

¹And it came to pass after this, that Absalom prepared him chariots and horses, and fifty men to run before him.²And Absalom rose up early, and stood beside the way of the gate: and it was so, that when any man that had a controversy came to the king for judgment, then Absalom called unto him, and said, Of what city art thou? And he said, Thy servant is of one of the tribes of Israel.³And Absalom said unto him, See, thy matters are good and right; but there is no man deputed of the king to hear thee.⁴Absalom said moreover, Oh that I were made judge in the land, that every man which hath any suit or cause might come unto me, and I would do him justice!⁵And it was so, that when any man came nigh to him to do him obeisance, he put forth his hand, and took him, and kissed him.⁶And on this manner did Absalom to all Israel that came to the king for judgment: so Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel.⁷And it came to pass after forty years, that Absalom said unto the king, I pray thee, let me go and pay my vow, which I have vowed unto the LORD, in Hebron.⁸For thy servant vowed a vow while I abode at Geshur in Syria, saying, If the LORD shall bring me again indeed to Jerusalem, then I will serve the LORD.⁹And the king said unto him, Go in peace. So he arose, and went to Hebron.¹⁰But Absalom sent spies throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, As soon as ye hear the sound of the trumpet, then ye shall say, Absalom reigneth in Hebron.¹¹And with Absalom went two hundred men out of Jerusalem, that were called; and they went in their simplicity, and they knew not any

thing.¹²And Absalom sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, David's counsellor, from his city, even from Giloh, while he offered sacrifices. And the conspiracy was strong; for the people increased continually with Absalom.¹³And there came a messenger to David, saying, The hearts of the men of Israel are after Absalom.¹⁴And David said unto all his servants that were with him at Jerusalem, Arise, and let us flee; for we shall not else escape from Absalom: make speed to depart, lest he overtake us suddenly, and bring evil upon us, and smite the city with the edge of the sword.¹⁵And the king's servants said unto the king, Behold, thy servants are ready to do whatsoever my lord the king shall appoint.¹⁶And the king went forth, and all his household after him. And the king left ten women, which were concubines, to keep the house.¹⁷And the king went forth, and all the people after him, and tarried in a place that was far off.¹⁸And all his servants passed on beside him; and all the Cherethites, and all the Pelethites, and all the Gittites, six hundred men which came after him from Gath, passed on before the king.¹⁹Then said the king to Ittai the Gittite, Wherefore goest thou also with us? return to thy place, and abide with the king: for thou art a stranger, and also an exile.²⁰Whereas thou camest but yesterday, should I this day make thee go up and down with us? seeing I go whither I may, return thou, and take back thy brethren: mercy and truth be with thee.²¹And Ittai answered the king, and said, As the LORD liveth, and as my lord the king liveth, surely in what place my lord the king shall

be, whether in death or life, even there also will thy servant be.²² And David said to Ittai, Go and pass over. And Ittai the Gittite passed over, and all his men, and all the little ones that were with him.²³ And all the country wept with a loud voice, and all the people passed over: the king also himself passed over the brook Kidron, and all the people passed over, toward the way of the wilderness.²⁴ And lo Zadok also, and all the Levites were with him, bearing the ark of the covenant of God: and they set down the ark of God; and Abiathar went up, until all the people had done passing out of the city.²⁵ And the king said unto Zadok, Carry back the ark of God into the city: if I shall find favour in the eyes of the LORD, he will bring me again, and shew me both it, and his habitation:²⁶ But if he thus say, I have no delight in thee; behold, here am I, let him do to me as seemeth good unto him.²⁷ The king said also unto Zadok the priest, Art not thou a seer? return into the city in peace, and your two sons with you, Ahimaaz thy son, and Jonathan the son of Abiathar.²⁸ See, I will tarry in the plain of the wilderness, until there come word from you to certify me.²⁹ Zadok therefore and Abiathar carried the ark of God again to Jerusalem: and they tarried there.³⁰ And David went up by the ascent of mount

Olivet, and wept as he went up, and had his head covered, and he went barefoot: and all the people that was with him covered every man his head, and they went up, weeping as they went up.³¹ And one told David, saying, Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom. And David said, O LORD, I pray thee, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness.³² And it came to pass, that when David was come to the top of the mount, where he worshipped God, behold, Hushai the Archite came to meet him with his coat rent, and earth upon his head:³³ Unto whom David said, If thou passest on with me, then thou shalt be a burden unto me:³⁴ But if thou return to the city, and say unto Absalom, I will be thy servant, O king; as I have been thy father's servant hitherto, so will I now also be thy servant: then mayest thou for me defeat the counsel of Ahithophel.³⁵ And hast thou not there with thee Zadok and Abiathar the priests? therefore it shall be, that what thing soever thou shalt hear out of the king's house, thou shalt tell it to Zadok and Abiathar the priests.³⁶ Behold, they have there with them their two sons, Ahimaaz Zadok's son, and Jonathan Abiathar's son; and by them ye shall send unto me every thing that ye can hear.³⁷ So Hushai David's friend came into the city, and Absalom came into Jerusalem.