֹת
מִפְּנֵה מִמָּטָר דֶּשֶׁא מֵאֶרֶץ:
ה כִּי־לֹא־כֵן בֵּיתִי עַם־אֵל 5 Is not my house like this with God?
כִּי בְרִית עוֹלָם שֵׁם
He has made an eternal covenant with me,

2 SAMUEL 23

- 1 'Last words' are ascribed to David, as to Jacob (Gn 49) and Moses (Dt 33). The text has suffered considerably; the poem may date from the beginning of the monarchy. The NRSV reads, for the last line of this verse: "the favourite of the Strong One of Israel."
- 2 The NJB & NRSV have the verbs in this verse in the present tense ('speaks' and 'is'); here, we follow NETB.
- 3 The NJB has 'Jacob' in place of 'Israel' in the 1st line.
- 4 The NJB parenthesises the entire 2nd line, and the NRSV has 'at sunrise' in the 2nd line.
- 5 For the 1st line, here following the MT & NRSV, the NJB has, "Yes, my House stands firm with God."

לִי עֲרוּכָה בְּכָל וְשִׁמְרָה
 כִּי־כָל־יִשְׁעֵי וְכָל־חֶפֶץ כִּי־לֹא יִצְמִיחַ:
 וּבְלִיַּעַל בְּקוֹץ מִנֶּדֶר 1
 כֻּלָּהֶם כִּי־לֹא בִיד יִקָּחוּ:
 וְאִישׁ יִגַּע בָּהֶם 2
 יִמָּלֵא בְרִזָּל וְעֵץ חֲנִית
 וּבְאֵשׁ שָׂרוֹף יִשְׂרָפוּ בַשָּׂבֶת:

{פ}

all in order, well assured;
 does he not bring to fruition my every victory and desire?
 6 But the godless he rejects like thorns,
 for these are never gathered by hand:
 7 No one touches them
 except with a pitchfork or the shaft of a spear,
 and they are completely burned up where they sit.

ח אֵלֶּה שְׁמוֹת הַגִּבֹּרִים אֲשֶׁר לְדָוִד יֹשֵׁב בַּשָּׂבֶת
 תַּחְכֵּמֹנִי | רֹאשׁ הַשְּׁלִשִׁי הוּא עֲדִינוּ הֶעֱצָנוּ הָעֶצְנִי
 עַל־שְׁמֹנֶה מֵאוֹת חָלָל בַּפֶּעַם אֶחָד {ס}
 ט וְאַחֲרָיו אֱלֶעָזָר בֶּן־דָּדוֹ דָּדִי בֶן־אַחֲחִי בְשִׁלְשָׁה
 גִּבֹּרִים הַגִּבֹּרִים עִם־דָּוִד בַּחֲרָפָם בַּפְּלִשְׁתִּים
 נֶאֱסָפוּ־שָׁם לַמִּלְחָמָה וַיַּעֲלוּ אִישׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל: ' הוּא
 קָם וַיִּךְ בַּפְּלִשְׁתִּים עַד | כִּי־יִגָּעָה יָדוֹ וַתִּדְבֶּק יָדוֹ
 אֶל־הַחֶרֶב וַיַּעַשׂ יְהוָה תְּשׁוּעָה גְדוֹלָה בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא
 וְהָעָם יָשָׁבוּ אַחֲרָיו אֶדְגֶּלֶפְשֵׁט: {ס}

8 These are the names of the warriors that David had: Josheb-Basshebeth a Tahchemonite; he was leader of the officers; it was he who wielded his battle-axe against eight hundred whom he killed at one time. 9 After him, there was Eleazar son of Dodo, the Ahohite, one of the three warriors with David at Pas-Dammin when the Philistines mustered for battle there. The Israelites retreated, 10 but he stood his ground and struck down the Philistines until his hand was so numb that it stuck to the sword. Yahweh brought about a great victory that day, and though the army rallied behind Eleazar, it was only to plunder.

6 In place of 'the godless', here following the NRSV, the NJB has 'men of Belial' and NETB has 'evil people'; the literal translation is 'worthlessness'.

7 The text of vv. 6-7 is very corrupt, so that the exact meaning is not certain.

8 The NJB has 'Ishbaal the Hachmonite' in place of 'Josheb-Basshebeth a Tahchemonite'. The word translated 'officers' (הַשְּׁלִשִׁי) is sometime rendered 'three' (as NJB & NRSV; cf. 1Ch 11:11); the etymological connection of this word to the Hebrew numerical adjective for 'three' can be explained as originating with a designation for the 3rd warrior in a chariot. The Kethib/Qere differences here would benefit from explanations.

9 The name 'Dodo' follows the Qere (דָּדוֹ) rather than the Ketiv, which has 'Dodai' (דָּדִי); also, the Kethib has גִּבֹּרִים in place of הַגִּבֹּרִים.

10 The NRSV ends the 1st sentence, here following the NJB, with, "until his arm grew weary, though his hand clung to the sword."

י^א ואַחֲרָיו שָׁמָּה בֶן־אֶגָּא הָרָרִי וַיֹּאסְפוּ פְּלִשְׁתִּים
לַחֲיָה וְתַה־יִּשָּׁם חֶלְקֶת הַשָּׂדֶה מְלֵאָה עֲדָשִׁים
וְהָעָם נָס מִפְּנֵי פְּלִשְׁתִּים: י^ב וַיִּתְּיֹצֵב בְּתוֹךְ־הַחֲלֻקָּה
וַיִּצִּילָהּ וַיִּךְ אֶת־פְּלִשְׁתִּים וַיַּעַשׂ יְהוָה תְּשׁוּעָה
גְּדוֹלָה: {ס} י^ג וַיֵּרְדּוּ שְׁלֹשִׁים שְׁלֵשָׁה מֵהַשְּׁלֹשִׁים
לָאֵשׁ וַיָּבֹאוּ אֶל־קִצִּיר אֶל־דָּוִד אֶל־מַעְרַת עֲדֹלָם
וְחֵית פְּלִשְׁתִּים חָנָה בַּעֲמֹק רְפָאִים: י^ד וְדָוִד אָז
בַּמְּצוּדָה וּמִצֵּב פְּלִשְׁתִּים אָז בֵּית לָחֶם: ט^ו וַיִּתְּאוּ
דָּוִד וַיֹּאמֶר מִי יִשְׁקֵנִי מִים מִבְּאֵר בֵּית־לָחֶם אֲשֶׁר
בְּשַׁעַר: {ס} ט^ז וַיִּבְקְעוּ שְׁלֹשֶׁת הַגִּבּוֹרִים בַּמַּחְנֶה
פְּלִשְׁתִּים וַיִּשְׁאָבוּ־מִים מִבְּאֵר בֵּית־לָחֶם אֲשֶׁר
בְּשַׁעַר וַיִּשְׁאוּ וַיָּבֹאוּ אֶל־דָּוִד וְלֹא אָבָה לִשְׁתּוֹתָם
וַיִּסַּךְ אֹתָם לַיהוָה: י^ז וַיֹּאמֶר חֲלִילָה לִּי יְהוָה
מַעֲשֵׂתִי זֹאת הַדָּם הָאֲנָשִׁים הַהֵלֶכִים בְּנַפְשׁוֹתָם
וְלֹא אָבָה לִשְׁתּוֹתָם אֵלֶּה עָשׂוּ שְׁלֹשֶׁת

¹¹ After him, there was Shamma son of Elah, the Hararite. The Philistines had mustered at Lehi. There was a field full of lentils there; the army took flight before the Philistines, ¹² but he positioned himself in the middle of the field, defended it, and struck down the Philistines; and Yahweh brought about a great victory. ¹³ Three of the thirty chiefs went down to David at the cave of Adullam, at the beginning of the harvest, while a band of Philistines was camped in the valley of Rephaim. ¹⁴ David was then in the stronghold, while a Philistine garrison was in Bethlehem. ¹⁵ David sighed, “Oh, if someone would give me water to drink from the well by the gate at Bethlehem!” ¹⁶ So, the three warriors broke through the Philistine camp and drew water from the well of Bethlehem near the gate and brought it to David. But he would drink none of it and poured it out as a libation to Yahweh. ¹⁷ He said, “Yahweh keep me from drinking this! This is the blood of men who went at the risk of their lives.” Therefore, he would not drink.

¹¹ The text of the 2nd sentence is difficult; the MT reads לַחֲיָה, which implies a rare use of the word חַיָּה, which normally refers to an animal, but if the MT is accepted it would here have the sense of a troop of people. In v. 13, the context suggests a staging location for a military operation, so we can take the word as a place name with ה directive. Here, the Masoretes took it as ‘animal’ and tried to make sense of it in that context.

¹² The literal translation of ‘defended’ is ‘delivered’.

¹³ ‘Three’ follows the Qere (שְׁלֹשָׁה) rather than the Ketiv, which has ‘thirty’ (שְׁלֹשִׁים), due to dittography of the following word.

¹⁴ NETB has ‘at the time’ in place of ‘then’, here following the NJB & NRSV.

¹⁵ In place of ‘David sighed’, here following the NJB, the NRSV has ‘David said longingly’ and NETB has ‘David was thirsty and said’.

¹⁶ The NJB has ‘bringing it away presented it to David’ in place of ‘brought it to David’, here following the NRSV.

¹⁷ Literally translated, David’s speech opens, “Far be it to me, Yahweh, from doing this.”

הַגִּבּוֹרִים: {ס} יִחְ וְאַבִּישַׁי אַחִי | יוֹאָב בֶּן־זְרוּיָה הוּא
 רֹאשׁ הַשְּׁלֹשִׁי הַשְּׁלֹשָׁה וְהוּא עוֹרֵר אֶת־חַנְיָתוֹ עַל־
 שְׁלֹשׁ מֵאוֹת חִלָּל וְלוֹשֵׁם בַּשְּׁלֹשָׁה: יט מִן־הַשְּׁלֹשָׁה
 הָכִי נִכְבָּד וַיְהִי לָהֶם לְשָׁר וְעַד־הַשְּׁלֹשָׁה לֹא־
 בָּא: {ס} כ וּבְנֵיהוּ בֶן־יְהוֹיָדָע בֶּן־אִישׁ־חֵיל חֵי רַב־
 פְּעֻלִּים מִקְבָּצָאֵל הוּא הִכָּה אֶת שְׁנֵי אֲרָאֵל מוֹאָב
 וְהוּא יָרַד וְהִכָּה אֶת־הָאֲרִי הָאֲרִיָּה בְּתוֹךְ הַבְּאֵר
 בַּיּוֹם הַשֶּׁלֶג: כא וְהוּא־הִכָּה אֶת־אִישׁ מִצְרִי אֲשֶׁר
 אִישׁ מֵרָאָה וּבִיד הַמִּצְרִי חָנִית וַיֵּרַד אֵלָיו בַּשֶּׁבֶט
 וַיִּגְזֹל אֶת־הַחֲנִית מִיַּד הַמִּצְרִי וַיַּהַרְגֵהוּ בַּחֲנִיתוֹ:
 כב אֵלֶּה עֲשָׂה בְנֵיהוּ בֶן־יְהוֹיָדָע וְלוֹשֵׁם בַּשְּׁלֹשָׁה
 הַגִּבּוֹרִים:

כג מִן־הַשְּׁלֹשִׁים נִכְבָּד וְאֶל־הַשְּׁלֹשָׁה
 לֹא־בָא וַיִּשְׁמְהוּ דָּוִד {ר} אֶל־מִשְׁמַעְתּוֹ: {ס}
 כד עָשָׂה אֶל־אֲחִי־יוֹאָב בַּשְּׁלֹשִׁים

Such were the deeds of the three warriors. ¹⁸ Abishai, the brother of Joab and son of Zeruiah, was leader of the three. With his spear, he fought against three hundred men and killed them, and won a name beside the three. ¹⁹ He was more famous than the three and became their captain, but he was not one of the three. ²⁰ Benaiah son of Jehoiada, a hero from Kabzeel, a man of many deeds, struck down two sons of Ariel of Moab and went down and killed a lion in a pit one snowy day. ²¹ He was also the man who killed an Egyptian man of good looks. The Egyptian had a spear in his hand, but he went down against him with a staff, tore the spear from the Egyptian's hand and killed him with it. ²² Such were the exploits of Benaiah son of Jehoiada, winning him a name among the three warriors.

²³ He was renowned in the thirty but he was not one of the three.

David put him in command of his bodyguard.

²⁴ Asahel the brother of Joab was one of the thirty;

¹⁸ The translation here follows the *Qere*, many medieval *Hebrew MSS*, the *LXX* (ἐν τοῖς τρισίν), and *Vg* (*de tribus*) in reading 'of the three' (הַשְּׁלֹשָׁה) rather than the *Ketiv*, which has 'the third' or 'adjutant' (הַשְּׁלִישִׁי). The *NJB* & *NRSV*, following the *Peshitta*, have 'of the thirty'.

¹⁹ The *NJB* & *NRSV*, following the *Peshitta* & 1Ch 11:25, open with 'he was more famous than the thirty'; here, we follow the *MT* & *NETB*.

²⁰ The translation follows the *Qere* in reading 'brave' (חֵיל) rather than 'life' of the *Ketiv* (חֵי). The *MT* lacks 'sons', here following the *LXX* (υἱοὺς) & *NRSV*. The (2nd) *Kethib/Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

²¹ After 'Egyptian', the *Ketiv* has 'who' (אֲשֶׁר) in place of 'man', here following the *Qere* (אִישׁ).

²² The *NJB* has 'thirty' in place of 'three', here following the *MT*, *NRSV* & *NETB*.

²³ The positions of list-formatting breaks of the *MT* ({ס} & {ר}) in this verse (and in much of this section) are not always clear.

²⁴ Possibly, information similar to the preceding was originally given about Asahel before the list of the *Thirty*, which begins with Elhanan.

אֶלְחָנָן בֶּן־דָּדוֹ {ר} בֵּית לָחֶם: {ס}	Elhanan son of Dodo, from Bethlehem;
כה שָׁמָּה הַחֲרָדִי {ס}	²⁵ Shammah from Harod;
אֵלִיקָא {ר} הַחֲרָדִי: {ס}	Elika from Harod;
כו חֶלֶץ הַפְּלָטִי {ס}	²⁶ Helez the Paltite;
עִירָא {ר} בֶּן־עֶקֶשׁ {ס} הַתְּקוּעִי: {ס}	Ira son of Ikkes, from Tekoa;
כז אֲבִיעֶזֶר {ר} הָעֲנָתְתִי {ס}	²⁷ Abiezer from Anathoth;
מִבְּנֵי הַחֻשָּׁה: {ס}	Mebunnai from Hushah;
כח צֶלְמוֹן {ר} הָאֲחֹחִי {ס}	²⁸ Zalmon from Ahoh;
מִהָרֵי הַנֶּטְפָּחִי: {ס}	Maharai from Netophah;
כט חֶלֶב בֶּן־בַּעְנָה {ר} הַנֶּטְפָּחִי {ס}	²⁹ Heleb son of Baanah, from Netophah;
אִתַּי בֶּן־רִיבִי מִגִּבְעַת בְּנֵי בְנִימִן: {ס}	Ittai son of Ribai, from Gibeah of Benjamin;
ל בְּנִיָּהוּ {ר} פִּרְעָתָנִי {ס}	³⁰ Benaiah from Pirathon;
הַדִּי מִנַּחֲלֵי גַעַשׁ: {ס}	Hiddai from the wadis of Gaash;
לא אֲבִי־עֶלְבֹן {ר} הָעֲרָבָתִי {ס}	³¹ Abi-Albon from Beth-ha-Arabah;
עֲזַמָּוֶת הַבְּרָחְמִי: {ס}	Azmaveth from Bahurim;
לב אֵלִיחַבָּא {ר} הַשְּׁעֶלְבֹנִי {ס}	³² Eliahba from Shaalbon;

²⁵ NETB has 'the Harodite' in place of 'from Harod' (twice in this verse), here following the NJB & NRSV.

²⁶ The NJB has 'from Beth-Pelet' in place of 'the Paltite', here following the NRSV & NETB.

²⁷ The NJB has 'Sibbecai' in place of 'Mebunnai', here following the MT, NRSV & NETB.

²⁸ The NRSV has 'the Ahohite' in place of 'from Ahoh', here following the NJB.

²⁹ The NJB & NETB, following a number of medieval Hebrew MSS, have 'Heled' in place of 'Heleb', here following the MT & NRSV.

³⁰ The NRSV has 'torrents' in place of 'wadis', here following the NJB & NETB.

³¹ The NJB uses the name 'Abibaal' in place of 'Abi-Albon', here following the MT, NRSV & NETB.

³² For the 2nd line, here following the MT, NRSV & NETB, the NJB has 'Jashen from Gimzo'.

בְּנֵי יִשָּׁן יְהוֹנָתָן: {ס}
 לֵב שַׁמָּה {ר} הַהָרָרִי {ס}
 אַחִיאָם בֶּן־שָׂרָר הָאֲרָרִי: {ס}
 לֵב אֱלִיפֶלֶט {ר} בֶּן־אַחֲסָבִי בֶן־הַמַּעֲכָתִי {ס}
 אֱלִיעָם בֶּן־אַחִיתָפֶל {ר} הַגִּלְגִּי: {ס}
 לֵב חֲצֵרוֹ חֲצַרִי הַכַּרְמֶלִי {ס}
 פַּעְרִי {ר} הָאֲרָבִי: {ס}
 לֵב יִגָּאל בֶּן־נָתָן מִזֹּבָה {ס}
 בְּנֵי {ר} הַגָּדִי: {ס}
 לֵב צֶלֶק הָעַמּוֹנִי {ס}
 נַחֲרָי {ר} הַבְּאֵרֹתִי
 נִשְׂאֵי נִשָּׂא כָּלִי יוֹאָב בֶּן־צֶרִיָּה: {ס}
 לֵב עִירָא {ר} הִיתְרִי {ס}
 גָּרֵב הִיתְרִי: {ס}
 לֵב אֻרִּיָּה {ר} הַחֲתִי
 כָּל שְׁלֹשִׁים וְשֶׁבַע:
 {פ}

the sons of Jashen, Jonathon
 33 Shammah from Harar;
 Ahiam son of Sharar, from Harar;
 34 Eliphelet son of Ahasbai, from Beth-Maacah;
 Eliam son of Ahithopel, from Gilo;
 35 Hezrai from Carmel;
 Paarai from Arab;
 36 Igal son of Nathan, from Zobah;
 Bani the Gadite;
 37 Zelek the Ammonite;
 Naharai, from Beeroth,
 armour-bearer to Joab son of Zeruiah;
 38 Ira the Ithrite;
 Gareb the Ithrite;
 39 Uriah the Hittite;
 thirty-seven in all.

33 'Shammah from Harar' seems to be repeated from v. 11. The NJB, NRSV & NETB add 'son of' at the beginning of the verse.

34 The NRSV omits 'Beth' before 'Maacah'; here, we follow the NJB.

35 In place of 'Hezrai', here following the Qere (חֲצַרִי), the Ketiv has 'Hezro' (חֲצֵרוֹ).

36 Almost all English translations agree here in ending the 1st line with 'from (of) Zobah' and the 2nd with 'the Gadite'.

37 'Armour-bearer' (singular) follows the Qere (נִשָּׂא); the Ketiv has the plural (נִשְׂאֵי).

38 The NJB has 'from Jattir' (twice in this verse) in place of 'the Ithrite', here following the NRSV & NETB.

39 The inclusion of 'Uriah the Hittite' is noteworthy (compare 11:15-17).

שמואל ב פרק כד

א וַיִּסַּף אֶף-יְהוָה לַחֲרוֹת בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּסֶּת אֶת-דָּוִד בָּהֶם לֵאמֹר לֵךְ מִנָּה אֶת-יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאֶת-יְהוּדָה: ב וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶל-יֹאבָב שֶׁר־הַחֵיל אֲשֶׁר-אִתּוֹ שׁוֹט-נָא בְּכָל-שִׁבְטֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מִדָּן וְעַד-בְּאֵר שֶׁבַע וּפְקֹדוּ אֶת-הָעָם וַיִּדְעֹתִי אֵת מִסְפַּר הָעָם: {ס} ג וַיֹּאמֶר יוֹאָב אֶל-הַמֶּלֶךְ וַיֹּסֶף יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֶל-הָעָם כָּהֶם | וְכֵהֶם מֵאָה פַעַמִּים וְעֵינֵי אֲדֹנֵי-הַמֶּלֶךְ רְאוּת וְאֲדֹנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ לָמָּה חָפֵץ בַּדְּבַר הַזֶּה: ד וַיַּחֲזֹק דְּבַר-הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶל-יֹאבָב וְעַל שָׂרֵי הַחֵיל וַיֵּצֵא יוֹאָב וְשָׂרֵי הַחֵיל לִפְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ לִפְקֹד אֶת-הָעָם אֶת-יִשְׂרָאֵל: ה וַיַּעֲבְרוּ אֶת-הַיַּרְדֵּן וַיַּחֲנוּ בְּעָרוֹעַר יְמִין הָעֵיר אֲשֶׁר בְּתוֹךְ-הַנָּחַל הַגָּד וְאֶל-יַעְזֵר: ו וַיָּבֹאוּ

2 SAMUEL 24

1 And again, the anger of Yahweh blazed out against the Israelites and he incited David against them, saying "Go, count Israel and Judah." 2 The king said to Joab, the general in command of his army, "Now, go throughout the tribes of Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, and take a census of the people; I wish to know the size of the population." 3 Joab said to the king, "May Yahweh your God multiply the people a hundred times while my lord the king still has eyes to see it; but why should my lord the king be so set on this thing?" 4 But the king's will prevailed over Joab and the senior officers, and Joab and the senior officers left the king's presence to take a census of the people of Israel. 5 They crossed the Jordan and camped at Aroer, on the south side of the city, at the wadi of Gad, near Jazer. 6 They then went to Gilead and to the land of

2 SAMUEL 24

- ¹ 1Ch 21:1 substitutes 'Satan' for 'Yahweh' in this verse, a significant theological change.
- ² Following 1Ch 21:2, the NRSV and NJB have 'Joab and the senior army officers' in place of 'Joab, the general in command of his army'; here, we follow the MT & NETB.
- ³ Joab expressed the popular fear in the matter, but he had to yield and oversee the counting in person (v. 4).
- ⁴ In place of 'take a census of the people of Israel', here following the NJB & NRSV, NETB has 'muster the Israelite army'.
- ⁵ For this verse, here following the MT & NETB, the NJB & NRSV, following the LXX (καὶ διέβησαν τὸν Ιορδάνην καὶ παρενέβαλον ἐν Αροερ ἐκ δεξιῶν τῆς πόλεως τῆς ἐν μέσῳ τῆς ὁράραγγος Γαδ καὶ Ελιεξερ), read, "They crossed the Jordan and made a start with Aroer and the town that is in the middle of the valley, toward Gad and on to Jazer."
- ⁶ In place of 'the land of Tahtim-Hodshi', here following the MT & NETB, the NJB & NRSV, following the LXX (καὶ εἰς γῆν Θαβασων, ἣ ἐστὶν Ἀδασα) have 'Kadesh in the land of the Hittites'. In place of 'to Dan-Jaan and on towards Sidon', here following the MT & NETB, the NJB & NRSV, following the LXX (εἰς Δανιδαν καὶ Ουδαν καὶ ἐκύκλωσαν εἰς Σιδῶνα) have 'to Dan, and from Dan they went around to Sidon'.

הַגִּלְעָדָה וְאֶל־אֶרֶץ תַּחְתִּים חֲדָשִׁי וַיָּבֹאוּ דָנָה יֵעֶן
וְסִבִּיב אֶל־צִידֹן: ^ז וַיָּבֹאוּ מִבְּצֶר־צֹר וְכָל־עָרֵי הַחֲוִי
וְהַכְּנַעֲנִי וַיֵּצְאוּ אֶל־נֶגֶב יְהוּדָה בְּאֶר שֶׁבַע: ^ח וַיֵּשְׁטוּ
בְּכָל־הָאֶרֶץ וַיָּבֹאוּ מִקְצֵה תְּשֻׁעָה חֲדָשִׁים וְעֶשְׂרִים
יּוֹם יְרוּשָׁלַם: ^ט וַיִּתֵּן יוֹאָב אֶת־מִסְפַּר מִפְּקֹד־הָעָם
אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ וַתְּהִי יִשְׂרָאֵל שִׁמְנֶה מֵאוֹת אֶלֶף אִישׁ־
חִיל' שֶׁלֶף חֶרֶב וְאִישׁ יְהוּדָה חֲמֵשׁ־מֵאוֹת אֶלֶף
אִישׁ: ^י וַיֵּךְ לִב־דָּוִד אֹתוֹ אַחֲרֵי־כֵן סָפַר אֶת־
הָעָם {פ}

וַיֹּאמֶר דָּוִד אֶל־יְהוָה חַטָּאתִי מֵאֵל אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתִי
וְעַתָּה יְהוָה הַעֲבֵר־נָא אֶת־עוֹן עַבְדְּךָ כִּי נִסְכַּלְתִּי
מֵאֵד: ^{יא} וַיִּקָּם דָּוִד בַּבֹּקֶר {פ}

וַדְּבַר־יְהוָה הָיָה אֶל־גָּד הַנָּבִיא חֲזָה דָּוִד לֵאמֹר:
^{יב} הֲלוֹךְ וּדְבַרְתָּ אֶל־דָּוִד כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה שְׁלֹשׁ אֲנֹכִי
נוֹטֵל עֲלֶיךָ בַּחֲרֹלֶךְ אַחַת־מֵהֶם וְאַעֲשֶׂה־לָּךְ:
^{יג} וַיָּבֹא־גָד אֶל־דָּוִד וַיַּגִּד־לּוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ הִתְבּוֹא לָךְ

Tahtim-Hodshi; they went on to Dan-Jaan and on towards Sidon, ⁷ and came to the fortress of Tyre and to all the towns of the Hivites and Canaanites, ending up in the Negeb of Judah at Beersheba. ⁸ Having covered the whole country, they returned to Jerusalem after nine months and twenty days. ⁹ Joab gave the king the numbers of those who had been counted; in Israel there were eight hundred thousand armed men able to draw the sword, and in Judah five hundred thousand. ¹⁰ Afterwards, David was stricken to the heart for having taken a census of the people.

David said to Yahweh, "I have committed a grave sin; but now, Yahweh, I beg you to take away the guilt of your servant; I have been very foolish." ¹¹ David got up next morning,

and the following message had come from Yahweh to the prophet Gad, David's seer, ¹² "Go and say to David, "Yahweh says this: I offer you three things; choose one of them for me to do to you."" ¹³ Gad went to David and told him. "Are seven years of famine to come on you in your

⁷ An alternate spelling for 'Negeb' (following the NJB & NRSV) is 'Negev' (as NETB).

⁸ The NJB & NRSV have 'at the end of' in place of 'after', here following NETB.

⁹ Like many similar figures in the Old Testament, these are clearly too high (1Ch 21:5 makes them higher still).

¹⁰ In place of 'was stricken to the heart', here following the MT, NJB & NRSV, NETB has 'felt guilty'.

¹¹ The paragraph break ({פ}) in the MT, in the middle of this verse, is difficult to explain; it would seem better placed at the start of the verse.

¹² An alternative reading for 'offer' is 'hold over'.

¹³ The NJB & NRSV (as well as many other English translations), following the LXX (τρία ἔτη) and 1Ch 21:12, have 'three years' in place of 'seven years', here following the MT & NETB.

שְׁבַע-שָׁנִים | רָעַב | בְּאַרְצָךְ אִם-שִׁלְשָׁה חֳדָשִׁים
נִסָּךְ לִפְנֵי-צָרֶיךָ וְהוּא רֹדְפְךָ וְאִם-הָיֹוֹת שְׁלֹשֶׁת
יָמִים דָּבָר בְּאַרְצָךְ עֲתָה דַע וּרְאֵה מִה-אֲשִׁיב
שְׁלָחִי דָבָר: {ס}

יִיאָמֶר דָּוִד אֶל-גָּד צֶר-לִי מְאֹד נִפְלֵה-נָא בְיַד-
יְהוָה כִּי-רַבִּים רַחֲמָיו וּבְיַד-אָדָם אֶל-אֶפְלָה: ^{טו} וַיִּתֵּן
יְהוָה דָּבָר בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל מִהַבֶּקֶר וְעַד-עֵת מוֹעֵד וַיָּמָת
מִן-הָעָם מִדָּן וְעַד-בְּאֵר שֶׁבַע שִׁבְעִים אֶלֶף אִישׁ:
^{טז} וַיִּשְׁלַח יְדֹו הַמַּלְאָךְ | יְרוּשָׁלַם לְשַׁחֲתָהּ וַיַּגִּחַם
יְהוָה אֶל-הָרָעָה וַיֹּאמֶר לַמַּלְאָךְ הַמַּשְׁחִית בָּעַם רַב
עֲתָה הֲרֵף יָדְךָ וּמַלְאָךְ יְהוָה הִזָּה עִם-גֶּרֶן הָאוֹרֶנָה
הָאֲרֹנָה הַיְבֹסִי: {ס}

יִיאָמֶר דָּוִד אֶל-יְהוָה בְּרָאתָו | אֶת-הַמַּלְאָךְ |
הַמִּכָּה בָּעָם וַיֹּאמֶר הִנֵּה אֲנֹכִי חָטָאתִי וְאֲנֹכִי
הָעֹוִיתִי וְאַלֶּה הַצֹּאן מִה עָשׂוּ תְהִי נָא יָדְךָ בִּי
וּבְבֵית אָבִי: {פ}

country,” he said, “or will you flee for three months before your pursuing enemy, or would you rather have three days’ pestilence in your country? Now think; and decide how I am to answer him who sends me.”

¹⁴ David said to Gad, “This is a hard choice: let us fall into the hand of Yahweh, for his mercy is great, and not into the hand of men.” ¹⁵ So, Yahweh sent a pestilence on Israel from that morning until the appointed time; and seventy thousand of the people died, from Dan to Beer-Sheba. ¹⁶ The angel stretched out his hand to destroy Jerusalem, but Yahweh thought better of this evil, and said to the angel who was destroying the people, “Enough! Now stay your hand.” The Angel of Yahweh was near the threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite.

¹⁷ When David saw the angel who was ravaging the people, he spoke to Yahweh. “It was I who sinned;” he said, “I who did this wicked thing; but these, this flock, what have they done? Let your hand lie heavy on me then, and on my family.”

¹⁴ The literal translation of ‘this is a hard choice’ (here following the NJB) is ‘I am in great distress’.

¹⁵ For this verse, here following the NRSV, the NJB reads, “So David chose pestilence. It was the time of the wheat harvest. Yahweh sent a pestilence on Israel from the morning until the time appointed and plague ravaged the land. From Dan to Beersheba seventy thousand of the people died.”

¹⁶ The narrative probably fuses two traditions: according to one, Yahweh halts the plague at the gates of Jerusalem out of love for the city (this verse) and David offers a sacrifice of thanksgiving ‘as Yahweh has ordered’ (v. 19). According to the other, the city is saved by David’s prayer and the building of an altar (vv. 17, 21, 25). The *Kethib*/ *Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

¹⁷ The people are like innocent sheep led to slaughter; David feels that the evil should fall upon him alone.

י"ח וַיֵּבֹא־גָד אֶל־דָּוִד בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ עֲלֵה
הַקֶּם לַיהוָה מִזְבֵּחַ בְּגֵרֶן אֲרֻנָּה הַיְּבֻסִי:
י"ט וַיַּעַל דָּוִד כַּדְּבַר־גָּד כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה: כ וַיִּשְׁקֶף
אֲרֻנָּה וַיֵּרָא אֶת־הַמֶּלֶךְ וְאֶת־עַבְדָּיו עֹבְרִים עָלָיו
וַיֵּצֵא אֲרֻנָּה וַיִּשְׁתַּחוּ לַמֶּלֶךְ אַפְּיוֹ אֶרְצָה: כא וַיֹּאמֶר
אֲרֻנָּה מִדּוּעַ בָּא אֲדֹנֵי־הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶל־עַבְדּוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר
דָּוִד לִקְנוֹת מֵעַמֶּךָ אֶת־הַגֵּרֶן לִבְנוֹת מִזְבֵּחַ לַיהוָה
וְתִעָצֵר הַמִּגָּפָה מֵעַל הָעָם: כב וַיֹּאמֶר אֲרֻנָּה אֶל־
דָּוִד יִקַּח וַיַּעַל אֲדֹנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ הַטֹּוב בְּעֵינָיו רֹאֵה
הַבֶּקֶר לַעֲלֹה וְהַמִּרְגָּזִים וְכָלִי הַבֶּקֶר לָעֵצִים: כג הֲפֹל
נָתַן אֲרֻנָּה הַמֶּלֶךְ לַמֶּלֶךְ {ס}

וַיֹּאמֶר אֲרֻנָּה אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ יִרְצֶךָ:
כד וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶל־אֲרֻנָּה לֹא כִּי־קִנּוּ אֶקְנֶה
מֵאוֹתֶךָ בַּמָּחִיר וְלֹא אֶעֱלֶה לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֵי עֲלֹת

¹⁸ Gad went to David that day and said, "Go up and erect an altar to Yahweh on the threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite." ¹⁹ At Gad's bidding, David went up as Yahweh had ordered him. ²⁰ When Araunah looked down and saw the king and his officers coming towards him, he went out and, with his face to the ground, did the king homage. ²¹ Araunah said, "Why has my lord the king come to his servant?" David said, "To buy the threshing-floor from you, in order to build an altar to Yahweh, so the plague may leave the people." ²² Araunah told David, "Let my lord the king take it and offer up what he thinks right. Here are the oxen for the holocaust, the threshing-sled and the oxen's yoke for the wood. ²³ All this, O king, Araunah gives to the king.

And Araunah said to the king, "May Yahweh your God show you favour." ²⁴ Nevertheless, the king said to Araunah, "No, I must pay you money for it; I will not offer Yahweh my God high-offerings that have

¹⁸ On the *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here, see #16.

¹⁹ The NRSV has 'instructions' in place of 'bidding', here following the NJB.

²⁰ After 'towards him', the NJB, following 1Ch 21:20, adds, 'Araunah was threshing the wheat'; here we follow the MT.

²¹ Note that here and henceforth there is no confusion between the *Qere* and *Ketiv* regarding the name 'Araunah' (אַרְוֹנָה) (see #16).

²² A 'threshing-sled' is a board with stones set in the underside, still used in Palestine for threshing.

²³ For the 1st sentence, here following the NRSV, the NJB reads, "The servant of my lord the king gives all this to the king;" the MT is difficult here: in normal court etiquette, a subject would not use his own name in this way, but would more likely refer to himself in the 3rd person, and the MT probably first sustained loss of עַבְדִּי ('servant'), leading to confusion of the word for 'my lord' with the name of the Jebusite referred to here.

²⁴ According to 1Ch 21:25, David paid six hundred shekels in gold (ca. 6.8 kg). Araunah's threshing floor was outside the Davidic and Jebusite city, on the hill dominating it to the north, and was later to be the site of Solomon's Temple (see #5:9).

חֲנֹם וַיִּקֶן דָּוִד אֶת־הַגֶּרֶן וְאֶת־הַבֶּקֶר בַּכֶּסֶף שְׁקָלִים
חֲמִשִּׁים כֹּה וַיִּבֶן שָׁם דָּוִד מִזְבֵּחַ לַיהוָה וַיַּעַל עֹלֹת
וּשְׁלָמִים וַיַּעֲתֶר יְהוָה לָאָרֶץ וַתַּעֲצֹר הַמִּגָּפָה מֵעַל
יִשְׂרָאֵל:
{ש}

cost me nothing.” So, David paid fifty shekels in silver for the threshing-floor and oxen. ²⁵ David built an altar to Yahweh there and offered holocausts and communion sacrifices. Then Yahweh took pity on the country and the plague was lifted from Israel.

²⁵ In place of ‘*communion sacrifices*’, here following the NJB, the NRSV has ‘*offerings of well-being*’ and NETB has ‘*peace offerings*’.