1:16 *Your mouth has testified against you*- From their own mouth and words men will be judged (Mt. 12:37; Lk. 19:22 cp. 2 Sam. 1:16). And yet perhaps even now, men are justified by their words before the court of Heaven- for 'justify' means to pronounce righteous, and this pronouncement / justification is therefore given even now. As the judgment seat of God is in a sense ongoing, our words are as it were our testimony at our own court case before God. At the last day, it could even be that the Lord cites the condemnatory words of the rejected uttered during their lifetimes and leaves these as their condemnation (cp. 1 Kings 20:40).

1:17 We can all too easily pray for what we will later ask to be changed. David prayed for deliverance from "the evil man", Saul; he asked that Saul be slain and punished (Ps. 140:1,9,10). But when this prayer was answered, David wept with the amazing lamentation over Saul which we have here. It's a lesson to think carefully about what we're praying for, and imagine our response and situation if actually the prayer is answered. We need to pray as if every prayer will be answered, not just expressing our feelings and immediate desires, as it seems David did in his prayers against Saul.

1:18 David’s lament over Saul was taught to the children of Judah; and the early chapters of 2 Samuel are full of examples of David's expression of love for Saul in every way he knew how. David's love for Saul was truly amazing. Saul was his enemy, he drove David to absolute despair, his senseless persecution of David was articulated in every way he could. In all this we see played out the prototype of the hatred between the Jews and Jesus. Yet when Saul was slain for his sins, David's love for him was overflowing, to the point that his people saw that this was no political theatricism (3:36,37). But it was not only at Saul's death that David had these feelings; after all, it's a lot easier to love someone when they're dead. Psalm 35 is David's commentary on his feelings for Saul: "They laid to my charge things that I knew not. They rewarded me evil for good to the spoiling of my soul (spiritually). But as for me, when they (Saul and his family, in the context) were sick, my clothing was sackcloth: I humbled my soul with fasting; and my prayer returned into my heart. I behaved myself as though he had been my friend or brother (i.e. Jonathan, 2 Sam. 1:26): I bowed down heavily, as one that mourns for his mother" (Ps. 35:11-15). Bowing down heavily as a man weeps at his mother's graveside is a powerful image. A man's grief for his mother must surely be the finest picture David could have chosen. That sense of infinite regret that he didn't appreciate her more. David realized that he had reached the point where he knew that he really did truly love his enemies. He wept for Saul as a man weeps at his dear mother's graveside. And he did this for a man who was utterly worthless. And this is a poor, poor shadow of the Christ’s love for Israel. And how much more does He love us, who at least try to make up for Israel's cruel indifference?

2:5 The way of grace is sometimes counter instinctive and can be seen as political suicide.

2:16 This incident was surely to show the tragic wastage and pointless destruction caused by conflict between brethren. Perhaps both sides were being prompted by this incident to call off the entire armed conflict with each other, but they failed to respond to the providential hint.

2:19 *He didn’t turn to the right hand nor to the left*- This phrase is typically used in the Bible to describe our faithful following of God in this way; he didn’t turn aside to the right nor the left in following his brother (:21), another phrase usually used about faithful following after Yahweh. Asahel justified his persecution of his brother as a faithful following of God- and died because of it. The same mistake is often repeated in essence in the church.

2:26,27 Both sides in this conflict between brethren sensed it was wrong, and yet they had still done it. Reconciliation between brethren should seek to appeal to this conscience which there often is- that conflict and division is wrong.

3:16 David’s breaking of up of this marriage for reasons of personal politics and pride seems totally wrong. This was not only a breach of Mosaic law, but displayed a sad elevation of politics above others’ relationships and marriages. It may be significant that her renewed marriage with David wasn’t blessed with any children (6:23).

3:35 David is at great pains to demonstrate that he is against the pointless shedding of blood. But his earlier life had featured much pointless shedding of blood- e.g. he killed 200 Philistines when only 100 were required (1 Sam. 18:25,27), and thought nothing of killing the man who informed him of Saul’s death (1:15; see too 4:12). He said that he was disallowed from building the temple because of how much blood he had shed (1 Chron. 22:8). His Psalms often call for the death of his enemies. We are left to reflect that perhaps now he was maturing, as we should over the course of our lives, to perceive the value and meaning of the human person. Or it could be that he was simply emphasizing that he really didn’t seek the blood of Saul’s family because he had truly forgiven him; or perhaps as a highly emotional person, he demonstrated both great sensitivity to the death of people and also great insensitivity; a very soft side and a very hard one, all within the same personality. Human nature is capable of very contradictory behaviour.

3:36,37 See on 1:18.

4:4 *His nurse took him up, and fled*- She failed to believe in David’s grace; she assumed that he and his men would come and kill Jonathan’s son, despite David’s grace to Saul and demonstration of his loyalty to Jonathan. We too find it so hard to believe in grace, even when it is demonstrated by the cross. Grace is the hardest thing to believe in because it is so contrary to all we have experienced at the hands of people and all we see around us; it is Divine in origin and doesn’t come naturally, so we so struggle to believe it- and, as in this case, catastrophe’s happen because of it which damage others permanently.

4:8 *Yahweh has avenged*- This was true, but they were wrong to have taken the work of His vengeance and judgment into their own hands. Vengeance is God’s, and by taking it for Him we are as it were playing God; we aren’t to take vengeance exactly because vengeance is God’s, not ours; and this is written in Scripture, Paul says (Rom. 12:19). Whilst Paul’s allusion may be to Dt. 32:35, he may also (under inspiration) be drawing his Old Testament teaching from this incident. If we would forbid ourselves to even think of taking vengeance, we and others would be saved so much hurt and trouble.

4:12 See on 3:35.

5:1 *We are your bone and your flesh*- This idiom is quoted in Eph. 5:30 about how we who are baptized into the body of Christ are as it were His bone and flesh. David again represents Christ, and his people represents we who are following Christ.

5:2 *You shall be shepherd of My people*- Yahweh was David’s shepherd (Ps. 23:1), and David was to shepherd Israel. There is a wonderful mutuality in God’s relationship with people.

5:6 *Unless you take away the blind and the lame*- The idea was that the blind and lame amongst the Jebusites would be enough to hold off David’s men.

5:8 *The blind and the lame can’t come into the house*- The lame, blind etc. were not allowed to serve God under the law (Lev. 21:18), nor be offered as sacrifices (Dt. 15:21), nor come within the temple. Christ purposefully healed multitudes of lame and blind (Mt. 15:30), and allowed them to come to Him in the temple (Mt. 21:14). His acted out message was clearly that those who were despised as unfit for God’s service were now being welcomed by Him into that service. The lame and blind were despised because they couldn’t work. They had to rely on the grace of others. Here is a crucial teaching: those called are those who can’t do the works, but depend upon grace. We are the lame and blind who have been invited to the Messianic banquet; and we are to reflect God’s calling of us, the desperate, in our calling of others- we too are to invite the lame and blind into our homes and thus into God’s Kingdom (Lk. 14:13,21). A person who feels they are somehow a nice guy and worthy of invitation will be the one who tends to consider others as unworthy of invitation to the Kingdom. He or she who perceives their own desperation and the sheer grace of our having been called into the Kingdom will eagerly invite even those they consider to be in the very pits of human society.

5:23,24 David didn’t get victory by the mulberry trees the same way each time. God changed the method; just as we too can’t assume God will deliver us just because He has in the past.

5:24 *The sound of marching*- David was being taught that he on earth must follow the movement of the Angel cherubim marching above him; in Ezekiel’s terms, we as the wheels of the cherubim on earth are to faithfully follow wherever they move above us.

6:2 The blood of atonement was always present on the top of the ark (the “mercy seat”), where the very presence of God was. This foretold the intense association of God Himself with the future sacrifice of His Son. In this sense, God was in Christ in His reconciliation of the world to Himself (2 Cor. 5:19). As the Angel cherubim overshadowed the top of the ark, so the Angels were intensely aware of Christ’s death; He could have called upon them to rescue Him out of it (Mt. 26:53), but He didn’t- in order to achieve maximum identity with us for whom He died.

6:5 The lesson is that all the fine worship in the world is meaningless unless it is underpinned by careful awareness of and obedience to God’s word. The great worship procession ended very abruptly- to drive home this point. See commentary on 1 Chron. 13 for more about David’s mistake and Uzzah’s sin.

6:9 Elizabeth’s words: “Who am I, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?” (Lk. 1:43) are remarkably similar to the Septuagint of 2 Sam. 6:9, where David asks “How can the ark of Yahweh come to me?”. As a result of this question of David’s, the ark remained three months in the house of Obed-Edom (:11). And was this why Mary, seeing herself as the ark bearing the special Name and glory of Yahweh in Christ, remained for three months in the house of Elisabeth straight after hearing this same question asked (Lk. 1:56)? There are further links, between the gladness of Lk. 1:44 and the joy of :12; and the loud cry of Lk. 1:42 and that of :15. If one combines Lk. 1:31 and Jn. 1:14 we have the word of God becoming flesh and “tabernacling” among us in the womb and faith of Mary. The Angel’s description of Holy Spirit ‘overshadowing’ Mary (Lk. 1:35) could have sent her mind back to how the Spirit-Cherubim and the cloud of Spirit glory overshadowed the ark (Ex. 25:20; 1 Chron. 28:18). The Septuagint uses the word for “overshadow” about the cloud of glory overshadowing the ark in the wilderness (Ex. 40:35; Num. 9:18,22). If these connections are valid, then Mary would have felt that within her was He who would be the covenant of the Lord, the stones of the word of God made flesh in a little boy. This was perception indeed, all achieved within the spiritual mind of an illiterate teenage country girl from a dumb village in Palestine. Depending how deeply we meditate upon God’s word and perceive the relevance for us, such connections are easily possible in our minds too, and can guide us in our decisions and actions, just as they did in teaching Mary she should remain three months with Elizabeth.

6:17-19 One of the most obvious similarities between the peace offering and the breaking of bread is that they both feature bread and wine, associated with a slain animal in the midst (see too Num. 15:9,10). Both require the eating of the sacrifice by the offerer. The peace offering and Passover (also typical of the memorial meeting) featured the offerer eating the sacrifice “before Yahweh". This phrase "before Yahweh" is continually emphasized in the records of the peace offerings. Our sense of the presence of the Father and Son at our memorial meetings has much room for improvement. We really are "before Yahweh" as we sit there. God came unto men when they offered acceptable peace offerings (Ex. 20:24), as He is made known to us through the breaking of bread (Lk. 24:35).

6:21 *Before your father*- This is a good example of “before” meaning ‘before’ in importance rather than time. God chose Saul well before He chose David. But God chose David before or above Saul in terms of importance and honour. This explains how in Jn. 8:58 Jesus was “before” Abraham in the sense that he was “before” him in terms of importance- but not in time, because He didn’t literally pre-exist.

6:20-22 *In the eyes of the handmaids... in the eyes of Yahweh... in my own eyes*- David is highly perceptive here. He’s saying that if this is how he feels in his *own* eyes, then this is how he is before the eyes of God, and therefore this is how he will be before the eyes of Israel and the general public. David is saying: ‘Who I am, my real self, is the one God sees, and I’m not going to hide it from the world; let them see me how I see myself and how God sees me’. In this incident, there was no gap between the ‘real self’ of David and the image he projected to the world. There was complete congruence between how he felt about himself, how God saw him, and how the watching world saw him. And this incident ought to be programmatic for our entire lives. This will ever keep us from worrying too much what others think of us, doing what is smart and acceptable and right in the eyes of men… rather we will think only of what is right in God’s eyes.

7:3 *Do all that is in your heart*- As in 1 Kings 22:14-17, the prophet was tempted to assume that he knew God’s word and therefore spoke too quickly, according to what they sensed a person wished to hear. We too should learn the lesson of needing to be sensitive to what is written in God’s word.

7:5 It was God's clearly expressed wish that He should not live in a physical house (see too Acts 7:48; 17:24). Yet He accommodated Himself to human weakness in wanting a physical house in which to worship Him; He came and lived (in a sense) in just such a house. He makes concessions to human weakness because He so thirsts for relationship with us; but by making free use of those concessions we in fact make relationship with Him more difficult.

7:12 *I will set up your seed*- "Set up" in the Septuagint is the same word as "resurrect", as if in some way the promise would be realized through Christ's resurrection.

7:14 The “seed” or descendant is ultimately Jesus, the Son of God (confirmed in Rev. 22:16; Rom. 1:3; Acts 13:23; Lk. 1:32,33). Jesus, the descendant, was to be a literal, bodily descendant of David, and yet have God as his Father. This could only be achieved by the virgin birth as described in the New Testament; Jesus’ mother was Mary, a descendant of David (Lk. 1:32), but he had no human father. God acted miraculously upon Mary’s womb by the Holy Spirit in order to make her conceive Jesus (Lk. 1:35). The “virgin birth” was the only way in which this promise to David could be properly fulfilled. he genealogy of the Lord Jesus in Matthew 1 frames Him as the product of 42 generations, divided into three groups of 14. The numerical value of 'David' is 14 [D = 4; w = 6; d = 4]. The emphasis is therefore on the fact that Jesus was so very intrinsically a descendant of David- and not, therefore, a pre-existent being. 2 Sam.7:14 and Ps. 89:27 predicted that a literal descendant of David would become God’s firstborn. He was clearly not in existence at the time those passages were written, and therefore not at the time of the Genesis creation either. Jesus became “the Son of God with power” by His resurrection from the dead (Rom. 1:4). The “house” He would build is the spiritual dwelling of God in people (Is. 66:1,2). He is the foundation stone of God’s temple (1 Pet. 2:4-8), believers are like the temple stones (1 Pet. 2:5).

*If he commits iniquity*- This speaks of Christ’s possibility of sinning. This had to be true if His temptations were to be of any real meaning (Heb. 2:14-18; 4:15,16); and clearly therefore Jesus is not God Himself (James 1:13-15). Punishment with rod and stripes was to be given if Messiah sinned; yet Christ was chastened with the rod of men "and with the stripes of the children of men", i.e. Israel (Is. 53:5; 1 Pet. 2:24; Mic. 5:1), in His death on the cross. Although He didn’t sin, Christ received this punishment; because God counted Him as if He were a sinner- because of His deep and willing association with us there. We must confirm that connection He made between Him and us by confessing our sins and being baptized into His death (Rom. 6:3-5) so that He becomes before God our representative.

7:16 “I will establish the throne of his (Christ’s) kingdom for ever... your (David’s) house and your kingdom... your throne shall be established for ever” (:13,16 cf. Is. 9:6,7) shows that Christ’s kingdom will therefore be based on David’s kingdom of Israel; this means that the coming kingdom of God will be a re-establishment of the kingdom of Israel (Ez. 21:25-27; Acts 1:11). To fulfil this promise, Christ must reign on David’s “throne”, or place of rulership. This was literally in Jerusalem. Thus the kingdom must be established here on earth at Christ’s return in order to fulfil these promises.

*Established for ever before you*- “Before you” suggests that David would witness the establishment of Christ’s eternal kingdom. This was therefore an indirect promise that he would be resurrected at Christ’s return so that he could see with his own eyes the kingdom being set up world-wide, with Jesus reigning from Jerusalem.

7:18 David was humbled when he received the promises, just as we should be by realizing that we really are in covenant relationship with God. “Who am I…?” was his response (2 Sam. 7:18). Like Jacob, he felt himself unworthy of all the “mercy and truth” shown him in the promises (Gen. 32:10).

7:18-20 The promises to David are described as the mercy of God (Is. 55:3; Ps. 89:33,34). God having a son is the sign of His love for us, and this must elicit a response in us. David himself marvelled that such mercy had been shown to him. Soon afterwards, we read of how David made a renewed attempt to show mercy to the house of Saul. Mephibosheth says that he is "your servant… what is your servant, that you should look upon such… as I am?" (9:8). Mephibosheth is using the very words which David used to God; David is showing mercy to Mephibosheth in the very way in which the promises of God to him were the "mercies" shown to David. Appreciating that the promises concern us personally, and that they reveal such loving grace from the Father, can only lead to a similar response in showing love and grace through entering into the lives and destinies of others.

8:4 *But reserved of them for one hundred chariots*- The king of Israel was not have chariot horses (Dt. 17:16). David destroyed most of them, but kept a few for himself. This weakness which he allowed himself led to his son Solomon becoming obsessed with horses and chariots, trading with Egypt in order to get them, and turning away from God completely. Weaknesses which we may allow ourselves can lead to others taking them much further and losing their faith. David seems to have tried to ‘get around’ God’s intention that the king of Israel trust in the heavenly cherubim horses and chariots of Angels rather than human ones; for he hamstrung the horses, so that they could only breed and not be used for work. But of course the next generation of horses were his. If we have a heart for God we won’t seek to get around His laws or have a little of both- obedience to Him and also the ways of this world. Yet despite David’s weakness in this matter, God still gave him victory and blessing (:5,6). We shouldn’t turn away from other believers because we perceive in them some weakness; for God doesn’t treat us nor any of His children like that.

8:13 *David made himself a name*- A name in Hebrew thought isn’t merely a personal identification tab, it speaks of a person’s achievements and character- hence the significance of God’s Name (Ex. 34:4-6) being His character and personality. By baptism into the Name, all God’s righteousness is counted to us.

8:17 Those who had faithfully followed David in his wilderness years, when he seemed a hopeless cause, were the ones who later became the rulers in his kingdom. We who follow Jesus now will be the rulers in His Kingdom (Rev. 5:10).

9:1 We too should consciously seek out opportunities to show grace, even to the relatives of our enemies. We have been shown kindness or grace from God (:3) and we should respond to this by reflecting it to others, thinking up ways to do so as God has done to us. The challenge is to ask ourselves when was the last time we thought up a way of showing grace to others.

9:8 See on 7:18-20. To be invited to eat bread at someone’s table was a sign of their grace and acceptance of you. We who are in Christ are openly and warmly invited to eat bread at the table of the King of the cosmos; and yet so many can’t be bothered to accept the invitation, or feel unworthy do so. We should note too that it’s not for us to control which of His people Christ invites to His table; we are there as grateful guests, not as the host.

9:13 *He was lame*- Christ taught that He has invited the lame to *His* table and we should also invite them to the table of the Messianic banquet in His future Kingdom on earth (Lk. 14:13,21).

10:3 David had earlier sent messengers to Nabal meaning well to him, and they were rudely rebuffed, resulting in his anger which only Abigail’s grace and wisdom saved him from (1 Sam. 25). And yet here the same situation repeated in its essence when he sent messengers to Hanun who were likewise misinterpreted and rebuffed. Again, David got angry- but there was no Abigail to restrain him, and he did get into an impossible fight… from which by grace God delivered him. David failed to learn from his previous experience; and God repeats situations in our lives too, that we might learn from them and develop. Note how suspicious people were in the societies of those days when they encountered David’s grace (see too 3:24,25); and today too, we tend to disbelieve God’s grace because we haven’t encountered it very often from people.

11:1 *But David stayed at Jerusalem*- When it was the season for a king like himself to be out in battle. The obvious lesson is that when we are doing nothing and not doing what we are intended to, then we are more prone to fall into sin. He appears to recognize his attitude problem in Ps. 30:6: "In my prosperity I said, I shall never be (spiritually) moved". In the lead up to the sin, God had given him victory after victory- leading him to think that he must therefore be spiritually OK because of his many physical blessings (1 Chron. 18:6). His conscience had been blunted by the easy life.

11:2 *He saw a woman*- Christ had His eye on this passage when he spoke about him that "looks on a woman to lust after her” has committed adultery with her already (Mt. 5:28). James 1:14,15 speaks of the process of temptation and sin, in any matter, as looking lustfully upon a woman, with the inevitable result of actually committing the sin. In this he may be interpreting David’s sin as an epitome of all failure. David is our example. Likewise the Lord’s list of the 12 evil things that come out of the heart (Mk 7:15-23): fornication, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, envy, slander, pride, foolishness, evil thoughts… all seem to describe the completeness of David’s sin with Bathsheba. It incorporated all these things, and was not just a one time, lustful failure of the moment.

11:3 *Daughter of Eliam*- David and Uriah knew each other very well; they had spent David's long wilderness years together, and lived next door to each other in Jerusalem (:13; 12:1). Bathsheba had been brought up by Uriah (12:3). She was the daughter of Eliam, who had been another of David’s mighty men (23:34). Presumably he had been killed and Uriah adopted her, bringing her up from babyhood, mothering her by feeding her from his bowl and letting her sleep in his bosom. This may imply that his own wife died early, and that he brought her and his own children up alone, and then married her when she was older. A very special spiritual and emotional bond must have been forged between those who stuck with David as a down and out, and who later on shared in the glory of his kingdom. That Uriah had such easy access to David would have been unthinkable for an ordinary soldier whom David hardly knew. Nathan criticizes David for having "no pity" on Uriah, implying that David well knew the relationship between Uriah and Bathsheba. Moreover, David would have been a larger than life figure for his followers, and Bathsheba would have grown up with this image of David as the saving hero.

11:4 *David sent messengers*- The use of messengers is emphasized throughout the account (3,4,5,6,19,23,27); what David had done would soon become very public knowledge, and it would seem that Uriah himself understood.

*For she was purified from her uncleanness*- Bathsheba's evening washing of herself which exposed her nakedness would have been in response to the principles of the Law. However, the Law didn’t actually state that the woman must wash herself after menstrual uncleanness; but the man who touched her must. So it could be that she had gone beyond the Law in washing herself; such was her spiritual perception, which was a factor in David’s attraction to her. Sexuality and spirituality are related, hence sexual temptation is especially strong for people who on one level respect spiritual principle.

11:21 *Who struck Abimelech the son of Jerubbesheth?*- Joab warned the messenger to quickly explain to David why the soldiers approached so near the wall of Rabbah, because he knew that David would immediately quote an example from the history of Israel, to prove that such an approach was unwise. David's familiarity with the spiritual records of Israel's history and use of them to guide behaviour was therefore well known, and it presumably did not depart from him during the months between his sin and repentance of it; we can retain God’s word in our minds and act upon it whilst at the same time in other areas being deeply displeasing to God.

11:25 *Don’t let this thing displease you*- But those very Hebrew words are used again in :27: "But the thing that David had done displeased Yahweh". No matter how we or others may rationalize and cover up sin, God notices and judges in due time.

12:4 Nathan’s parable about David’s sin with Bathsheba blamed the act on a traveller ‘coming to’ David asking to be satisfied. The traveller of the parable represented David’s lusts which led to adultery and murder, although this was not his usual state of mind- they were as a traveller to him. It’s a helpful picture of how our lusts come to us- from within (Mk. 7:21-23; James 1:13-15), not from any external cosmic being.

12:8 There will be anomalies in the lives of our brethren- just as there are in the lives of us all (if only we would examine ourselves ruthlessly enough to see them). And in some ways at some times, God goes along with them. Thus He gave Saul’s wives to David, which would’ve involved David being married to both a mother and daughter- for he had married Saul’s daughters. And this giving of Saul’s wives to David may not have occurred simply after Saul’s death. For David’s eldest son, Amnon, was borne by Ahinoam (3:2), who was initially Saul’s wife (1 Sam. 14:50). Now this is not to justify sin. Adultery, taking another’s wife or husband, is all wrong. Let there be no mistake. But God at times sees the bigger, or longer, perspective, and tolerates things which we may quite rightly find intolerable. And if He loves us despite of our sin and failure- are we surprised that we are invited to show love to others in the face of their sin and failure toward us? A black and white insistence upon God’s standards being upheld in the lives of others, demanding their repentance for having hurt us, is what has caused so much division between believers. Whilst God alone will apportion the guilt for this, in the final algorithm of Divine judgment, it’s worth observing that the fault for division isn’t always with the sinners, the wider thinkers, the freewheelers; but with the inflexible intolerance of those in power.

*If that would have been too little, I would have added to you*- This seems to be saying that God would have made concessions to David's sexual weakness, even further than the ones He had already made. It is as if God had prepared those concessions on different levels. If David had felt that he needed yet more sexual fulfilment, God had a way prepared to meet this. Yet David took it into his own hands to decide what God would concede to him. However, God's concessions to David cannot necessarily be extrapolated to our lives today. “Too little” recalls 7:19, where the promises to David are described as a “little thing”; the promises were so wonderful that David should not have allowed himself to fall into such sin. And us likewise. Such is the wonder of God’s promise to us that we really have no excuse to sin. Every sin is in a sense a denial of His promises.

12:9 David murdered, committed adultery and even the deadly sin of presumption (cp. Num. 15:31). All of which required his death; and yet he is held up in Rom. 4:7 as representative of each and every sinner. Only if we appreciate the seriousness of our position before God will we be able to feel true joy, peace and commitment after realizing our forgiveness. Note how God reads our motives; He saw David as if he had killed Uriah with his sword; even though David's command to Joab to retire from Uriah and let the Ammonites kill him was carefully calculated not to break the letter of the law.

12:9,10 David "despised the word of Yahweh... you despised Me". His attitude to God's word was his attitude to God- for the word of God, in that sense, was and is God.

12:13 David’s “I have sinned” is word for word what Saul said at his condemnation (1 Sam. 15:24). David then lies all night upon the earth, refuses to eat, people try to raise him up from the ground, and then they succeed in setting bread before him and he eats it (:16,17,20). David was consciously doing exactly what Saul did in 1 Sam. 28:20-25, the night before his death / condemnation. David was recognizing, of his own volition, that he was no better than Saul. And by doing this, he was saved. Unlike Saul, he altered the verdict of condemnation by meaningful repentance. Paul makes the point that if we condemn ourselves, we will not be condemned (1 Cor. 11:31). The terms of the judgment pronounced against him are framed to echo the rejection and condemnation of Saul. He despised the commandment of Yahweh (:9) as did Saul (1 Sam. 15:29). Evil was raised up against David out of his own house (:11)- what happened to Saul (1 Sam. 20:30). David’s wives were given to his neighbour (:11), as Saul’s wives were (12:8; 1 Sam. 15:28; 28:17).

*You will not die-* David at that moment represents us all, today. The Spirit changes David’s personal reflections upon this forgiveness in Ps. 32:1 ("Blessed is he”) to "blessed are they" (Rom. 4:7) to make this point. "Blessed is the man (e.g. David, or any sinner- David is our example) unto whom the Lord imputes not iniquity" (Ps. 32:2) is alluded to in 2 Cor. 5:19: "God was in Christ... not imputing (the world's) trespasses unto them". Through being justified, any repentant sinner will then have the characteristics of Christ, in God's sight. In Christ there was no guile (1 Pet. 2:22), as there was not in David (or any other believer) after the justification of forgiveness (Ps. 32:2). "Blessed is the man... in whose spirit is no guile" (Ps. 32:2) is picked up in Rev.14:5: "In their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God". The picture of forgiven David in Ps. 32 is what we will each be like after acceptance "before the throne of God". Yet David's experience can also be ours here and now; in those moments of true contrition, we surely are experiencing salvation in prospect.

12:16 Prayer and repentance can change God's stated purpose. Prayer changes things. It really does. What would otherwise have happened can be changed by prayer. We, little and tiny humans, can change the mind of Almighty God. This is the extent of His sensitivity to us. Moses, Samuel and Jeremiah had the power to within limits change God’s mind towards His people (Jer. 15:1). David prayed and fasted for his child by Bathsheba not to die- even though God had said that it would. He clearly believed that God was a God who was open to changing in response to prayer.

12:23 This verse is sure proof that David didn’t believe that dead children go to live in Heaven; there is no immortal soul taught in the Bible.

12:28 Whatever carried the name of a person was seen as his property. If a city was conquered, it bore the name of the conqueror, as here; the names of owners were on their property (Ps. 49:12); and in this context, God's Name is over His people (Dt. 28:10). So to bear God's Name is to recognize His complete ownership and even conquest of us. By baptism into His Name we become totally His. And yet there's a significant twist to all this in Is. 43:1: "I have called you by your name, because you are mine". It seems like a slip- we expect God to say that He has called us by His Name, because we are His. But no- He wishes us to bear both His Name and our own name, He doesn't wish to subsume us beneath His ownership and manifestation to the point that we are not significant as persons.

13:15 Any giving in to the lust of the flesh, especially sexually, can never bring happiness but rather yet more anguish. This incident teaches clearly enough that sexual desire and love aren’t always the same thing.

13:20 There are Biblical examples of refusing to take guilt when others feel that it should be taken. Recall how the Lord’s own parents blamed Him for ‘making them anxious’ by ‘irresponsibly’ remaining behind in the temple. The Lord refused to take any guilt, didn’t apologize, and even gently rebuked them (Lk. 2:42-51). In similar vein, Paul wrote to the Corinthians: “Even if I made you sorry with a letter, I do not regret it” (2 Cor. 7:8). He would not take guilt for their being upset with him. Likewise Absalom comforted his raped sister not to ‘take it to heart’, not to feel guilty about it, as it seems she was feeling that way, taking false guilt upon her. We should take true guilt before God for our actual sins, and not allow others to put guilt on us.

14:8-10 The slayer of innocent blood was to be slain without pity, and this would in fact bring some kind of blessing: "that it may go well with you" (Dt. 19:13). But David seems to have stepped up to a higher level when he told the woman of Tekoah that he would protect her son from revenge murder, after he had slain another man. The woman pointed out that if her son was slain, the inheritance would be lost in her husband's name. Here was a case where two principles seemed to be at variance: the need to slay the guilty, and the need to preserve the inheritance. The higher level was to forgive the slayer of innocent blood, even though the Law categorically stated that he should be slain.

14:11 The woman of Tekoah wanted David to show mercy, and so she says: "Let the king remember Yahweh your God”. To be aware of who Yahweh is, of the characteristics outlined in Ex. 34:5-7 that comprise His Name… this must surely affect our behaviour, seeing we bear that Name. It is an understanding of the Name that inspires our faith in forgiveness and our ability to show grace.

14:13 The woman understood the implications of the promise in Eden when she tells David that God “devises means” to bring back the banished and expelled to Him. Whom did God banish? Adam, and all his children. But God ‘devised means’ through the promises of Gen. 3:15 so that this banishment was not permanent expulsion. The means devised was the death and resurrection of His Son, the seed of the woman. But the woman’s point was that as God sought to restore His banished sons, through the pain and cost to Him of the blood of His Son, so we ought to likewise be inspired to win back the banished. And so we look to those banished from ecclesial life by disfellowship, church politics, personal animosities of past decades, or simply their own outright sins; or those marginalized by poverty, education, disability, health, geography… these are the banished whom we ought to be winning back.

14:14 Her point was that as God in some sense breaks His own laws, e.g. that sin leads to permanent death, so surely David likewise could have the same spirit of grace and bring about the salvation of someone rightly appointed to death. Legalism fails to understand grace.

14:20 The woman thought that Angels know everything and therefore David was like an Angel (2 Sam. 14:20). Angels don’t know *everything* (Mt. 24:36). Yet the woman’s immature concept isn’t corrected, just as wrong understandings of demons weren’t.

15:8 *If Yahweh shall indeed bring me again to Jerusalem, then I will serve Yahweh*- Absalom was quoting the words of Jacob in Gen. 28:20,21. But a little reflection ought to have shown that these were the words of Jacob in a very weak part of his life. Both Jacob and Absalom should’ve wanted to serve God anyway, whether or not He gave them blessing in this life. Absalom thought that all would be good for him just by quoting the words of the Bible and thus identifying himself with a righteous man (even though he paid no attention to the context of his quotation). This kind of surface level Biblicism and spirituality can easily happen today as a cover for simply doing what the flesh naturally wants to do.

15:13 *The hearts of the men of Israel are after Absalom*- The record of the various rebellions against David show how fickle are the hearts of men; they changed loyalty so easily according to whatever seemed to offer them the most immediate advantage; just as a study of the theme of “the crowds” in the Gospels shows the same. For all their apparent culture, sophistication and education, people’s hearts today are the same, and we can never trust in human loyalty generally; although our experience with God’s people can be amazingly better.

15:23 *The brook Kidron*- David’s exit from Jerusalem has many similarities with Christ’s crossing the brook Kidron and the mount of Olives (:30) and going to His death, surrounded by a few faithful followers who had promised to follow Him to the death (:21 = Mt. 26:35). The support which David had within the Jerusalem leadership points forward to that of Joseph and Nicodemus for Christ at the time of His betrayal and final rejection.

16:2 This unexpected grace formed the basis of Ps. 23, where David marvels at God’s kindness in furnishing a feast for him in the wilderness at the very time that it seemed he was walking in the valley of the shadow of death. Sometimes God does things like this in our lives too- His grace bursts into the darkness of a situation.

16:10 Shimei was a wicked man who hated God's servant David. God told him to curse David. Afterwards, Shimei repents and acknowledges that by doing so he sinned (2 Sam. 19:20). And although David recognized that God had told Shimei to curse him, David tells Solomon not to hold Shimei "guiltless" for how he had cursed him (1 Kings 2:9). Thus a man is encouraged by God to do the sinful act in which he has set his heart.

16:18 This is one of several Biblical examples of untruth being told in vague, ambiguous terms in order to save others’ lives. See on 17:20.

16:21 Ahithophel was Bathsheba’s grandfather (11:3 cp. 23:34); his inability to forgive David despite his evident repentance and the Divine blessing of the marriage led him to a bitterness which led him to death.

16:22 From this we could infer that David lay with Bathsheba in that same place on the roof top. This is significant insofar as it shows how exactly the thought leads to the action. David's thoughts in that spot were translated into that very action, in precisely the same physical location. The roof top is also the place of prayer, and in this we see the schizophrenic nature of David’s spirituality; he went to pray, and then stood at the edge of the roof in order to view Bathsheba, with his hands on the railing around the roof which surely he would have erected, in obedience to the Law. And he realized that it was evening, and that in accordance with the Law’s principles a menstruating woman ought to wash and be unclean until the evening. In this we see the mixing of flesh and spirit which is at the root of most of our failings.  See on 11:4.

17:11 *As the sand that is by the sea for multitude*- Baptism means that we are now the seed of Abraham, and the promised blessings are right now being fulfilled in us (Acts 3:27-29). Israel were multiplied as the sand on the sea shore (1 Kings 4:20), they possessed the gates of their enemies (Dt. 17:2; 18:6)- all in antitype of how Abraham's future seed would also receive the promised blessings in their mortal experience, as well as in the eternal blessedness of the future Kingdom.

17:14 Ahithophel advised Absalom to attack and kill righteous king David without any more delay. Absalom refused this advice. The inspired record comments: “For Yahweh had ordained to defeat the good counsel of Ahithophel”. Was it really good counsel? Not in God’s eyes. It was only ‘good’ for Absalom from a fleshly viewpoint. And yet the record speaks from Absalom’s perspective; it speaks of something definitely evil as being “good” within the context in which it was given. Thus the record here refers to men’s bad thinking as if it is correct. This principle explains why the New Testament uses the language of demons to describe mental illness, even though demons don’t exist and God is all powerful.

17:20 *They have gone over the brook of water*- The Hebrew is ambiguous; they were literally over the water in that they were hiding over a well (:18). See on 16:18.

17:23 Ahithophel was like so many people- giving up his life, even if not everyone does it by suicide, because he felt he had failed, he ran out of highway and lost his political power to others. For those in Christ, life becomes valuable; we number our days with wisdom (Ps. 90:12). We no longer fear failure, for firstly we know there is forgiveness in Christ; and secondly, our realization will be that we’re on a journey, living the real life of ultimate discovery and adventure, able to live with the fears which this presents to us. Failure is no longer a problem to us; for the aim of the Kingdom is ever before us. Our failures are nothing more than temporary setbacks, as the baby who stretches out her hands to the lamp on the ceiling and cries because she can’t reach it. We take them all, even our sins, in the spirit of the cross- the supreme failure which became the supreme triumph of God and the spiritual person.

18:3 David was described as the chiefest among ten thousand, and yet this is how Solomon’s illegal girlfriend describes him (Song 5:10). He had clearly told her all about his father David- and she evidently pleased Solomon by describing him as being like his father, even though she probably had never known David. He sought a wife who would be a surrogate parent rather than someone he could serve and assist towards God’s Kingdom.

18:27 *He is a good man, and comes with good news*- This is the kind of comment which would be uttered by someone in David’s position, and it has total psychological credibility. This kind of thing gives us every confidence that the Bible is indeed the inspired record of the actual words spoken by people thousands of years ago. We also note that what David says here is typical of our human tendency to associate the nature of the messenger with the message. The good news of the Gospel must be associated with the ‘goodness’ of the messenger. The Greek word evangelion translated 'Gospel' means, strictly, 'good news that is being passed on'; for example, the good news of a victory was passed on by runners to the capital city. It reflects the Hebrew association of carrying tidings, and good news which we see here. Once it had been spread around and everyone knew it, it ceased to be evangelion; it was no longer news that needed to be passed on. But in that time when there was a special urgency to pass it on, it was evangelion. This is to be the spirit of our spreading of the news about Christ; such heralding is not the same as lecturing or indifferently mentioning facts to someone. Such lecturing seeks no result; whereas the herald of God has an urgency and breathlessness about his message. There must be a passion and enthusiasm in us for the message of Christ and His Kingdom. More to be feared than over emotionalism is the dry, detached utterance of facts which has neither heart nor soul in it. Man’s peril, Christ’s salvation… these things cannot mean so little to us that we feel no warmth or passion rise within us as we speak about them. Remember how the early preachers were so enthusiastic in their witness that they were thought to be drunk. We are insistently pressing our good news upon others- evangelising.

19:6 Material relevant to David is applied directly to all believers in the New Testament, thus setting him up as our example and realistic pattern rather than merely a historical figure. Joab's comment about the way David loved his enemies was thus set up by Jesus as the example for each of us (Mt. 5:44). And yet David only came to be so kind and forgiving because of his experience of God's forgiveness to him over the Bathsheba incident. Just as God did not impute iniquity to David over this (Ps. 32:2), so David did not 'impute iniquity' to Shimei for cursing him, and did not carry out a rightful death sentence against that man (:19,21). Note how Shimei uses the very same wording which David used in his repentance: "I have sinned" (:20).

19:11 “We are of (Christ's) bones and flesh” (Eph. 5:32) is a direct allusion back to the way David called the men of Judah who were not enthusiastic for his return in glory "my bones and my flesh". How much more intimate then can we feel to Christ, we who are baptized into His body and who look for His return eagerly?

19:14 *He bowed the heart of all the men of Judah*- See on 15:13.

19:22 This is an example of where we read of Israel’s King having a human being who was an adversary [Heb. Satan, the Greek Septuagint version here uses diabolos]. There are other such examples in 1 Sam. 29:4; 1 Kings 5:4; 11:14,23,25). We face a simple choice – if we believe that every reference to ‘Satan’ or ‘Devil’ refers to an evil cosmic being, then we have to assume that these people weren’t people at all, and that even good men like David were evil. The far more natural reading of these passages is surely that ‘Satan’ is simply a word meaning ‘adversary’, and can be applied to people [good and bad], and even God Himself – it carries no pejorative, sinister meaning as a word. The idea is sometimes used to describe our greatest adversary, i.e. our own sin, and at times for whole systems or empires which stand opposed to the people of God and personify sinfulness and evil. But it seems obvious that it is a bizarre approach to Bible reading to insist that whenever we meet these words ‘Satan’ and ‘Devil’, we are to understand them as references to a personal, supernatural being. See on 24:1.

19:23 David graciously overlooked Shimei's cursing, promising him that he would not die because of it (16:10,11). But he didn't keep up that level of grace to the end: he later asked Solomon to ensure that Shimei was killed for that incident (1 Kings 2:8,9). Perhaps it was Shimei’s words which so broke David’s heart that he later wrote: “Because that he remembered not to show mercy, but persecuted the poor and needy man… as he loved cursing, so let it come unto him; as he delighted not in blessing, so may it be far from him. He clothed himself also with cursing as with a garment…” (Ps. 109:16-18).

19:28 To be invited to sit at the King's table is an honour indeed; we have this invitation to break bread with Jesus the King.

19:35 Even in the cynicism of Ecclesiastes, written in Solomon’s later life, he still uses words and phrases which have their root in his father David- e.g. his description of women as snares in Ecc. 7:26 goes back to how his father dealt with women who were a snare (1 Sam. 18:21); his whole description of old age in Ecc. 12 is based on his father’s experience with Barzillai here. The simple point is that the influence we have upon our children will continue all their lives, even into their old age.

20:2 *All the men of Israel changed*- See on 15:13.

20:5 As Samuel tarried longer than Saul expected (1 Sam. 13:8), so Amasa "tarried longer than the set time which [David] had appointed him". Circumstances repeat within our lives and also between our experiences and those of characters in Biblical history. God through His Angels is working out a script for us, so that potentially we are enabled to see that God is teaching us through repetition and through re-framing circumstances in different contexts to see if we have really learnt the lesson intended. We learn from this that we are not in the hands of random fate, but rather there is meaning attached to every event, even if we can’t immediately discern it- and perhaps in some cases we will only finally discern it in the Kingdom.

20:8 It seemed that the sword at Joab’s side accidentally fell out of its scabbard as he went toward Amasa to greet him– but it was on purpose, of course. The Bible at times like this is recording situations according to how they appear to men, rather than how they are in ultimate reality. This helps us understand the apparently non-scientific parts of the Bible, e.g. the attribution of mental illness to ‘demons’ in the New Testament.

20:10 *Amasa took no heed to the sword*- Drivers can see a collision coming, but not swerve; there is a lack of cognition somewhere in the human psyche. Pilots take off at times knowing that their wings are frozen, and crash. Amasa saw the sword and must have seen the possibility of death, but didn’t take cognisance of it. Samson must have known, on one level, what Delilah would do. Jesus too was human, and knew what Judas would do from the beginning; and yet felt and acted as if He hadn’t taken cognisance of it. But mankind is in partial amnesia, somewhere, somehow, we fail to recognize the obvious. Likewise with the nearness of the Lord’s return, with the urgency of our task in witness, with the evident need to follow God’s word- this lack of cognisance so often comes into play. We really ought to pray, earnestly, for open hearts and eyes and obedient lives before our daily reading.

20:24 *The men subject to forced labour*- 1 Kings 12:4

21:1 *There was a famine*- Innocent people suffered because of others’ sin. This is why babies die and why we all suffer as the result of Adam’s sin. The sinfulness of sin is largely in the effect which it has upon others. God will not force people not to sin, because He has given humanity genuine freewill; and because of this, He will not shield others from the consequences of sin, because sin and its consequence cannot be divided; sin is the consequence of the sin.

21:16,18 The “mighty men” of Gen. 6:4 weren’t anything other than ordinary men, even if they were very large in size; that text is no proof for misguided ideas about Angels sleeping with women on earth. Here and in Dt. 3:11, the same term is used about ordinary men who could be killed; the Rephaim had children like other human beings, inhabiting an area known as the valley of Rephaim (Josh. 15:8).

21:22 *These four were born to the giant in Gath*- David killed Goliath but took five stones to do the job, only one of which he used (1 Sam. 17:40). He was spiritually ambitious (as we should be), and so he had planned to kill Goliath’s four giant sons too. Our notes on 1 Sam. 17 show that David’s victory over Goliath was typical of Christ’s conquest of sin on the cross; this should inspire us to rise up against the other giants of sin which we encounter, inspired by Christ’s victory there. Hence we read that Goliath’s sons died at the hand of David’s men and in that sense also at David’s hand.

22:6 “The cords of Sheol” are paralleled in the poetry here with “the snares of death”. ‘Sheol’ is the Hebrew word often translated “grave” in many Bibles, and refers simply to the grave and death rather than any supposed place of fiery punishment for the wicked. Righteous David ‘went there’ in that he was close to death; Christ also died and was in the grave, so it clearly isn’t a place where only the wicked go.

22:7 *My cry came into His ears*- This is the wonder of prayer. Our actual words are personally heard by the God who is so far away; and He acts mightily on earth (:8) in response.

22:8 “The earth” is paralleled with “the foundations of heaven”. This (and also Job 26:11; 1 Sam. 2:8) speaks as if Heaven / the sky rests on the mountains, from where earth seems to touch the heavens (Is. 13:5), with the stars stretched out in the north (Job 26:7). Prov. 8:28 speaks of God establishing “the clouds *above*”, and the surrounding context seems to describe God as forming the sky around the earth and then putting a horizon in place – just the sort of scientifically incorrect geo–centric view held by people at the time. The point surely was that *however* people understood creation to be or to have happened, God had done it, and in wisdom. God adds no footnote to David’s words, pointing out his understanding to be incorrect. This is important to bear in mind in our days, as we who believe in God as creator encounter so many scientific theories about the origin of our world.

22:10 God Himself is spoken of as coming, descending etc. when He ‘preaches’ to humanity (see too Gen. 11:5; Ex. 19:20; Num. 11:25; in this sense Christ ‘went to’ people and preached without going Himself personally, 1 Pet. 3:19). We are therefore very intensely manifesting Him whenever we take His word to others, and our behaviour should reflect that.

22:11 The Old Testament describes Yahweh, the one true God, as riding through the heavens on chariots to the help of His people Israel (see too Dt. 33:26; Ps. 18:10; 104:3; Is. 19:1; Hab. 3:8). But Baal was known as ‘the one who rides upon the clouds’. Clearly the language of Baal is being appropriated to Yahweh, teaching Israel that there was no other God apart from God, no cosmic satan bringing evil, no gods of good bringing blessing- all was from Yahweh (Is. 45:5-7). Often the Bible alludes to contemporary language used about false beliefs and deconstructs them, and the passages which do this are often misunderstood because readers are unaware of the local language and ideas being deconstructed.

22:21-25 David at the end of his life could say that he was upright and had kept himself from his iniquity- despite his sins concerning Bathsheba and Uriah. He could only say this by a clear understanding of the concept of imputed righteousness (Ps. 32:1-8), believing that he was totally “purified” from the past (:27). He really believed it and felt it, as we should. Paul's claim to have always lived in a pure conscience must be seen in the same way (Acts 23:1; 2 Tim. 1:3)- when there were times when he kicked against the goads in his conscience (Acts 9:5).

22:26 *To have bowed the neck-* The Hebrew word only occurs elsewhere in Prov. 25:10 concerning 'bowing the neck' in shame or reverence. And this is what the Hebrew means: to bow the neck. This, David recognized in his time of spiritual maturity, was what God does in response to those who show a truly spiritual attitude to their brethren. David thus recognized the humility of God; all the characteristics we are asked to demonstrate are emulations of His characteristics, and humility is one of them.

22:31 David was very much involved in Israel his people. He saw himself as their representative. "God, *my* rock [is] my shield... he is a shield to all those who take refuge in Him" (:3,31). “I am in distress; let us fall now into the hand of Yahweh” (24:14) reflects this. When he sung Psalms, he invited Israel to come and sing along with him (Ps. 105:2; 107:22; 111:1). In this we see foreshadowed the representative nature of the work, being and sacrifice of Jesus.

23:2 The inspired writers of the Bible spoke their words because God’s Spirit was moving them (1 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:19-21).

23:4 *Like the clear shining after rain*- David was talking about his promised descendant, Jesus, for he knew his own immediate family wasn’t going to totally fulfil the promises to him about the Kingdom of God (:5). Christ’s future Kingdom will be like the dawn of a new day in which He is like the sun (Mal. 4:2), after the rain of all this world’s problems has finally ended.

23:5 Is. 26:8,9 parallels “the desire of my soul” with “my spirit”; it is the dominant desire of a man. For David, the salvation promised to him through Christ was “all my desire”. The direction of his life was towards that end. 2 Chron. 15:12,15 parallels seeking God with having our whole desire for Him, giving all our heart and soul to Him. God judges a man’s life with regard to where the essential, dominant desire of his heart is focused. And like David, our dominant desire should be for the coming of the Kingdom.

23:6,7 *The ungodly shall be as thorns... the man who touches them must be filled with iron and the staff of a spear. They shall be utterly burned with fire in the same place*- Jesus had this in mind when He taught that only He could root up the weeds; we cannot do so (Mt. 13:24-30). The wicked will be destroyed in the same place (just outside Jerusalem) where Christ was "filled with iron" by the spear thrust. It isn't possible for us to uproot the tares because this can only possibly be done by the One who totally uprooted sin in Himself, dying to it on the cross. This association between Christ's unique right to judge and His victorious death is shown by the way the "thorns" will be burnt in the same area as He was crucified in. Literal Gehenna was in the same vicinity as Golgotha; and this in this sense His death was a foretaste of the future judgment. Phil. 2:9-11 reasons along the same lines; because Christ died for us, He therefore has the right to have every knee bowing to Him at the judgment. On account of being "the Son of man" and yet also being our perfect Messiah, He has the right therefore to be judge (Jn. 5:27 cp. Dan. 7:13,14).

24:1 The books of Samuel and Chronicles are parallel accounts of the same incidents, as the four gospels are records of the same events but using different language. 2 Sam. 24:1 says that Yahweh moved David against Israel in order to make him take a census of Israel. The parallel account in 1 Chron. 21:1 says that “Satan” moved David to take the census. In one passage God does the ‘moving’, in the other Satan does it. The only conclusion is that God acted as a ‘Satan’ or adversary to David. He did the same to Job by bringing trials into his life, so that Job said about God: “With the strength of Your hand You oppose me” (Job 30:21); ‘You are acting as a Satan against me’, was what Job was basically saying. The word ‘satan’ of itself carries no sinful or evil connotation; it simply means an adversary. See on 19:22.

24:14 It is truly written in the context of God’s final condemnation that it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God (Heb. 10:31). But David said that he would prefer to fall into the hands of God rather than into the hands of man. To fall into the hands of God is thus a figure for judgment / condemnation by Him. Fearful as it is, it is actually far milder than the judgment of men. This is how cruel our judgment of others can be; this is how awful is human condemnation of each other. It is worse that God’s. No wonder that the Lord established “Judge not…” as a foundation principle for His true people. God is kinder than men. It's better to be punished by Him than by men. This puts paid to the Catholic conception of God as a merciless torturer of wicked men. Clearly the doctrine of eternal torments was invented by men, not God.

24:16,17 Thanks to David building an altar at his own expense and asking God to kill him and his family, God stopped the plague upon Israel; the stretched out hand of God in destruction was what David asked to be upon him and his family. Israel were suffering the effect of their own sin, in not paying the temple tax (Ex. 30:11-16); but in the spirit of Christ, David was willing to die for them. And his dominant desire was counted as if it had been done, and thanks to his self-sacrificial spirit, the people were saved when they personally were unworthy. The wrath of God can be turned away by the actions of those He is angry with (Num. 25:4; Dt. 13:15-17; Ezra 10:14; Jonah 3:7,10; 2 Chron. 12:7; Jer. 4:4; 21:12). And yet that wrath can also be turned away by the prayers of a third party (Ps. 106:23; Jer. 18:20; Job 42:7). This means that in some cases, our prayers for others can be counted as if they have repented. We can gain our brother for God’s Kingdom (Mt. 18:15), as Noah saved his own house by his faithful preparation (Heb. 11:7).