

treachery so angered David that he cursed Joab and all his family, and mourned publicly for the murdered Abner.

When the Israelites saw how just David was, they all said that they were in favor of him. Two captains then slew Ishbosheth and carried his head to David, from whom they expected a reward. But David, who despised all treachery, had them both put to death. Although some members of Saul's family were left, the elders of Israel came to David at Hebron and anointed him king of all Israel (1048 BC).

Then seeing that Jerusalem was a great city, strongly fortified, in a favorable position on the mountains of Israel, David determined to take it for his capital. For the Canaanites still dwelt in the city, and the Benjaminites had failed to drive them out. In this David succeeded, and moving his capital there, he called it the City of David. Thus David went on, and grew great, for the Lord God of hosts was with him.



LXXXVI. The Ark Brought to Jerusalem.

DAVID lived in a grand and spacious palace in Jerusalem; for not being content with Michal, Abigail, and Ahinoam, the new king had many other wives, and was the father of many children, who all dwelt under his roof.

The king was soon obliged to leave his new capital, to go forth and fight his old foes, the Philistines. When he had conquered these enemies, he felt that it was time to bring the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem, and to build a Temple where it might take up its abode for good. With an escort of thirty thousand men, he therefore set out.

The Ark was placed on a new cart, and this procession slowly wended its way towards Jerusalem. Now it was unlawful for any but the priests to carry the Ark; and a man, who was not a Levite, once stretched out his hand to steady the Ark when the oxen stumbled. But no sooner had he touched it than he fell down dead.

Awed by this accident, the king ordered the journey stopped, and the Ark was placed in a house near by, where it remained for three months. Then, seeing that it brought great blessings to that house, the people again became anxious to have it in Jerusalem; and as soon as a new tent was erected for it (for the Tabernacle of Moses was at Gibeon), they sent the Levites to bring it thither (1045 BC).

In his joy at the return of the Ark, David went ahead of it on foot, in simple garb, and not in his royal raiment; and, dancing and playing upon his harp, he led the way to Mount Zi'on, as Jerusalem is often called in poetry, where the Ark was to remain.

David also gave alms to all the poor, and offered up costly sacrifices. His joy was marred, however, when his wife Michal despised him for dancing and singing before the



Michael despises David, *painting by James Tissot.*

Lord and his people; and because of this, she remained childless until her death.

Although David had thus brought the sacred Ark to Jerusalem, he did not consider a tent a sufficiently handsome abode for it, and wished to build a fine Temple instead. But when he consulted the prophet

Na'than, the Lord told him that it was not for David to build a house for God, but that God would build a house for David, and that his sons would rule after him. Moreover, the Lord confirmed to David that through him the Promised Seed would be born, whose throne would be established forever.

David replied, "Who am I, Lord God, and what is my house, that You have done all this for me? For it is for Your word's sake, and for Your greatness—for there is none like You—that You have done these things. Therefore let Your name be magnified forever, and bless Your servant according to all that You have promised." This blessing was the probable source of David's joyful Mes-si-an'ic psalms.

As David did not dare to undertake the building of the Temple after Nathan's words, he made use of his time in completing the defeat of the Philistines. These enemies were finally subdued, and paid tribute to Israel.

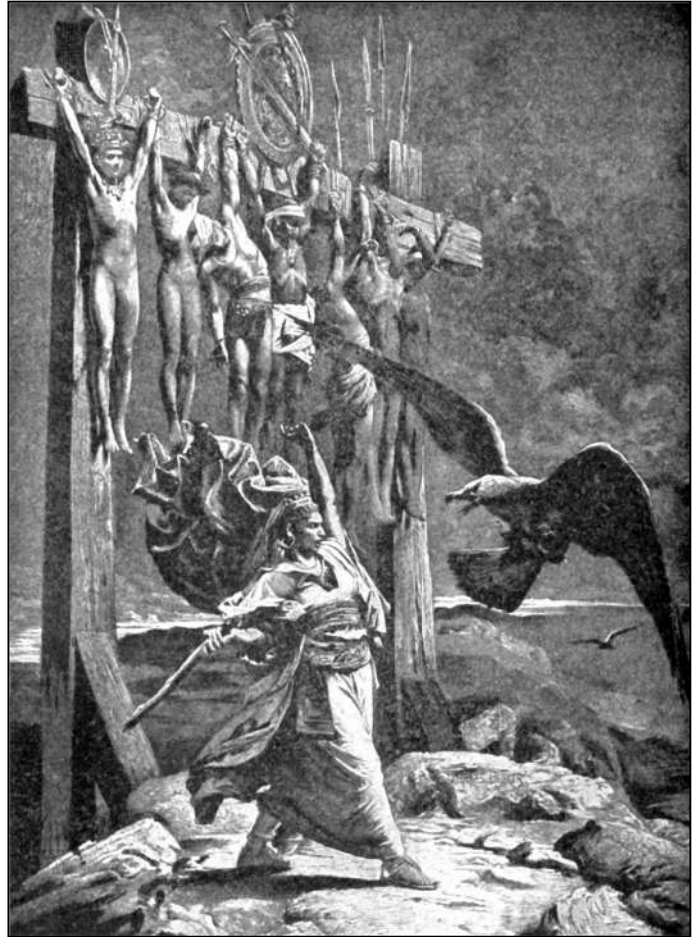
Now David continued to grow in greatness and in renown, and the nations around about, becoming alarmed, joined in league against him. David and his captains defeated

them all, and they paid him tribute: Phil-is'tia, Moab, Ammon, Edom, and Syria to the Euphrates River. Thus it was that under David, God's promise to Abraham came true, for Abraham was promised the land from Egypt to the Euphrates (Gen 15:18), and all these were tributary to David (1036 BC).

David was now so firmly placed upon the throne that he no longer feared the family of Saul. He even received Saul's last descendants in his palace, where he made them welcome and treated them like his own sons, out of love for Jonathan.

But because Saul had murdered the Gibeonites, some years earlier, a great famine came over the land which caused much suffering. David, hoping to end this famine, finally gave up to the Gibeonites seven of the former king's family. These were duly executed, and the famine ceased its ravages (1018 BC).

Riz'pah, the mother of two of the dead, wished to protect their bodies from the beaks and claws of the birds of prey, so she took up her position at the foot of the gallows. There she mightily strove to drive away the birds by day and the wild beasts by night, until David, touched by her devotion, had the bodies taken down and buried.



Rizpah protecting the bodies of her sons.
Painting by Georges Becker.



LXXVII. David's Repentance.

FEELING that he had at last earned his rest, David now left the care of the army to Joab, and returned to his capital, Jerusalem. But one day, being bored with idle-