

A READING FROM THE SECOND BOOK OF SAMUEL [5:1-5, 9-10]

All the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron, and said, "Look, we are your bone and flesh. For some time, while Saul was king over us, it was you who led out Israel and brought it in. The LORD said to you: It is you who shall be shepherd of my people Israel, you who shall be ruler over Israel." So all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron; and King David made a covenant with them at Hebron before the LORD, and they anointed David king over Israel. David was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years. At Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months; and at Jerusalem he reigned over all Israel and Judah thirty-three years. David occupied the stronghold, and named it the city of David. David built the city all around from the Millo inwards. And David became greater and greater, for the LORD, the God of hosts, was with him.

The Word of the Lord.

PSALM 48 (said by half-verse)

- 1 Great is the LORD, and highly to be praised; *
in the city of our God is his holy hill.
- 2 Beautiful and lofty, the joy of all the earth, is the hill of Zion, *
the very center of the world and the city of the great King.
- 3 God is in her citadels; *
he is known to be her sure refuge.
- 4 Behold, the kings of the earth assembled *
and marched forward together.
- 5 They looked and were astounded; *
they retreated and fled in terror.
- 6 Trembling seized them there; *
they writhed like a woman in childbirth,
like ships of the sea when the east wind shatters them.
- 7 As we have heard, so have we seen,
in the city of the LORD of hosts, in the city of our God; *
God has established her for ever.
- 8 We have waited in silence on your loving-kindness, O God, *
in the midst of your temple.
- 9 Your praise, like your Name, O God, reaches to the world's end; *
your right hand is full of justice.
- 10 Let Mount Zion be glad
and the cities of Judah rejoice, *
because of your judgments.
- 11 Make the circuit of Zion;
walk round about her; *
count the number of her towers.
- 12 Consider well her bulwarks;
examine her strongholds; *
that you may tell those who come after.
- 13 This God is our God for ever and ever; *
he shall be our guide for evermore.

A READING FROM THE 2ND LETTER TO THE CORINTHIANS [12:2-10]

I know a person in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know; God knows. And I know that such a person—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know; God knows— was caught up into Paradise and heard things that are not to be told, that no mortal is permitted to repeat. On behalf of such a one I will boast, but on my own behalf I will not boast, except of my weaknesses. But if I wish to boast, I will not be a fool, for I will be speaking the truth. But I refrain from it, so that no one may think better of me than what is seen in me or heard from me, even considering the exceptional character of the revelations. Therefore, to keep me from being too elated, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me, to keep me from being too elated. Three times I appealed to the Lord about this, that it would leave me, but he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness.” So, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. Therefore I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities for the sake of Christ; for whenever I am weak, then I am strong.

The Word of the Lord.