

# DAVID:

## SHEPHERD, PSALMIST, KING

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### CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

**“YET HAVE I SET MY KING”**  
(II Samuel 8; I Chronicles 18, 19, 20)

Crown Him the Lord of Heaven!  
Enthroned in worlds above;  
Crown Him the King to whom is given  
The wondrous name of Love.  
Crown Him with many crowns,  
As thrones before Him fall;  
Crown Him, ye kings, with many crowns,  
For He is King of all!”

- Godfrey Thring

A time of rest which succeeded the removal of the ark was broken in upon by a succession of fierce wars.

One after another the surrounding nations gathered together, either singly or in confederacies, against David. **“The heathen raged; the kingdoms were moved.”** The Philistines. For the last time they arose; but David smote and subdued them, and took the bridle of the mother-city out of their hand.

*The Moabites.* The hereditary alliance, dating from the time of Ruth, between the Hebrew monarch and his restless neighbours was insufficient to restrain them; and Benaiah was commissioned to lead an expedition against them, which was so successful that their entire army fell into his hands, and was dealt with according to the terrible custom of the time, one-third only being spared.

*The Syrians.* The king of Zobah and the Syrians of Damascus were utterly defeated; vast spoils of gold and brass fell into David’s hand, and the border of Israel was carried to the line of the Euphrates, so that the ancient promise made by God to Abraham was fulfilled:

**“Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates.”**

*Edom.* Whilst David was engaged in the north, the Edomites invaded Judah, and Abishai was dispatched against them.

On the west shore of the Dead Sea he encountered them, and slew eighteen thousand in the valley of Salt. The whole land, even to Petra, its rock-bound capital, was slowly reduced to submission; and, with the exception of Hadad, who made his way to Egypt, the royal family was exterminated.

*Ammon.* A friendly overture on the part of David was met with gross insult; and Hanun, apprehending the infliction of condign revenge, formed a vast coalition.

The combined forces amounted to thirty-two thousand, with a strong contingent of cavalry and chariots, against which David could only oppose the Hebrew infantry, the use of horses being forbidden by the Mosaic legislation. It was a supreme moment in David's career, and taxed the utmost resources of Joab's generalship.

By God's good hand, however, victory was secured; the tide of Israelite invasion swept over the hostile country; Kabbah, the capital city, fell into David's hand; the people were put to work with saws, arrows, and axes, probably preparing the materials for the erection of public works, and perhaps of the temple itself.

These years of war gave birth to some of the grandest of the psalms, amongst which may be numbered, 2, 20, 21, 50, 110.

## I. THE FOE

The heathen (nations) rage; the peoples imagine a vain thing; the kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord, and against his anointed. We hear their plottings in their council chambers:

**“Let us break their bands asunder,  
And cast away their cords from us.”**

They trust in chariots and in horses; their kings think that they will be saved by the multitude of their hosts. They inspire fear through the hearts of Israel, so that the land trembles as though God had rent it, and the people drink the wine of staggering and dismay. So tremendous is their assault, so overwhelming their numbers, that all help of man seems vain.

It is thus in every era of the history of God's people, that Satan has stirred up their foes. Right behind the coalitions of men lies the malignity of the fallen spirit, who ever seeks to bruise the heel of the woman's seed.

**“In the world ye shall have tribulation.” Behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days.” “When the dragon saw that he was cast down to the earth, he persecuted the woman.”**

## II. THE ATTITUDE OF FAITH

Whilst the serried ranks of the foe are in sight, the hero-king is permitted a vision into the unseen and eternal. There is no fear upon the face of God, no change in his determination to set his king upon his holy hill. In fact, it seems that the day of his foe's attack is that in which he receives a new assurance of sonship, and is bidden to claim the nations for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession.

As he anticipates the battle, he hears the chime of the Divine promise above the tumult of his fear:

**“Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron;  
Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.”**

On his leaving the capital, his people pray that the Lord may answer him in the day of trouble, remember his offerings, and send him help from the sanctuary; and he replies,

**“Now know I that the LORD saveth his anointed;  
He will hear him from his holy heaven  
With the saving strength of his right hand.”**

He knows that through the loving-kindness of the Most High he shall not be moved, but that his right hand will destroy his enemies.

In the ecstasy of his faith he asserts, as he looks eastward, across the Jordan, that Gilead will as certainly own his sway as Ephraim and Manasseh did. Strong in the allegiance of Judah, and her sister tribes, he counts victory already secured. Moab is his washing-basin; Edom like a slave shall carry his shoes; Philistia shall tremble before his war-shout, and even the strong city of Petra shall receive his troops.

In perfect peace he anticipates the result, the Lord will send forth the rod of his strength out of Zion, and strike through kings in the day of his wrath, and make his enemies his footstool, so that in all after-days he may combine the office of priest and king, as Melchizedek did on that same site centuries before.

## III. THE WARRIORS OF THE PRIEST-KING

Catching the contagion of his faith, they triumph in God's salvation, and in his name set up their banners. They believe that God, as a Man of War, is going forth with their hosts, and will tread down their adversaries. They are characterized by the willingness of their service. No mercenaries are pressed into their ranks; they gladly gather around the standard, as the warriors of whom Deborah sang, who willingly offered themselves. They are clad not in mail, but in the fine linen of the priests; **“the beauties of holiness,”** a phrase which suggests that the warfare was conducted by religious men, as an act of worship to God. They are numerous as the dewdrops that bespangle the morning grass, when every blade has its own coronet of jewels, and the light is reflected from a million diamonds (Psalm 110).

What an exquisite conception of David's ideal for his soldiers, and of the knightly chivalry, of the purity, truth, and righteousness, in which all the soldiers of the Messiah should be arrayed!

#### **IV. THE COMPLETENESS OF THE VICTORY**

The armies of the alien cannot stand the onset of those heaven-accoutered soldiers. Kings of armies flee apace. They are bowed down and fallen in bitter, hopeless defeat. They are made as a fiery furnace in the time of God's anger, and swallowed up in his wrath. Their dead bodies strew the battle-field, and the valleys are choked with slain.

As the triumphant army returns, leaving desolation where their foes had swarmed, they express in song their gratitude to their Almighty Deliverer. Singers and minstrels, Benjamin and Judah, Zebulun and Naphtali, join in the mighty anthem:

**“He that is our God is the God of salvation;  
and unto God the Lord belong the issues from death:**

**“O God, Thou art terrible out of thy holy places;  
The God of Israel is He giveth strength and power unto his people.”**

All this has a further reference. In David we have a type of the Messiah. For, of a truth, against the Holy Servant Jesus, whom God has anointed, both the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel have gathered together. Men have refused his sway, and do refuse it but God hath sworn, and will not repent, that to Him every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess: and it is more sure than that to-morrow's sun will rise that, ere long, great voices shall be heard in heaven, saying, **“The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ: and He shall reign for ever and ever”** (Revelation 11:15-18).

~ end of chapter 24 ~

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