

1 SAMUEL

INTRODUCTION TO THE FIRST BOOK OF SAMUEL

This book, in the Hebrew copies, is commonly called Samuel, or the Book of Samuel; in the Syriac version, the Book of Samuel the Prophet; and in the Arabic version, the Book of Samuel the Prophet, which is the First Book of the Kings; and the Septuagint version, the Book of the Kingdom: it has the name of Samuel, because it contains an history of his life and times; and the Jews say ^{f1} it was written by him; and as it may well enough be thought to be, to the end of the twenty fourth chapter; and the rest might be written by Nathan and Gad, as may be gathered from (~~1329~~1 Chronicles 29:29) as also the following book that bears his name; and both may be called the Books of Kings, because they give an account of the rise of the kings in Israel, and of the two first of them; though some think they were written by Jeremiah, as Abarbanel; and others ascribe them to Ezra: however, there is no doubt to be made of it that this book was written by divine inspiration, when we consider the series of its history, its connection and harmony with other parts of Scripture; the several things borrowed from it, or alluded to in the book of Psalms, particularly what is observed in (~~937~~Psalm 113:7,8), seems to be taken out of (~~908~~1 Samuel 2:8), and the sanction which the Lord gives to it, by referring to a fact in it, whereby he stopped the mouths of the Scribes and Pharisees cavilling at his disciples, (~~418~~Matthew 12:3,4), compared with (~~926~~1 Samuel 21:3-6), yea, even, as Huetius ^{f2} observes, some Heathen writers have by their testimonies confirmed some passages in these books, which they seem to have been acquainted with, as Nicolaus of Damascus ^{f3}, and Eupolemus ^{f4}; it contains an history of the government of Eli, and of the birth of Samuel, and his education under him; of the succession of Samuel in it, and the resignation of it to Saul, when he was chosen king; of his administration of his office, and of things done in the time of it, both before and after his rejection, and of the persecution of David by Saul, and is concluded with his death.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO FIRST SAMUEL 1

This chapter gives an account of the parents of Samuel, of the trouble his mother met with from her rival, and comfort from her husband, (^{<0001>}1 Samuel 1:1-8), of her prayer to God for a son, and of her vow to him, should one be given her, (^{<0009>}1 Samuel 1:9-11) of the notice Eli took of her, and of his censure on her, which he afterwards retracted, and comforted her, (^{<0012>}1 Samuel 1:12-18) of her conception and the birth of her son, the nursing and weaning of him, (^{<0019>}1 Samuel 1:19-23) and of the presentation of him to the Lord, with a sacrifice, (^{<0024>}1 Samuel 1:24-28).

Ver. 1. *Now there was a man of Ramathaimzophim, of Mount Ephraim,* etc.] Ramathaim is a word of the dual number, and signifies two Ramahs; the city consisted of two parts, being built perhaps on two hills, and were called Zophim; because, as the Rabbins say, they looked one to another; or rather, because situated on eminences, there were watchtowers in them, where watchmen were placed; or because they were inhabited by prophets, who were sometimes called watchmen, (^{<3017>}Ezekiel 3:17) and here is thought to be a school of the prophets, (see ^{<0019>}1 Samuel 19:19-24) and which seems to be countenanced by the Targum, in which the words are paraphrased thus, “and there was one” man of Ramatha, of the disciples of the prophets; or, as others think, the sense is this, this man was one of the Ramathites, the inhabitants of Ramah, and of the family of Zuph, or the Zuphites, which gave the name to the land of Zuph, and the grand ancestor of Elkanah is in this verse called Zuph, (see ^{<0015>}1 Samuel 9:5). According to Jerom ^{f5}, this is the same with Arimathaea, of which Joseph was, (^{<4257>}Matthew 27:57) for thus he writes,

“Armatha Sophim, the city of Helcanah and Samuel, in the Thamnitic region near Diospolis (or Lydda), from whence was Joseph, who in the Gospels is said to be of Arimathaea;”

but Reland ^{f6} thinks it cannot be the same that was about Lydda, which was all a champaign country; whereas this was in the mountains of Ephraim,

which must be sought to the north of Jerusalem, and not the west, and so it follows:

of Mount Ephraim: which is added to distinguish it from other Ramahs in several tribes, as in Benjamin, Naphtali, etc. though this may refer not to the situation of Ramathaim, but to the country of this man, who was originally of Mount Ephraim, as was the Levite in (^{<0790>}Judges 19:1) who was the cause of much evil to Israel, as this was of great good, as Kimchi observes:

and his name was Elkanah; which signifies “God hath possessed”; that is, possessed him, or he was in possession of God; he had an ancestor of the same name, (^{<1373>}1 Chronicles 6:23). This man was a Levite, one of the Kohathites, and a descendant of Korah; so that the famous prophet Samuel was of the sons of Korah:

the son of Jeroham, the son of Elihu, the son of Tohu, the son of Zuph; the three last of these names are somewhat differently read in (^{<1365>}1 Chronicles 6:26,27), where they are Eliab, Nahath, Zophai; and in (^{<1364>}1 Chronicles 6:34,35). Eliel, Toah, Zuph:

an Ephrathite; which appellation is to be connected, according to Kimchi, not with Elkanah, but with Zuph; though neither of them were so called from Bethlehemjudah, the inhabitants of which were indeed called Ephrathites from Ephratah, another name of it; so Elimelech, and his sons Mahlon and Chilion, being of that city, were so called, (^{<8002>}Ruth 1:2) not from their being of the tribe of Ephraim, as Jeroboam of that tribe is called an Ephrathite, (^{<1113>}1 Kings 11:26), (see ^{<0725>}Judges 12:5) for these were Levites, the descendants of Kohath, in the line of Korah; but because they sojourned in Mount Ephraim, or dwelt there, as Elkanah did; and it is well known that the Kohathites had cities given them in the tribe of Ephraim, (^{<0215>}Joshua 21:5,21).

Ver. 2. *And he had two wives*, etc.] Which, though connived at in those times, was contrary to the original law of marriage; and for which, though a good man, he was chastised, and had a great deal of vexation and trouble, the two wives not agreeing with each other; perhaps not having children by the one so soon as he hoped and wished for, he took another:

the name of the one was Hannah, and the name of the other Peninnah; the first name signifies “grace” or “gracious”, and she was a woman who had the grace of God, and very probably was also very comely, beautiful, and

acceptable, as she was in the sight of her husband; the other signifies a cornered gem, a precious stone or jewel, as the pearl, ruby, amethyst, etc. Very likely Hannah was his first wife, and having no children by her, he took Peninnah, who proved to be a rough diamond: and Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children; how many Peninnah had is not said, perhaps ten; (see ~~1~~ 1 Samuel 1:8) and that Hannah had none was not because she was naturally barren, but because the Lord had shut up her womb, or restrained her from bearing children, to put her upon praying for one, and that the birth of Samuel might be the more remarkable: (see ~~1~~ 1 Samuel 1:5).

Ver. 3. *This man went up out of his city yearly*, etc.] From year to year; or, as the Targum, from the time of the solemn appointed feast to the solemn appointed feast, from one to another; there were three of them in the year, at which all the males in Israel were to appear at the tabernacle; and being a Levite, this man was the more careful to observe this rule. He is said to “go up” out of his city, which was Ramathaim or Ramah; for though it was built on an eminence, from whence it had its name, yet Shiloh, whither he went, was higher; that being, as Adrichomius says ^{f7}, on the highest mountain of all round about Jerusalem, and the highest of all the mountains of the holy land. So that as he first went down the hill from Ramah, he went up an high ascent to Shiloh, which is the place he went up to as follows:

to worship and to sacrifice unto the Lord of hosts in Shiloh; where the tabernacle was, the place of worship, and the altar of burnt offerings, on which sacrifices were offered. This place, according to Bunting ^{f8}, was twelve miles from Ramah, though others say it was not more than seven miles from it; hither he went to worship, or bow before the Lord; to pray unto him, as it is commonly interpreted; and being put before sacrifice, is said to be preferable to that, and more acceptable to God, and more eligible to be done in the tabernacle or temple than at home; (see ~~18:10~~ Luke 18:10) and though he is said to go up to sacrifice, it is not to be understood of his performing it himself, but by others, by the priest; for he himself was a Levite and could not offer sacrifices. This is the first time that mention is made of this title of Jehovah, Lord of hosts, of all the hosts and armies in heaven and in earth, the Lord of Sabaoth, as in (~~5:4~~ James 5:4) from **abx**, an “host”, or army; and from hence the Heathens called some of their deities by the name of Sabazius, as Jupiter Sabazius ^{f9}; and the Phrygians

and Thracians used to call Bacchus Sabazius, and other Grecians following them did the same^{f10}:

and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas the priests of the Lord, were there; Eli was the next judge of Israel after Samson, and who also was the high priest, as is generally supposed; but when and how the high priesthood came into his family is nowhere said, who was a descendant of Ithamar, the younger son of Aaron, in whose line it continued to the time of Solomon; and Josephus^{f11} places three between Phinehas and Eli, who were all of the line of Eleazar, whom he calls Abiezer, Bouci, and Ozis; but their Scripture names are Abishua, Bukki, and Uzzi, (^{<1186>}1 Chronicles 6:50,51). And according to him, after Uzzi came Eli to be high priest, and therefore must be the first of the line of Ithamar that was in that office. His two sons are mentioned as officiating as priests in Shiloh, at the time Elkanah used to go yearly thither to worship and sacrifice; who were very wicked men, as appears by an after account of them; and it is generally thought that this is observed here, to show that the wickedness of these priests did not hinder this good man from doing his duty; nor did he make use of it as an excuse for not attending the worship of the sanctuary.

Ver. 4. *And when the time was that Elkanah offered,* etc.] That is, brought his offering to the priest, to offer it for him, which was at one of the three festivals. According to R. Joshua Ben Levi^{f12}, this was at the time of Pentecost; but Abarbinel thinks it was at the time of the ingathering of the fruits of the earth, which was a time of rejoicing, even the feast of tabernacles, and which is most likely:

he gave to Peninnah his wife, and to all her sons and her daughters, portions; parts of the offering, everyone a part, or portion; by which it appears, that this was a peace offering he offered, the greater part of which belonged to the owner, and which he made a feast of for his family and friends; (see ^{<6125>}Deuteronomy 12:5-7 16:10-15). Jerom^{f13} interprets these portions of garments.

Ver. 5. *But unto Hannah he gave a worthy portion,* etc.] Or, one choice portion, as the Targum; the best part or portion in the peace offering, of what the priest had not; he had the breast and the right shoulder, the next best piece he gave to Hannah; and the word being of the dual number, some render it a double portion; others, “one part of two faces”^{f14}; which Jerom interprets, which might be received with a cheerful countenance, it was so good and excellent in its kind; others interpret it that he gave it with

a sorrowful ^{f15} and displeased countenance, because of the reason following, that she had no children; but Ben Gersom understands it of a part or portion of meat that had two faces or appearances; that he gave her one of the pieces, one part of which was very fat, and the other had no fat on it, so that she might choose what she liked best:

for he loved Hannah; loved her best, and therefore did everything to please her, and make her comfortable under her affliction for want of children, and to express his tender affection for her:

but the Lord had shut up her womb; restrained her from conception, and bearing children; (see ^{<OLD>}Genesis 20:18) or “though the Lord had shut up her womb” ^{f16}; this did not abate his love to her.

Ver. 6. *And her adversary also provoked her sore*, etc.] That is, Peninnah, the other wife of Elkanah; for when a man had more wives, two or more, they were usually at enmity to one another, as the two wives of Socrates were, being always jealous lest one should have more love and respect than the other from the husband; and this woman provoked Hannah one time after another, and continually, by upbraiding her with her barrenness; and this was another reason why Elkanah did all he could to comfort her, not only because the Lord had restrained her from bearing children, but because also she that envied and emulated her sadly provoked her:

for to make her fret; and be uneasy, and murmur at and complain of her unhappy circumstances: some render it, “because she thundered” ^{f17} against her; that is, Peninnah was exceeding loud and clamorous with her reproaches and scoffs, which were grievously provoking to Hannah. So said Socrates, when Xantippe first scolded at him, and then poured foul water on him: did not I say, says he, that Xantippe first thunders, and then rains ^{f18}?

because the Lord had shut up her womb; it was this Peninnah upbraided her with, and at which Hannah fretted and grieved.

Ver. 7. *And as he did so year by year*, etc.] Elkanah went up every year to Shiloh, and offered sacrifices, taking his family with him, and gave to Peninnah and her children their portion, and to Hannah a double portion, or if but one yet the best:

when she went up to the house of the Lord; that is, Peninnah, along with her husband, with whom she went every year to the tabernacle at Shiloh:

so she provoked her; her rival Hannah, upbraiding her with her barrenness; to which she was stirred up by seeing her husband on these festivals take so much notice of her, and show so much love and respect for her, as always to give her the best portion. Abarbinel thinks that Peninnah and Hannah lived at two separate places, the one at Ramah and the other at Ramatha, which both together are called Ramathaim; and that they only met with and saw one another at these festivals, and then it was that the one was so very insulting and provoking to the other:

therefore she wept and did not eat; that is, Hannah wept at the insults, reproaches, and scoffs, cast at her by her antagonist; insomuch that she could not eat of the peace offerings, though her husband always gave her the best part and portion of them; but her grief took away her stomach and appetite, that she could not eat; (see ^{<90B>}Psalm 42:3).

Ver. 8. *Then said Elkanah her husband to her, Hannah, why weepest thou?* etc.] Since it was a time of rejoicing, as every festival was, especially at the ingathering of the fruits of the earth:

and why eatest thou not? since they were at a feast, and she had the best part and portion of the provision:

and why is thy heart grieved? to such a degree that she could neither eat nor drink:

am not I better to thee than ten sons? which, as Jarchi says, Peninnah had borne to him; his meaning is, that the share she had in his love and affections ought to have been esteemed by her more than if she had ten or many children by him; and it suggests that Peninnah would have been glad to have such a share in his affections as Hannah had; and it would have been more eligible to her, than to have borne him so many children as she had.

Ver. 9. *So Hannah rose up after they had eaten in Shiloh, and after they had drank,* etc.] After dinner, after Elkanah and Peninnah, and their children, had eaten heartily, and drank freely, and made a comfortable meal, and even a feast of it, at the place where the tabernacle and altar were, and their peace offerings were offered up, part of which they had been regaling themselves with. The Targum is,

“after she had eaten in Shiloh, and after she had drank;”

for upon the entreaty of her husband, and to make him easy, she might be prevailed upon to eat somewhat, though it might be but little; and to drink, though it was but water; for as for wine and strong drink, she declares afterwards she had not drank, (^{<0015>}1 Samuel 1:15)

now Eli the priest sat upon a seat by a post of the temple of the Lord; for so the tabernacle was called, and sometimes the temple is called a tabernacle, (^{<2400>}Jeremiah 10:20). Now at the door posts and side of the threshold of the temple of the Lord, as the Targum; at the entrance of the great court of the Israelites, Eli had a seat placed, on which he sat; this must be at the gate of the court of the tabernacle, by the pillars of it; for in the court itself none afterwards might sit but kings of the family David ^{f19}; here Eli sat as an high priest and judge, give advice in difficult cases, and to try and judge all causes that were brought before him; some say ^{f20} that he was on this day constituted an high priest, and others say ^{f21} he was now made a judge; but no doubt he was both high priest and judge before this time.

Ver. 10. *And she was in bitterness of soul*, etc.] Because of her barrenness, and the taunts and reflections she had met with on that account; her life was bitter to her, she could take no pleasure in any of the comforts of it:

and prayed unto the Lord, and wept sore; her prayer was with strong crying and tears; it was very fervent and affectionate; she prayed most vehemently, and wept bitterly. This perhaps was about the time of the evening sacrifice, about three or four o'clock in the afternoon; seeing it was after dinner that she arose up and went to prayer in the house of God, at the door of the tabernacle, or near it, as it should seem by the notice Eli took of her, who sat there.

Ver. 11. *And she vowed a vow*, etc.] Which might be confirmed by her husband; otherwise the vow of a woman, if disapproved of by her husband, was not valid, (^{<0008>}Numbers 30:8) and Elkanah might make the same vow his wife did, and so it stood; for as this was a vow of Nazariteship, it is a tradition of the Jews ^{f22}, that a man may vow his son to be a Nazarite, but a woman may not; but as this instance contradicts the tradition, they endeavour to explain away this vow, as it may respect a Nazarite, as will be observed hereafter:

and said, O Lord of hosts; this is properly the first time this title was used by any that we know of; for though it is expressed in (^{<0003>}1 Samuel 1:3)

there it is used as the words of the writer of this history, and so long after this prayer was put up; (see Gill on “~~1~~ Samuel 1:3”); and it is an observation in the Talmud ^{f23}, that from the day God created the world, no man called him the Lord of hosts till Hannah came and called him so:

if thou wilt indeed look upon the affliction of thine handmaid the sorrow of heart she had, the reproach she met with, on account of her having no children:

and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid; which petitions are the same in other words, and are repeated to denote her vehemence and importunity in prayer, and may allude to usages among men, that will look upon a person in distress, and turn away and forget them, and never think of them more; which she deprecates may not be her case with God:

but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child; or, “a seed of men” ^{f24}; a son in the midst of men, as the Targum; such as is desirable by men, as a male child for the most part is; though some Jewish writers interpret it of the seed of righteous, wise, and understanding men, such as be fit to serve the Lord, which seems to be a sense foreign to the text; a man child she asks, because no other could serve the Lord in the temple; and that she meant by this phrase such an one is clear, because she vowed that a razor should not come on its head, which is never said of females, as Kimchi observes:

then will I give him unto the Lord all the days of his life; to serve him, and minister unto him in the sanctuary; being born a Levite, it was incumbent on him to serve the Lord, and he had a right to his service; but then a common Levite did not enter on it until twenty five or thirty years of age, and was not always serving, but was dismissed from it at fifty (~~Numbers~~ Numbers 8:24,25); but the child she vows, if the Lord would give her such an one, should be trained up in his service from his infancy, and continue it all the days of his life; and was to be also a perpetual Nazarite, as Samson was, as follows:

and there shall no razor come upon his head; as was not to come upon a Nazarite, during his Nazariteship, (~~Numbers~~ Numbers 6:5) and as such a vow made by a woman contradicts the tradition of the Jews before mentioned, they give another sense of this clause; as the Targum, which paraphrases it, “and the fear of man shall not be upon him;”

but about this there is a division ^{f25}; but that Samuel was Nazarite, and a perpetual one, is the sense of their best interpreters.

Ver. 12. *And it came to pass, as she continued praying before the Lord,* etc.] Being very earnest and importunate with him to grant her request, and therefore repeated her petition, and prolonged her prayer, being unwilling to let the Lord go, until she had a promise, or some satisfaction, that she should have the thing she liked; some think she continued an hour in prayer:

that Eli marked her mouth; observed the motion of her lips, and no doubt her distorted countenance, and uplifted eyes and hands, but chiefly the former; not knowing what the woman was at, and what could be the meaning of such motions.

Ver. 13. *Now Hannah, she spake in her heart,* etc.] It was mental prayer she used, some ejaculations of her mind she sent up to God, which she was sensible were well known to him, and she needed not to express vocally:

only her lips moved; as her heart spoke, and sent up her petitions, as if she had used words and phrases in form:

but her voice was not heard: that she might not seem to be ostentatious in her prayer, and that she might not interrupt others in their devotions; and she knew that her voice was not necessary with respect to God:

therefore Eli thought she had been drunken; by the motions she made, and gestures she used, as if she was muttering something to herself, and by her long continuance therein, and it being after a feast she had been at with her husband, and the rest of the family; from all which Eli concluded this must be her case.

Ver. 14. *And Eli said unto her, how long wilt thou be drunken?* etc.] What, every day drunk? what, continually in this wicked practice? when will it be stopped? for Eli might have observed on other days, and at other times, odd looks, and a strange behaviour in her, which he took for the effects of drinking too much wine: or how long will this drunken fit last? she had been a considerable time as he thought in it, and it was not gone off yet: the Targum is,

“how long wilt thou behave like a fool, or a mad woman?”

as drunken people generally do act, as if they were fools, or mad:

put away thy wine from thee; not as if she had any with her there to drink of, but he advises her, since it had such an effect upon her, to abstain from it, and wholly disuse it, and so break off such an habit and custom she had got into; or he would have her go home and sleep it out, and wait till she had digested it, and the strength of it was gone off, before she came to such a place of devotion and worship; from hence the Jews say ^{f26} it may be learnt, that a drunken person ought not to pray.

Ver. 15. *And Hannah answered and said, no, my lord*, etc.] That is not my case, you have greatly mistaken it; she answered with great mildness and meekness, without falling into a passion at such a scandalous imputation upon her, and with great respect and reverence to Eli, suitable to his office; so in later times the high priest used to be addressed after this manner, particularly on the day of atonement, “Lord high priest”, do so and so ^{f27}; indeed these words of Hannah are interpreted as not so very respectful, as if the sense was, not a lord art thou in this matter; nor does the Holy Ghost dwell upon thee ^{f28}; which thou hast sufficiently shown, or thou wouldest never have suspected me of drunkenness:

I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit: depressed with trouble and grief on account of afflictions; if she was drunk, it was not with wine, but with sorrow: or “a woman of a hard spirit” ^{f29}; which is sometimes taken in an ill sense, and, according to Abarbinel, is here denied by her, who connects this clause with the preceding thus; not, my lord, am I a woman of a hard spirit, or such a hardened wretch, and such an impudent woman, as I must be, were it so, to come drunk into the house of God, and pretend to pray unto him:

I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink; not any sort of intoxicating liquors that day, neither wine new or old, as the Targum:

but have poured out my soul before the Lord: the affliction of it, as the same paraphrase; the grievances and distresses, the complaints of her soul, which were many, and which she had poured out before the Lord freely and plentifully, and which had taken up some time to do it; (see ^{<90B>}Psalm 42:8 102:1 *title) where phrases similar to this are used, and which seem to be taken from hence.

Ver. 16. *Count not thine handmaid for a daughter of Belial*, etc.] A yokeless, a lawless, impudent, and abandoned creature; one of the most wicked, vilest, and most profligate wretches; as she must be to come drunk

into the sanctuary of God; (see ~~1257~~ 1 Samuel 25:17,25). Drunkenness in man is an abominable crime, but much more in a woman. The Romans^{f30} forbade wine to women, and drunkenness in them was a capital crime, as adultery, or any other; and indeed a drunken woman is liable to all manner of sin:

for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief have I spoken hitherto; out of the abundance of the heart the mouth will speak, whether it is matter of trouble or of joy; the heart of Hannah was full of grief, and her mouth full of complaints, on which she long dwelt, in order to give vent thereunto, and ease herself.

Ver. 17. *Then Eli answered and said, go in peace*, etc.] He found he was mistaken in her, and that her discourse was not only sober and rational, but religious and spiritual; and therefore dismisses her in peace, and bids her not distress herself with what he had said to her, nor with anything she had met with from others, or from the Lord; but expect peace and prosperity, and particularly success in what she had been engaged, and had been solicitous for:

and the God of Israel grant thee thy petition that thou hast asked of him; which may be considered either as a prayer for her, he joining with her in a request to the Lord, that what she had asked might be granted; or as a prophecy that so it would be, it being revealed to him by the Holy Ghost, as the high priest of the Lord; or impressed by an impulse upon his spirit that the favour asked would be given; and therefore she might go home in peace, and with satisfaction of mind.

Ver. 18. *And she said, let thine handmaid find grace in thy sight*, etc.] She had found favour in his sight she perceives, and she desires it might be continued and increased; and that as he had prayed for her, he would still use his interest at the throne of grace for her:

so the woman went her way; took her leave of Eli, and went from the tabernacle to her husband: and did eat; what remained of the peace offerings, which were to be eaten that night, and not left till the morning; and though she would not eat her dinner, her heart was so full of grief, yet she could now make a good supper, being eased and relieved in her mind:

and her countenance was no more sad; sorrowful and dejected, but cheerful, brisk, and lively; believing that her prayers, and those of the high priest, would be answered.

Ver. 19. *And they rose up in the morning early*, etc.] Partly for devotion, and partly for the sake of their journey:

and worshipped before the Lord; went up to the tabernacle, and prayed with their faces towards that part of it, the western part, where stood the ark of the Lord, the symbol of the divine Presence; and when they no doubt gave thanks for all the favours they had received there, and prayed for a safe and prosperous journey home, committing themselves to the care of divine Providence:

and returned, and came to their house to Ramah; or “Ramatha”, the same with Ramathaim, (^{<BOOK>}1 Samuel 1:1). Abarbinel thinks that Elkanah had two houses, one at Ramah for Peninnah, and another at Ramatha for Hannah; and that this was Hannah’s house, to which they returned and came:

and Elkanah knew Hannah his wife: cohabited with her as a man with his wife; it is a modest expression of the conjugal act; (see ^{<BOOK>}Genesis 4:1) and is observed to show that the conception and birth of Samuel were not in a supernatural way, but in the ordinary way and manner of generation:

and the Lord remembered her; the prayer she had made to him, opened her womb, as he had before shut it, and gave her power to conceive.

Ver. 20. *Wherefore it came to pass, when the time was come about, after Hannah had conceived*, etc.] Or, “at the revolutions of days”^{f31}; at the end of a year, of a complete year, as Ben Melech, from their return from Shiloh; for it might be some time after their return that she conceived; or rather the sense is, that at nine months’ end, the usual time of a woman’s going with child from her conception, which is the date here given:

that she bare a son: was brought to bed of a son:

and called his name Samuel, [saying], because I have asked him of the Lord; one would think rather his name should have been Saul, for the reason given; but, as Ben Gersom observes, givers of names are not always grammatically strict and critical in them, or in the etymology of them, as in the names of Reuben and Noah, in which he instances; and this may be the rather overlooked in a woman, than in a man of learning. According to Kimchi, it is as if it was Saulmeel; that is, “asked of God”, and by contraction Samuel; but Hillerus^{f32} gives a better account of this name, and takes it to be composed of Saul-mul-el, “asked before God”, “in the sight of God”, “before the ark of God”. This name Hannah gave her son (for

sometimes the father, and sometimes the mother, gave the name) in memory of the wonderful favour and goodness of God in granting her request; and to impress her own mind with a sense of the obligation she lay under, to perform her vow, and to engage her son the more readily to give up himself to the service of God, when he reflected on his name, and the reason of it.

Ver. 21. *And the man Elkanah, and all his house*, etc.] All his family, excepting Hannah, and her son Samuel; or all the men of his house, as the Targum; for only the males were obliged to appear at the three festivals:

went up to Shiloh; to the house of God there:

to offer unto the Lord the yearly sacrifice; either the passover, to which men commonly went up with their families: (see ^{<124>}Luke 2:41,42), or rather it may be what was offered at the feast of tabernacles, as Abarbinel thinks, the time of the ingathering the fruits of the earth, when men went up with their families to offer sacrifice, and express their joy on that account, (^{<160>}Deuteronomy 16:10-15)

and his vow: which he had made between feast and feast; for whatever vows men made at home, on any account, they paid them at the yearly festivals; and this vow might be on the account of the birth of his son, by way of thanksgiving for that.

Ver. 22. *But Hannah went not up*, etc.] For women, though they might go if they pleased to the yearly feasts, yet they were not obliged to it; whether she went up at the time for her purification, and for the presenting and redemption of the firstborn, is not certain; some say the Levites were not obliged by that law, the perquisites of it falling to them, and so did not go up; others that she did, though it is not expressed, the Scriptures not relating all facts that were done; though by what follows it looks as if she did not:

for she said unto her husband, I will not go up until the child be weaned: which, according to Jarchi, was at the end of twenty two months; but others say at the end of twenty four months, or two years, as Kimchi and Ben Melech; and sometimes a child was three years old before it was weaned, and sometimes longer, which very probably was the case here; (see Gill on ^{<128>}Genesis 21:8"). Comestor ^{f33} observes, there was a three fold weaning of children in old times; the first from their mother's milk, when three years old; the second from their tender age, and care of a dry

nurse, when seven years old; the third from childish manners, when at twelve years of age; and that it is this last and metaphorical weaning which is here meant, when Samuel was twelve years of age, and fit to serve in the temple; but the proper sense is best, since she is said to bring him when weaned: her reason for it seems to be this, because had she went up with her sucking child, she must have brought him back again, since he would not be fit to be left behind, and would be entirely incapable of any kind of service in the sanctuary; and according to the nature of her vow, she could not think of bringing him back again, after she had once entered him there:

and then I will bring him, that he may appear before the Lord; and minister in the service of the sanctuary in what might be suitable to his age; there and then she would present him, and give him up to the Lord, as she had promised she would:

and there abide for ever; that is, as long as he lived; for her vow was that he should be a Nazarite all the days of his life, and be separated to the service of God as long as he had a being in the world.

Ver. 23. *And Elkanah her husband said unto her, do what seemeth thee good,* etc.] He spake like a kind and indulgent husband, knowing that she would not thereby break any law of God; and it might be more for her own health, and the health of the child, to stay longer:

tarry till thou have weaned him; when he would be more fit for the journey, and to be left behind:

only the Lord establish his word; which some understand of the prophecy of Eli that God would grant her request, which being delivered under the direction of the Spirit of God, is called his word; but this was already fulfilled, and established by Hannah's bearing a son: or the word "his" refers not to the Lord, but to Samuel, and so may respect the word which his mother spake concerning him; either when she made her vow, as Abendana, that he should be a perpetual Nazarite, and the Lord's as long as he lived: and so Elkanah wishes that he might have health and grow strong, and be fit for the service of the Lord, and live many years to perform it; or what she had just now said, as Abarbinel, that he should abide in the house of God for ever, or as long as he lived:

so the woman abode; at home, while Elkanah and his family went up to Shiloh:

and gave her son suck until she weaned him; did not put him out to a wet or dry nurse, but suckled him herself with what nature had provided for his nourishment, as becomes women to do, if their circumstances of health, and the provisions of nature, will admit of it.

Ver. 24. *And when she had weaned him*, etc.] At the usual time of weaning children; (see Gill on “⁰⁰¹²³1 Samuel 1:23”) some refer this not only to the milk of the breast, from which he was weaned, but to such food as was common to children, and so supposes him grown up to nine or ten years of age:

she took him up with her; to the tabernacle at Shiloh, at a yearly festival: with three bullocks; for three sorts of offerings, burnt offering, sin offering, and peace offering; or since one only is spoken of as slain, that is, for sacrifice, the other two might be for food to entertain her family and friends with while there; or as a present to the high priest, to whose care she committed her son:

and one ephah of flour; if the bullocks were all sacrificed, three tenth deals, or three tenth parts of the ephah, went for a meat offering to each bullock, which made nine parts out of ten, and the tenth part she had to dispose of at pleasure; (see ⁰⁴⁵⁹Numbers 15:9), though that seems to be restrained to a burnt offering only:

and a bottle of wine; part of which might be for the drink offering which always attended a meat offering, and the rest for her own use, and that of her friends:

and brought him unto the house of the Lord in Shiloh: the tabernacle there, and delivered him up to the care of the high priest, to be trained up in the service of God:

and the child was young; a very child, very young in years, a little infant; not a sucking child, as the Targum, because weaned, otherwise of a very tender age; though some think this expresses that he was a well grown lad, and was sharp and acute, and could well distinguish between good and evil.

Ver. 25. *And they slew a bullock*, etc.] One of the three Hannah brought, unless the singular is put for the plural, and so all three were slain, some for sacrifice, and some for food perhaps; or if only one was slain, it might be offered as a sacrifice previous to the presentation of Samuel; or else was made a present of to Eli, at the introduction of Samuel to him, as follows:

and brought the child to Eli: to be under his care, to be instructed and trained up by him in the service of the tabernacle; from hence it appears that Elkanah the husband of Hannah came along with her at this time.

Ver. 26. *And she said, O my lord,* etc.] According to the Targum, it is a supplication or request, I beseech thee, my lord; that is, to look upon her son, and take him under his care as his disciple or scholar, to instruct him in the law of God, and enter him into his service; to which Eli might be very backward and indifferent, and even treat it with some degree of contempt, that such a young Levite should be brought to him, when the soonest the Levites were admitted was at twenty five years of age:

as thy soul liveth, my lord; which Ben Gersom takes for the form of an oath, as if she swore to the truth of what follows by the life of the high priest; but as it was forbidden to swear by any but by the living God, by his life, it cannot be thought so good a woman as Hannah would be guilty of such a sinful and Heathenish practice; this rather is a wish or prayer for his life and health, and the continuance thereof, to bring up her son in the exercise of true religion:

I am the woman that stood by thee here, praying unto the Lord: by which it appears that Eli was now at the tabernacle, and in the same place he was, (^{<000>}1 Samuel 1:9) when she was some years ago praying near him, at the distance of four cubits, as the Jews say: she takes no notice of his mistaking her for a drunken woman, nor of his censure on her, and the reproof he gave her; but puts him in mind only of her praying to the Lord standing near to him, which made him take the more notice of her; standing is a prayer posture; the Jews say there is no standing but what is prayer, or prayer is meant by it; (see Gill on "^{<005>}Matthew 6:5").

Ver. 27. *For this child I prayed,* etc.] Which she now had in her hand, and was presenting to Eli:

and the Lord hath given me my petition which I asked of him; and which he also desired might be granted her, or foretold that it would be, (^{<007>}1 Samuel 1:17) though perhaps he knew not then particularly what it was she asked; nor did she acquaint him with it at parting, as she now did, having obtained of the Lord what she was so solicitous for, and now makes mention of with thankfulness.

Ver. 28. *Therefore also I have lent him to the Lord*, etc.] To be employed in his service, not for a few days, months, or years, but for his whole life. The Targum is,

“I have delivered him, that he may minister before the Lord;”

as she had received him from him as an answer of prayer, she gave him up to him again according to her vow: as long as he liveth he shall be lent unto the Lord, or as the Targum,

“all the days that he lives he shall be ministering before the Lord;”

or “all the days he shall be asked” (or “required”) by or for the Lord^{f34}; that is, he shall be lent unto him, and serve him as long as it is desired:

and he worshipped the Lord there; in the tabernacle at the same time; either Elkanah, who with Hannah brought the child to Eli, and now gave thanks to God for giving them the child, and prayed unto him that he might be received into the service of the sanctuary; or else Eli, to whom the child was brought for admittance, who when he heard that Hannah’s request was granted, which he had entreated also might be or had declared it would be, bowed his head, and gave thanks to God for it; or rather the child Samuel, as he was taught and trained up, bowed himself before the Lord, and worshipped him in the tabernacle as soon as he was brought into it, though a child; for he only is spoken of in this and the preceding verse; and by some interpreters^{f35} the name Samuel is supplied; the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, read in the plural number, “and they worshipped the Lord there”: that is, Elkanah and his wife; so Mr. Weemse^{f36} translates and interprets it.

CHAPTER 2

INTRODUCTION TO FIRST SAMUEL 2

In this chapter the song of Hannah is recorded, ([1 Samuel 2:1-10](#)), and an account is given of the return of Elkanah and Hannah to their own home, and of the care she took yearly to provide a coat for Samuel, and of her being blessed with many other children, and of the growth and ministry of Samuel before the Lord, ([1 Samuel 2:11,18-21,26](#)), and of the wickedness of the sons of Eli, ([1 Samuel 2:12-17](#)), and of Eli's too gentle treatment of them when he reproved them for it, ([1 Samuel 2:22-25](#)) and of a sharp message sent him from the Lord on that account, threatening destruction to his house, of which the death of his two sons would be a sign, ([1 Samuel 2:27-36](#)).

Ver. 1. *And Hannah prayed and said*, etc.] She had prayed before, but that was mental, this vocal; she had prayed and was answered, and had what she prayed for, and now she gives thanks for it; and thanksgiving is one kind of prayer, or a part of it; (see [1 Timothy 2:1](#) [Philippians 4:6](#)), wherefore though what follows is a song, it was expressed in prayer; and therefore it is said she prayed, and that by a spirit of prophecy, as the Targum; hence she is by the Jews^{f37} reckoned one of the seven prophetesses; and indeed in this song she not only relates the gracious experiences of divine goodness she had been favoured with, and celebrates the divine perfections, and treats of the dealings of God with men, both in a way of providence and grace; but prophesies of things that should be done hereafter in Israel, and particularly of the Messiah and of his kingdom. There is a great likeness in this song to the song of the Virgin Mary; compare ([1 Samuel 2:1](#)) with ([Luke 1:46,47](#)) and ([1 Samuel 2:2](#)) with ([Luke 1:49](#)) and ([1 Samuel 2:4,8](#)) with ([Luke 1:51,53](#)),

my heart rejoiceth in the Lord: not in her son the Lord had given her, but in the goodness and kindness of the Lord in bestowing him on her, as an answer of prayer; which showed great condescension to her, the notice he took of her, the love he had to her, and his well pleasedness in her, and his acceptance of her prayer through Christ; she rejoiced not in her husband, nor in the wealth and riches they were possessed of, nor in any creature

enjoyments, but in the Lord, the giver of all; nor in her religious services and sacrifices, but in the Lord Christ, through whom her duties were acceptable to God, and who was the antitype of the sacrifices offered; and it is in the person, offices, and grace of Christ, that we should alone rejoice: (see ^{¹⁰⁰⁴Philippians 4:4 3:3) this joy of Hannah's was not worldly, but spiritual; not outward, but inward; not hypocritical, but real and hearty:}

mine horn is exalted in the Lord: which supposes that she had been in a low estate, was crest fallen, and her horn was defiled in the dust, as Job says was his case, (^{³⁸¹⁶⁵Job 16:15), when God had shut up her womb, and her adversary upbraided her with it, and provoked and fretted her; and when she was so full of grief, that she could not eat her food, and prayed in the bitterness of her soul; but now she could lift up her horn and her head, as horned creatures, to whom the allusion is, do, when they are lively and strong; now she could look pleasant and cheerful, and even triumph, being raised to an high estate, and greatly favoured of the Lord, to whom she ascribes this change of her state and circumstances: it was owing to his power and grace that she was thus strengthened and exalted; as it is owing to the same, that the people of God, who are in a low estate by nature, are raised out of it in conversion, and brought into an open state of grace and favour with God, and put into the possession of rich blessings and mercies, and have hope of eternal glory, on account of which they can exult and triumph:}

my mouth is enlarged over mine enemies; meaning Peninnah, and those that provoked her, and upbraided her with her barrenness, to whom she was not able to make any reply; but now her mouth was opened, and she could speak largely, and did; not in a way of reproach and reviling, in retaliation for what she had met with from others; but in prayer to God, to whom she could come with open mouth, and use freedom and boldness, and plead with importunity, fervency, and in faith, and in praise and thanksgiving to him for the great and good things he had done for her, and would now freely and largely speak of them to others; to some, her friends, to their joy and pleasure; and to others, her enemies, to their grief and confusion:

because I rejoice in thy salvation; not only in temporal salvation wrought by the Lord for her, whereby she was delivered from the reproach of barrenness, through a son being given unto her; but in spiritual and eternal salvation, through the Messiah, she had knowledge of, and faith in, as

appears from (^{<0120>}1 Samuel 2:10), as all believers in him do, as it is contrived by the wisdom of God, wrought out by Christ, and applied by his Spirit; it being so great, so suitable, so perfect and complete, entirely free, and of an everlasting duration; (see ^{<0115>}Psalm 20:5 ^{<0119>}Isaiah 25:9).

Ver. 2. *There is none holy as the Lord*, etc.] From the consideration of what the Lord had done for her, which had filled her heart and mouth with joy and praise, she is led to celebrate the perfections of God, and begins with his holiness, in which he is glorious, and which appears in all his ways and works; he is essentially, originally, independently, perfectly, and immutably holy, as others are not. Angels are holy, but not of themselves; their holiness is from the Lord; nor is it perfect in comparison of his, and therefore they cover their faces while they celebrate that perfection of his; nor immutable, at least not naturally so, as the loss of it in those that fell demonstrates. Of men, some under the legal dispensation were holy, not truly, but in a typical and ceremonial sense; some are only outwardly and hypocritically holy, and only so in the sight of men, not in the sight of God; and those that are truly holy, being called to holiness, and have the principle of it implanted in them, and live holy lives and conversations; yet though there is a likeness of the holiness of God in them, being made partakers of the divine nature; it is far from an equality to it; for the holiness of the best of men is imperfect; they are not without sin in them, nor without sin committed by them, and perfection is disclaimed by them all; but the Lord is without iniquity, just and true is he; none in his nature, nor in any of his works, not the least shadow thereof:

for [there] is none besides thee; there is no God besides him; no being but what is of him, and none is holy but by him; the holiness of angels is from him; the holiness of Adam in innocence was of him; and all the holiness of his chosen ones comes from him, to which they are chosen by him, and which is secured in that choice unto them, and are sanctified by God the Father, in Christ, and through the Spirit:

neither is there any rock like our God; the word rock is used for Deity, and sometimes for a false one, (^{<0521>}Deuteronomy 32:31) and so it may here, and the sense be, there is no god like to our God; there is indeed none besides him; there are fictitious gods, and nominal ones, as the idols of the Gentiles, and who are so in an improper and figurative sense, as magistrates; but there is but one true and living God; nor is there any like him for the perfections of his nature, and the blessings of his goodness,

whether in providence or grace. Under this metaphor of a rock, our Lord Jesus Christ is often signified; he is the rock of Israel, the rock of refuge, and of salvation; and there is no rock can do what he does, hide and shelter from the justice of God; there is no rock like him for strength and duration; none like him for a foundation to build upon, or for safety and protection from the wrath of God, and the rage of men, (see ^{<1983>} Psalm 18:31).

Ver. 3. *Talk no more so exceeding proudly*, etc.] At such an high rate, in such an overbearing manner, as if above everyone; this may have respect to Peninnah, and all that joined with her to provoke Hannah to anger, and make her fret, insulting and triumphing over her, because she had not children, as they had; but now their mouths would be stopped, and their talk over, and not give themselves the haughty airs they had done, at least there would be no occasion for them:

let not arrogancy come out of your mouth; arrogating to themselves, and to their merits, what they enjoyed, as children, riches, etc. when all come from the Lord; or what is “hard” ^{f38}, intolerable, which bears so hard on those to whom it is said, that it cannot be bore with; or what is “old” ^{f39}, and trite, old sayings concerning barren women, as if of no use in the world, and disagreeable to God, and as having no share in his favour. The Targum renders the word by reproaches, or blasphemies:

for the Lord is a God of knowledge; or knowledges ^{f40}: of perfect knowledge; he knows all persons and things; he knows himself, his perfections, purposes, thoughts, words and works; he knows all his creatures, animate and inanimate, rational and irrational, angels and men; the hearts of all men; all that they say, all their hard sayings, all their proud, haughty, overbearing expressions, calumnies, and reproaches, as well as all they think and all they do, good or bad; and God will sooner or later convince them of and punish them for their hard speeches against his people: and he is the author of all knowledge, natural, civil, spiritual, and evangelical:

and by him actions are weighed: his own actions; his works “ad intra”; his purposes and decrees, the counsels of his will, and the thoughts of his heart, the things his mind is set upon; all his appointments and designs, his whole will and pleasure; all are pondered by him, and are formed with the utmost wisdom, and for the best ends and purposes: and all, his actions and works without, whether of creation, providence, and grace, all are weighed and done according to infinite wisdom, unerring justice and truth; all

respecting things temporal or spiritual, what relate to the outward estate of men, or to their everlasting happiness: all the actions of men, as they are known unto him, they are weighed and examined by him, whether they proceed from a right principle to a right end or not; upon which, many actions, thought to be good, are not found to be so, and others, though good, yet not found perfect before God; so that there is no justification nor salvation by the best: or the sense is, such actions as are done well, they are “directed to him”^{f41}; as they are ordained by him that men should walk in them, they are for his use, and are done with a view to his glory. There is a double reading of these words; the marginal, which we follow, is “to” or “by him” actions are directed or weighed; but the textual reading is a negative, “actions are not weighed”^{f42}, or numbered; the works of God cannot be comprehended, or the actions of men are not disposed and ordered without his will and pleasure, or cannot be performed unless he wills or permits; and all are disposed of, overruled, and directed, to answer his own ends and purposes.

Ver. 4. *The bows of the mighty men are broken*, etc.] Hannah, from relating gracious experiences, and celebrating, the divine perfections of holiness, omniscience, and sovereignty, passes on to take notice of the dealings of God with men in providence and grace; bows are here put for all military arms, which men of might and war make use of, and which God can easily break in pieces, and so make war to cease in the earth, and hinder warlike men from doing what they design and attempt; they are enfeebled and weakened by him, and their hands cannot perform their enterprises: so the bows of Satan, and his principalities and powers, are broken, and his fiery darts are quenched, and the people of the Lord enabled to stand against him, and wrestle with him and them, being strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, as it follows:

and they that stumbled are girt with strength; who, through weakness, are ready to stumble at everything they meet with in the way; yet, being girded with strength by the Lord, are able to do great exploits, as David did, that being his case, (¹⁹⁸⁹Psalm 18:29,32), so such as are weak in grace, in faith, in knowledge, and ready to stumble at every trial and exercise, let it come from what quarter it will; yet being girded by the Lord with strength, are able to exercise grace, perform duty, go through every service they are called to, whether in a way of doing or suffering, to bear the yoke and cross of Christ, to oppose every enemy, to walk on in the ways of God, and to persevere in faith and holiness to the end.

Ver. 5. *They that are full have hired out themselves for bread*, etc.] Such as have been full of the good things of this life have been stripped of all, and reduced to such circumstances as to be obliged to hire themselves out to persons to labour under them for their bread. Hannah has either respect to some instances she had known, or prophecies of what would be hereafter, and was fulfilled in the Israelites, when in the hands of the Egyptians and Assyrians, (Lam 4:6) and may be exemplified in the case of the prodigal son, (^{<40513>}Luke 15:13-16) and is true of such who have larger gifts, but not grace, and which they exercise for lucre sake, and are mere hirelings; and of self-righteous persons who are full of themselves, of their goodness and righteousness, purity, and power; are quite mercenary do all they do for gain, work for life, and labour for perishing meat, and for that which is not bread, and is unsatisfying:

and they that were hungry ceased; that is, from being hungry, being filled with good things, having a large and sufficient supply to satisfy their craving desires, (^{<40513>}Luke 1:53). Such are the changes sometimes in Providence, that those who have lived in great plenty and fulness are obliged to work for their bread; and, on the other hand, such as have been starving, and in furnishing circumstances, have been brought into very plentiful and affluent ones. The “hungry”, in a spiritual sense, are such who hunger and thirst after Christ, and his righteousness, for justification before God; after him and his blood for the remission of their sins, and the cleansing of their souls; after him, and salvation by him, in whom alone it is to be had; after a view of interest in him, and a greater degree of knowledge of him; and after more communion with him in his word and ordinances; and after the enjoyment of them for that purpose: now when they enjoy what they are craving after, they cease to hire out themselves for bread, as others do; they do not cease from working, but from dependence on their works, on which they cannot feed and live, having found and got other and better bread to feed upon; they cease to be hungry, for they are filled and satisfied with the love of God, with the righteousness of Christ, with the blessings of grace, and salvation by him, with the goodness of his house, and with all the fulness of God and Christ; and so having what satisfies them, they desire no other food, shall have no more want, or be in a starving condition any more, especially this will be the case hereafter:

so that the barren hath born seven; meaning herself, who had born many, even five children besides Samuel, (^{<4020>}1 Samuel 2:20,21) which either was

the case before this song was delivered; or rather what she believed would be the case after Eli had blessed her, and prayed for the children by her; seven being a number put for many, (²¹¹⁶Proverbs 24:16 ²¹⁰¹Isaiah 4:1)

and she that hath many children is waxed feeble; and incapable of bearing more; and stripped of what she had; this may be understood of Peninnah, concerning whom the Jews have this tradition ^{f43}, which Jarchi relates, that when Hannah bore one child, Peninnah buried two; and whereas Hannah had five, Peninnah lost all her ten children. This may be applied to the case of the Gentile and Jewish churches, under the Gospel dispensation, when more were the children of the desolate or barren, the Gentiles, than of the married wife, the Jews, (²⁵⁰¹Isaiah 54:1).

Ver. 6. *The Lord killeth, and maketh alive*, etc.] Which is true of different persons; some he takes away by death, and others he preserves and continues in life; and of the same persons, whom God removes by death, and restores them to life again, of which there are instances both in the Old and New Testament; and be they which they will, both are of God, he is the great Disposer of life and death. Death is of him; it is by his appointment; it is sent by his order; and when it has a commission from him, there is no resisting it; and let it be brought about by what means it will, still it is of God: and life is of him; it is first given by him, and it is preserved by him; and though taken away, it shall be restored at the resurrection of the dead; of which some interpret this clause, as Kimchi and Ben Gersom observe: and what is here said is true, in a spiritual sense; the Lord kills by the law, or shows men that they are dead in sin, and in a legal sense; and he makes alive by his Spirit, through the Gospel, quickening such who were dead in trespasses and sins; which is his own work, and the effect of divine power and grace; (see Gill on "⁶⁵²³Deuteronomy 32:39").

he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up; he bringeth some very near to the grave, to the very brink of it; so that in their own apprehensions, and in the opinion of their friends, they are just dropping into it, and no hope of recovery left; when he says to them "Return", and brings them back from the pit, and delivers them from going into it, (¹⁸³²Job 33:22,28,30 ¹⁹¹¹Psalm 90:3) and even when they are laid in it, he brings up out of it again, as in the case of Lazarus, and which will be the case in the resurrection, (¹¹⁵³John 5:28,29).

Ver. 7. *The Lord maketh poor, and maketh rich*, etc.] Which is true in a natural sense of the same persons, as might be exemplified in the case of

Job; and of different persons, as in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus; for both poverty and riches are of God, (see ~~AMP~~ Proverbs 22:2 30:8). Poverty is of God; for though it is sometimes owing to a man's own conduct, yet that there is such a difference among men in general, that some should be poor, and others rich, is owing to the wise providence of God, that men may be dependent on one another. Riches are of God, and are the gifts of his bountiful providence; for though they are oftentimes the fruits of industry and diligence, as means, yet not always; and whenever they are, they are to be ascribed to the blessing of God attending the diligent hand. This is also true in a spiritual sense; for though spiritual poverty is owing to the fall of Adam, and to the actual sins and transgressions of men, whereby they become poor and miserable, yet all this is not without the knowledge and will of God: and it is he that makes men sensible of their poverty, and then makes them rich in spiritual things, with his own grace, and the blessings of it, with the riches of grace here, and of glory hereafter; all which flow from the good will of God, who has laid up much for his people, bestowed much on them, and entitles them to more; and which come to them through the poverty of Christ, who, though he was rich, became poor, that they through his poverty might be made rich, (~~AMP~~ 2 Corinthians 8:9) he bringeth low, and lifteth up; which has been verified in the same persons, as in Job, Nebuchadnezzar, etc. and in different persons, for he puts down one, and raises up another; so he rejected Saul from being king, and took David from the sheepfold, debased Haman, and raised Mordecai to great dignity: and, in a spiritual sense, the Lord shows men the low estate and condition they are brought into by sin, humbles them under a sense of it, brings down their proud spirits to sit at the feet of Jesus, and to submit to him, and to his righteousness; and he lifts them up by his son out of their fallen, captive, and miserable estate, and by his Spirit and grace brings them out of the horrible pit of nature into the state of grace; sets them upon the rock Christ, and makes their mountain to stand strong by the discoveries of his love, and will at last lift them up to glory, and place them on the same throne with Christ.

Ver. 8. *He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill*, etc.] This is but a further illustration of what is before expressed. Literally; such poor as are beggars, are those that are extremely poor, that sit in the dust and beg, and have nothing but a dunghill to lie on; yet God is able to raise and lift up persons in such an extremely low condition to a very high one: spiritually; such are the poor, who are poor in

spirit, and spiritually poor, and are sensible of it, and they, and they only, are beggars. For all that are poor, as they are not sensible of their poverty, so they beg not; but some are and beg; they knock at the door of grace and mercy; their language is petitionary, they entreat the grace and mercy of God; their posture is standing, and waiting till they have an answer; they are importunate, and will not easily take a denial; and they observe all opportunities to get relief, and are thankful for everything that is given then. Their conditions, in which they are, is represented by the “dust” and “dunghill”; which in general denotes that they are in a mean estate, in a sinful one, and in a very polluted and loathsome one; in this condition the Lord finds them, when he calls them by his grace; and from this he raises and lifts them up by his Spirit and grace, out of which they could never have raised themselves; and in which estate of sin and misery they must have lain, had he not exerted his powerful efficacious grace, in bringing them into a glorious one, next described:

to set them among princes the people of God called by grace, who are the sons of the King of kings by adoption, manifested in their regeneration and faith; have a princely spirit, the spirit of adoption, a free, generous, and bountiful one; live and look like princes, are well fed and clothed, and attended; have the riches of princes, and are heirs of a kingdom: and to be set among them, is to be made one, and ranked as such; to have a place and a name in the church, and among the people of God; to sit down with them at the table of the Lord, and have communion with them: and to make them inherit the throne of glory; eternal glory and happiness, which as it is signified by a kingdom and crown, so by a throne, and is the same with Christ’s, (~~Rev~~ Revelation 3:21) and therefore must be a glorious one: and this is had by way of inheritance; not obtained by industry, nor purchased with money; but comes by adoption grace, and belongs only to children, is a bequest of our heavenly Father, and comes through the death of Christ the testator; and this phrase denotes not barely the right unto, but the possession of his happiness and glory:

for the pillars of the earth are the Lord’s, and he hath set the world upon them; the earth has its foundations on which it is laid, and its pillars by which it is supported; but these are no other than the power and providence of God; otherwise the earth is hung upon nothing, in the open circumambient air: and that God can and does do this may well be thought, and to do all the above things in providence and grace, related in the preceding verses; in the support, and for the proof of which, this is

observed. Figuratively, the pillars of the earth may design the princes of the world, the supreme rulers of it, and civil magistrates, who are sometimes called cornerstones, and the shields of the earth, (~~3804~~ Zechariah 10:4 ~~4970~~ Psalm 47:9), and so pillars, because they are the means of cementing, supporting, and protecting the people of the earth, and of preserving their peace and property. Likewise good men may be meant in a figurative sense, who, as they are the salt of the earth, are the pillars of it, for whose sake it was made, and is supported, and continued in being; the church is the pillar and ground of truth; and every good man is a pillar in the house of God, and especially ministers of the Gospel; (see ~~6082~~ Revelation 3:12 ~~5485~~ 1 Timothy 3:15 Gal 2:9 ~~4000~~ Proverbs 9:1).

Ver. 9. *He will keep the feet of his saints*, etc.] Now follow promises and prophecies of future things respecting the Israel of God, either in a literal or spiritual sense. By “his saints” are meant not angels, though they are his Holy Ones, but men, and a body of them; who though unholy in themselves, nor can they make themselves holy, yet are made so by the grace of God, in consequence of electing grace, by which they are chosen to be holy, from Christ the source and spring of all holiness, by the Holy Spirit of God, as the efficient cause, and which is done in the effectual calling; hence they live holy lives and conversations, though not altogether without sin in the present state. The word also signifies such to whom God has been kind and gracious, and on whom he has bestowed blessings of goodness, and who are bountiful and beneficent to others. These are the Lord’s, whom he has set apart for himself, and has sanctified in Christ, and by his Spirit; and of these he is keeper, not angels, nor ministers of the word, nor themselves, but the Lord himself is the keeper of them; and who is an able, faithful, tender and compassionate, constant and everlasting keeper of them; and particularly he keeps their “feet”; he indeed keeps their whole persons, their bodies and souls; the members of their bodies, and the powers of their souls, their head, their heart, their affections, from turning aside from him; he guides, directs, and orders all their actions and goings; he keeps their feet in his own ways, where he has guided them; he keeps them in Christ the way, and in all the paths of faith, truth, righteousness, and holiness, and in the way everlasting: he keeps them from falling; for though they are liable to fall into sin, and by temptation, and from a lively exercise of grace, yet not totally and finally; they are secured from it by his love to them; the promises he has made them; his power exerted on their

behalf; their being in the hands of Christ, and the glory of all the three Persons concerned herein:

and the wicked shall be silent in darkness; sin has spread darkness over all human nature; every man is born and brought up in darkness, and walks in it: a state of unregeneracy is a state of darkness, in which wicked men continue; and they are in the dark about God, the perfections of his nature, his mind and will, word and worship; about Christ, and the way of life, peace, and salvation by him; about their own state and condition by nature, and the danger they are in; about the nature and necessity of regeneration; and about the Scriptures, and the doctrines of the Gospel; and living and dying; in such a state, darkness, blackness of darkness, is their portion forever: so the Targum,

“the wicked in hell in darkness shall be judged:”

and it is said they shall be “silent” in it; they are quiet, easy, and content in the state of natural darkness in which they are; they neither do nor will understand; they do not care to come to the light, but shun the means of light and knowledge; they have nothing to say of God, of Christ, of the Spirit of God, or of divine things; they can talk enough of evil things, and pour them out in great plenty, but not of any good; and when their evils are charged upon them by the law, their mouths are stopped, and they pronounced guilty, and have nothing to say why justice and judgment should not take place; and so they will be silent and speechless at the great day of judgment. Some interpret it, they shall be “cut off in darkness”; so Kimchi and Ben Melech; that is, by death, by the hand of God, by the sword of justice:

for by strength shall no man prevail; which is a reason both why God will keep his saints, and why the wicked shall be silent, or cut off and perish: with respect to good men, they are not saved, kept, and preserved by their own strength; they are not saved without a righteousness, without regeneration, without repentance towards God, and faith in Christ; neither of which they can perform in their own strength: nor can a saint keep himself from, or prevail over his spiritual enemies of himself, not over sin, nor Satan, nor the world; but it is by the power of God that he is kept through faith unto salvation: and with respect to wicked men, these shall not prevail by their strength over good men, or the church, who are built upon a rock, against which the gates of hell cannot prevail; nor can the wicked so prevail by their strength as to hinder their being cut off, and cast

into outer darkness; they have no power over the spirit to retain it in the day of death; and whether they will or not, they shall be cast into hell, and go into everlasting punishment.

Ver. 10. *The adversaries of the Lord shall be broken to pieces*, etc.] Or Jehovah, Father, Son, and Spirit, “shall break in pieces those that contend with him”; with the Lord, or with his people, or with Samuel particularly; for this may be considered as a prophecy of Hannah concerning her son, what God would do for him against his enemies, that should rise up, contend, and fight with him, as the Philistines; of whom Ben Gersom interprets it, whom the Lord discomfited and broke to pieces; see the literal fulfilment of this prophecy in (⁽¹⁰⁰⁾1 Samuel 7:1-17) in a spiritual sense all wicked men are the enemies of God, and of his people, and sooner or later shall be broken to pieces. Some, in a good sense; when they are smitten with the words of his mouth, cut to the heart, and made contrite; are humbled and brought into subjection to him, and their enmity slain and abolished, and they filled with love to him; and are so broken to pieces, that they have nothing to depend upon, or trust in for life or salvation, but apply to Christ alone for it. Others, in an ill sense; and the meaning is, that the wicked shall be utterly destroyed by the Lord, with an everlasting destruction, with an incurable and irreparable one; shall be broken in pieces like a potter’s vessel, which can never be put together again, (see ⁽¹⁰¹⁾Psalm 2:9 ⁽¹⁰²⁾Revelation 2:27)

out of heaven shall he thunder upon them: as the Lord did upon the Philistines in the times of Samuel, when Israel were engaged in war with them, (⁽¹⁰³⁾1 Samuel 7:10). And the last vial of the wrath of God, poured out upon his adversaries the antichristian states, will be attended with thunders and lightnings, (⁽¹⁰⁴⁾Revelation 16:17,18), it denotes the terrible manner in which God will destroy his adversaries; the Septuagint version is, “the Lord ascended to heaven and thundered”; hence Procopius Gazaeus, following this version, says, Hannah prophesied of the taking up of the Saviour, and of the mission of the Holy Ghost, and of the preaching of the apostles, and of the second coming of Christ, as follows: the Lord shall judge the ends of the earth; not of the land of Israel by Samuel, as some interpret it, (see ⁽¹⁰⁵⁾1 Samuel 7:15-17) but of the whole world, and may refer to the government of it in general by the Lord, or to the judgment of it by his Son; for he judges none, but has committed all judgment to him; who at his first coming judged the world, by the ministry of the word in Judea and in the Gentile world, by setting up ordinances,

and by qualifying and constituting persons to act in the government of his church under him; and at his spiritual coming he will take to himself his great power and reign, and judge the whore of Babylon; and at his last or second coming he will judge the whole world, quick and dead, righteous and wicked:

and he shall give strength unto his king: either who was made king in the times of Samuel, Saul, who was the first of the kings of Israel, or David, whom Samuel anointed; and it is true of them both, that the Lord gave them strength to fight with and conquer their enemies; or rather the King Messiah, who in the next clause is called the Lord's anointed, or Messiah:

and exalt the horn of his anointed; and so the Targum paraphrases the words,

“he shall give strength to his king and enlarge the kingdom of his Messiah.”

with which Kimchi agrees, and says, the thing is doubled or repeated, for the King is the Messiah; and to him the words are applied by other Jewish writers^{f44}, ancient and modern. Christ is King over all, angels and men, particularly he is King of saints; he is Jehovah's King, set up and anointed by him from everlasting; was in time promised as such, and in the fulness of time came in that character, and at his ascension to heaven was made and declared Lord and Christ; and through the success of his Gospel in the world has appeared yet more so, and will be still more manifest in the latter day, when he shall be King over all the earth, and especially in his personal reign. Now when “strength” is said to be given him, this must be understood either of strength given to him in human nature, to perform the great work of our redemption and salvation, which required great strength; as a divine Person he needed none, as man he did; or of that strength communicated to him as Mediator, to give unto his people, in whom they have both righteousness and strength; or rather of that power and dominion given him as King particularly; all power in heaven and in earth were given him at his resurrection, and will appear more fully hereafter, when his kingdom will be from sea to sea, and his dominion from the river to the ends of the earth, (see ²⁰⁷³Daniel 7:13,14). And the same thing is meant by “horn”, which is an emblem of strength, power, dominion, and glory; hence he himself is called the horn of David, and the horn of salvation; it is a name and title given to kings, (²⁰⁷⁴Daniel 7:24 ⁶¹⁷¹²Revelation 17:12) in allusion to the horns of beasts, in which their

strength lies to defend themselves, and annoy their enemies; and the exaltation of him prophesied of may respect and include his resurrection from the dead, ascension to heaven, session at the right hand of God, the judgment of all committed to him, and the glorious exercise of his kingly office in the spiritual and personal reigns. This is the first time we meet with the word Messiah, or anointed, as ascribed to a divine Person, the Son of God; who has this name or title from his being anointed, not with material oil, but with the oil of gladness, with the Holy Ghost, and his gifts and graces without measure; and who is called the Lord's anointed, because he was anointed by his Father to be prophet, priest, and King, or invested by him with those offices even from eternity, (see ^{<4016>}Psalm 2:6 ^{<4082>}Proverbs 8:22,23) and which was more manifestly declared at his birth, his baptism, and ascension to heaven; (see ^{<4124>}Luke 2:40,52 ^{<4405>}Acts 10:37,38 2:36).

Ver. 11. *And Elkanah went to Ramah to his house*, etc.] Of which (see ^{<4019>}1 Samuel 1:19). This was after he had offered the sacrifices at the feast, worshipped the Lord, and Hannah had delivered her prayer or song of praise, and both had committed Samuel to the care of Eli, and left him with him:

and the child did minister unto the Lord before Eli the priest; he not only read in the book of the law, but learned to sing the praises of God vocally, and to play upon an instrument of music used in the service of God in those times, and to light the lamps in the tabernacle, and open and shut the doors of it, and the like; which were suitable to his age, and which might not be quite so tender as some have thought; or this may respect some small beginnings in the ministry of the sanctuary, in which he gradually increased under the inspection, guidance, and instruction of Eli, which is meant by ministering before him; the Targum is,

“in the life of Eli the priest;”

he began his ministration before his death.

Ver. 12. *Now the sons of Eli were sons of Belial*, etc.] Not that Eli their father was Belial, a wicked man; but though they had so good a father, they were very wicked men, unprofitable abandoned wretches, that cast off the yoke of the law of God, and gave themselves up to all manner of wickedness:

they knew not the Lord; not that they had no knowledge of God in theory, or were real atheists, but they were so practically; they denied him in works, they had no love to him, nor fear of him, and departed from his ways and worship, as much as if they were entirely ignorant of him; so the Targum,

“they did not know to fear before the Lord,”

or serve him; or, as Kimchi,

“they did not know the way of the Lord,”

that is, practically.

Ver. 13. *And the priest's custom with the people was*, etc.] Not what was according to the will and law of God, but which the sons of Eli had introduced; and in which they were followed by the rest of the priests, and so it became an established custom, and had the force of a law, statute, or judgment, as the word signifies:

[that] when any man offered sacrifice; not any sort of sacrifice, for if it was a burnt offering, it was wholly consumed by fire, and in that the following custom could not take place; and if it was a sin offering, that was eaten by the priests, and so there was no need of taking such a method as after related; but a peace offering, part of which belonged to the Lord, the fat that was burnt, and the breast and shoulder to the priest, and the rest to the owner, who made a feast of it for his family and friends:

the priest's servant came while the flesh was in seething; that is, while those parts were boiling for the owner and his family; which was done in some part of the tabernacle, as afterwards in the temple:

with a flesh hook of three teeth in his hand; with a three forked instrument, with which he was sent by order of the priest that slew the sacrifice, and offered it, to whom belonged the parts before mentioned, allowed him by the law; but not content with these, he sent his servant, while the rest were boiling, with such an instrument as here described, to draw up more out of the boiling pot.

Ver. 14. *And he struck it into the pan, or kettle, or cauldron, or pot*, etc.] Whatever vessel was made use of, larger or lesser, according to the quantity of flesh the owner boiled for himself and friends, the trident the

priest's servants brought with him, he struck into the boiler to the bottom; of it:

all that the fleshhook brought up the priest took for himself; as his own property; whereas no part of it at all belonged to him, he having had the breast and shoulder delivered to him in the first place; and yet, by this method, all that he could drag up with this three forked instrument he claimed as his own; which might be much, that would hang upon three teeth of it, or in which they were fastened; and, according to Abarbinel, each of them would bring up a pound of flesh, and perhaps more:

so they did in Shiloh, unto all the Israelites that came thither; to offer their sacrifices, which was the proper place for them, the tabernacle and altar being there; and men of all ranks and degrees were treated alike, princes and people, rich and poor; the custom universally obtained, and all sorts of men met with the same usage.

Ver. 15. *Also before they burnt the fat*, etc.] Which belonged to the Lord, and was to be offered to him by fire, in the first place, as it ought to be; and the order of sacrificing required that he should have his part first before the priest or the owner: but so impious were the priests become, that

the priest's servant came, and said to the man that sacrificed; not to the priest that offered, but to the man that brought his sacrifice to be offered by the priest:

give flesh to roast for the priest; meaning, not what was his by law, as the breast and shoulder, though for these he ought to have stayed until the fat was offered to the Lord; but other parts of the peace offering, which he had no right unto, for roasting or boiling, and yet in an imperious manner demanded it by his servant:

for he will not have sodden flesh of thee, but raw though this was not the only reason of this demand, because they liked roast meat better than boiled; but because the three forked flesh hook did not always bring up the best pieces out of the boiling pot; and therefore he resolved to have flesh raw, that he might have the best, as well as dress it to his own liking.

Ver. 16. *And if any man said unto him, let them not fail to burn the fat presently*, etc.] Or stay till they have offered the fat, as the Targum; let that be done in the first place, which may be quickly done, in a very little time, and let as much haste be made as can be to do it:

and then take as much as thy soul desireth; by which it appears that the men that brought the sacrifice had more religion at heart, and were more concerned for the honour and glory of God than the priest; being willing to suffer in their property, but could not bear that the Lord should be dishonoured, and so rudely treated: they were willing the priests should take what they pleased of theirs, though they had no right to any; only they desired the Lord might be served first, which was but reasonable:

then he would answer him, nay, but thou shall give it me now, and if not, I will take it by force; signifying, he would not stay till the fat was burnt, and the Lord had his portion, but he would have it directly; and if he would not give it him freely, he would take it whether he would or not; to such a height of insolence and impiety were the priests arrived, as to put it in the power of their servants to make such wicked demands, and treat God, and those that brought their sacrifices to him, in such a contemptuous manner.

Ver. 17. *Wherefore the sin of the young men was very great before the Lord*, etc.] That is, the sons of Eli; for they were the ringleaders who set these bad examples, which other priests followed, and therefore the sin is ascribed to them; and which was sadly aggravated by taking what was not their own, and by taking it in a forcible manner, and before the Lord had his part in the offering, and all this done in the tabernacle, in the presence of God; which plainly showed that they had not the fear of God before their eyes, nor any sense of his omniscience and omnipresence, any more than of his holiness and justice:

for men abhorred the offering of the Lord; it was irksome and disagreeable to them to bring their sacrifices, when they saw the law of God was not attended to, and the rules of sacrificing were not observed; such contempt of God, such abuse of sacrifices, such injury done to the sacrificers, and such covetousness and sensuality in the priests, that it even set the people against sacrifices, and made them loath them, and neglect to bring them. And this aggravated the sin of the young men, though the sacrificers were not excused hereby, (~~1~~ 1 Samuel 2:24).

Ver. 18. *But Samuel ministered before the Lord*, etc.] The ministration of Samuel, though a child, is observed both before and after the account of the ill behaviour and wickedness of Eli's sons; partly to the shame and disgrace of them, and as serving to aggravate their sin, and make it appear the more black and heinous; and partly to his honour and reputation, that he was not corrupted and turned aside from God by their evil practices.

The phrase here used is different from that in (^{<0121>}1 Samuel 2:11) there he is said to minister before Eli, under his direction and guidance, but here before the Lord; being now engaged in higher services, and which he could perform without the assistance of Eli, as in the presence of God more immediately; it seems to have respect to him when more grown in age, stature, knowledge, and experience, though here related: yet still being “a child”; not got out of his childhood, or arrived to manhood:

girded with a linen ephod; such as priests used to wear, but not Levites in common, nor extraordinary persons on extraordinary occasions, (see ^{<0228>}1 Samuel 22:18 ^{<0054>}2 Samuel 6:14). This seems to be a peculiar favour, and a special honour which Eli granted to Samuel when so very young, on account of the grace of God bestowed on him in a wonderful manner; and because brought up in the tabernacle as a holy person, and a Nazarite; and because his birth was foretold, and he asked of God, as his name signified, as Procopius Gazaenus observes.

Ver. 19. *Moreover, his mother made him a little coat*, etc.] Suitable to his stature; this was an outer coat to wear over others, and this also was such an one as the priests wore; it is the same word that is used for the priest’s robe, (^{<0204>}Exodus 28:4), and this, it is very likely, was altogether of her own spinning, and weaving, and making up; which were works women did in those times: and this Hannah did partly out of her great love to her son Samuel, and partly to lessen the expense that Eli, or the congregation, were at in the maintenance of him; and the Talmudists ^{f45} observe, that a priest might wear a garment, and minister in it, if his mother made it; and they give instances of priests, Ishmael and Eleazar, for whom their mothers made garments:

and brought it to him from year to year; for it seems this was only to be worn at festivals, and not on common days; and therefore she did not leave it with him, but took it home with her, and brought it again at the returning festival:

when she came up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice: whether at the passover, or at Pentecost, or at the feast of tabernacles; and it is very probable she came with her husband at them all, yearly; for though she was not by the law obliged thereunto, yet her religious zeal and devotion, and her great desire to see her son as often as she could, induced her to come.

Ver. 20. *And Eli blessed Elkanah and his wife*, etc.] Not only the first time they brought Samuel to him, and left him with him; but every year they came to worship, as the Jewish commentators mostly interpret it:

and said, the Lord give thee seed of this woman; children by her, year after year:

for the loan which is lent to the Lord; instead of Samuel, who was asked of the Lord and given to him again; and as they were thereby in some measure deprived of him, and could not always enjoy him, and be delighted with him, Eli prayed for them, and gave them his benediction as a priest, that they might be favoured with other children, who might be of delight and service to them when in old age:

and they went unto their own home; at Ramah, as in (^{<0021>}1 Samuel 2:11) or to his place ^{f46}, Elkanah's; hence Kimchi concludes that Hannah was of another city originally; but the Targum is,

“to their place;”

and indeed, what was now the place or home of the one, was of the other.

Ver. 21. *And the Lord visited Hannah*, etc.] In a way of mercy, approving and confirming the blessing of Eli; or rather granting the blessing he prayed for, by giving her power to conceive, bear, and bring forth children, as the following words explain it:

so that she conceived and bare three sons and two daughters; whereby the prophecy of Hannah was fulfilled, (^{<0025>}1 Samuel 2:5), and was no doubt matter of great joy to her, though of these children we nowhere else read, nor even of their names. Josephus ^{f47} says, Elkanah had other sons by Hannah, and three daughters; which agrees not with the text:

and the child Samuel grew before the Lord: in age and stature, in grace and goodness, and improved much in the worship and service of God, both in the theory and practice of it; or became great with him, high in his esteem and favour, and was blessed with much of his presence, and with large gifts of his grace.

Ver. 22. *Now Eli was very old*, etc.] It is very probable he was now about ninety years of age, since when he died he was ninety eight, (^{<0015>}1 Samuel 4:15) which is observed to show his incapacity for the discharge of his office, and inspection into public affairs; which gave his sons opportunity

of acting the wicked part they did without reproof, and with impunity, Eli knowing nothing of it; and accounts in some measure for the gentle reproof he gave them, when he did know of it; for being old, he was not so full of spirit and vigour, and more given to tenderness and mercy; besides, his sons were grown up and married, and he had less authority over them; though he ought to have considered himself not as a father only, but as an high priest and judge of Israel, and performed his office as such; however, it must be a great affliction to him in his old age, and added to the weight of it, that his sons should behave so unworthily as they did:

and heard all that his sons had done unto Israel; who, besides what was by the law allowed them, took flesh out of the pot as it was boiling, and demanded raw flesh to roast before the fat was offered to the Lord; and in this manner they used all, without distinction, that came with their sacrifices:

and how they lay with the women that assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation; not that they lay with them at the door in a public beastly manner; but the women that came thither they decoyed into their own apartments, or into some of the courts of the tabernacle, and there debauched them: who these women were, and what their business at the tabernacle, is not easy to say; some think they came about business which belonged to women to do there, as to wash and clean the rooms, to sew and spin, and the like; but one would think that these latter works should be done, not at the door of the tabernacle, but in some apartment in it, or rather at their own houses, for the use of it: the Targum is, that they there assembled to pray, which is more likely, and that they were devout women; who came there in large numbers, for the word used has the signification of armies; to perform religious exercises in fasting, and praying, and bringing sacrifices to be offered for them; though they do not seem to be such, as was Anna the prophetess, (⁴¹²⁵Luke 2:37) who made their abode in the tabernacle, and served God night and day with fastings and prayers, since these were only at the door of the tabernacle; nor were there in the tabernacle conveniences for such persons, as afterwards in the temple. The Jews, for the most part, by these understand new mothers, who came with their offerings for purification, attended with many other women, their relations, friends, and neighbours, and which especially, when several met together on such an occasion, made a crowd at the door of the tabernacle; and some are of opinion that these men did not lie with them, or debauch them, according to the literal sense of the word; but that they

delayed the offering of their nests of doves they brought, so that they were forced to stay all night, and could not return home; and because by this means they were restrained from their husbands, it is reckoned as if these men had lain with them^{f48}; and which they think is confirmed, in that the man of God sent to Eli, after mentioned, takes no notice of this lewdness of theirs, only of their ill behaviour as to sacrifices, but the text is so express for their debauchery, that it cannot be denied.

Ver. 23. *And he said unto them, why do ye such things?* etc.] As to impose upon the people that bring their offerings, by taking more than is due, and in a very indecent and imperious manner; and especially to defile the women when they came to worship: these were very scandalous sins, and deserved a more severe reprimand, and indeed a greater chastisement than by mere words; Eli should have rebuked them more sharply, and laid open the evil of their doings, and as a judge punished them for them:

for I hear of your evil doings by all this people; the inhabitants of Shiloh, or who came thither to worship, who were continually making their complaints to Eli; which still shows his backwardness to reprove them in the manner he did until he was obliged to it by the continual remonstrances of the people against the practices of his sons; he did not attend to the information he had from a few persons, until it became general.

Ver. 24. *Nay, my sons,* etc.] This seems to be too soft and smooth an appellation, too kind and endearing, considering the offence they were guilty of, and were now reproofing for; rather they deserved to be called sons of Belial, the children of the devil, than sons of Eli, or brutes and shameless wretches, and such like hard names:

for it is no good report that I hear; a very bad one; far from being good, scarce anything worse could have been said of them; to rob persons of the flesh of their offerings, when there was a sufficient allowance made for them by law, and to be so impious as to require what was not their due, and even before the Lord had his; and to debauch the women that came to religious worship, and that in the sacred place of worship, they also being priests of the Lord, and married men; sins very shocking and sadly aggravated, and yet Eli treats them in this gentle manner:

ye make the Lord's people to transgress: by causing them to forbear to bring their sacrifices, being used in such an injurious and overbearing way; and by decoying the women into uncleanness, and by setting examples to

others: or, “to cry out”; as in the margin of our Bibles, to exclaim against them for their exorbitant and lewd practices; so the Targum,

“the people of the Lord murmur because so ill used by them:”

this clause may be read in connection with the former, “it is no good report that I hear, which ye cause to pass through the Lord’s people”; ye occasion the people to speak ill of you everywhere, in the camp of Israel, throughout the whole nation; the report as it is bad, it is general, is in everyone’s mouth; so Maimonides ^{f49} interprets it; with which Jarchi and others agree ^{f50}.

Ver. 25. *If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him,* etc.

When one man does an injury to another in his person and property, the case is brought before the judge, he hears it, examines into it, and determines upon it, and does justice, orders that the injured person have satisfaction made him, and so the matter is ended:

but if a man sin against the Lord, who shall entreat for him? all sin is in some sense against God, as it is contrary to his nature, and a breach of his law, and especially bold, daring, presumptuous sins; but there are some sins that are more immediately and particularly against God, as sins against the first table of the law, which relate to the worship of God, and such were the sins of Eli’s sons in the affair of sacrifices; all sin against God is aggravated by the perfections of his nature, and made tremendous, as being against a God of strict justice, of unspotted purity and holiness, and who is omniscient, omnipresent, and omnipotent; and by the relation and connection there is between God and men, he is their Creator and Preserver, the God of their lives and mercies, and of all the blessings they enjoy, and yet sin against him! who will entreat the favour of God for such persons, ask pardon for them, and beseech the Lord to be propitious and merciful to them? who on earth will do it? such persons are scarce and rare, few care to stand up in the gap between God and sinners; in some cases they ought not, in others they cannot. Eli suggests by this question, that he could not, even for his own sons; and who in heaven can or will do it? not saints departed, who know nothing of what is done below, nor angels, only the Lord Jesus Christ; he is the only Mediator between God and men, who has engaged his heart to approach unto God, and interpose between him and sinful men, and has made peace and reconciliation by his blood, and is become the propitiation for sin, and ever lives to make intercession for transgressors, and is always prevalent and successful in his

mediation and intercession; excepting him, there is none to entreat for those that have sinned against the Lord, (see ^{¹ John 2:1,2). In answer to this question, who shall entreat for him? the Jews say ^{f51} repentance and good works; but these are insufficient advocates for a sinner, without the atoning sacrifice of Christ, who is propitiation for sin, and upon which a plea can only be founded:}

notwithstanding, they hearkened not unto the voice of their father; to his reproofs and counsels, his reasonings and expostulations; though his rebukes were so gentle, and this last reasoning of his so close and strong, so nervous and striking:

because the Lord would slay them; it was his purpose and decree, his will and pleasure, to cut them off for their wickedness; wherefore he gave them up to a judicial blindness, and hardness of heart, as he did Pharaoh, so that they were proof against all advice, admonitions, and arguments used with them: some choose to read the words, “therefore the Lord would slay them” ^{f52}, because they were disobedient to the voice of their father; but the former sense is best; for his will to destroy them was not so much for their disregard to the reproofs of their father in which he himself was culpable, as for their breach of his laws.

Ver. 26. *And the child Samuel grew up,* etc.] Increased in stature and in grace, grew more and more in all respects, and better and better, while Eli’s sons grew worse and worse; the contrast between these make the one to shine and appear illustrious, and the other to look the blacker: or “he went on, and grew, and was good” ^{f53}; as he proceeded on in years, and grew in stature, he appeared more and more to be a good man, a virtuous, holy, and gracious person:

and was in favour both with the Lord, and also with men; the Lord was pleased to give him some tokens of his favour, that he delighted in him, that he was wellpleasing in his sight, and that his person and services were acceptable to him; and the more Eli’s sons disgusted the people by their ill lives and conduct, the greater esteem among them did Samuel obtain by his becoming life and conversation; all admired him, spoke well of him, and thanked God that in such bad times he was raising up one among them, of whom they had the most hopeful prospect of usefulness to them.

Ver. 27. *And there came a man of God unto Eli,* etc.] A prophet, as the Targum; he had gifts and graces bestowed on him by the Lord, qualifying

him for that office; he came from God, and spoke in his name, as prophets used to do: who this was is not said, nor can it be known with certainty; many conjectures are made; some think he might be Phinehas, as Ben Gersom and Abarbinel ^{f54}, which is not at all likely; it is not probable that he was living, for if he had been alive, Eli would not have been high priest; the more ancient Jews say ^{f55} he was Elkanah, the father of Samuel; and so Jarchi; and he is said in the Targum on (~~9000~~1 Samuel 1:1), to be one of the disciples of the prophets, and was reckoned by them among the two hundred prophets that prophesied in Israel ^{f56} but of his prophecy we nowhere read in Scripture, or that he was one: other's ^{f57} think he was Samuel himself, who through modesty conceals his name; but he was now a child, as in the preceding verse; indeed, some are of opinion that what follows is recorded in this chapter by way of anticipation, and properly belongs to, and is a part of the message sent from the Lord by Samuel to Eli, in the following chapter:

and said unto him, thus saith the Lord; using the language prophets in later times did, who spake not of themselves, but in the name of the Lord; and from whence it appears that this was not a divine Person, the Son of God in human form, since he never used to speak in this manner when he appeared:

did I plainly appear to the house of thy father, when they were in Egypt in Pharaoh's house? he did; this was evident and certain, and a wonderful instance of condescending goodness: the house of his father is the house of Aaron, who, and all his sons, were born in Egypt, from whose youngest son, Ithamar, Eli descended; and to whom the Lord appeared when in Egypt, and sent him to meet Moses, whose spokesman he appointed him to be; and who prophesied in Egypt, and reprov'd the Israelites, which is recorded in (~~2300~~Ezekiel 20:1-49) as say the Jews ^{f58}.

Ver. 28. *And did I choose him out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest,* etc.] He did; of all the tribes of Israel the Lord chose the tribe of Levi to place the priesthood in, and of all the families of that tribe he chose the house of Aaron, Eli's ancestor, to minister in the priest's office, (see ~~1230~~Exodus 28:1)

to offer upon mine altar; burnt offerings, sin offerings, and peace offerings; this is the altar of burnt offering, which stood in the court of the tabernacle:

to burn incense; on the altar of incense, which was in the holy place, and on which incense was burnt morning and evening:

to wear an ephod before me? in which was the breastplate, with the Urim and Thummim, with which the high priest went into the most holy place, where was the ark, the symbol of the divine Presence, and where he inquired of the Lord by the above things:

and did I give unto the house of thy father all the offerings made by fire of the children of Israel? he did; the priests who were of the house of Aaron had not only the sin offerings, and part of the peace offerings, but even of the offerings made by fire, the burnt offerings; the skin of them was the priest's, and the meat offerings that went along with them, (see ^{<RB25>}Leviticus 6:25,26) and (^{<RB8>}Leviticus 8:8-10,33-35 ^{<RB8>}Numbers 18:8-10) which were given them for their maintenance. Now these instances of God's goodness to the family of Aaron are mentioned to aggravate the sins of Eli and his sons.

Ver. 29. *Wherefore kick ye at my sacrifice, and at mine offering, which I have commanded in my habitation,* etc.] To be offered in the tabernacle, where the Lord had his dwelling; which they might be said to kick and spurn at, despising them, as if there were not enough of them, nor the best of them given to them for their maintenance; a metaphor taken from cattle well fed and fat, which kick and spurn with their feet at even the owners and feeders of them. The Targum is,

“why do ye use force with the holy offerings?”

that is, take them away by force, when there was such a sufficient quantity allowed them for their support. Some understand this of their driving away such, that before used to bring their sacrifices to be offered, but being so ill treated, refrained from bringing them:

and honourest thy sons above me; by suffering them to take their part of the sacrifices, and even what did not belong to them, before God had his part, or before the fat was burnt; and by continuing them in their office, to the dishonour of God, his name and worship, when they ought to have been turned out by him and punished; but by this he preferred the honour of his sons before the honour of God, and chose rather that he should be dishonoured, than that they should be censured:

to make yourselves fat with the chiefest of all the offerings of Israel my people? they took the best pieces of the peace offerings from them by force, having no right unto them; and this they did to indulge their luxury and sensuality, which Eli connived at; and it is highly probable took part of the roasted meat his sons provided for themselves, out of the choicest pieces of the offerings of the people; since he himself is included in this clause, “to make yourselves fat”, as his sons might be, and it is certain he himself was, (~~GOHS~~ 1 Samuel 4:18).

Ver. 30. *Wherefore the Lord God of Israel saith*, etc.] This being the case, so much contempt cast upon his sacrifices, and dishonour on himself:

I said indeed that thy house, and the house of thy father, should walk before me for ever; or minister in the priest’s office before him: if the house of Aaron in general is meant, it did continue so to do, in one branch or another of it, as long as the Mosaic dispensation lasted, which is meant by the phrase “for ever”; but since it is afterwards denied that it should, rather the house of Ithamar, or of the immediate parent of Eli, is meant, and this said when the priesthood was translated from the family of Eleazar to the family of Ithamar; when, and on what account that was done, we nowhere read. It is a tradition ^{f59}, that it was in the time of the Levite’s concubine; and because Phinehas, and the other priests, did not go from city to city, and reprove the Israelites for the many sins they were fallen into, that the priesthood was taken away out of the family of Eleazar, and translated to that of Ithamar:

but now the Lord saith, be it far from me; to continue the priesthood in the line of Ithamar; which argues no change in the purposes or promises of God, this being not a decree of his, but a declaration of his will; that if the house of Ithamar behaved well in the discharge of the office of the high priest, it should continue with them to the end of the Mosaic dispensation, but if not, it should be taken from them, and restored to the family of Eleazar; as it was in Solomon’s time:

for them that honour me I will honour; as Phinehas the son of Eleazar did at Shittim, where he showed his zeal for the Lord of hosts, and had the promise of the everlasting priesthood; and which continued in his family until the Babylonish captivity, excepting the interval in which it was in the family of Ithamar, and for what reason is not known:

and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed; as the posterity of Eli, whose sons despised the Lord, and his offerings, as appeared by their conduct; and these were killed in battle in one day, and in the times of Solomon, Abiathar, of the posterity of Eli, was thrust out of the priesthood, and Zadok, of the line of Eleazar, was put in his room, (^{<1027>}1 Kings 2:27,35).

Ver. 31. *Behold, the days come*, etc.] Or, are coming ^{f60}; and will quickly come, in a very little time the things, after threatened, began to take place, even in the days of Eli's sons, and the whole was accomplished in about eighty years after:

that I will cut off thine arm, and the arm of thy father's house: that is, the strength of him and them, as the Targum, the strength of a man for doing business lying in his arm; meaning by it not long life, as Kimchi, who concludes this sense from what follows; but rather power and authority, or the exercise of the office of high priest, which gave him and his family great esteem and power; or it may be best of all, his children, which are the strength of a man, and the support of his family, (see ^{<1048>}Genesis 49:3)

that there shall not be an old man in thine house; as there were none when he died, and his two sons, the same day; and the children they left were very young, and Ahitub, who was one of them, could not die an old man, since Ahimelech his son was priest in the time of Saul, who with eighty five priests were slain by his order; and Abiathar his son was deprived of his priesthood in the time of Solomon; though some understand this not of an elder in years, but in office; and that the sense is, that there should be none of his family a senator, or a member of the great sanhedrim, or court of judicature; and so it is interpreted in the Talmud ^{f61}; with which agree Ben Gersom and Abarbinel.

Ver. 32. *And thou shalt see an enemy in my habitation*, etc.] Either the Philistines in the land of Israel, where God chose to dwell, who quickly after made war against Israel, and pitched in Aphek, (^{<1000>}1 Samuel 4:1) or, as in the margin of our Bibles, and other versions ^{f62}, “thou shalt see the affliction of the tabernacle”; as he did when the ark of God was taken, at the news of which he died, (^{<1007>}1 Samuel 4:17,18) and so the Targum understands it of affliction and calamity, yet not of the house of God, but of his own house; paraphrasing the words thus,

“and thou shall see the calamity that shall come upon the men of thine house, for the sins which they have committed before me in the house of my sanctuary:”

but it seems best to interpret it of a rival, which not he in his own person should see, but whom his posterity should see high priest in the temple; as they did in Solomon’s time, when Abiathar, of the family of Eli, was thrust out, and Zadok, of the family of Eleazar, was put in; for, as Kimchi observes, when a man has two wives, they are rivals or adversaries to one another, jealous and emulous of each other, as Elkanah’s two wives were, and of one of them the same word is used as here, (^{<0005>}1 Samuel 1:6) so when one high priest was put out, and another taken in, the one was the rival or adversary of the other, as in the case referred to:

in all the wealth which God shall give Israel; which points exactly at the time when this should be, even men God did well to Israel, gave them great prosperity, wealth and riches, quietness and safety, a famous temple built for the worship of God, and everything in a flourishing condition, both with respect to temporals and spirituals, as was in the days of Solomon, (see ^{<0005>}1 Kings 4:20,25 10:27) and then it was amidst all that plenty and prosperity, and when the high priesthood was most honourable and profitable, that Eli’s family was turned out of it, and another put into it:

and there shall not be an old man in thine house for ever; (see Gill on ^{<0005>}1 Samuel 2:31”) this is repeated for confirmation, and with this addition, that this would be the case for ever.

Ver. 33. *And the man of thine*, etc.]. Of his family, which should spring from him: whom I shall not cut off from mine altar: from serving there: who though he shall not be an high priest, but a common priest, as all the descendants of Aaron were,

shall be to consume thine eyes, and to grieve thine heart; that is, the eyes and heart of his posterity; who though they should see of their family ministering in the priest’s office, yet should make so poor a figure on account of their outward meanness and poverty, or because of their want of wisdom, and intellectual endowments, or because of their scandalous lives, that it would fill their hearts with grief and sorrow, and their eyes with tears, so that their eyes would fail, and be consumed, and their hearts be broken:

and all the increase of thine house shall die in the flower of their age; or “die men”^{f63}; grown men, not children, when it would not be so great an affliction to part with them; but when at man’s estate, in the prime of their days, perhaps about thirty years of age, the time when the priests entered upon their office to do all the work of it; the Targum is, “shall be killed young men:”

it is more than once said in the Talmud^{f64}, that there was a family in Jerusalem, the men of which died at eighteen years of age; they came and informed Juchanan ben Zaccai of it; he said to them, perhaps of the family of Eli are ye, as it is said, (^{<0023>}1 Samuel 2:33).

Ver. 34. *This shall be a sign unto thee*, etc.] A confirming one, that all which had been now said would be fulfilled:

that shall come upon thy two sons, Hophni and Phinehas; which Eli would live to see fulfilled on them; and when it was, he might be assured the rest would be most certainly accomplished, and it was this:

in one day they shall die both of them; as they did in battle with the Philistines, (^{<0041>}1 Samuel 4:11).

Ver. 35. *And I will raise up a faithful priest*, etc.] Not Samuel, as some, for he was not of the seed of Aaron, and of the priestly race; nor had he a sure house, for his sons declined from the ways of truth and justice; but Zadok, as it is commonly interpreted, who was put into the office of the high priest by Solomon when he came to the throne, in the room of Abiathar, of the line of Eli; who was an upright man, and faithfully discharged his office, and answered to his name, which signifies righteous, (see ^{<0045>}Ezekiel 44:15) that shall do according to that which is in my heart, and in my mind: according to the secret will and pleasure of God, as revealed in his word; do everything relating to the office of an high priest, according to the laws of God respecting it; so the Targum,

“that shall do according to my word, and according to my will:”

and I will build him a sure house; which some understand of a numerous family and posterity he should have to succeed him, so that there should never be wanting one of his seed to fill up that high office; or rather it may design the establishment of the high priesthood in his family, which was an everlasting one, as promised to Phinehas his ancestor, and which continued unto the times of the Messiah, who put an end to it, by fulfilling it; unless it

can be thought that this may refer to the temple built by Solomon, which was a firm house, in comparison of the tabernacle, which was a movable one; it was built for Zadok and his posterity, who was the first that officiated in it as a legal priest. There is one writer, who says ^{f65},

“this agrees with no man, only with our Lord Jesus, who is called our high priest, that offered up a sacrifice to the Father for us therefore to Christ properly this prophecy belongs; but, according to the history; to Zadok:”

and Christ is said indeed to be a faithful, as well as a merciful high priest, faithful to him that appointed him, and faithful to those for whom he officiated; he always did the things which pleased his Father, was obedient to his will and commands in all respects; and a sure house is built by him, his church, against which the gates of hell can never prevail: however, the next clause is by others interpreted of him,

and he shall walk before mine anointed for ever; or “before my Messiah”, as the high priests did; they were types of Christ, and represented him, and acted under him, and in his stead, and prefigured and pointed at what he was to do, when he came in the flesh, and now does in the most holy place in heaven. Though it is more commonly understood of Zadok and his posterity, walking or ministering, as the Targum, before Solomon the Lord’s anointed, and before the kings of the house of David, as they did until the Babylonish captivity.

Ver. 36. *And it shall come to pass, that everyone that is left in thine house*, etc.] That is not cut off by death, the few remains of Eli’s posterity in succeeding times, after the high priesthood was removed out of his family into another; so that they were reduced at best to common priests, and these, as it should seem, degraded from that office for their maladministration of it, or scandalous lives:

shall come and crouch to him for a piece of silver and a morsel of bread; which Grotius interprets of their coming to God, and bowing themselves before him, and praying to him for the smallest piece of money to cast into the treasury, and for a morsel of bread to be accepted as an offering, instead of a bullock, sheep, lamb, or even a bird, which they were not able to bring; but the meaning is, that such should be the low estate of Eli’s family, when another, even Zadok, was made high priest, that they should come and humble themselves before him, as the Targum expresses it,

beseeking him to give them a piece of silver, even the smallest piece, that is, as the word signifies, a “gerah” or “meah”, about a penny or three halfpence of our money, the twentieth part of a shekel, (^{<2652>}Ezekiel 45:12) and a piece of bread, not a whole loaf, but a slice of it, to such extremity would they be brought:

and shall say, put me, I pray thee, into one of the priests' offices, that I may eat a piece of bread; or into one of the wards of the priests; their custodies or courses, as the Targum; with which the Jewish commentators generally agree, and of which there were twenty four; (see ^{<1304>}1 Chronicles 24:4-19), and there are some traces of them in the New Testament, (see ^{<4005>}Luke 1:5-8), but these were regular priests, who were in those courses, and had a sufficient maintenance for them, and had not barely a piece of bread to live on, or just enough to keep them from starving, as the phrase denotes; wherefore this must be understood, as before hinted, of priests degraded from their office, on some account or another, and reduced to poverty and want; and therefore, that they might be kept from starving, would solicit the high priest in those days, and beg that he would put them in some inferior post under the priests, to do the meanest offices for them, slay the sacrifices for them, wash their pots, open and shut up doors, and the like, that so they might have a living, though a poor one; and this may reasonably be thought to be the case of Eli's posterity, in process of time, after Abiathar was deposed from the high priest's office, and was ordered to go and live upon his fields and farm at Anathoth, (^{<1025>}1 Kings 2:26) with which compare (^{<2640>}Ezekiel 44:10-14). This, as Ben Gersom observes, was a fit punishment, and a righteous retaliation on Eli's posterity, that they should be brought to crouch to others, and be glad of a morsel of bread, who had behaved so imperiously towards the Lord's people, and had taken away their flesh from them by force; and, not content with their allowance, took the best pieces of the sacrifices, to make themselves fat with them.

CHAPTER 3

INTRODUCTION TO FIRST SAMUEL 3

This chapter gives an account of the Lord's calling to Samuel in the night season, which he first took for the voice of Eli, but being instructed by him, made answer to the voice, (^{<ORR>}1 Samuel 3:1-10), and of a message sent from him by Samuel to Eli, foretelling the destruction of his family, (^{<ORR>}1 Samuel 3:11-14) and of the delivery of it to him, which Samuel was first fearful of doing, but, encouraged by Eli, he delivered it to him, to which he patiently submitted, (^{<ORR>}1 Samuel 3:15-18) and the chapter is closed with the establishment of Samuel as a prophet of the Lord, who continued to appear and reveal himself to him, (^{<ORR>}1 Samuel 3:19-21).

Ver. 1. *And the child Samuel ministered unto the Lord before Eli,* etc.] Under his direction and instruction; the Targum is, in the life of Eli, and in such parts of service, relating to the tabernacle of the Lord, as he was capable of, such as opening and shutting the doors of it, lighting the lamps, singing the praises of God, etc. according to Josephus^{f66}, and others, he was now about twelve years of age:

and the word of the Lord was precious in those days; that is, a word from the Lord in a dream or vision, directing, informing, instructing, or reproving, this was very rarely had; of late there had been but very few instances; and which accounts for it why not only the child Samuel knew not that it was the voice of the Lord that called to him, but Eli himself thought nothing of it until he had called a third time, so rare and scarce was any instance of this kind; for which reason these words are premised in the following narration: and as everything that is scarce and rare is generally precious, so the word of God in this way also was; and so it is as considered in every view of it; as the written word of God; when there was but little of it penned, as at this time, and few or none to teach and instruct in it, Eli being old, and his sons so vile; or when it is forbidden to be read, and the copies of it destroyed, and become scarce, as in the times of Dioclesian; or when there are but very few faithful evangelical ministers of the word; which, though it is always precious to them that have precious faith in it, the promises of it being exceeding great and precious, and the

truths of it more precious than fine gold, and the grand subject of it a precious Saviour, who is so in his person, offices, blood, righteousness, and sacrifice; yet is generally more precious when there is a scarcity of it, when God makes a man, a Gospel minister, more precious than fine gold, even than the golden wedge of Ophir, (see ^{<2332>}Isaiah 13:12) where the word is used in the same sense as here:

there was no open vision; or prophecy, as the Targum; no publicly known prophet raised up, to whom the people could apply for counsel, direction, and instruction in divine things; in all the times of the judges we read only of Deborah the prophetess, and one prophet more, (^{<0044>}Judges 4:14 6:8), excepting the man of God lately sent to Eli, (^{<0027>}1 Samuel 2:27), and this want of prophecy served to set off with greater foil the glory of Samuel as a prophet of the Lord, when he was an established one; there having been none of that character in the memory of man, and therefore he is spoken of as at the head of the prophets, (^{<4124>}Acts 3:24), for though there might be some private visions to particular persons, or God might appear in vision to private persons for their own special use and instruction; yet there was no public vision, or what was for public good and general use: some render it, “no broken up vision”^{f67}; it lay hid, concealed out of sight, as if it was immured and shut up within walls, or like water pent up, that cannot break through its fences, and spread itself; or “not multiplied”, as R. Isaiah, not frequent and repeated, the instances of it few and rare; the sense of this clause is much the same as the former.

Ver. 2. *And it came to pass at that time*, etc.] When the word of the Lord was scarce and precious, and there was no open vision; or, as Ben Gersom, the same day the man of God came to Eli at night, the following affair happened:

when Eli was laid down in his place; on his bed to sleep, in one of the chambers or apartments of the tabernacle; for as there were such in the temple for the priests, so in that:

and his eyes began to wax dim, that he could not see; to help himself to anything he might want when in bed; which seems to be the reason Samuel lay near him, and why, when he heard his voice, he immediately ran to him, supposing he needed his assistance. Some, as Kimchi and others, understand this not of the eyes of his body, but of his mind; and that the Holy Spirit, as a spirit of prophecy, was departing from him, because of his

connivance at the sins of his sons; and so the following prophecy came not to him, but to Samuel.

Ver. 3. *And ere the lamp of God went out in the temple of the Lord,* etc.]

The tabernacle so called; lamp is put for the lamps in the candlestick in the tabernacle, which were lighted every evening, and burnt till morning; by which time some of them at least usually went out, only it is said the western lamp never went out. Now the reason why this is observed is to show that it was in the night, before morning, that the following transaction was: some by this lamp understand the lamp of prophecy, that before that was quite extinct in Eli, only began to depart, as his eyes are said to begin to wax dim, the spirit of prophecy came to Samuel; so that, as the Jews express it, before one sun was set another arose; thus before the sun of Moses set, the sun of Joshua arose; and before the sun of Eli set, the sun of Samuel arose:

where the ark of God was; that is, in the temple or tabernacle; not in that part of it where the lamps were burning in the candlestick, that was in the holy place; but the ark was in the holy of holies, where the Lord dwelt, and was the symbol of his presence; and which is observed to point out the place from whence the voice came, after mentioned; and which the Targum expresses here,

“and a voice was heard out of the temple of the Lord, where the ark of the Lord was:”

and Samuel was laid down to sleep; after Eli was in bed, and Samuel had done all his business, he laid himself down to sleep in his place; in the court of the Levites, as the Targum, with which the Jewish commentators in general agree: it must be somewhere near to Eli, so that he could quickly come at him, when he needed his assistance; though, according to the Misnah ^{f68}, the priests shut the doors of the court within, and the Levites slept without. It is highly probable that Samuel's apartment was near to Eli, or he could not have so readily come to him, as it is plain he did. This circumstance is also observed, to show that it was in the night, and before morning, that the following vision was; and, as Kimchi thinks, about cock crowing; and it may be from hence Strabo ^{f69} had the notion, that Moses ordered such to sleep (in the temple) for themselves, and others, who were fit to receive good dreams, and who might expect from God a good gift, who lived soberly and righteously; and because the tabernacle was covered with skins, hence might spring the notion of others to sleep in temples, for

the above reason, under the skins of the sacrifices, (see Gill on “~~Amos~~ Amos 2:8”), though they seem rather to have slept upon them, for the above purposes, namely, to converse with their deities, and get knowledge from them^{f70}.

Ver. 4. *That the Lord called Samuel*, etc.] By a voice which came forth from the most holy place, from between the cherubim, the seat of the divine Majesty:

and he answered, here am I; which was not intended to declare the place where he was, but to express his readiness and cheerfulness to do any thing that was required of him.

Ver. 5. *And he ran unto Eli, and said here [am] I*, etc.] He got out of his bed as fast as he could, and put on his clothes, and ran with all haste to the apartment where Eli lay, supposing he wanted some immediate assistance, which he was there ready to give him to the utmost of his ability; and he made the more haste, as knowing his age and infirmities, and being desirous, out of affection to him, to help him as soon as possible:

for thou calledst me; he took it to be the voice of Eli, partly because there was no other man in the tabernacle, it being in the middle of the night, or early in the morning, before the doors were opened, or any of the priests were come in to minister, and partly because the voice might be very much like Eli's, and which was done to direct him to him:

and he said, I called not, lie down again; he signified he wanted nothing, and so had no occasion to call him, nor had he, but bid him go to bed again, and sleep quietly:

and he went and lay down; and very probably fell asleep again.

Ver. 6. *And the Lord called yet again*, Samuel, etc.] Called him a second time by his name, with a like audible voice as before:

and Samuel arose, and went to Eli; did not run as before, being perhaps more thoughtful of this affair, that he should be called a second time, and careful not to awake Eli, should he be mistaken again, and find him asleep:

and said, here am I, for thou didst call me; perceiving that he was awake, he desired to know what he wanted, and he was ready to help him; for he was now certain of it that he did call him:

and he answered, I called not, my son, lie down again; by this appellation, my son, he expresses his affection to him, and signifies he took it kindly that he should show such readiness to do anything for him and would not have him be discouraged and abashed, because he was mistaken, but return to his bed and rest again.

Ver. 7. *Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord*, etc.] He knew that Jehovah, the God of Israel, was the true God; he had spiritual knowledge of him, and knew somewhat of his word and worship, ways and ordinances, in which he had been instructed by Eli; wherefore, though the Targum is,

“Samuel had not yet learned to know doctrine from the Lord;”

it can only be understood, that he had not learnt it perfectly; somewhat he knew of it, but in an imperfect manner, being a child: but the sense of the word is, that as yet he was ignorant that God had used to speak with ordinary and familiar voice to men, as Maimonides says ^{f71}; he perhaps had never heard of any such thing, and much less was experimentally acquainted with it, that God ever did speak after such a manner to men, and could not distinguish between the voice of God and the voice of Eli:

neither was the word of the Lord yet revealed unto him; what of the written word that was in being he had, and read, as the law of Moses; but the meaning is, that no word of prophecy of the Lord was revealed unto him, as the Targum; he never had prophesied as yet, and knew not the form and manner of prophecy, as the above writer observes, or what methods God took to reveal himself, his mind and will, to men, at least not this by an audible voice.

Ver. 8. *And the Lord called Samuel again the third time*, etc.] In the same manner he had done before, expressing his name no doubt:

and he arose and went to Eli, and said, here am I, for thou didst call me; as if he should say, it must certainly be so, I cannot be mistaken a third time:

and Eli perceived that the Lord had called the child; he was satisfied now that Samuel must have heard a voice, and he knew there was no man in the tabernacle but himself, and therefore it must be the voice of the Lord out of the most holy place; and he had formerly been acquainted with such voices, and used to them, and now called them to mind; and besides, as Aben Ezra

observes, he was the rather confirmed in this, that the Lord called Samuel, because Samuel heard the voice, and not Eli, though Eli lay nearer the most holy place than Samuel did; which showed that this must be the voice of prophecy the Lord makes whom he pleases to hear; and that Eli might be fully persuaded of this, before the matter of the prophecy was delivered to him, Samuel was so often directed to him.

Ver. 9. *Therefore Eli said unto Samuel, go, lie down,* etc.] Once more; *and it shall be, if he call thee;* the voice, or the Lord by it:

that thou shalt say, speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth; his meaning is, that he should not rise and come to him, as he had done, but continue on his bed, on hearing the voice again, but desire the Lord to speak to him what he had to say, to which he was ready to attend:

so Samuel went and lay down in his place; which, as commonly understood, was in the court of the Levites, (see Gill on “~~OR~~ 1 Samuel 3:3”).

Ver. 10. *And the Lord came, and stood,* etc.] At the place where Samuel lay; either there was, as Kimchi, a form before his eyes in the vision of prophecy, some visible corporeal shape assumed; or a bright splendour an illustrious appearance of the glory of God; or it may be rather the voice, which before seemed to be at some distance whereabouts Eli lay; it now seemed nearer, and was as the voice of one just by him, that sounded in his ears:

and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel: repeating his name, in order the more to excite his attention:

then Samuel answered, speak, for thy servant heareth; he leaves out the word Lord, which Eli bid him use; for he might be afraid as yet to make mention of the name of the Lord in the vision of prophecy, as Kimchi speaks; or lest it should be the voice of another, as Jarchi; as yet he might not be quite certain whether it was the voice of the Lord, or the voice of a man; for that he should have any mistrust of its being the voice of a demon or spectre, there is no reason to believe.

Ver. 11. *And the Lord said to Samuel,* etc.] The voice of the Lord continued speaking to him: behold,

I will do a thing in Israel; which may be particularly interpreted of the taking of the ark, and the slaying of the two sons of Eli; and which is elsewhere represented as the Lord's doing, for the sins of Eli's family, (~~1983~~ Psalm 78:61,62)

at which both the ears of everyone that heareth it shall tingle; be struck with horror and amazement, and quite stunned, and know not what to think or say, like persons surprised with a violent clap of thunder, which strikes their ears so strongly, that the noise of it is not soon gone from them; this was verified in Eli, and in his daughter-in-law particularly, who, at the news of the above things, the one fell backwards and broke his neck, and the other fell into labour and died; and all Israel were struck with astonishment at these things.

Ver. 12. *In that day I will perform against Eli all things which I have spoken concerning his house*, etc.] Or family, that is, by the man of God, (~~1927~~ 1 Samuel 2:27) as that he would cut off the strength of it, that there should not be an old man in it; and such as remained should be reduced to the utmost poverty and meanness; this shows that that prophecy was antecedent to this, contrary to the sense of some:

when I begin, I will also make an end; not immediately, and at once, but by degrees; he began in the death of Hophni and Phinehas, and went on in the slaughter of Abimelech, and the eighty five priests at Nob, in the times of Saul, and finished in the thrusting out of Abiathar from the priesthood, in the times of Solomon, whereby that family was brought to disgrace and poverty.

Ver. 13. *For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever*, etc.] That is, bring his judgments upon them, which should continue on them to their utter destruction; this, as to the substance, he said before by the man of God:

for the iniquity which he knoweth; for the iniquity of his sons, which he thoroughly informed of, and fully acquainted with by others; and somewhat of which he must have been sensible of, and seen with his own eyes, and therefore was inexcusable:

because his sons made themselves vile; mean and contemptible in the sight of men, abhorred and accursed in the sight of God, by taking the flesh of the sacrifices of the people, which did not belong to them, who came to sacrifice, and by debauching the women that came to the door of the

tabernacle for religious service. It is said this clause was originally written, “because his sons made light of me”; or cursed the Lord, and is one of the eighteen places called the correction of the Scribes, who corrected it as we have it; and it may be observed, the Septuagint version is, “because his sons spake ill of God”; or cursed him; however, this they did, they preferred their lusts, and the indulging of them, to the honour and glory of God: this Eli knew,

and he restrained them not; from their evil practices; he did not make use of his authority, neither as a father, and especially not as high priest, and the judge of Israel, who ought not only to have sharply reproved them, which he did not, but to have censured or punished them, and turned them out of their office: “or did not frown upon them”^{f72}, as in the margin of our Bibles; he did not knit his brows, or wrinkle up his face, and by his countenance show his displeasure at their proceedings, but in an easy, smooth, gentle manner, expostulated with them about them.

Ver. 14. *And therefore I have sworn unto the house of Eli*, etc.] Either had done this before, which was signified to him by the man of God, or did swear now for the confirmation of his threatenings, and to assure the certain performance of them:

that the iniquity of Eli’s house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering for ever: not even typically, which was all that legal sacrifice could do; and not so that the priesthood should ever return to the family again, as the office of high priesthood never did; or, as Abarbinel interprets it, because of sacrifice and offering, that the iniquity Eli’s sons were guilty of in taking the flesh of the sacrifices and offerings, which did not belong to them, and before the Lord had his part, should never be expiated.

Ver. 15. *And Samuel lay until the morning*, etc.] It is not said he slept; it can hardly be thought he should, when it is considered what a new, strange, and uncommon thing had befallen him; what honour had been conferred on him a child, that the Lord should vouchsafe to speak and communicate his mind to him, and what dreadful things were said of Eli’s family; all which must greatly affect his mind, and keep him waking: however, he lay musing thereon until morning, and then arose,

and opened the doors of the house of the Lord; as he had used to do, and which was the business of the Levites; though he had been so highly honoured, he was not elated with it, nor thought himself above so low and

mean an employment in the house of God; nor did he run to Eli or others, boasting of what he had met with that night, but modestly and carefully attended to what was his common and constant employment every morning:

and Samuel feared to show Eli the vision; the vision of prophecy, as the Targum; what God had foretold should befall him and his family, lest he should be grieved on more accounts than one; partly because he, an old man, an high priest, and judge of Israel, was overlooked and neglected, and the prophecy was delivered to a child, and not to him; and partly because of the sad things that should come upon his family.

Ver. 16. *Then Eli called Samuel,* etc.] Perceiving he was risen by the opening of the doors of the tabernacle, which he might hear; and observing he did not come to him as usual, to know whether he wanted anything, and being impatient to hear what was said to him of the Lord:

and he said, Samuel, my son; called him by his name, and in a very tender and affectionate manner, the more to engage him to hasten to him, and thereby also putting him in mind of his filial duty to obey him:

and he answered, here am I; ready to attend and perform any service enjoined him.

Ver. 17. *And he said, what is the thing that the [Lord] hath said unto thee?* etc.] The word “Lord” is not in the text, but it is “that it hath said”; the voice that had so often called him in the night, and which yet Eli knew was the voice of the Lord; and as it was, he was sensible there was something of importance said, and he had great reason to believe it respected him and his family; and the rather he might conclude this, by what the man of God had lately said to him, whose words perhaps he had too much slighted, questioning his authority; and therefore the Lord took this way and method to assure him that what was said came from him; for hereby Eli was fully convinced that this voice Samuel heard was of the Lord, and so what was said must be from him, and this he was impatient to know:

I pray thee, hide it not from me; and he not only beseeched and entreated him, but adjured him, as in the next clause:

God do so to thee, and more also, if thou hide anything from me of all the things that said unto thee; it is the form of an oath or curse, wishing that

God would do some great evil to him, and more than he chose to express, if he concealed anything from him that had been told him. So Kimchi and Abarbinel take it to be an oath; and Josephus,^{f73} and Procopius Gazaeus on the place say, that Eli obliged Samuel by oaths and curses to declare what had been said to him.

Ver. 18. *And Samuel told him every whit, and hid nothing from him,* etc.] And so approved himself to be a faithful prophet of God, and man of God, as he is afterwards called; the whole counsel of God is to be declared by his servants the prophets, and the ministers of his word; nothing is to be concealed, which it is the will of God should be made known, whether it be pleasing or displeasing to man:

and he said, it is the Lord; that has said it, and there is nothing to be said against it, and that will do it; and there is no resisting him: or “the Lord is he”^{f74}; who has a sovereign right to all his creatures, and may dispose of them as he pleases; he is all wise, and does all things well; he is holy and righteous in all his ways and works, and there is no unrighteousness in him; he is faithful to his word, whether in a way of promise or threatening; and all he does to his people is in love, mercy, and kindness:

let him do what seemeth him good; not what seems good to men, or is so in their esteem, but what seems good to the Lord, who knows what is best for his people, and can do nothing but what is good; all is good he does; there is nothing but goodness in him, and nothing but goodness comes from him; he does good, and nothing else, and even when he afflicts his people; all he does is well done in creation, providence, and grace: and Eli’s desire is, that he would fulfil the good pleasure of his will; he appears to be in an excellent temper, not surly and morose, taking it ill that such a message should be sent him by a child; nor was he unaffected with the case of his family, but humbly submitted to the will of God, and acquiesces in it as good, and neither arraigns his justice, nor murmurs at his providences.

Ver. 19. *And Samuel grew,* etc.] Not only in years and stature, but in grace and goodness, in wisdom, knowledge, and understanding, both with respect to things natural and spiritual, and in esteem, credit, and reputation among men:

and the Lord was with him; he was not only in favour with men, but with God; and had fresh and repeated tokens of the grace and good will of God towards him; he indulged him with his presence, and assisted him in his

service, and prospered and succeeded him in all things in which he was engaged. The Targum is,

“the Word of the Lord was his help;”

the essential Word of God, the Messiah:

and did let none of his words fall to the ground^{f75}; in allusion either to water that falls to the ground, and becomes useless, or to an arrow falling out of the bow, and to the ground, before it reaches the mark, and so unsuccessful^{f76}; or to any weapon of war, sword or spear, falling out of the hand of the soldier, whereby he is disarmed and rendered unserviceable: and these words, according to Kimchi, and in which he is followed by Abarbinel, are to be understood, not only of the words which he spake by the Holy Ghost under a spirit of prophecy, and had their exact accomplishment; but his common words, which were spoken by weight and measure, as the last expresses it, and which were delivered out according to the rules of justice, probity, and truth; and so he failed not of performing that which he had said, or of doing what was right, whereby Israel knew he was fit, prepared, and designed to be a prophet of the Lord, as in the following verse; but it seems rather to have respect to the things predicted by him under a spirit of prophecy concerning Eli and his house, which soon began to be fulfilled.

Ver. 20. *And all Israel, from Dan even unto Beersheba*, etc.] That is, from the most northern border of the land of Israel, on which Dan lay, to the utmost border of it southward, where Beersheba was, the fame of Samuel for his piety, prudence, and prophecy, was spread abroad; so that all

knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the Lord; or that he was faithful^{f77} to God and man, to be credited in what he said; and so a fit man to be a prophet of the Lord, being eminently qualified with gifts by him for that office; the Targum is,

“that Samuel was faithful in the words of the prophecy of the Lord,”

in relating them.

Ver. 21. *And the Lord appeared again in Shiloh*, etc.] In the tabernacle there; he had appeared before to Samuel, when he called him, and declared to him what he designed and resolved to do to Eli and his family, and now

appeared again to him in the same place before the battle of the Israelites with the Philistines, of which there is an account in the following chapter. Such appearances had not been usual in Shiloh for a long time, but were now renewed and repeated:

for the Lord revealed himself to Samuel by the Word of the Lord; by Christ, the Word of the Lord, who appeared to him, it is probable, in an human form, as he was wont to do to the patriarchs and prophets, and by whom the Lord revealed his mind and will unto them, being the Angel of his presence, and the messenger of his covenant; or by giving him a word of command to be delivered by him to the children of Israel, and which is expressed and delivered, in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4

INTRODUCTION TO FIRST SAMUEL 4

This chapter is a narrative of a war between Israel and the Philistines, in the time of Samuel, and of the consequences of it. In the first battle, the Philistines had the better of the Israelites, which caused the latter to inquire into the reason of it, and who proposed to fetch the ark of the Lord, and did, to repair their loss, and prepare for a second battle, in which they hoped to succeed, and which struck a panic into their enemies, (^{<000E>}1 Samuel 4:1-7), who yet encouraged and stirred up one another to behave in a courageous manner, and victory a second time was on their side, a great number of the Israelites were slain, among whom were Hophni and Phinehas, the two sons of Eli, and the ark of God was taken, (^{<000E>}1 Samuel 4:8-11), the news of which being brought to Eli, he fell back and died, (^{<000E>}1 Samuel 4:12-18) and to his daughter-in-law, who upon it fell into labour, and died also, (^{<000E>}1 Samuel 4:19-22).

Ver. 1. *And the word of Samuel came to all Israel*, etc.] Or was “known”, as the Targum, the word of prophecy by him, which related to what befell Eli and his family; this was spread throughout the land, and everyone almost had knowledge of it, and which began to be fulfilled in the war between Israel and the Philistines, later related; or the doctrine, instructions, and exhortations of Samuel to the people of Israel, were by the means of others conveyed throughout the land; and yet they went into measures which proved fatal and ruinous to them; or the word of Samuel, which was from the Lord, came to Israel, to stir them up to go to war with the Philistines, whereby the punishment threatened to Eli’s family would begin to have its accomplishment:

now Israel went out against the Philistines to battle; according to the word of Samuel, or of the Lord by him; though Ben Gersom thinks they did this of themselves, which was their sin, and did not ask counsel of the Lord, nor of Samuel his prophet; but it seems as if the Philistines were the aggressors, and first came forth to war against them, and they went out to meet them ^{f78}, as the word is, and defend themselves as it became them: this was forty years after the death of Samson, and at the end of Eli’s

government, who judged Israel so many years, when they had recruited themselves, and recovered their losses they sustained by Samson; and when they perceived a new judge was raised up among the Israelites, who was likely to be of great service to them, and to prevent their authority over them, and therefore thought to begin with them as soon as possible:

and pitched beside Ebenezer; a place so called by anticipation, and had its name from an later victory obtained, when Samuel set up a stone between Mizpeh and Shen, and called it by this name, (^{<04712>}1 Samuel 7:12), it signifies a stone of help:

and the Philistines pitched in Aphek; a city in the tribe of Judah, bordering on the Philistines, (see Gill on "^{<04218>}Joshua 12:18").

Ver. 2. *And the Philistines put themselves in array against Israel*, etc.] Prepared for battle, and put themselves in a posture for it; formed themselves in a line of battle, and so invited and challenged the Israelites to fight them:

and when they joined battle; engaged with each other, the Israelites doing the same, putting themselves in a proper form and posture for fighting; or "the battle was spread", or "spread itself"^{f79}; that is, as the Targum, they that made war were spread; the soldiers were placed in order for battle, to the right and left, which took up on both sides a large space; though Abarbinel understands this in a very different sense, and takes the word to have the same signification as in (^{<07801>}Psalm 78:60), where it has the sense of forsaking; and so here the Israelites forsook the battle, and fled, which brought on their destruction, flight being, as the Jews say^{f80}, the beginning of fall or ruin, as it follows:

Israel was smitten before the Philistines; they had the worst of it and were beaten:

and they slew of the army in the field about four thousand men; so many fell upon the spot, in the field.

Ver. 3. *And when the people came into the camp*, etc.] At Ebenezer, where they pitched their tents, and from whence they went out to battle, and whither they returned after their defeat:

the elders of Israel said, wherefore hath the Lord smitten us today before the Philistines? they were right in ascribing it to the Lord, who had

suffered them to be defeated by their enemies, but it is strange they should be so insensible of the cause of it; there was a reason ready at hand, their sins and iniquities were the cause of it, the corruption of manners among them, their neglect of bringing their offerings to the Lord, and the idolatry that many of them were guilty of, at least secretly, (~~9123~~ 1 Samuel 2:24 7:3) to punish them for which, they were brought into this war, and smitten in it; and yet they wonder at it, that so it should be, that they the people of God should be smitten before Heathens and uncircumcised Philistines; and the rather, since they went to battle with them according to the word of the Lord by Samuel; not considering that they went into this war without humiliation for their sins, and without praying to God for success, and that it was intended as a correction of them for their offences against God:

let us fetch the ark of the covenant of the Lord out of Shiloh unto us; in which the law was, sometimes called the covenant between God and them; and which was a symbol of the divine Presence, for want of which they supposed they had not the presence of God with them, and so had not success; and the rather they were encouraged to take this step and method, because that formerly Israel had success against their enemies when the ark was with them, (~~9306~~ Numbers 31:6 ~~9086~~ Joshua 6:6) though no doubt in this there was an overruling providence of God, by which they were led to take such a step as this, in order to bring the two sons of Eli into the camp, that they might be slain in one day, according to the divine prediction:

that when it cometh among us, it may save us out of the hand of our enemies; foolishly placing their confidence in an external symbol, and not in the Lord himself; ascribing salvation to that, which only belongs to him, whether of a temporal or spiritual kind: and such folly and vanity are men guilty of when they seek to, make use of, and trust in anything short of Christ for salvation; as in carnal descent; in the rituals of the law; in the ordinances of the Gospel; in any religious exercises, private or public; or in any works of righteousness done by them: in Christ alone is salvation from spiritual enemies; and indeed from the Lord only is salvation and deliverance from temporal enemies.

Ver. 4. *So the people sent to Shiloh,* etc.] They liked the proposal of the elders, took their advice, and joined with them in a message to Eli the high priest at Shiloh:

that they might bring from thence the ark of the covenant of the Lord of hosts, which dwelleth between the cherubim; which overshadowed the

mercy seat that was upon the ark, and was the residence of the divine Majesty; wherefore having this with them, they concluded they should have the presence of God with them, and so success, (see ~~Psalm~~ Psalm 53:1 99:1)

and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the ark of the covenant of God; these, either with or without the leave of Eli, took the ark out of the tabernacle, and carried it on their shoulders to the camp, or however attended it there, being borne by other priests or Levites; and by this means they were brought into the camp, and so to battle, to meet their doom there; according to Bunting^{f81}, it was carried by them forty two miles.

Ver. 5. *And when the ark of the covenant of the Lord came into the camp,* etc.] Being brought thither by the men that carried it:

all Israel shouted with a great shout, so that the earth rang again; this they did as now sure of victory, because of the ark, and to give spirit and courage to each other to go forth to battle, and to strike a panic into their enemies.

Ver. 6. *And when the Philistines heard the noise of the shout,* etc.] For it being so loud as to make the earth ring, it was heard in the camp of the Philistines, which might not be at any great distance from the camp of Israel; how far from each other were Aphek and Ebenezer is not certain;

they said, what meaneth the noise of this great shout in the camp of the Hebrews? they could not conceive what should be the reason of it, seeing they had no occasion to shout for joy, having been lately defeated; and a shout is made generally just before a battle is begun, and the onset made, or when victory is obtained; neither of which was the case now:

and they understood that the ark of the Lord was come into the camp: this they understood by spies, which they sent to find out the meaning of the shout; which is more probable than that they came to the knowledge of it by deserters; seeing it is not very likely that any Israelites would desert to the Philistines.

Ver. 7. *And the Philistines were afraid,* etc.] When the spies returned, and reported to them the reason of the shouting:

for they said, God is come into the camp; into the camp of Israel, because the ark represented him, and was the symbol of his presence; and these

Heathens might take the ark itself for an idol of the Israelites; the Targum is,

“the ark of God is come”

and they said, woe unto us; it is all over with us, destruction and ruin will be our case, victory will go on their side now their God is among them:

for there hath not been such a thing heretofore; if by this they meant that the ark had never been in the camp of Israel before, they were mistaken; and it is no great wonder they should, being not so well acquainted with the affairs of Israel, and their customs; or rather, it was not so yesterday, or three days ago, when they were defeated; there was no shouting then: or the state of the war is altered; before we fought with the men of Israel, but now we must fight with the God of Israel also.

Ver. 8. *Woe unto us, who shall deliver us out of the hand of these mighty gods?* etc.] Of whom they spoke in an ironical and sneering manner; or if seriously and through fear, they use their own Heathenish language, as if the Israelites had many gods, as they had, though mightier than theirs; though the Syriac and Arabic versions read in the singular, out of the hand of God, or the most strong God; and so the Targum, out of the hand of the Word of the Lord:

these are the gods that smote the Egyptians with all the plagues in the wilderness: the ten plagues were inflicted on the Egyptians in the land of Egypt, and not in the wilderness; wherefore the Philistines may be supposed to be mistaken in this circumstance; which is not to be wondered at, since many historians who have written of the affairs of the Jews have been mistaken in them, as Justin, Tacitus, and others; nay, even Josephus himself in some things: but perhaps respect is had to the drowning of Pharaoh and his host in the Red sea, which had the wilderness of Etham on both sides of it; and this stroke was the finishing one of the plagues on the Egyptians. R. Joseph Kimchi supposes the word for wilderness has the signification of speech, as in (^{214B} Song of Solomon 4:3) and that the sense of the Philistines is, that God smote the Egyptians with all the plagues he did by his word, his orders, and commands; but now he was come in person, and would smite them by himself; this sense Abarbinel calls a beautiful one.

Ver. 9. *Be strong, and quit yourselves like men, O ye Philistines,* etc.] Since this was all they had to depend upon, their manly courage; if they did

not exert that it was all over with them; and seeing their case was desperate, having gods as well as men to fight with, it became them to exert themselves to the uttermost; which did they, there was a possibility still of gaining victory, and so immortal honour to themselves; these words seem to be spoken by the generals and officers of the army of the Philistines to the common soldiers:

that ye be not servants to the Hebrews, as they have been to you; that is, before and in the times of Samson; but it appears from hence that at this time neither the Philistines ruled over the Israelites, nor the Israelites over them; but as there was danger of their becoming subject to Israel, they had better die gloriously in the field of battle than to be in the base state of servitude:

quit yourselves like men, and fight; this is repeated to animate them to battle, which they supposed was not far off by the shoutings of the Israelites, and which they must prepare for.

Ver. 10. *And the Philistines fought*, etc.] With great ardour and spirit, quitted themselves like men of valour and courage, their case being desperate as they imagined, since God was in the camp of Israel:

and Israel was smitten: were routed and beaten:

and they fled every man into his tent; such of them as escaped the sword of the Philistines fled to their own houses in the several cities from whence they came; so the Targum,

“every man to his city”

so that their army was quite broken up:

and there was a very great slaughter far greater than in the first battle:

For there fell of Israel thirty thousand footmen; their army chiefly, if not altogether, consisting of footmen, there being few horses in Israel; and if any cavalry now, these may be supposed to flee; before they lost only 4000, now 30,000; so that the ark was no security to them, which was suffered, to show their vain trust and confidence in it.

Ver. 11. *And the ark of God was taken*, etc.] By the Philistines; which was suffered partly as a punishment to the Israelites, for fetching it from the tabernacle without the will of God, and for their vain confidence in it; and

partly that the Philistines might have an experiment of the power and might of God, as Procopius Gazaeus observes, by what they would suffer through having it among them; some have thought that this was an emblem of Christ being delivered into the hands of the Gentiles, and of the Gospel being translated from the Jews to them: and the two sons of Eli,

Hophni and Phinehas, were slain; which fulfilled the prophecy of the man of God, that they should both die in one day, (⁰⁰²³1 Samuel 2:34). It is very probable they stood fast by the ark, and chose rather to die than to give it up freely; having received a charge from their father, that if the ark was taken, not to desire life, nor ever dare to come into his presence more, as Josephus^{f82} relates.

Ver. 12. *And there ran a man of Benjamin out of the army*, etc.] Out of the rank in which he was, before the whole army was quite broken up. This was a young man as Josephus^{f83} says, which is highly probable; though not at all to be depended on is what the Jews^{f84} say, that this was Saul, later king of Israel:

and came to Shiloh the same day; which, according to Bunting^{f85}, was forty two miles from Ebenezer, near to which the battle was fought; and that it was a long way is pretty plain by the remark made, that this messenger came the same day the battle was fought; though not at such a distance as some Jewish writers say, some sixty, some one hundred and twenty miles^{f86}; which is not at all probable:

with his clothes rent, and earth upon his head; which were both tokens of distress and mourning, and showed that he was a messenger of bad tidings from the army; (see Gill on “⁰⁰⁰⁶Joshua 7:6”).

Ver. 13. *And when he came*, etc.] To Shiloh; he either passed by Eli, who being blind could not see him, (⁰⁰⁴⁵1 Samuel 4:15) or he came in at another gate of the city on the other side of it, as Abarbinel thinks; though the former seems more likely by what follows, he not choosing to deliver the bad news to Eli first, whom he knew it would very much grieve, and therefore slipped by him into the city:

lo, Eli sat upon a seat by the wayside watching: by the “hand” of the way, as the marginal reading, and which we follow; it seems to be a place where two ways or more met, and where was a way post erected, with an hand directing what places they led to. The text is, “he”, or “it smote”, as if his heart smote him for letting the ark go; so Kimchi^{f87}; here Eli had a seat

placed, which, as the Targum says, was at the ascent of the way to the gate; and so the Septuagint has it, at the gate; and Josephus^{f88} says it was at one of the gates; either of his own house, or of the tabernacle, or rather of the city; here he was watching for news, to hear what he could, and as soon as he could, how it fared with the army, with his sons, and especially with the ark;

for his heart trembled for the ark of God; not so much for his sons, whose death he might expect from the divine prediction, but for the ark, about which he was doubtful; fearing lest it should fall into the hands of the uncircumcised Philistines, who would triumph upon it, and which would make sad the heart of every true Israelite, and reflect much dishonour on the God of Israel; and very probably he might tremble the more when he reflected on his own sin and folly in suffering his sons to take it with them. Eli here may represent a good man in pain for the church of God, and the interest of religion in declining times, both with respect to ministers of the word, and members of churches: as when Gospel ministers are removed by death, few raised up in their stead, and those that do appear in the ministry, either unregenerate, as it may be feared; or have not gifts and abilities qualifying them for it; or are of immoral lives and conversations, or propagate false doctrines, errors, and heresies: and also when among professors of religion and members of churches there is a great decay of powerful godliness; and they are got into a drowsy, sleepy, frame of spirit, are become lukewarm and indifferent to spiritual exercises, want zeal for the Gospel and cause of Christ; are careless about the honour and interest of religion, unstable and inconstant in doctrine and worship, and in their affections to one another, and the ministers of the word; and their conversation not as becomes their profession:

and when the man came into the city, and told it; how that the army of Israel was beaten, what a number of men was killed, among whom were the two sons of the high priest, and the ark was taken:

all the city cried out; that is, all the inhabitants of the city, having most of them perhaps relations and friends in the army, for whom they were concerned, fearing their lives were lost; but especially the loss of the ark was insupportable by them, it being of so much advantage to that city particularly, both with respect to things temporal and spiritual; wherefore, upon hearing this bad news, there was a general shriek and cry throughout the whole city.

Ver. 14. *And when Eli heard the noise of the crying,* etc.] The shrieks of the men and women, which were very clamorous and terrible. Eli had his hearing, though not his sight; he could not see the distress in their countenances, but he heard the lamentations they made:

and said, what meaneth the noise of this tumult? it seems the people ran about, wringing their hands, and making doleful shrieks; the noise of which Eli heard, and the meaning of which he inquired after, or what should be the cause of it:

and the man came in hastily, and told Eli; or made haste, and came to him, and related all that is later expressed; for Eli was not in any house, but on a seat by the way side, and therefore could not be said to come “in” to him; but he came to him, where he was, being brought by some of the citizens Eli had inquired of what should be the meaning of this noise; and therefore without delay the man was hastened to give the whole account unto him, as it was highly proper he should, being the supreme magistrate.

Ver. 15. *Now Eli was ninety eight years old,* etc.] Which is very properly observed, he being now come to the end of his days, and which also accounts for his blindness after mentioned:

and his eyes were dim, that he could not see; could not see the messenger, and read in his countenance, and perceive by his clothes rent, and earth on his head, that he was a bringer of bad tidings; or his eyes each of them “stood”^{f89}; were fixed and immovable, as the eyes of blind men be. In (~~OR~~1 Samuel 3:2) it is said, “his eyes began to wax dim”; but here that they “were” become dim; and there might be some years between that time and this, for Samuel then was very young, but now more grown up: though Procopius Gazaeus thinks that Eli was then ninety eight years of age, and that the affair there related was just before his death; but it rather appears to be some time before.

Ver. 16. *And the man said unto Eli, I am he that came out of the army,* etc.] It is very probable that the people Eli inquired of told him there was a messenger come from the army, though they did not choose to relate to him the news he brought:

and I fled today out of the army; so that as he was an eyewitness of what was done in the army, the account he brought was the earliest that could be had, in bringing which he had made great dispatch, having ran perhaps all the way:

and he said, what is there done, my son? has a battle been fought? on which side is the victory? is Israel beaten, or have they conquered? how do things go? he uses the kind and tender appellation, my son, to engage him to tell him all freely and openly.

Ver. 17. *And the messenger answered and said,* etc.] He delivered his account gradually, beginning with generals, and then proceeding to particulars, and with what he thought Eli could better bear the news of, and so prepared him for the worst; in which he acted a wise part:

Israel is fled before the Philistines; they have given way and retreated, and which might possibly be done without great loss, and which, though it was bad news, might not be so very bad:

and there hath also been a great slaughter among the people; this is worse news still; however, the number of the slain is not given, nor any mention of particular persons that were killed: so that, for any thing yet said, his own sons might be safe: but then it follows,

and thy two sons also, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead; the news of which must be very affecting to him, and strike him closely; though he might expect and be prepared for it by what both the man of God and Samuel from the Lord had related to him:

and the ark of God is taken; the thing he feared, and his heart trembled before for it; this was the closing and cutting part of the account; the messenger foresaw that this would the most affect him, and therefore referred it to the last.

Ver. 18. *And it came to pass, when he made mention of the ark of God,* etc.] Of the taking of that, it struck him to the heart, and killed him; the rest he bore tolerably well, the flight of Israel before the Philistines, the great slaughter made of them, the death of his two sons; but the taking of the ark was so dreadful to him, that he could not support under it:

that he fell from off the seat backward, by the side of the gate; which confirms the sense of (⁴⁹⁰¹³1 Samuel 4:13) though whether it was the gate of his own house, or of the tabernacle, or of the city is not certain; the latter is most probable: it seems the seat on which he sat had no back to it, and might be placed only for present convenience:

and his neck brake; the back part of it, the “vertebrae” of it, which has its name in Hebrew from the several joints in it:

and he died; not through the breaking of his neck, for it is very probable he died directly upon hearing the ark was taken, and which was the reason of his falling backward, and that brake his neck:

for he was an old man, and heavy; full of flesh, a very fat man, and so fell heavy, which occasioned the breaking of his neck:

and he had judged Israel forty years; had governed them in the capacity both of an high priest and judge, so that he must enter on his government when fifty eight years of age; the Septuagint version has it very wrongly twenty years. According to the Jews^{f90}, he died on the tenth of Ijar, answering to part of April and May, and his two sons and the ark taken; for which a fast was kept on it.

Ver. 19. *And his daughter in law, Phinehas’s wife, was with child, near to be delivered*, etc.] Was near her time, as it is commonly expressed. Ben Gersom derives the word from a root which signifies to complete and finish^{f91}; denoting that her time to bring forth was completed and filled up; though Josephus^{f92} says that it was a seven months’ birth, so that she came two months before her time; the margin of our Bibles is, “to cry out”^{f93}; and so Moses Kimchi, as his brother relates, derives the word from a root which signifies to howl and lament, and so is expressive of a woman’s crying out when her pains come upon her:

and when she heard the tidings that the ark of God was taken: which is mentioned first, as being the most distressing to her:

and that her father in law and her husband were dead; her father-in-law Eli is put first, being the high priest of God, and so his death gave her the greatest concern, as the death of an high priest was always matter of grief to the Israelites; and next the death of her husband, who should have succeeded him in the priesthood; for though he was a bad man, yet not so bad as Hophni, as Ben Gersom observes; and therefore the priesthood was continued in his line unto the reign of Solomon; and no notice is taken by her of the death of her brother-in-law:

she bowed herself, and travailed; put herself in a posture for travailing; perceiving she was coming to it, she fell upon her knees, as the word used signifies; and we are told^{f94}, that the Ethiopian women, when they bring

forth, fall upon their knees, and bear their young, rarely making use of a midwife, and so it seems it was the way of the Hebrew women:

for her pains came upon her; sooner it is very probable than otherwise they would, which is sometimes the case, when frights seize a person in such circumstances: or were “turned upon her”^{f95}; they ceased, so that she could not make the necessary evacuations after the birth, which issued in her death; some render it, “her doors were turned”^{f96}, or changed; the doors of her womb, as in (~~880~~ Job 3:10), though these had been opened for the bringing forth of her child, yet were reversed, changed, and altered, so as to prevent the after birth coming away, which caused her death, as follows.

Ver. 20. *And about the time of her death*, etc.] Which quickly came on after she was brought to bed:

the women that stood by her; who were called to her labour, and assisted at it:

said unto her, fear not, for thou hast born a son; perceiving that she was very low spirited, endeavoured to cheer and comfort her, by observing to her that the worst was over; and besides she had brought forth a man child, which was usually matter of joy to a family, and particularly to the woman that bears it, which causes her to forget the sorrows and pains she has gone through in bearing it, (~~862~~ John 16:21) but she answered not, neither did she regard it; said not one word in answer to them, nor was the least affected with joy and pleasure at what they related to her; being not only a dying woman, on the borders of another world, and so had no relish for temporal enjoyments, but also overcome with grief with what had happened, not only to her family, but more especially to the ark of God.

Ver. 21. *And she named the child Ichabod*, etc.] Which some render, “where is the glory?” as in the margin of our Bibles; but it signifies “no glory”, as Jarchi and Kimchi interpret it; her husband being dead, she gives her child its name; the reason for which name follows:

saying, the glory is departed from Israel: the God of glory, or the glorious Lord, was departed from Israel; the ark, the symbol of his presence, being taken from them, and carried captive by the enemy; (see ~~878~~ Psalm 78:61)

because the ark of God was taken, and because of her father in law, and her husband; who were dead; these are the words either of the writer of

this book, or, as Abarbinel thinks, of the women that assisted at her labour; who interpreted the name of the child, and suggested what were her intentions in giving this name, which she had only expressed in general terms; the particulars of which they thought fit to give, agreeably to her meaning, as they supposed; which were the taking of the ark, and the death of her father-in-law, and of her husband; but according to the same writer she before her death corrected the sense they put upon her intention in thus naming the child; showing that it was not on the account of the death of her father and husband that she supposed the glory to be departed, and therefore named her child Ichabod: but solely and alone because the ark was taken, as in the next verse.

Ver. 22. *And she said*, etc.] Repeating what she had said before, for the confirmation of it, or as correcting what the women had said; and so may be rendered,

but she said; giving her own and only reason for the name of the child:

the glory is departed from Israel, for the ark of God is taken; so when the word, worship, and ordinances of God are removed from a people, the glory is gone from them; the God of glory is no more seen among them, who is so glorious in his nature, perfections, and works; and Christ, the Lord of life and glory, is no more held forth unto them in the glories of his person, offices, and grace; and the glorious Gospel of Christ is no more preached unto them, so full of glorious doctrines and promises; and the glorious ordinances of it no more administered: and, when this is the case, the glory is departed from a people; and which is owing to their formality, lukewarmness, unfruitfulness, negligent attendance on the worship of God, contempt of the word and ordinances, and an unbecoming walk and conversation.

CHAPTER 5

INTRODUCTION TO FIRST SAMUEL 5

This chapter relates how that the ark being brought by the Philistines to Ashdod, and placed in the temple of their idol, that fell down before it, (^{<090E>}1 Samuel 5:1-5), that the hand of the Lord was upon the men of Ashdod, and smote them with emerods, (^{<090E>}1 Samuel 5:6,7) and being carried to Gath, the men of Gath were smitten likewise with the same, (^{<090E>}1 Samuel 5:8,9), and after that the men of Ekron, whither it also was carried, (^{<090E>}1 Samuel 5:10-12).

Ver. 1. *And the Philistines took the ark of God*, etc.] Which fell into their hands, Israel being beaten, and caused to flee, and the priests that had the care of the ark slain; and when possessed of it, they did not destroy it, nor take out of it what was in it, only took it up:

and brought it from Ebenezer unto Ashdod. Ebenezer was the place where the camp of Israel was pitched, (^{<090E>}1 Samuel 4:1) and near to which the battle was fought. Ashdod was one of the five principalities of the Philistines, the same with Azotus, (^{<408D>}Acts 8:40). The distance between these two places, according to Bunting^{f97} was one hundred and sixty miles; though one would think the distance from each other was not so great: why it was carried to Ashdod is not plain; perhaps it might be the nearest place of note in their country; and certain it is that it was one of their most famous cities, if not the most famous; (see Gill on "^{<290E>}Isaiah 20:1"), and had a famous idol temple in it.

Ver. 2. *When the Philistines took the ark of God*, etc.] And had brought it to Ashdod:

they brought it into the house of Dagon; a temple dedicated to that idol, and in which his image stood; of which (see Gill on "^{<076E>}Judges 16:23"),

and set it by Dagon; by the side of him, either in honour to the ark, as Abarbinel, designing to give it homage and adoration, as to their own deity; for though the Gentiles did not choose to change their gods, yet they would add the gods of other nations to them; and such the Philistines might

take the ark to be: or else, as Procopius Gazaeus, they brought it into their idol's temple, as a trophy of victory, and as a spoil taken from their enemies, and which they dedicated to their idol. Laniado^{F98} observes, that the word here used signifies servitude, as in (~~01315~~Genesis 33:15) and that the ark was set here to minister to, or serve their god Dagon. The temple of Dagon at Ashdod or Azotus was in being in the times of the Maccabees, and was burnt by Jonathan,

83 The horsemen also, being scattered in the field, fled to Azotus, and went into Bethdagon, their idol's temple, for safety. 84 But Jonathan set fire on Azotus, and the cities round about it, and took their spoils; and the temple of Dagon, with them that were fled into it, he burned with fire." (1 Maccabees 10)

Ver. 3. *And when they of Ashdod arose early on the morrow*, &c.] Either the people, the inhabitants of the place, who came early to pay their devotions to their idol, before they went on their business; or the priests of the idol, who came to sacrifice in the morning:

and, behold, Dagon was fallen upon his face to the earth before the ark of the Lord; as if he was subject to it, and giving adoration to it, and owning it was above him, and had superior power over him:

and they took Dagon, and set him in his place again; having no notion that it was owing to the ark of God, or to the God of Israel, that he was fallen, but that it was a matter of chance.

Ver. 4. *And when they arose early on the morrow morning*, etc.] For the same purpose as before; unless they had any curiosity to indulge, to see whether the ark and Dagon agreed better together, if they had any suspicion that the former mischance was to be attributed to some variance and disagreement between them:

behold, Dagon was fallen upon his face to the ground before the ark of the Lord: again, and in a worse condition than before:

and the head of Dagon, and both the palms of his hands, were cut off upon the threshold; of the temple, upon which he fell with such force, that the threshold cut off his head, and both his hands; which signified he had neither wisdom to contrive for his own safety, nor strength and power to defend himself; and therefore of what advantage could he be to his votaries? This may be an emblem of the fall of idolatry in the Gentile

world, before the preaching of Christ and his Gospel in it; or of the idol of man's righteousness, which is set up, though it cannot stand, against the righteousness of Christ, and of man's renouncing that, when convinced of the weakness and insufficiency of it, and submitting to the righteousness of Christ:

only the stump of Dagon was left to him: his body, as the Targum, his head and hands being cut off; or, as it is in the Hebrew text, only Dagon was left; that is, the fishy part of this idol; for "Dag" signifies a fish; and, as Kimchi relates, this idol, from the navel upwards, had the form of a man, and from thence downwards the form of a fish; and it was the lower part that was left; (see Gill on "⁴⁰⁷⁶²³Judges 16:23").

Ver. 5. *Therefore neither the priests of Dagon, nor any that come into Dagon's house*, etc.] Neither the priests that continually attended the worship and service of Dagon, nor the people that came there to pay their devotions to him:

tread on the threshold of Dagon in Ashdod unto this day: but used to leap over it, either reckoning it sacred because touched by their idol, which fell upon it; or rather, as it should seem, in a way of detestation, because it had been the means of cutting off the head and hands of their idol; and this custom not only continued to the latter days of Samuel, the writer of this book; but even among the Philistines in one place or another to the times of Zephaniah, who seems to allude to it, (³⁰⁰⁰Zephaniah 1:9). In later times there was another deity worshipped at Ashdod; according to Masius^{f99}, the Philistine Venus, or Astarte, was worshipped in this place; though perhaps she may be no other than Atergatis, or Adergatis, which with Selden^{f100} is only a corruption of Addir-dag, the magnificent fish, in which form Dagon is supposed to be; so the Phoenician goddess Derceto, worshipped at Ashkelon had the face of a woman, and the other part was all fish; though Ben Gersom says Dagon was in the form of a man, and which is confirmed by the Complutensian edition of the Septuagint, which on (⁴⁰⁰⁰1 Samuel 5:4) reads, "the soles of his feet were cut off"; which is a much better reading than the common one, "the soles of his hands", which is not sense; by which it appears that he had head, hands, and feet; wherefore it seems most likely that he had his name from Dagon, signifying corn: (see Gill on "⁴⁰⁷⁶²³Judges 16:23").

Ver. 6. *But the hand of the Lord was heavy on them of Ashdod*, etc.] Not only on their idol, but on themselves; it had crushed him to pieces, and now it fell heavy on them to their destruction:

and he destroyed them; either by the disease after mentioned they were smitten with, or rather with some other, since that seems not to be mortal, though painful; it may be with the pestilence:

and smote them with emerods; more properly haemorrhoids, which, as Kimchi says, was the name of a disease, but he says not what; Ben Gersom calls it a very painful disease, from whence comes a great quantity of blood. Josephus^{f101} takes it to be the dysentery or bloody flux; it seems to be what we commonly call the piles, and has its name in Hebrew from the height of them, rising up sometimes into high large tumours:

even Ashdod and the coasts thereof; not only the inhabitants of the city were afflicted with this disease, but those of the villages round about.

Ver. 7. *And when the men of Ashdod saw that it was so*, etc.] That many of their inhabitants were taken away by death, and others afflicted with a painful disease; all which they imputed to the ark being among them:

they said, the ark of the God of Israel shall not abide with us; like the Gergesenes, who besought Christ to depart their coasts, having more regard for their swine than for him:

for his hand is sore upon us, and upon Dagon, our god, not the hand of the ark, unless they took it for a god, but the hand of the God of Israel; in this they were right, and seem to have understood the case better than the other lords they after consulted; his hand was upon Dagon, as appeared his fall before the ark, and upon them by smiting with the haemorrhoids, the memory of which abode with the Philistines for ages afterwards; for we are told^{f102} that the Scythians, having plundered the temple of Venus at Ashkelon, one of their five principalities, the goddess inflicted upon them the female disease, or the haemorrhoids; which shows that it was thought to be a disease inflicted by way of punishment for sacrilege, and that it was still remembered what the Philistines suffered for a crime of the like nature.

Ver. 8. *They sent therefore and gathered all the lords of the Philistines unto them*, etc.] The other four lords, for there were five with this; (see ~~6:13~~ Joshua 13:3),

and said, what shall we do with the ark of the God of Israel? they no doubt told them what they and their idol had suffered on account of it, and the resolution they were come to that it should be no longer with them; and therefore desire to know what must be done with it, whether they should return it to the people of Israel, or dispose of it somewhere else; it is probable some might be for the former, but the greater part were not, and were for keeping it in their possession somewhere or another:

and they answered, let the ark of the God of Israel be carried about unto Gath; which was another of the five principalities of the Philistines, and not far from Ashdod; according to Jerom ^{f103}, it is included in the remnant of Ashdod, (~~253~~Jeremiah 25:20) and according to Bunting ^{f104} but four miles from it. The Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions make this to be the answer of the men of Gath, the one reading it,

“and they of Gath said, let the ark of God come to us;”

and the other,

“they of Gath answered, let the ark of the God of Israel be carried about;”

for they suspected, as Procopius Gazaeus observes, that the destruction did not come from God, but was a disease arising from some pestilential cause. They perhaps imagined it was in the air in and about Ashdod, or that though the situation of the ark was not liked, in another place it might be otherwise, and more agreeable:

and they carried the ark of the God of Israel about thither; they seem not to carry it directly to the place, but carried it in a round about way, as if they had a mind to give it an airing, before they fixed it any where.

Ver. 9. *And it was so, that after they had carried it about,* etc.] And at last placed it in the city of Gath;

the hand of the Lord was against the city with a very great destruction: greater than that at Ashdod, more persons were destroyed; the distemper sent among them was more epidemic and mortal:

and he smote the men of the city, both small and great; high and low, persons of every class, rank, and station, young and old, men, women, and children:

and they had emerods in their secret parts; and so had the men of Ashdod; and the design of this expression is, not to point at the place where they were, which it is well known they are always in those parts, but the different nature of them; the emerods or piles of the men of Ashdod were more outward, these more inward, and so more painful, and not so easy to come at, and more difficult of cure; for the words may be rendered,

and the emerods were hidden unto them^{f105}; were inward, and out of sight; and perhaps this disease as inflicted on them might be more grievous than it commonly is now. Josephus^{f106} wrongly makes these to be the Ashkalonites, when they were the men of Gath.

Ver. 10. *Therefore they sent the ark of God to Ekron*, etc.] Another of the five principalities of the Philistines, about ten miles from Gath, where Baalzebub, or the god of the fly, was worshipped:

and it came to pass, that as the ark of God came to Ekron; and had been there some little time:

that the Ekronites cried out; when they perceived the hand of God was upon them, as upon the other cities; these were the chief magistrates of the city, with the lord of them, as appears by what follows:

saying, they have brought about the ark of the God of Israel to us; from one city to another, and at length to us:

to slay us and our people; not that this was their intention, but so it was eventually.

Ver. 11. *So they sent and gathered together all the lords of the Philistines*, etc.] As the men of Ashdod had done before on the same account, (^{CHRS}1 Samuel 5:8)

and said, send away the ark of the God of Israel; as these lords were united in their government, and made one common cause of it against Israel, one could not dispose of this capture without the consent of the rest; otherwise the lord of Ekron, with his princes, were clearly in it that it was right and best to send it away out of any of their principalities:

and let it go again to its own place; to the land of Israel and Shiloh there, though to that it never returned more:

that it slay us not, and our people; that is, all of them, for great numbers had been slain already, as follows:

for there was a deadly destruction throughout all the city; a mortal disease went through the whole city, and swept away a multitude of people:

the hand of God was very heavy there; it seems by the expression to haste been heavier on the inhabitants of this city than upon those of Ashdod and Gath, which made them the more pressing to get rid of the ark.

Ver. 12. *And the men that died not were smitten with the emerods*, etc.] As the inhabitants of Ashdod and Gath had been; this shows that those that died did not die of that disease, but of some other; very likely the pestilence:

and the cry of the city went up to heaven; not that it was heard and regarded there, but the phrase is used to denote the greatness of it, how exceeding loud and clamorous it was; partly on the account of the death of so many of the inhabitants, their relations and friends; and partly because of the intolerable pain they endured through the emerods. There is something of this history preserved in a story wrongly told by Herodotus^{f107}, who relates that the Scythians returning from Egypt passed through Ashkelon, a city of Syria (one of the five principalities of the Philistines), and that some of them robbed the temple of Venus there; for which the goddess sent on them and their posterity the disease of emerods, and that the Scythians themselves acknowledged that they were troubled with it on that account.

CHAPTER 6

INTRODUCTION TO FIRST SAMUEL 6

In this chapter we are told the Philistines advised with their priests what to do with the ark, and wherewith to send it home, (^{<0001>}1 Samuel 6:1,2) whose advice was to send with it a trespass offering, golden images of emerods and mice, and to put it on a new cart, and the images in a coffer on the side of the ark, and draw it with two cows, (^{<0003>}1 Samuel 6:3-8), and gave them a token whereby they might know whether they had been smitten by the God of Israel or not, (^{<0009>}1 Samuel 6:9) which advice they took, and acted in all things according to it; and the lords of the Philistines accompanied the ark to the border of Bethshemesh, (^{<0010>}1 Samuel 6:10-12), where they of Bethshemesh received it with joy, and offered the kine for a burnt offering to the Lord, and the Levites took care of the ark and presents in it, and the lords of the Philistines returned home, (^{<0013>}1 Samuel 6:13-18), but they of Bethshemesh looking into the ark were smitten of God, upon which they sent to the men of Kirjathjearim to fetch it from them, (^{<0019>}1 Samuel 6:19-21).

Ver. 1. *And the ark of the Lord was in the country of the Philistines seven months.*] Or “in the field”^{f108} of the Philistines; hence Procopius Gazaicus observes, that none of the cities daring to receive the ark, they left it without under the open air, so thinking they should be delivered from their calamity. But the word is often used for country, and is generally so understood here; the Targum is,

“in the cities of the Philistines;”

in one or other of them, first for a while in Ashdod, and then for some time in Gath, and last in Ekron, and in all seven months from the time of its being taken; and it being in wheat harvest when it was returned, (^{<0013>}1 Samuel 6:13), these seven months will carry us back to the beginning of winter, or towards the end of autumn, when the battles between Israel and the Philistines were fought, and the ark was taken. Josephus^{f109} says it was with the Philistines four months only, contrary to the text.

Ver. 2. *And the Philistines called for the priests and for the diviners,* etc.] The one were skilled in the rites and ceremonies of religion, not only of their own, but of other nations, particularly of Israel; and that they were not strangers to the history and affairs of that people is plain from (~~1016~~ 1 Samuel 6:6) and the other were skilled in judicial astrology, and knowledge of future events, at least as they pretended to; and therefore were both thought fit persons to advise with on the occasion of the ark, and the circumstances they were in through that:

saying, what shall we do to the ark of the Lord? shall we send it back to its own land, or not? the Ekronites had moved it might be sent back, and the five lords sent for the priests and diviners to have their advice upon it, whether it was right or not, and what they should do to it, or with it; for if it was advisable to send it back, then another question follows:

tell us wherewith we shall send it to its place; whether on men's shoulders, or on horses or asses, or on a carriage; and whether just as it was taken, or with some presents with it.

Ver. 3. *And they said, if ye send away the ark of the God of Israel, send it not empty,* etc.] As they perceived they had either resolved upon, or at least were inclined to do; and which they also thought advisable and therefore would have them by no means send it away as it was, but with some presents along with it; for the meaning of this word "empty" is not that they should take care that all that were in it when taken should go with it, and nothing be taken out of it, or it be stripped of its contents; but that some gifts and offerings should be sent along with it: perhaps they might have some notion of, or respect unto a law in Israel, (~~1023~~ Exodus 23:15) or might say this from a common principle received among Heathens, that deities were to be appeased by gifts ^{f110}:

but in any wise return him a trespass offering; here again they seem to have some notion of the sorts and kinds of sacrifice among the Israelites; and advise to a trespass offering, to make satisfaction and atonement for the offence they had committed in taking away the ark; and that they should make restoration not only by returning the ark, but by sending an expiatory offering along with it:

then ye shall be healed; of the disease with which they were smitten; for it seems it still continued on them, at least on many:

and it shall be known to you why his hand is not removed from you; which was because the ark was detained by them; but when that should be sent home, and they be healed upon it, then it would be a plain case that the reason why the disease was inflicted and continued was because of that.

Ver. 4. *Then said they, what shall be the trespass offering which we shall return to him?* etc.] They paid a great deference to their priests and diviners, and were willing to be directed in all things by them; being ignorant of what was most proper in this case, and might be acceptable to the God of Israel:

they answered, five golden emerods, and five golden mice; images of these made of gold, as appears from the next verse; the reason of the former is easy, from the above account of the disease they were afflicted with; but of the latter no hint is given before: indeed in the Vulgate Latin and Septuagint versions of (^{49RB}1 Samuel 5:6) is inserted a clause, that

“mice sprung up in the midst of their country;”

which is not in the Hebrew text, nor in the Chaldee paraphrase; yet appears to be a fact from the following verse, that at the same time their bodies were smitten with emerods, their fields were overrun with mice, which destroyed the increase of them; wherefore five golden mice were also ordered as a part of the trespass offering, and five of each were pitched upon:

according to the number of the lords of the Philistines; who were five, and so the principalities under them; (see ^{68BB}Joshua 13:3)

for one plague was on you all, and on your lords; the lords and common people were equally smitten with the emerods, and the several principalities were alike distressed and destroyed with the mice; and therefore the trespass offering, which was a vicarious one for them, was to be according to the number of their princes and their principalities; five emerods for the five princes and their people smitten with emerods, and five mice on account of the five cities and fields adjacent being marred by mice.

Ver. 5. *Wherefore ye shall make images of your emerods,* etc.] Which some take to be images of the five cities; others of a man at large with the disease in his back parts; others of that part of the body of a man only, in a circular form, in which the disease was, and expressing that; but the text is plain for the disease only, as high large tumours: though Maimonides ^{f111}

says of these images, that the word is attributed to them, not because of their external form, but because of their spiritual virtue and influence; whereby the damage or disease of the emerods in the hinder parts were removed: he seems to take them to be a sort of talismans, which were images of a disease or noxious creature a country was infected with, made under some celestial influence to remove it; and Tavernier^{f112} relates, as Bishop Patrick observes, that it is a practice with the Indians to this day, that when any pilgrim goes to a pagoda for the cure of any disease, he brings the figure of the member affected, made either of gold, silver, or copper, according to his quality, which he offers to his god. There is a tradition among the Heathens, which seems to be borrowed from this history, and serves to establish the credit of it; the Athenians not receiving Bacchus and his rites with due honour, he was angry with them, and smote them with a disease in their private parts, which was incurable; on which they consulted the oracle, which advised them in order to be rid of the disease to receive the god with all honour and respect; which order the Athenians obeyed, and made images of the several parts, privately and publicly, and with these honoured the god in memory of the disease^{f113}: both the disease and cure are here plainly pointed at:

and images of your mice that mar the land; that devoured the fruits of it, as these creatures in many instances have been known to do; and particularly in Palestine, the country of the Philistines, where in some places their fields were sometimes almost deserted because of the abundance of them; and were it not for a sort of birds that devoured them, the inhabitants could not sow their seed^{f114}: the Boeotians sacrificed to Apollo Pornopion (which signifies a mouse), to save their country from them^{f115}; Aristotle^{f116} reports of field mice, that they sometimes increase to such incredible numbers, that scarce any of the corn of the field is left by them; and so soon consumed, that some husbandmen, having appointed their labourers to cut down their corn on one day, coming to it the next day, in order to cut it down, have found it all consumed; Pliny^{f117} speaks of field mice destroying the harvest; Aelianus^{f118} relates such an incursion of field mice into some parts of Italy, as obliged the inhabitants to leave the country, and which destroyed the corn fields and plants, as if they had been consumed by heat or cold, or any unseasonable weather; and not only seeds were gnawn, but roots cut up; so the Abderites^{f119} were obliged to leave their country because of mice and frogs:

and ye shall give glory to the God of Israel; by sending these images as monuments of their shameful and painful disease, and of the ruin of their fields; owning that it was the hand of the Lord that smote their bodies with emerods, and filled their fields with mice which devoured them; seeking and asking pardoning of him by the trespass offering they sent him:

peradventure he will lighten his hand from you: abate the violence of the disease, and at length entirely remove it:

and from your gods; not Dagon only, but others seem to have suffered, wherever the ark came: for the Philistines had other deities; besides Dagon at Ashdod, there were Baalzebub at Ekron, and Marnas at Gaza, and Derceto at Ashkelon; and perhaps another at Gath, though unknown; and besides the gods suffered, or however their priests, by the number of men that died, and by the fruits of the earth being destroyed; which must in course lessen their revenues: and from off your land; the fruits of which were destroyed by mice.

Ver. 6. *Wherefore then do ye harden your hearts, as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts?* etc.] And would not let Israel go, when their dismissal was demanded by Moses and Aaron in the name of the Lord; but was refused from time to time, being given up to judicial blindness and hardness of heart: and it seems by this, that though it was proposed by some to send back the ark, and which the priests and diviners approved of; yet there were some that were against it, who, notwithstanding the plagues inflicted on them, like Pharaoh and the Egyptians hardened their hearts; which story these priests were acquainted with by the tradition of their ancestors, this being a fact then generally known in the world; or by the relation of the Israelites, over whom they had ruled many years, and were conversant with them:

when he had wrought wonderfully among them: that is, the God of Israel, though they mention not his name, who had wrought wonders in the land of Egypt; the ten plagues he inflicted on them are referred to:

did they not let the people go, and they departed? who were convinced by these plagues that they ought to let Israel go, and by them were prevailed upon to dismiss them, and the people did go out of their land; and therefore should not we let the ark go likewise, on whom plagues have been inflicted for detaining it? and may we not expect more and greater, should we refuse to dismiss it?

Ver. 7. *Now therefore make a new cart*, etc.] For there were no Levites, nor priests of the Lord to carry it upon their shoulders, as it was wont to be when carried, and therefore they ordered a cart to be made; and they might know the Levites were allowed wagons to carry some of their sacred things on, (^{<000>}Numbers 7:1-8) and a new one for the honour of the ark, as David afterwards did, (^{<000>}2 Samuel 6:3)

and take two milch kine, on which there hath come no yoke; which also might be designed for the honour of the ark; but there was a further view in it, at least in the providence of God; since two such creatures, who had young, would be apt, if left to themselves, as these were, to return home to them, and not to proceed on a journey; and being unaccustomed to a yoke, would draw one way, and another another, in different ways; and not go on in a direct road, as such that are used to the yoke do:

and tie the kine to the cart; in order to draw it:

and bring their calves home from them; that they might not cry after them, which would cause them to turn back.

Ver. 8. *And take the ark of the Lord, and lay it upon the cart*, etc.] Which was dispensed with in these uncircumcised Philistines, there being no other to do this service:

and put the jewels of gold; or rather “vessels of gold”^{f120}; the five golden emerods, and the five golden mice:

which ye return him for a trespass offering, in a coffer by the side thereof; in a basket, as the Syriac version: in a scrip, as the Arabic; in a purse, or bag, as Josephus^{f121}; which latter is probable enough:

and send it away, that it may go; that is, set it a going, without any driver or guide; but leave it to take its course of itself to the land of Israel. Josephus^{f122} says it was set in a place where three ways met, that it might take which it might; and the taking of the right way must be a strong evidence of its being under the direction of God.

Ver. 9. *And see if it goeth up by the way of its own coast to Bethshemesh*, etc.] The nearest city to the land of the Philistines, which lay on their borders, and the borders of the tribe of Judah, (see Gill on “^{<0650>}Joshua 15:10”). Now the lords of the Philistines are directed by their priests to observe, whether these kine, that drew the cart on which the ark was, took

the direct road to the borders of the land of Israel, and to Bethshemesh, the nearest city that lay on that coast: if so, they might conclude then,

he hath done us this great evil; that is, the God of Israel, whose ark this was; he had inflicted the disease of the emerods on them, and sent such numbers of mice into their fields, that had destroyed the increase of them:

but if not, then we shall know that it is not his hand that hath smote us; but that there is some other cause of it:

it was a chance that happened to us; and so might have been the case if the ark had never been taken or detained, and to be imputed to fate, or to the stars, or some secret causes they know not of.

Ver. 10. *And the men did so*, etc.] Made a new cart, not the lords of the Philistines, but workmen by their orders:

and took two milch kine, and tied them to the cart; with the gear that horses, asses, or oxen, were usually fastened to a carriage they drew:

and shut up their calves at home; or, “in the house”^{f123}; the cow house or stable where they used to be put; this they did to restrain them from following the cows, which would disturb them in drawing the cart.

Ver. 11. *And they laid the ark of the Lord upon the cart*, etc.] Perhaps the same men that made the cart; however they were the Philistines, yet were not punished for touching it, as Uzzah was, though an Israelite, (^{am6}2 Samuel 6:6,7)

and the coffer with the mice of gold, and the images of their emerods; which coffer was placed in a purse or bag hung at the side of the ark, with the golden mice and emerods in it.

Ver. 12. *And the kine took the straight way to the way of Bethshemesh*, etc.] Though they had none to drive, lead, or guide them, yet they steered their course to the road that led to Bethshemesh, though there were other ways they might have taken; which shows they were under the direction of God himself:

and went along the highway; or, “in one highway”, or “post”^{f124}; though they had never been used to a yoke, they drew together in one path; and did not draw one way, and another another, as oxen unaccustomed to a yoke do:

lowing as they went; on account of their calves, which showed their sense of them, and their natural affection for them; and yet went on, did not attempt to go back to them; by which it was plain they were under a supernatural influence:

and turned not aside to the right or to the left; when other ways presented, on the right hand or on the left; they kept going straight on in the road that led to the place they were destined for; all which can be reckoned nothing less than a miracle:

and the lords of the Philistines went after them unto the border of Bethshemesh; not before them to guide them, or on the side of the ark to take care of it, but behind: and not at all out of respect and reverence to it, but to see what would be the issue of things, whether it would turn out an imposture or not; and that they might be able to make a true judgment of what had befallen them, as their priests and diviners had directed them to; they followed it until it was out of their territories, and in the hands of the Israelites. This place Bethshemesh is thought by some, as R. Isaiah observes, to be the same with Timnathheres, where Joshua was buried, in (~~0119~~Judges 2:9), which signifies the figure of the sun, as this does the house of the sun; and where, perhaps, when inhabited by the Canaanites, was a temple of the sun; and it was, according to Bunting^{f125}, twelve miles from Ekron, from whence the ark came; and so far it was followed by the Philistines. This was a city given to the Levites, and so a proper place for the ark to come to be taken care of; hence mention is made of Levites that took it down from the cart, (~~0165~~1 Samuel 6:15), (see Gill on "~~0216~~Joshua 21:16").

Ver. 13. *And they of Bethshemesh were reaping their wheat harvest in the valley*, etc.] Which began at Pentecost, in the month Sivan, about our May; so that there were many people in the fields, who were eyewitnesses of this wonderful event:

and they lifted up their eyes, and saw the ark, and rejoiced to see it; for though the ark while in the tabernacle was only seen by the high priest, when he went into the holy of holies; yet this having been brought out from thence, and exposed in the camp of Israel, some of this place very probably were there at that time, and had seen it, and knew it again by its form and splendour; and which gave them great pleasure to behold, which had been taken, and had been so long in the hand of the enemy, and the people of Israel deprived of it; which was the symbol of the divine Presence among

them, and now restored to them again; and in this wonderful way, without seeking for it, without going to war on account of it, without paying a ransom for it; and was brought to them in a cart drawn by cattle without a driver, the lords of the Philistines with a large retinue following it. This is to be understood not of their looking “into” it, as they afterwards did, and were punished, as Kimchi; but of their looking “on” it.

Ver. 14. *And the cart came into the field of Joshua, a Bethshemite,* etc.] In that part of the valley where they were reaping wheat which belonged to him, whom we nowhere else read; whether a priest or Levite, which is not improbable, since this was a city of the Levites, or a common Israelite, is not certain:

and stood there where there was a great stone; afterwards called the great stone of Abel, (^{GEN 31}1 Samuel 6:18). By the providence of God it was so ordered, that the kine made a stop just at this place; and proceeded no further, as if sensible they were come to their journey’s end, and had brought the ark into the hands of its friends, and to a proper place for them to express their thankfulness for it; for this stone seemed designed to be, as it was, the altar on which the burnt offering, by way of thanksgiving for the return of the ark, was to be offered; the Jews say ^{f126} this stone was the altar built by Abraham:

and they clave the wood of the cart, and offered the kine a burnt offering unto the Lord; the cart they cut in pieces, and laid the wood of it in order upon the stone, and slew the two cows, and laid their pieces on the wood, and set fire to it, and burnt them with it, as expressive of joy and thankfulness that the ark was returned. This was done, not by the lords of the Philistines, as some of the ancient Jews thought, as Kimchi relates, in which they are followed by some Christian interpreters; but by the men of Bethshemesh, as Kimchi, by the priests there; for though this was not the proper and usual place for sacrifice, nor were cows offered in sacrifice; yet this being an extraordinary case, and thank offerings were necessary as soon as the ark was returned, these things were dispensed with; and the rather, since Shiloh, where the tabernacle was, was destroyed; and besides, the ark of the Lord was here present, which sanctified the place, as it did the tabernacle, and made it fit for such service; and as for these cows, they had been employed in sacred service, and the Lord had a right unto them, and claim upon them; and it seemed not fitting that they should be after employed to any other use and service than his own; nor were the men of

Bethshemesh blamed or punished for this, though they afterwards were for looking into the ark.

Ver. 15. *And the Levites took down the ark of the Lord*, etc.] Or, “had took it down” ^{f127}; for this, though here related, was done as soon as the ark came into the field, or quickly after, and before the burnt offering could be made, which was burnt with the wood of the cart; and though the persons that took it down are called Levites, they were priests, who were of the tribe of Levi; for it was the work of the priests to take it down, though the Levites then might carry it; and it is remarkable that Bethshemesh was given to the Kohathite Levites, whose business it was to carry the ark on their shoulders; see (~~f210~~) Joshua 21:10 (~~f045~~) Numbers 4:15)

and the coffer that was with it, wherein the jewels of gold were; the purse or bag in which were the five golden mice, and the five golden emerods:

and put them on the great stone; both the ark and the coffer, by which the cart stood, and on which the sacrifice of burnt offering was probably offered:

and the men of Bethshemesh offered burnt offerings, and sacrificed sacrifices, the same day unto the Lord; besides the burnt offering of the two cows, they offered others to testify their thankfulness for the return of the ark; and also peace offerings, on which they feasted with one another, to express their greater joy.

Ver. 16. *And when the five lords of the Philistines had seen it*, etc.] Observed all that was done, how the kine performed their journey, drew the cart in which the ark was straight to Bethshemesh, stopped in a field near it, where it was received joyfully by the people, and sacrifices offered on account of it:

they returned to Ekron the same day; as they might very well, since it was but twelve miles from Bethshemesh.

Ver. 17. *And these are the golden emerods, which the Philistines returned for a trespass offering unto the Lord*, etc.] Along with the ark:

for Ashdod one, for Gaza one, for Ashkelon, one, for Gath one, for Ekron one; which were the five principalities of the Philistines that belonged to the five lords before mentioned; and each of these were at the expense of a

golden emerald, and sent it along with the ark to make atonement for the offence they had been guilty of in taking and detaining it.

Ver. 18. *And the golden mice, according to the number of all the cities of the Philistines belonging to the five lords*, etc.] That is, as many golden mice as there were cities under the jurisdiction of the five lords, which are the same before mentioned:

both of fenced cities and of country villages; walled and unwalled towns; it seems by this, as it was but reasonable it should be, that the several villages adjacent and belonging to the five principal cities contributed their part towards the expense of the five golden emeralds, and five golden mice, since they were afflicted both in their persons, and especially in their fields, as well as those in the cities; though Kimchi and others think that the country villages sent each of them a golden emerald, and a golden mouse, fearing the presents of the five cities would not serve for them; and therefore, though the priests and diviners only ordered five of each, according to the number of the principal cities, yet they of themselves sent more: all the country villages that reached

even unto the great stone of Abel; the Targum is,

“unto the great stone”;

and so the Septuagint version, reading Eben instead of Ebal; or “lamed” is put for “nun”, as “nun” for “lamed”, (^{<1637>}Nehemiah 13:7,8). The Vulgate Latin version is unto great Abel, taking it for a city, as does Procopius Gazaeus, who calls it the great city Abel, through which they carried the ark of the Lord; so Jerom^{f128}, who takes it to be the same with Bethshemesh, called Abel because of the mourning in it for the men of Bethshemesh after slain; or to distinguish it from another Abel is called “great”, (^{<1005>}2 Samuel 20:15) but it seems plainly to be the same with the great stone, (^{<0064>}1 Samuel 6:14,15), here called Eben Gedolah, here Abel Gedolah, by the change of a letter, having its latter name by anticipation from the great mourning hereafter made, next mentioned:

whereon they set down the ark of the Lord; when it was taken out of the cart, as also the coffer in which were the presents, (^{<0065>}1 Samuel 6:15),

which: stone remaineth unto this day in the field of Joshua the Bethshemite: the supplement, which stone remaineth, seems necessary, lest it should be thought the ark remained there unto the time of the writing this

book, which was not true, for it was soon after this fetched to Kirjathjearim; but the stone remained, and might be seen; and posterity in following times were told that was the stone on which the ark was put when it returned to Israel.

Ver. 19. *And he smote the men of Bethshemesh*, etc.] That is, God smote them, though they had received the ark with such expressions of joy, and had offered sacrifices on account of it; yet sinning in one particular after mentioned, which was highly resented, they were smitten by him with a thunderbolt, as Josephus says ^{f129}:

because they had looked into the ark of the Lord; which was forbidden the Levites, (⁰⁴⁰³Numbers 4:20) out of curiosity these men opened the ark, to see whether the Philistines had taken anything out of it, or put anything into it; and this, when in the tabernacle, being only to be seen by the high priest; and supposing they should never have the like opportunity again, to look upon the tables of the law which were in it, took it; and the rather they might be emboldened to this action, since it had been in the hands of the uncircumcised Philistines, who had profaned it; and as yet not restored to its pristine purity, holiness, and place:

even he smote of the people fifty thousand and seventy men; but as Bethshemesh was but a small place, a village, as Josephus ^{f130} calls it, and it seems not likely that there should be such a number of persons in it, and especially that should look into the ark; or that God, who is good and merciful, should destroy so large a number for this offence, however he might think fit to make an example of some, it is thought that the case was not as our version represents it. Some who think there were so many slain, yet distinguish them, seventy of the elders of the people, and 50,000 of the congregation, or common people, as the Targum; which accounts not for the difficulty at all: others think that only seventy of the men of Bethshemesh died, and that 50,000 were such as flocked out of the country on this occasion; but as this was on the same day the ark came into those parts, it can hardly be thought that so great a number should be got together so soon; and still less that they should all of them open the ark, and look into it. Abarbinel is of opinion that only seventy men of Bethshemesh were slain, and that the other 50,000 were the Philistines that died on account of the ark while it was among them; and reads the words, “with the men of Bethshemesh he smote--even he smote of the people seventy”; that is, of the men of Bethshemesh; 50,000, that is, of the

Philistines, and so this gives the sum of all that died on account of the ark, both while it was in the hands of the Philistines, and when returned to Bethshemesh, which is not an improbable sense: but others, and perhaps more truly, think that only seventy persons were smitten with death; for the order in which this account is given is different from all others in the Hebrew text, the lesser number being put first with a considerable distinguishing accent upon it, whereas the greater number is always expressed first; it stands thus, “of the people seventy men; 50,000 men”: 5000, according to the Syriac and Arabic versions. Josephus^{f131} is express for it that only seventy men were slain, and so some of the ancient Jews^{f132}; who say that these seventy were equal to 50,000, because of their superior excellency and dignity, as Ben Gersom observes, being the priests of the Lord, or the sanhedrim; but Bochart’s^{f133} sense seems to be preferable to all others, that there is a defect of the particle *m*, “out of”; and so to be read, either seventy men out of fifty thousand; that out of the 50,000 that flocked on this occasion from various parts, seventy were smitten for the reason before given; or rather seventy men, fifty out of 1000 men; that is, a twentieth part of the number of them, so that, out of 1400, seventy men were struck with death for their curiosity^{f134}. Something of this story seems to be retained by tradition among the Heathens; we are told^{f135} that when Troy was taken an ark was found, in which was the image of Bacchus; which being opened by Eurypylyus, he was struck with madness as soon as he saw the image:

and the people lamented, because the Lord had smitten [many] of the people with a great slaughter; I see no occasion for the supplement “many”; it was a great slaughter, if we consider the awful manner in which it was made, by thunder and lightning, as may be supposed; however, by an immediate stroke from heaven; and the persons on whom it was made, men of a sacred character, priests and Levites; and a great number, considering it was but a small city. Hence the place was called Abel, which signifies weeping, mourning, lamentation, (~~ORIG~~ 1 Samuel 6:18).

Ver. 20. *And the men of Bethshemesh said, who is able to stand before this holy Lord God?* etc.] The Targum is,

“before the ark of this holy Lord God;”

which is said either by way of complaint of the severity of God, and the strictness of his justice; or in reverence of his holiness, acknowledging their

imperfection, sin, and guilt, by reason of which they could not stand before him; nor can any, but on account of the mercy seat over the ark, or through Christ, his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice:

and to whom shall he go up from us? that is, the ark, the symbol of God's presence, which they seem to be desirous of parting with; being unworthy of it, and conscious of their impurity in comparison of God that dwelt in it; and of their weakness to give the honour and reverence that was due unto it; and yet they knew not who were fit for it, or would choose to receive it, because of the danger they were liable to through every inadvertency in them, and irreverence of that.

Ver. 21. *And they sent messengers to the inhabitants of Kirjathjearim,* etc.] Which was a city further on in the tribe of Judah, and lay among some woods, from whence it had its name, and was formerly called Kirjathbaal, from Baal's being worshipped there; of which (see ^{<063>}Joshua 15:9), they might choose to send hither to fetch the ark from them, because it was at a greater distance from the Philistines, their city Bethshemesh being on the borders of them; and because it might be a place of greater eminence and strength, and besides lay in the way to Shiloh, whereby they might suppose it was intended to be had; unless Shiloh was before this time destroyed:

saying, the Philistines have brought again the ark of the Lord; which they doubted not would be good news to them:

come ye down, and fetch it up to you; but say not one word of the reason of this request, lest it should discourage them; but rather represent it as a favour to them, and an honour done them, as indeed it was. Kirjathjearim seems to have stood on an eminence in comparison of Bethshemesh, and therefore it is said to come down from the one, and go up to the other. That Bethshemesh was in a valley, (see ^{<063>}1 Samuel 6:13) and this on a hill, (^{<070>}1 Samuel 7:1).

CHAPTER 7

INTRODUCTION TO FIRST SAMUEL 7

This chapter gives an account of the ark being brought to Kirjathjearim, where it continued twenty years, (^{<000>}1 Samuel 7:1,2) of the exhortation of Samuel to the people of Israel to reform from idolatry, and which had its desired effect, (^{<000>}1 Samuel 7:3,4) of Samuel's praying for the people, and offering sacrifices for them, and of the success thereof, victory over their enemies, (^{<000>}1 Samuel 7:5-14), and of his administration of justice to them, and constancy in it, (^{<000>}1 Samuel 7:15-17).

Ver. 1. *And the men of Kirjathjearim came and fetched up the ark of the Lord*, etc.] From Bethshemesh, which was near unto them, as Josephus ^{f136} says; they made no difficulty of fetching it, but gladly received it; for if they knew of what happened to the men of Bethshemesh, they knew it was not owing to the presence of the ark among them, but to their irreverent behaviour to it; and though Kirjathjearim was not a Levite city, and so the men of it could not bear the ark themselves, yet they might have proper persons from Bethshemesh to do this service:

and brought it into the house of Abinadab in the hill; which; hill was within the city of Kirjathjearim, and is mentioned either to distinguish this Abinadab that dwelt on it from another of the same name in the city, as Kimchi observes; or else to remark the propriety of the place, and the reason of the choice of it for the ark to be placed in; hills and high places being in those times accounted fittest for sacred services to be performed in, as well as places of safety; who this man was is not certain. Josephus ^{f137} says he was a Levite, but if so he could only be a sojourner in this place; however he might be, as he suggests he was, a man of great esteem for religion and righteousness:

and sanctified Eleazar his son to keep the ark of the Lord; not only to watch it that it might not be taken away, but to keep persons from it, from touching it, or using it irreverently; and such as were not allowed to come nigh it; as well as to keep the place clean where it was put; and for this he was appointed by the priests, or the elders of the city; and was set apart for

this service, and prepared for it by washings and sacrifices; and the rather he and not his father was invested with this office, because he was a young man, and his father might be old and decrepit; and this his son also a holy goodman, wise and prudent, and active and zealous for God, and true religion; and on all accounts a fit person for this post.

Ver. 2. *And it came to pass, while the ark abode in Kirjathjearim, that the time was long,* etc.] It could not be less than between forty and fifty years, for it remained here until the times of David, who removed it from hence after he was made king over all Israel, and when he had reigned over Judah seven years; and from the death of Eli to that time, which included the government of Samuel and Saul, it could not be less than what has been hinted:

for it [was] twenty years; not that this was all the time the ark was at Kirjathjearim, but it was so long there before it was much taken notice of, and sought unto, and the Lord by it; there was a great neglect of God, and his worship, which through the means of Samuel began to revive about this time, as it follows:

and all the house of Israel lamented after the Lord; became sensible of their evil doings, and repented of them, and sought the Lord with fasting, and prayer, and tears; bewailed their backslidings and revoltings from him, and cried after a departing God.

Ver. 3. *And Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel,* etc.] When they assembled at one of their three yearly feasts, or as he went from place to place, exhorting them to repentance and reformation; and perceiving they began to be awakened to a sense of their sins, and seemed desirous of returning to God, and restoring his worship:

saying, if ye do return unto the Lord with all your hearts; truly and sincerely; for he might fear there was hypocrisy and dissimulation at least in some of them:

[then] put away the strange gods; as all but the true God are; or the gods of another people, as the Philistines, Canaanites, etc. Baalim seem chiefly intended, as appears from the following verse:

and Ashtaroth from among you; female deities, such as with other nations went by the name of Juno, Venus, etc. so the Arabic version,

“the idols of the women ye secretly worship.”

Aquila renders it, “the images of Astarte”; so they call Venus as Procopius Gazaeus observes, from “aster”, a star; but the word signifies flocks of sheep, and these deities are supposed by some to be in the form of them; but be they what they may, they were to be put away out of their houses, and out of their hearts:

and prepare your hearts unto the Lord, and serve him only; that is, direct your hearts to him while in his service; let it proceed from the heart, and let it be done to him only, and not to another with him; or to him in and by another, as may be pretended, and commonly is by idolaters:

and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines; under whose dominion they had been for many years; for though their power over them was weakened by Samson, yet they were not completely delivered by him; so all the time of Eli they were not wholly free from them; and especially since their last defeat by them; when the ark was taken, they had been under oppression by them; now Samuel promises them deliverance from it, in case they relinquish their idols, and served the Lord solely and heartily.

Ver. 4. *Then the children of Israel did put away Baalim and Ashtaroth,* etc.] Both their male and female deities, of which (see ^{<0713>}Judges 2:13 3:7)

and served the Lord Only; Dr. Lightfoot ^{f138} observes, that a spirit of repentance and conversion came generally upon all the people; a matter and a time as remarkable as almost any we read of in Scripture, one only parallel to it; and that is in Acts, chapters two and three, at the great conversion there.

Ver. 5. *And Samuel said, gather all Israel to Mizpeh,* etc.] Not Mizpeh in Gilead, on the other side Jordan, but a city which lay on the borders of Judah and Benjamin, where the tribes met on the account of the Levite’s concubine, (^{<0710>}Judges 20:1). This order Samuel gave by messengers sent to the several tribes, or the heads of them, to meet him at this place:

and I will pray for you unto the Lord; no doubt he prayed for them privately, that the reformation begun might be carried on, and appear to be sincere, and hearty, and general, and universal; but he was desirous that they might appear in a body, and join with him in public prayer for their spiritual and temporal welfare; that they might have true repentance for

their sins, reform from them, and have remission of them, and be delivered out of the hands of their enemies.

Ver. 6. *And they gathered together to Mizpeh*, etc.] Even all Israel, at least the heads of the people, and representatives of them:

and drew water, and poured it out before the Lord; drew it from some fountain near at hand, and poured it out as in the presence of God, who was where his people were met together. Jerom^{f139} relates it as tradition of the Jews, that curses were cast into this water, as in the water of jealousy, and that idolaters were tried by it; and that whatever idolater, who denied he worshipped idols, and tasted of it, his lips so stuck together that they could not be separated, and by this means was known and put to death; and therefore it is said Samuel judged now at this place: but it should be observed, this water was not drunk, but poured out; and that as a token of their humiliation, as Jarchi, that they were before the Lord, as water poured out; and of the sincerity of their repentance, as the Targum, which is,

“they poured out their heart in repentance, as water;”

and of the atonement and expiation of their sins, which passed away as water to be remembered no more, as Kimchi, or rather signifying hereby that they thoroughly renounced idolatry, that nothing of it should remain; as water entirely poured out, there remains not so much as any smell of it in the cask, as does of honey or oil, or such kind of liquor; for what a learned writer^{f140} says, that this was in token of joy, like that at the feast of tabernacles, when they drew water out of the fountain of Siloah, seems not so agreeable, since this was a day of humiliation, fasting, and prayer, as follows:

and fasted on that day, and said there, we have sinned against the Lord; Samuel prayed in public for them, with whom they joined; and they fasted in a literal sense, abstaining from food, and made a confession of their sins; this was the work of that day:

and Samuel judged the children of Israel in Mizpeh; not that he now began to judge them, but went on in a more public and vigorous manner to judge them; he sat, and heard, and tried causes that came before him; explained the laws of God to them, and enforced the obedience of them; reformed abuses that were among them, and punished idolaters.

Ver. 7. *And when the Philistines heard that the children of Israel were gathered together to Mizpeh,* etc.] Not knowing it was upon a religious account; but supposing they met to form schemes and measures to cast off their yoke, and deliver themselves out of their hands; and were preparing to take up arms, and fall upon them:

the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel; with forces out of their several principalities united to fight with them; judging it advisable to lose no time, but attack them before they were well prepared and provided to defend themselves:

and when the children of Israel heard it, they were afraid of the Philistines; because they were unarmed, and not at all prepared for war, and having no expectation of it.

Ver. 8. *And the children of Israel said to Samuel,* etc.] To whom they applied, not as the general of their forces, but as the prophet of the Lord; believing his prayers for them would be of more avail to them than an army of men ever so numerous, or so well accoutred:

cease not to cry unto the Lord our God for us: he had been praying for them that day, and they desired he would continue praying for them, well knowing that the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much; they knew their salvation was of the Lord, and that he only could save them, and that he must be sought unto for it; and as Samuel had an interest in him, they beg he would continue to make use of it on their behalf; in which they expressed their trust in God, their regard to means, the duty of prayer, and the high esteem they had of the prophet of the Lord, whom they entreat to pray for them:

that he will save us out of the hands of the Philistines; who were now coming up against them, and who had for a long time tyrannised over them.

Ver. 9. *And Samuel took a sucking lamb,* etc.] Which it might be, and yet more than eight days old, for under that it might not be sacrificed, (⁽⁴²²³⁾Exodus 22:30)

and offered it for a burnt offering wholly unto the Lord; the whole of it was burnt, skin and all, whereas the skin was the priest's in other burnt offerings; and this is remarked^{f141} as one of the three things in which it

differed from other offerings; the word being feminine, the Jews gather from hence, as Jarchi notes, that females might be offered at a private altar:

and Samuel cried unto the Lord for Israel; not only offered a sacrifice for them, but prayed for them:

and the Lord heard him; and answered him, either by causing fire to come down on the sacrifice, by which it was consumed, or by the voice of thunder, which frightened and discomfited the Philistines; and the event of things manifestly showed it.

Ver. 10. *And as Samuel was offering up the burnt offering* etc.] Which he might do by a priest, as Ben Gersom suggests, he being only a Levite; though he being a prophet, and an extraordinary person, and this an extraordinary case, he might do it himself, as Gideon and others, as well as offer it in another place than where the tabernacle was; Shiloh being now destroyed, persons and places for sacrifice were now dispensed with: and before Samuel had made an end of offering the sacrifice,

the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel; and were come as far almost as Mizpeh, where Israel were, and Samuel was sacrificing:

but the Lord thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines; which fulfilled Hannah's prophecy, (^{<0020>}1 Samuel 2:10) and this, as Josephus^{f142} says, was attended with lightning, which flashed in their faces, and shook their weapons out of their hands, so that they fled disarmed; and also with an earthquake, which caused gaps in the earth, into which they fell:

and discomfited them; disturbed, affrighted them, and threw them into confusion and disorder, as well as destroyed many of them:

and they were smitten before Israel; the meaning of which is not that they fled before them, and were killed by them; but that before Israel could come out against them, and fight with them, they were smitten and destroyed, many of them by the thunder and lightning, and by the earth opening upon them, and devouring them; for this phrase, "before Israel", denotes time, as Abarbinel observes, and not place.

Ver. 11. *And the men of Israel went out of Mizpeh,* etc.] To which they were encouraged by hearing or perceiving that the army of the Philistines was discomfited by the thunder, and lightning, and earthquake:

and pursued the Philistines; who, when they came out, were fleeing from the opening earth, and frightened with thunder and lightning, and many were killed, and all put in disorder; so that they stayed not to engage in battle with Israel, and who had nothing to do but to pursue their enemy:

and smote them: with what weapons of war they could get at Mizpeh, and with what some might have with them for private use, and in common wear; but more especially with the weapons of the Philistines, which they in their confusion and fright had thrown away:

until they came under Bethcar; a place so called; “car” signifies a lamb; here might be formerly a temple dedicated to the lamb, unless it had its name in memory of the lamb Samuel now offered, which was followed with such success. Josephus^{f143} calls this place Corraea; and in the Targum it is Bethsaron, which signifies a fruitful field or champaign country.

Ver. 12. *And Samuel took a stone, and set it*, etc.] Not for worship, but as a monument of the victory obtained by the help of God: and this he placed

between Mizpeh and Shen; which latter signifies a tooth, and designs the precipice of a rock which juts out, and hangs over in the form of one:

and called the name of it Ebenezer; which signifies “the stone of help”; and is the same place which by anticipation has this name, (~~1~~ Samuel 4:1), so that in the selfsame place where the Israelites were twice beaten by the Philistines, and the ark taken, was this salvation wrought for them:

saying, hitherto hath the Lord helped us; this was but the beginning of their deliverance from the Philistines, and which was owing to the help of the Lord; and as he had begun to help them, they might hope and encourage themselves that he would go on to help them until their deliverance was completed: however, they with Samuel thought it their duty, which was right, to acknowledge what the Lord had done for them, and perpetuate the memory of it, though they could not be sure what he would do for them hereafter; yet as they were sensible of, and thankful for this instance of his goodness, they hoped for more, and had their dependence on him for future success against their enemies.

Ver. 13. *So the Philistines were subdued*, etc.] Not that their country was conquered, or they made subject and become tributaries to Israel; but they were so humbled, as not to attempt to give the people of Israel any further

trouble and distress, who were now delivered from their oppression and tyranny:

and came no more into the coast of Israel; at this time they did not gather together their forces dispersed, nor raise and bring a new army into the land of Israel; they contented themselves with placing garrisons on the coast, but did not attempt to enter and invade them any more; that is, for a long time, even until Samuel was grown old, and the people would have a king, and had one, which offended the Lord, and then he suffered them to be distressed by them again; but while Samuel was alone governor they came no more, though they did quickly after Saul was made king, as it follows:

the hand of the Lord was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel; not all the days of his life, but all the days of his sole government, which restrained them from making incursions into the land of Israel; and indeed in later times, when they did come forth to make war with them, the battle was against them during the times of Samuel.

Ver. 14. *And the cities which the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel,* etc.] We nowhere read that the Israelites went out to war with them, and took these cities from them by besieging and assaulting them; but they made a demand of them after the above victory obtained, by which the Philistines were so intimidated, that they quietly surrendered them to them:

from Ekron even unto Gath, and the coasts thereof, did Israel deliver out of the hands of the Philistines; not by dint of sword, but by demand, to which they submitted; and though Ekron, if not Gath, fell to the tribe of Judah by lot, yet were never in their possession; and so are to be understood exclusively here, that not they, but the cities and towns that lay between them and the coasts thereof, which the Philistines had seized upon, these they were obliged to deliver up again to Israel; and if Ekron and Gath were delivered, they were not long held by them, for we soon read of them as in the hands of others:

and there was peace between Israel and the Amorites; who were a principal nation of the Canaanites, and are put for the whole of them that remained; and so Josephus^{f144} calls them the remnant of the Canaanites; these, finding the Philistines were subdued, were quiet and peaceable, and gave Israel no more trouble.

Ver. 15. *And Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life.*] Not only before Saul was made king, but afterwards; for though he had not the exercise of the supreme government of the nation, yet he might act as a judge under Saul, and hear and try causes brought before him, and execute justice and judgment; and as a prophet he taught and instructed the people, and reformed abuses among them; and besides, he held and exercised his extraordinary office, to which he was raised up of God, and even took upon him to reprove Saul himself, and to kill Agag. The Jews say ^{f145} he judged Israel thirteen years only, eleven by himself, and two with Saul; but his government must be much larger, his with Saul is reckoned forty years, (~~4432~~ Acts 13:21).

Ver. 16. *And he went from year to year in circuit,* etc.] As judges do; or “from the year in the year” ^{f146} from the time of the year in the year, as the Targum, from the middle of it, that is, every half year; and so Josephus says ^{f147}, that he went twice a year in circuit: and the places he went to, and where he held his courts of judicature, were

Bethel, and Gilgal, and Mizpeh; by Bethel is not meant Shiloh, as Abarbinel, for that was now destroyed; nor Kirjathjearim, where the ark was, for it would have been called by its name; but the same Bethel that was near to Ai, and not far from Shiloh, and was in the tribe of Benjamin, as all those places were. Gilgal was where the tabernacle, ark, and camp of Israel were first pitched, when they came over Jordan, and Mizpeh where the people used to be assembled on occasion, (see ~~9005~~ 1 Samuel 7:5,6),

and judged Israel in all those places; who came from all parts hither with their causes, and for advice and counsel in all cases, at the returning periods.

Ver. 17. *And his return was to Ramah,* etc.] When he had gone his circuit, he came back to this city, which was his native place, and where his father and mother had dwelt, (see ~~8006~~ 1 Samuel 1:1)

for there was his house; and his father’s house before him, and perhaps the same, (~~8009~~ 1 Samuel 1:19) and there he judged Israel; here was his fixed residence, and here he was always to be met with, except when on his circuit; and hither the people of Israel might come from all parts, to have justice done them between man and man, or receive information in matters of difficulty and importance:

and there he built an altar unto the Lord: to offer his own sacrifices, and the sacrifices of the people, either by himself, or by a priest, when the people came to have justice administered to them; or to desire him to pray for them, teach and instruct them, or to give them advice. Shiloh being destroyed, and no place appointed for the tabernacle and altar, the Jews say, high places for a private altar were lawful, and even for one that was not a priest to offer; these things, though settled by law, yet were for a time dispensed with, until things could be fixed in their proper place and order.

CHAPTER 8

INTRODUCTION TO FIRST SAMUEL 8

This chapter relates, how that Samuel being old, and his sons behaving ill, the people desired to have a king set over them, (~~ORR~~ 1 Samuel 8:1-5), which case Samuel laid before the Lord, and he was directed by him to yield to the people's desire, but at the same time to set before them all the disadvantages and ill consequences that would arise from thence, which he did, (~~ORR~~ 1 Samuel 8:6-18), but they insisting upon it, nevertheless, he gave them reason to expect that their request would be granted, (~~ORR~~ 1 Samuel 8:19-22).

Ver. 1. *And it came to pass, when Samuel was old*, etc.] The common notion of the Jews is, that he lived but fifty two years ^{f148}; when a man is not usually called an old man, unless the infirmities of old age came upon him sooner than they commonly do, through his indefatigable labours from his childhood, and the cares and burdens of government he had long bore; though some think he was about sixty years of age; and Abarbinel is of opinion that he was more than seventy. It is a rule with the Jews ^{f149}, that a man is called an old man at sixty, and a grey headed man at seventy:

that he made his sons judges over Israel; under himself, not being able through old age to go the circuits he used; he sent them, and appointed them to hear and try causes in his stead, or settled them in some particular places in the land, and, as it seems by what follows, at Beersheba; though whether that was under his direction, or was their own choice, is not certain.

Ver. 2. *Now the name of his firstborn was Joel*, etc.] In (~~ORR~~ 1 Chronicles 6:28) he is called Vashni; (see Gill on “~~ORR~~ 1 Chronicles 6:28”). This was not Joel the prophet, as some have thought, neither his parentage, nor his office, nor his times, will agree with this:

and the name of his second Abiah: which two sons seem to be all he had:

they were judges in Beersheba; in the utmost border of the land, to the south, as Ramah, where Samuel dwelt and judged, was more to the north;

where they were placed by their father, for the greater convenience of the people of Israel that lived southward, to bring their causes to them, as those lived more northward might bring them to him: according to Josephus ^{f150}, they were placed by their father, the one in Bethel, one of the places Samuel used to go to in his circuit and judge, and the other at Beersheba. But some, as Junius and others, think it should be rendered, “unto Beersheba”; and so takes in its opposite, Dan, which lay at the utmost border of the land northward; hence the phrase, “from Dan to Beersheba”; and that the one was settled at Dan for the sake of the northern part of the land, and the other at Beersheba, for the sake of the southern: or rather these sons of Samuel placed themselves at Beersheba; which was an ill judged thing, to be both in one place, and which must give the people of Israel a great deal of trouble, and put them to a large expense to come from all quarters thither, to have their causes tried; but that is not the worst.

Ver. 3. *And his sons walked not in his ways*, etc.] The meaning of which is not that they did not go the circuit he did, which is too low a sense of the words some Jewish writers give; but they did not walk in the fear of God, in the paths of religion and righteousness, truth and holiness; they neither served God, nor did justice to men, as Samuel had done:

but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment; indulged to covetousness, sought to get riches at any rate, took bribes, which blind the eyes of judges; and so passed wrong judgment, and gave the cause to those that gave the largest gifts, right or wrong.

Ver. 4. *Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together*, etc.] At some place of rendezvous appointed; these were the heads of the tribes, and fathers of the houses and families of Israel, the principal persons of age and authority:

and came to Samuel unto Ramah; the place of his nativity and abode, and where he now dwelt, and judged Israel; they went in a very respectable body with an address to him.

Ver. 5. *And said unto him, behold, thou art old*, etc.] (see ^{<000>}1 Samuel 8:1), his age was no reproach to him, nor was it becoming them to upbraid him with it; nor was it a reason why he should be removed from his office, for it did not disqualify him for it; but rather, having gained by age

experience, was more fit for it, though he might not be able to ride his circuits as formerly:

and thy sons walk not in thy ways; whom he had made judges; this is a better reason than the former for what is after requested; and had they only besought them to remove him from their places, and rested content with that, it would have been well enough; but what they were solicitous for, and always had an inclination to, and now thought a proper opportunity offered of obtaining it, was what follows:

now make us a king to judge us like all the nations; to rule over them as sole monarch; to go before them in battle as their general, as well as to administer justice to them, by hearing and trying causes as their judge; which only they mention to cover their views, and make their motion more acceptable to Samuel; what they were desirous of was to have a king appearing in pomp and splendour, wearing a crown of gold, clothed in royal apparel, with a sceptre in his hand, dwelling in a stately palace, keeping a splendid court, and attended with a grand retinue, as the rest of the nations about them had had for a long time. The first kings we read of were in the times of Abraham, but after it became common for nations to have kings over them, and particularly the neighbours of Israel, as Edom, Moab, Ammon, etc. and Cicero says^{f151}, all the ancient nations had their kings, to whom they were obedient: Israel had God for their King in a peculiar manner other nations had not, and stood in no need of any other; and happy it would have been for them if they had been content therewith, and not sought after another: however, they were so modest, and paid such deference to Samuel, as to desire him to make or appoint one for them.

Ver. 6. *But the thing displeased Samuel*, etc.] Not that they called him an old man, and suggested that he was incapacitated for his office, nor for observing the unbecoming walk of his sons, but for what follows:

when they said, give us a king to judge us; what displeased him was, that they were for changing their form of government, not only to remove it from him, and his sons, but from the Lord himself, who was king over them; the ill consequences of which, many of them at least, he easily foresaw, and which gave him great uneasiness, both on account of the glory of God, and their own good; insomuch, as Josephus^{f152} says, he could neither eat nor sleep, but watched all night, and spent it in prayer, as follows:

and Samuel prayed unto the Lord; to know his mind and will, and what answer he should return unto them.

Ver. 7. *And the Lord said unto Samuel*, etc.] He appeared to him in a vision or dream, and by an articulate voice delivered to him what follows:

hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee; not as approving of what they said, but permitting and allowing what they asked, as a punishment of them for their disloyalty and ingratitude, and as resenting their ill behaviour to him; for it was in anger he assented to their request, (^{<2811>}Hosea 13:11)

for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me that I should not reign over them; most interpreters supply the word “only”, as if the sense was, that they had not only rejected Samuel from judging them, but the Lord also from reigning over them; and which is spoken to comfort Samuel, and to alleviate the pressure on his mind for the ill treatment he had met with; for since they had served the Lord after this manner, it was no wonder he should be ill used, and might bear it with great patience: but I see no reason why the word may not be taken absolutely, that they had not rejected Samuel from all share in the government, at least from judging the people; for so he continued all the days of his life, even after they had a king over them; but they entirely rejected the sole and peculiar government of God over them.

Ver. 8. *According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them out of Egypt*, etc.] This was no new thing; all that they had done since they were wonderfully favoured of God, as to be brought out of Egyptian bondage, was all of a piece with this; one continued series of ingratitude, of rebellion against God, and against his servants, that he employed under him, as Moses, Aaron, etc.

even unto this day, wherewith they have forsaken me, and served other gods; this is what this people were always addicted to, to cast off the worship and service of God, and go into idolatry:

so do they also unto thee; acted the like ungrateful part to him for all the service he had done them, from his childhood to that time; wherefore, as the disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord, if such things as before observed were done to Jehovah himself, Samuel could not expect to meet with better treatment, other than he had, (see ^{<4024>}Matthew 10:24,25).

Ver. 9. *Now therefore hearken unto their voice*, etc.] And appoint them a king as they desire:

howbeit, yet protest solemnly unto them; not against the thing itself, which was permitted, but against the evil of their request, as to the unseasonable time, ill manner, and unjustifiable reason, in and for which it was made; the Lord would have Samuel lay before them their evil in requesting it, and the evils that would follow upon it to them, and faithfully represent them to them, that they might be left without excuse, and have none to blame but themselves when they, should come upon them:

and show them the manner of the king that shall reign over them: or the right or judgment^{f153}; not a legal right or form of government, but an assumed, arbitrary, and despotic power, such as the kings of the east exercised over their subjects, a king like whom the Israelites desired to have; namely, what unbounded liberties he would take with them, what slaves he would make of them, and what of their property he would take to himself at pleasure, as is after related. The word signifies, not a divine law, according to which the king should govern, but a custom, or a custom he would introduce, as the word is rendered, (^{<0013>}1 Samuel 2:13) and is different from that in (^{<0015>}1 Samuel 10:25).

Ver. 10. *And Samuel told all the words of the Lord unto them*, etc.] How he considered this request of theirs as a rejection of him as their king, and that it was acting the same ungrateful part they had always done; and since they were so importunate to have it granted, it should be done; but that he was ordered to lay before them all the inconveniences that would attend it, and the evils that would follow upon it unto them:

that asked of him a king; which is observed, not to distinguish a part of them from the rest; for this was an united request of the people.

Ver. 11. *And he said, this will be the manner of the king that shall reign over you*, etc.] Not in which he ought to proceed, but what he will do: and this not the manner of one king, or of the first only, but of all of them, more or less; of kings in general, who are commonly inclined to arbitrary power. So Aristotle^{f154} in opposition to theocracy, describes a full and absolute kingdom, as he calls it, when a king does all things according to his will: and observes, that he that would have the mind or reason preside, would have God and the laws rule; but he that would have a man to reign, adds also a lust, or one led by his own lust: so it follows,

he will take your sons, and appoint them for himself; for his own use and service, to wait upon him, to be his pages, or grooms, or guards:

for his chariots; to take care of them, and drive them, though not without paying them for it; yet this being but a mean and servile employment, and what they should be obliged to, whether they would or no, is observed to show the tyranny and bondage to which they would be subject, when their sons otherwise might be free men, and possessed of estates and carriages of their own:

and to be his horsemen; or rather “for his horses”, to take care of them, and go out along with him, and attend his person, whether when going to war, or on pleasure:

and some shall run before his chariots; be his running footmen, being swift of foot, and trained up for that service; some are naturally swift, as Asahel was (^{<1028>}2 Samuel 2:18). Pliny ^{f155} speaks of some swifter than horses; and of the swiftness of some he elsewhere gives ^{f156} many surprising instances. It seems as if it was usual to have fifty such men to run before them, (see ^{<1031>}2 Samuel 15:1 ^{<1005>}1 Kings 1:5).

Ver. 12. *And he will appoint him captains over thousands, and captains over fifties*, etc.] Which though posts of honour, yet when they are not matter of choice, and especially being precarious, and depending on the arbitrary will of a prince, are not eligible, and less so to persons that choose another sort of life:

and [will set] them to ear his ground; to plough it; not the same persons made captains of thousands and fifties, but others, whom he will employ in tilling and manuring his fields, and oblige them to it:

and to reap his harvest; when it is ripe, and gather it in, and bring it home into his barns and garners:

and to make his instruments of war: as swords, spears, bows and arrows, most commonly used in those times:

and instruments of chariots; which seem to design chariots of war, and the iron spikes and scythes which were joined to them, to cut down the foot soldiers, when driven among them in battle, which are commonly called chariots of iron; (see ^{<676>}Joshua 17:16 ^{<0043>}Judges 4:3).

Ver. 13. *And he will take your daughters to be confectionaries*, etc.] Such as deal in spices, and mix them, and make them up in various forms very agreeable to the taste. Men are commonly in our countries and times employed in such arts, but it seems this was the business of women in those times and places. Some versions ^{f157} render it “*unguentariae*”, makers or sellers of ointments, and such there were in some nations ^{f158}, such was Lydia in Juvenal ^{f159};

and to be cooks; to dress all sorts of food, especially what were boiled, as the word signifies: and to be bakers; to make and bake bread, which though with us is the work of men, yet in the eastern countries was usually done by women; (see Gill on “⁻⁰³²⁶Leviticus 26:26”).

Ver. 14. *And he will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your oliveyards*, etc.] Which includes the whole increase of their land, their corn, and wine, and oil; and it is these, the fruits of their fields, vineyards, and oliveyards, which are here meant; for otherwise kings might not, and did not by their absolute authority, take away those from their subjects; otherwise Ahab would have taken away Naboth’s vineyard at once, nor would Jezebel have needed to have taken such a method she did, to put Ahab into the possession of it:

even the best of them, and give them to his servants; for their service; and which some restrain to times of war, when necessity obliged to use such methods.

Ver. 15. *And he will take the tenth of your seed*, etc.] When grown up and ripe, as their wheat and barley:

and of your vineyards; the tenth of the grapes they should produce:

and give to his officers, and to his servants; for the support and maintenance of them; and to pay this, besides the tithes of the priests and Levites, would make it very burdensome to them; and this was no other than what kings of other nations usually had, the like to whom they were desirous of having, and therefore must expect that they would insist upon the privileges and revenues that others had. In Babylon, as Aristotle ^{f160} relates, there was an ancient law which required the tenth of whatever was imported for the public revenue, which was revived in the times of Alexander by Antimenes the Rhodian. In Arabia Felix was an island abounding with frankincense and myrrh, and various spices, the tenth of

the fruits of which the king always had, as Diodorus Siculus^{f161} reports, as in the Apocrypha:

“And as for other things that belong unto us, of the tithes and customs pertaining unto us, as also the saltpits, and the crown taxes, which are due unto us, we discharge them of them all for their relief.” (1 Maccabees 11:35)

Ver. 16. *And he will take your manservants, and your maidservants,* etc.] Into his own family, for his own use and service, if he wants them, or likes them better than what he has:

and your goodliest young men: that are tall and lusty, comely and beautiful, of a proper stature and good aspect; and such in all countries used to be chosen for officers in courts, or attendants there; and so the Turks to this day pitch upon young men to attend on great personages, who are of a comely form, have admirable features, and are well shaped, (see Gill on “²⁰⁰⁴Daniel 1:4”),

and your asses, and put them to his work; employ them in ploughing his fields, drawing his carriages, or bearing his burdens; and so any other cattle that would serve the same purposes, as oxen, camels, etc.

Ver. 17. *He will take the tenth of your sheep,* etc.] As well as of their seed and vineyards; and not the tithe of their flocks only, but of their herds also, which are here included, as Kimchi observes:

and ye shall be his servants: made slaves of by him, even as the Canaanitish servants were, according to Abarbinel; though others interpret it more mildly of their being obliged to pay tribute and taxes, for the support of his government.

Ver. 18. *And ye shall cry out in that day, because of your king,* etc.] His power and pride, his oppression and tyranny, his heavy exactions, and intolerable yoke, and yet not be able to free themselves from them; all that they could do would be only to cry out under them as grievously distressed, and not knowing how to help themselves; and which would be the more aggravated, because they brought all this upon themselves, as it follows:

which ye shall have chosen you; for though the choice of a king for them, at a proper time, God had reserved to himself, yet in later times, as is here

suggested, they would choose for themselves, and did, (see ^{<2804>}Hosea 8:4) besides, to have a king in general was at first their own choice, though the particular person was by the designation of the Lord:

and the Lord will not hear you in that day; will not regard them, have no compassion on them, suffer them to remain under their oppressions, and not deliver them out of them; because they rejected him from being their King, and put themselves out of his protection, into the hands of another, and therefore it was just to leave them to their own choice.

Ver. 19. *Nevertheless, the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel*, etc.] The advice he gave not to think of a king, but be content with the government under which they were; but to this they would not hearken, notwithstanding all the inconveniences that would attend such a change:

and they said, nay, but we will have a king over us; they would not believe what Samuel said concerning a king, even though they were the words of the Lord he delivered to them; and though they knew Samuel was a prophet, and spoke by a spirit of prophecy, and none of his words had ever fallen to the ground: but such was their stubbornness and obstinacy, and so set upon having a king, that one they would have, let them suffer what hardships, or be at what expenses they might; at all events, and against all remonstrances, they were determined to have one.

Ver. 20. *That we also may be like all the nations*, etc.] Even though they were slaves, like them; a king they would have, as they had, such was their stupidity. It was their greatest honour and glory, as well as happiness, not to be like other nations; as in their religion, laws, and liberties, so in their form of government; God being their King in such a peculiar sense as he was not of others, but with this they could not be content:

and that our king may judge us; hear their causes, administer justice and judgment to them, protect their persons and properties, and rule them according to the civil laws that were given them:

and go out before us, and fight our battles; which Samuel their present judge did not, and to which perhaps they may have some respect; but then he gained more for them by his prayers, than a king or general would by his military skill or prowess, (see ^{<0070>}1 Samuel 7:10), and it is very remarkable, and what is observed by some, that their first king died in a battle. What made them so pressing and importunate to have a king at, this time, and not defer it to another, it is very probable was, that they understood that

Nahash, king of the children of Ammon, was preparing to attack them, and therefore they were desirous to have a king also to go out before them, and meet him, and give him battle, (~~1012~~1 Samuel 12:12).

Ver. 21. *And Samuel heard all the words of the people*, etc.] Patiently, and without interruption; attentively heard them, took notice of them, laid them up in his memory; but gave no answer to them, but reported them to the Lord, as in the next clause:

and he rehearsed them in the ears of the Lord; privately, in a free and familiar manner, with great exactness, as they were expressed; this he did, not before the people publicly, but in secret prayer, seeking for direction what he should further do, or what answer he should return to them.

Ver. 22. *And the Lord said to Samuel*, etc.] an audible voice, or by an impulse upon his mind:

hearken unto their voice, and make them a king; since they will have a king, let them have one, and let them know that they shall have one:

and Samuel said unto the men of Israel: the elders of the people that addressed him on this occasion, (~~1000~~1 Samuel 8:4)

go ye every man unto his city; signifying they might return in peace, and be assured their request would be granted, and a king would be appointed in a short time, and which they might report to their fellow citizens; and they might expect to hear from him quickly, as soon as he had instructions from the Lord who should be their king, which right he had reserved to himself; and therefore in the mean while they might rest contented that they would have one in a little time.

CHAPTER 9

INTRODUCTION TO FIRST SAMUEL 9

This chapter gives an account of Saul, the person the Lord had appointed to be king of Israel; it relates his descent, and describes his person, (^{<0001>}1 Samuel 9:1,2) and how seeking his father's asses, which were lost, he providentially came to the place where Samuel dwelt, (^{<0003>}1 Samuel 9:3-5) and being advised by his servant, and approving of his advice, he concluded to go to him, and inquire the way he should go, (^{<0006>}1 Samuel 9:6-10) and being directed by some young maidens, they found him presently in the street going to a feast, (^{<0011>}1 Samuel 9:11-14) and Samuel having some previous notice from the Lord of such a person's coming to him that day, when he met him invited him to dine with him, and obliged him to stay with him that day, (^{<0015>}1 Samuel 9:15-19) satisfied him about his asses, and gave him a hint of the grandeur he was to be raised to, to which Saul made a modest reply, (^{<0020>}1 Samuel 9:20,21) and Samuel treated him at the feast in a very respectable manner, (^{<0022>}1 Samuel 9:22-24) and privately communed with him of things preparatory to what he was about to make known unto him, (^{<0025>}1 Samuel 9:25-27).

Ver. 1. *Now there was a man of Benjamin*, etc.] Of the tribe of Benjamin, which had its name from the youngest son of Jacob, and one of this tribe was the first king of Israel:

whose name was Kish: whom the apostle calls Cis, (^{<4121>}Acts 13:21), and Josephus^{f162} Cises; his name, according to Hillerus^{f163}, signifies "ensnared"; for what reason it was given him is not certain:

the son of Abiel; in (^{<3333>}1 Chronicles 8:33 9:39), he is called Ner that begat Kish; and in this book, (^{<0451>}1 Samuel 14:50,51) Ner and Kish are represented as brethren, the sons of Abiel: to reconcile this, it may be observed, that Ner being the elder brother, on the death of his father Abiel, had the care and bringing up of his younger brother Kish; and therefore when he is said to beget him, the meaning is, not that he was the parent of him, but the bringer up of him; or rather, as Kimchi thinks, Abiel had two sons, one of which was Ner; and that he had two sons, one that was called

after his own name Ner, who was the father of Abner; and the other Kish, the father of Saul:

the son of Zeror, the son of Bechorath, the son of Aphiah, a Benjamite; of these persons we nowhere else read:

a mighty man of power; not a man of riches, or of authority, neither a wealthy man, nor a magistrate, for his family was mean and contemptible, (^{<002>}1 Samuel 9:21 10:27) but a man of great strength, an able bodied man, and of great natural fortitude, and courage of mind.

Ver. 2. *And he had a son whose name was Saul,* etc.] Of this name was the great apostle of the Gentiles before his conversion, and was of the same tribe also; but very different in stature; he was a little man, this a large tall man, like his father perhaps;

a choice young man, and a goodly; (^{<003>}1 Samuel 2:1-10) of a goodly aspect, a comely man, tall and well shaped, in the prime of his age, a very agreeable person, one among a thousand:

and there was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he; meaning not for the endowments of his mind, or his moral character and behaviour. There might be as good, or better men than he, on such accounts, but for his outward appearance, his bodily shape, and the dignity of his person:

from his shoulders and upwards he was higher than any of the people; this description of him is enlarged upon and explained, to show that he was just such a person the people were desirous of having king over them, such an one as the nations about them had; and it was usual with the eastern people, and so with the Greeks and Romans, to choose persons to the highest offices of magistracy that made a personable appearance superior to others, and is what they often take notice of, as a recommendation of them as princes. Herodotus^{f164} reports of the Ethiopians, that they judged the largest of the people, and him who had strength according to his size, most worthy to be king. And the same writer observes^{f165}, that among the many thousands of men of the army of Xerxes, there was not one who for comeliness and largeness was so worthy of the empire as Xerxes himself; so Ulysses, because of his height, was the more acceptable to the people of Corfu^{f166}; so Alexander's captains, it is said^{f167}, might be thought to be kings for their beautiful form, height of body, and greatness of strength and wisdom. Julius Caesar is said to be of high stature; and so Domitian^{f168};

Virgil ^{f169} represents Turnus as in body more excellent than others, and by the entire head above them; and Anchises as walking statelier and higher than the rest ^{f170}; among the many encomiums Pliny ^{f171} gives of Trajan, as to his outward form and appearance, this is one, “proceritas corporis”, height of body, being higher than others; the Gentiles had a notion that such men came nearer to the deities, and looked more like them; so Diana is described as taller than any of the nymphs and goddesses ^{f172}. Solomon, according to Josephus ^{f173}, chose such young men to ride horses, and attend his person, when he himself rode, who were conspicuous for their height, and greatly above others.

Ver. 3. *And the asses of Kish, Saul’s father, were lost*, etc.] Had got out of the stables or fields, in which they were kept, and strayed from thence:

and Kish said to Saul his son, take now one of the servants with thee, and arise, go seek the asses; he chose not to send his servants only, who might not be so careful and diligent in searching for them, but his son, and not him alone, but a servant with him to wait upon him, and assist him. And it was quite agreeable to the simplicity of those times for persons of equal or greater substance to be employed in such an affair; asses made a considerable part of the wealth and riches of men, were rode upon by persons of quality, and were fed and taken care of by the sons of dukes and princes; (see ^{<800>}Job 1:3 ^{<060>}Judges 5:10 ^{<034>}Genesis 36:24). The Jews ¹⁷⁴ have a tradition, that this servant was Doeg the Edomite.

Ver. 4. *And they passed through Mount Ephraim*, etc.] The mountainous part of that tribe, which lay contiguous to the tribe of Benjamin, where it might be supposed the asses had strayed to:

and passed through the land of Shalisha; a tract in the tribe of Benjamin, so called from some illustrious person, prince, and duke of it; in it very probably was the place called Baalshalisha; (^{<042>}2 Kings 4:42) and which perhaps is the same Jerom calls ^{f175} Bethshalisha; and says there was a village of this name in the borders of Diospolis, almost fifteen miles distance from it to the north, in the Tamnitic country; though Bunting ^{f176} says it was situated in Mount Ephraim, eight miles from Jerusalem to the northwest:

but they found them not; the asses, neither in Mount Ephraim, nor in the land of Shalisha:

then they passed through the land of Shalim which some take to be the same with Salim, where John was baptizing, (~~ERR~~ John 3:23) but Jerom says ^{f177} it was a village on the borders of Eleutheropolis, to the west, seven miles distant from it:

and [there they] were not; the asses could not be found there:

and he passed through the land of the Benjamites; or rather of Jemini, which was in Benjamin, so called from a famous man of that name; for it cannot be thought they should pass through the whole tribe of Benjamin in one day. And, according to Bunting ^{f178}, from Gibeah, the native place of Saul, through the mountain of Ephraim, and the land of Shalisha, to the borders of Shalim, were sixteen miles; and from thence to Jemini, in the tribe of Benjamin, sixteen more:

but they found them not; the asses.

Ver. 5. *And when they were come to the land of Zuph*, etc.] In which was Ramathaimzophim, the native place of Samuel, (~~BOOK~~ 1 Samuel 1:1) and so the Targum here,

“the land in which was the prophet”

Saul said to the servant that was with him, come, and let us return; home, despairing of finding the asses after so long a search in divers places:

lest my father leave caring for the asses, and take thought for us; fearing some evil should have befallen his son and his servant, in comparison of whom, and especially his son, the asses would be of no account, and so give himself no concern for them, but be in great care and uneasiness for his son and servant; wherefore Saul thought it most advisable to return home as soon as possible, lest his father should be overwhelmed with grief and trouble.

Ver. 6. *And he said unto him*, etc.] That is, the servant of Saul:

behold, now, there is in this city a man of God; a prophet of the Lord, as the Targum; such were called men of God, because not only partakers of the grace of God, but of extraordinary gifts, which qualified them for the office of prophets. The city near to which they now were was Ramah, the place where Samuel lived, and he is the man of God here meant:

and he is an honourable man; of great esteem among men for his wisdom and knowledge, integrity and faithfulness, and particularly for his gift of prophecy, being a true prophet of the Lord; so the Targum,

“and he is a man that prophesies truth,”

and that made him honourable, and gave him great credit:

all that he saith cometh surely to pass; as his prophecies concerning Eli’s family, and other things, which were well known to have had their accomplishment, and this had gained him universal esteem, (see ^{<088>}1 Samuel 3:19),

now let us go thither; being very near it, within sight of it, insomuch that the servant could point at it, and say “this city”, as in the preceding part of the verse:

peradventure he can show us our way that we should go; to find the asses; he was not certain he could or would, but thought it possible and probable he might.

Ver. 7. *Then Saul said to his servant, but behold, if we go*, etc.] The Targum is,

“if he receives money,”

which it seems Saul was not clear in; some sort of persons that set up for prophets, and a sort of diviners and fortune tellers, did; but he could not tell whether so eminent and honourable a person as Samuel was, did; in as much he was not better known by him, who had been so many years a judge in Israel:

what shall we bring the man? it being usual, when persons addressed great men for a favour, to carry a present with them; or a man of God, a prophet of the Lord, to inquire of the Lord by him concerning any thing, (see ^{<114>}1 Kings 14:2,3 ^{<114>}2 Kings 4:42),

for the bread is spent in our vessels; the food they brought with them in their bags or scrips for their journey, this was all exhausted; not that he meant by it, that if they had had any quantity, they might present it to the man of God, though yet sometimes such things were done, as the instances before referred to show; but that since their stock of bread was gone, what

money they had, if they had any, must be spent in recruiting themselves, and therefore could have none to spare to give to the man;

and there is not a present to bring to the man of God; neither bread nor money, without which he seems to intimate it would be to no purpose to go to him:

what have we? Saul knew he had none, he had spent what he brought out, with him for the journey, and he put this question to try what his servant had; unless it can be supposed it was the custom now, as afterwards among the Romans^{f179}, for servants to carry the purse, and as it was with the Jews in Christ's time, (~~4816~~ John 12:6) though this may have respect not to a price of divination, but to the common custom in eastern countries, and which continues to this day with the Turks, who reckon it uncivil to visit any person, whether in authority, or an inferior person, without a present; and even the latter are seldom visited without presenting a flower, or an orange, and some token of respect to the person visited^{f180}.

Ver. 8. *And the servant answered Saul again, and said,* etc.] As he had answered him before, when Saul proposed to return home, by telling him there was an honourable man of God in the city near at hand, that might possibly be able to direct them which way they should go to find the asses: so he answers him again with respect to the present it was proper to carry with them, and what he had in his hands to make:

behold, I have here at hand the fourth part of a shekel of silver: a “zuz” of silver, as the Targum, four of which made a shekel, about seven pence halfpenny of our money, and scarce so much:

that will I give to the man of God to tell us our way; that they should go to find the asses: which he would give him very freely for that purpose: both Saul and his servant must entertain a mean opinion of prophets, and men of God, and especially of so great a man as Samuel, that he should be employed at any time in directing persons in such cases, and take money for so doing, and so small a gratuity as this before mentioned; though it seems as if, at some times, something of this kind was done by prophets, and men of God, which might be permitted to keep the people from going to diviners and soothsayers.

Ver. 9. *Before time in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God,* etc.] To ask doctrine of him, as the Targum, to be taught by him, to have his mind and will in any affair of moment and importance; which was usually done

by applying to some man of God, eminent for grace and piety, and a spirit of prophecy:

thus he spake, come, and let us go to the seer; a man used to say to his friend, when he wanted some instruction or direction, let us go together to such an one, the seer, and ask counsel of him what is proper to be done in such an affair:

for he that is now [called] a prophet was before called a seer; for though these names are used freely of the same persons, both before and after this time; yet now the more common appellation which obtained was that of a prophet; custom, and the use of language, varied at different times, though the same was meant by the one and the other; such men were called seers, because of the vision of prophecy, because they saw or foresaw things to come; and they were called prophets, because they foretold what they saw, or delivered out their predictions by word of mouth. This verse is put in a parenthesis, and is commonly supposed to be the words of the writer of this book: hence some draw an argument against Samuel being the writer of it, as Abarbinel does, who concludes from hence that it was written by Jeremiah, or some other person long after Samuel, or that this verse was added by Ezra; but as this book might be written by Samuel in the latter part of his life, he might with propriety observe this, that in his younger time, and quite down to the anointing of Saul king, both when there was no open vision, and afterwards when there was scarce any that had it but himself, he was used to be called the seer; but in his latter days, when there were many that had the vision of prophecy, and there were schools set up, it was more common to call them prophets; though perhaps these are the words of Saul's servant, spoken to encourage Saul to go to the man of God, and inquire of him, since in former times, as he could remember, being perhaps an old servant, or he had heard his parents so say, that such men used to be called seers, because they saw what others did not, and declared and made others to see what they did; and therefore there was a probability that this man of God, who was a seer, might show them the way they should go to find the asses.

Ver. 10. *Then said Saul to his servant, well said*, etc.] Or “good is thy word”^{f181}, thou hast well spoken; it is a good proposal thou hast made, and thou art very generous to give all thou hast to the man; and very promising it is, that since he is a seer he may inform us where the asses are, or which way we must take to find them. Things look feasible enough:

come, let us go: to the city, and to the man of God there, and hear what he will say to us, and what information he will give us:

so they went unto the city where the man of God [was]; to Ramah, where Samuel dwelt.

Ver. 11. *And as they went up the hill to the city*, etc.] For the city was built upon an hill, from whence it had the name of Ramah, which signifies high and lifted up:

they found young maidens going out to draw water: going out of the city, to a fountain which was at the bottom of the hill; and this was the usual business of maidens in those countries to fetch water for the service of the family, (see Gill on “^{<0241>}Genesis 24:11, 15, 16”). R. Akiba^{f182} makes this observation, that whenever a man meets maidens coming out of a city before he goes into it, it is a token of prosperity to him; and instances in the cases of Abraham’s servant, of Jacob, and of Moses, and here of Saul, who was informed of a kingdom, and anointed for it, (see ^{<0244>}Genesis 24:14,21 29:10,11) (^{<0216>}Exodus 2:16),

and said unto them, is the seer here? meaning, is he in the city? or is he at home? or is he in the country?

Ver. 12. *And they answered them, and said, he is*, etc.] That is, he is in the city, at home, and to be spoken with:

behold, he is before you; his house is straight before you as you go along, you cannot miss of it. Some Jewish writers say^{f183} they gave a token to know it by, that there was a cloud at the door, and when they saw that, they might know it was the seer’s house:

haste now, for he came today to the city; from the suburbs to it, or from his country house, or from the other Ramah, for there were two of them, one over against the other, (see ^{<000>}1 Samuel 1:1), for that he was just now come off a circuit, is not so probable, since he was now old, and past riding his circuits; and indeed the meaning may be no more than as it may be rendered, “today he comes into the city”^{f184}; that is, he comes out of his own house into the city, and was then just coming out; so that, if they made haste, they might meet him in the street before he got to the place of sacrifice and feasting:

for there is a sacrifice of the people today in the high place; whether it was the new moon, or some festival they observed, though the tabernacle was not there, is not certain; at which, besides the offerings required, freewill offerings and peace offerings were brought by the people, on part of which they feasted with their friends; and very probably, as Samuel was acquainted by the Lord that he who was to be king of Israel would be with him that day, he might add to the sacrifices of the people, to make the entertainment the more grand and liberal; since he had a principal concern in ordering the guests, and dividing the portions, as well as blessing the food, which indeed he might take upon him, as being judge, priest, and prophet: this was an high place where this sacrifice or feast was; for Shiloh being destroyed, and the tabernacle removed elsewhere, and that being in one place, and the ark in another, and they not together, no distinction of places was made, none being yet chosen, all were fit; and particularly high places, which were always reckoned the most proper for divine service and sacrifice.

Ver. 13. *As soon as ye come into the city, ye shall straightway find him*, etc.] By which it seems that the house of Samuel was at that end of it at which they entered; and with which agrees what is observed in the preceding verse, that “he was before them”, his house was in sight of them:

before he go up to the high place to eat; intimating they would, if they made haste, come up to him before he got thither to sit down and eat with the people; for if they did not, they would not be able to see him and speak with him for some time, if on that day:

for the people will not eat until he come; partly out of affection and veneration for him, being their chief magistrate, as well as seer or prophet, and partly for the reason following:

because he doth bless the sacrifice; ask a blessing upon it, upon the meat of the peace offerings before it was eaten; for as this was usually done at every common meal, then much more at such a solemn festival as this. Jarchi gives us the form of blessing used on such an occasion,

“blessed art thou, O Lord our God, the King of the world, who hath sanctified us by his commandments, and hath commanded us to eat the sacrifice:”

and “afterwards they eat that be bidden”; for when a man offered his peace offerings, he not only had his family with him, but invited his friends, and

the poor, and the fatherless, the strangers, and the Levites, to partake with him, (see ^{f185}Deuteronomy 12:18 14:29 16:11), the number of the guests at this time, see in (^{f186}1 Samuel 9:22).

Now therefore get ye up; ascend the hill as fast as ye can:

for about this time ye shall find him; that is, by the time they could get up the hill into the city they would find him coming out of his house to go to the sacrifice: or “as this day”^{f185}; so sure as the day is, so sure shall ye find him.

Ver. 14. *And they went up into the city*, etc.] Saul and his servant went up the hill to the city of Ramah: and

when they were come into the city; were within it, within the walls of it;

behold, Samuel came out against them; came out of a door of his house upon them, just as they came up: or “to meet them”^{f186}; his way to the high place lay where they were coming; unless it can be thought he went out purposely to meet them, having, as in the following verse, an intimation, that about that time one from the tribe of Benjamin, who should be king, would come to him, and so made this his way, knowing that one coming from that tribe must come that way; but it seems most likely that this was his readiest way:

for to go up to the high place; or place of sitting down, or feasting, as the Targum, (see Gill on “^{f187}1 Samuel 9:12”).

Ver. 15. *Now the Lord had told Samuel in his ear*, etc.] In a private manner, whispering in his ear, telling him in a free, familiar, friendly way, as a secret:

a day before Saul came; that he might prepare for the entertainment of him, and not be surprised at his coming, as well as hereby be assured he was the person designed to be king of Israel, when he should come:

saying; as follows.

Ver. 16. *Tomorrow about this time I will send thee a man out of the land of Benjamin*, etc.] Who without any thought or design of his own, but merely directed by the providence of God, should come to him, not expecting a kingdom; at most only to hear of his father’s asses, and which

way he should take to find them; missing the finding of which would and did bring him thither:

and thou shalt anoint him to be captain over my people Israel; the leader, ruler, and governor of them; to which high office he was to be appointed by pouring oil upon him, and was the first king on whom this ceremony was performed, and from whence he was called the Lord's anointed:

that he may save my people out of the hands of the Philistines; who, since Samuel was grown old, made encroachments upon them, built garrisons on their borders, and made, it is very probable, incursions upon them, and ravages and oppressions of them:

for I have looked upon my people; with an eye of pity and compassion:

because their cry is come unto me; by reason of the oppressions of the Philistines, and the war they were threatened with by the Ammonites; though Abarbinel thinks this refers to their importunate cry, supplication, and request to have a king set over them.

Ver. 17. *And when Samuel saw Saul*, etc.] Who could not but take notice of him for his height, and which might give him a suspicion he was the man the Lord had spoken of to him; and the rather, because this was the exact time in which he was to be sent to him, and therefore he fixed his eyes upon him: and that he might be assured it was he, and be left at no uncertainty about it,

the Lord said unto him; by a still small voice, or by an impulse upon his mind:

behold the man whom I spake to thee of; yesterday, this is he:

this same shall reign over my people; be their king, as they have desired: or "shall restrain"¹⁸⁷ them, keep them in due bounds, in the discharge of their duty to God and man; and keep them from doing that which is evil, or walking in evil ways, which is the business of a good king; or who shall restrain them from having their own will, but shall rule over them in an absolute manner, according to his own arbitrary will and pleasure.

Ver. 18. *Then Saul drew near to Samuel in the gate*, etc.] Either at the door of his own house, just as he was coming out of it, or within the gate of the city as Saul entered that, Samuel came to it, in order to go through it

to the high place, which it is probable was without the city; wherefore it is very properly said that Samuel came out to meet them, (~~004~~ 1 Samuel 9:14)

and said, tell me, I pray thee, where the seer's house is; one knows not which to wonder at most, the simplicity and humility of Samuel to be in so plain an habit, unattended by servants, and yet going to a public festival, so that he seemed to be no other than a common man, to be inquired of whereabouts his house was; or the ignorance of Saul, who had lived so long in the world, and so near Samuel, and yet had never seen and knew not the chief magistrate in the nation, so famous both for his civil and religious character.

Ver. 19. *And Samuel answered Saul, and said, I am the seer*, etc.] For he supposed, by inquiring for his house, that his business was with him; wherefore this he said, not as boasting of his character and office, or in the pride and vanity of his mind, but merely for information sake:

go up before me unto the high place; instead of returning home with him, he invited him to go to the place of feasting, as the Targum, whither he was going to partake of the entertainment there; and he bids him go before him, either because he was an old man, and could not go his pace, or he had business to do by the way, or this was in honour to Saul, whom he knew was to be king of Israel:

for ye shall eat with me today; he and his servant, at the public feast: he insisted upon his dining, or it may be rather supping with him:

and tomorrow I will let thee go; for it being in the evening when this feast was, he could not depart that night, but must stay till morning, and then he promised to dismiss him:

and will tell thee all that is in thine heart; answer all questions he had in his mind to ask him, for which he came into the city, and inquired for his house. The Jews^{f188} have a tradition that it was in the heart of Saul that he should be a king, having in a vision seen himself placed on the top of a palm tree, which was a sign of royalty, and this Samuel told him.

Ver. 20. *And as for thine asses that were lost three days ago*, etc.] Which, according to Kimchi, is to be understood not of the time from whence they were lost, but to be reckoned from the time that Saul had been seeking of them; so the Targum,

“as to the business of the asses, which are lost to thee, and thou art come to seek them today, these three days:”

though it is probable enough that the same day they were lost Saul set out to seek them, Now Samuel telling him of the asses that were lost, and of the time of their being lost, or of his seeking them, so exactly, before ever he said a word to him about them, must at once convince him that he was a true prophet, and which must prepare him to give credit to all that he should hereafter say to him:

set not thy mind on them, for they are found; of the truth of which he could not doubt, after he had said the above words; and which he said to make his mind easy, that he might the more cheerfully attend the feast, and be the more willing to stay all night:

and on whom is all the desire of Israel? which was to have a king; in this they were unanimous, and who so fit and proper as Saul, it is intimated, whom Samuel knew God had chosen and appointed to be king over them?

is it not on thee, and on all thy father's house? not that the Israelites had their eye on Saul, and their desire after him to be their king, though he was such an one as they wished for; but that as this desire of theirs was granted, it would issue and terminate in him and his family; he should be advanced to the throne, which would be attended with the promotion of his father's house, as Abner particularly, who was his uncle's son, and was made the general of the army.

Ver. 21. *And Saul answered and said, am not I a Benjamite,* etc.] Or the son of Jemini, the name of one of his ancestors, (see ^{<000>}1 Samuel 9:1) or rather, as the Targum, a son of the tribe of Benjamin:

of the smallest of the tribes of Israel? having been greatly reduced, even to the number of six hundred men, by the fatal war between that tribe and the rest, on account of the Levite's concubine, and is called little Benjamin, (^{<000>}Psalm 68:27).

and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? the smallest in number, had the least share of authority in the tribe, and of land and cattle, wealth and substance:

wherefore then speakest thou so to me? Saul presently understood Samuel's meaning, that he should be chosen king of Israel, the affair of a

king being at this time in everyone's mind and mouth; but could not believe that one of so small a tribe, and which sprung from the youngest son of Jacob, and of so mean a family, would be raised to such dignity, but that a person of great figure and character would be settled upon; and, therefore he took Samuel to be in joke, as Josephus^{f189} says, and not in earnest.

Ver. 22. *And Samuel took Saul and his servant, and brought them into the parlour*, etc.] The dining room of the house, which belonged to the high place:

and made them sit in the chiefest place among them that were bidden; and who very probably were the principal persons in the city; and yet Saul was placed at the head of them by Samuel, to convince him that what he had said to him was in earnest, and to do him honour before all the people; and for the sake of him, and to show his respect to him, he placed his servant; his minister, also in the chief place with him; what was reckoned the highest and most honourable places at table, (see Gill on "~~4236~~ Matthew 23:6"). The guests were placed by the master of the feast according to their rank; and the dignity of the person, as Jarchi observes, was known by his manners and place of sitting:

which were about thirty persons; more or less; Josephus^{f190} says seventy, disagreeing with the text, the Targum, Syriac and Arabic versions, but agreeing with the Septuagint.

Ver. 23. *And Samuel said unto the cook*, etc.] That dressed and prepared the food for the entertainment of the guests:

bring the portion which I gave thee; to dress; for part of the provisions of the feast was Samuel's, and the other part the people's that brought the peace offerings:

of which I said unto thee, set it by thee; do not bring it in with the rest, but keep it in the kitchen till called for.

Ver. 24. *And the cook took up the shoulder, and that which was upon it*, etc.] Meaning either, as some think, some sauce that was poured on it, or garnish about it; or the thigh, as the Targum, and so Jarchi, Kimchi, and others; or rather the breast, as a more ancient Jew^{f191}; since this joined to the shoulder before separated, and in sacrifices went along with it; though most think this was the left shoulder and breast, because the right shoulder and breast of the peace offerings were given to the priest, to be eaten by

him and his sons, (^{f192}Leviticus 7:34) but in those unsettled times, with respect to sacrifices, many things were dispensed with; and Samuel, though a Levite, might officiate as a priest, and so the right shoulder and breast belonged to him as such; and this best accounts for his having the disposal of it; and upon this extraordinary occasion, Saul, though not the son of a priest, might be admitted to eat of it, it being the choicest part, and fit to be set before one designed to be king; and to show that he was to live in friendship with the priests of the Lord, and to take care of and protect the ministerial function:

and set it before Saul; by the direction of Samuel no doubt, as a token of honour and respect unto him; it being usual in other countries to commend the best dishes, or best pieces of flesh, to the more excellent and worthy persons at table ^{f192}; and this was, as Josephus ^{f193} calls it, a royal portion: the arm or shoulder, especially the right arm, being a symbol of strength, may denote that strength which was necessary for him to bear the burden of government, to protect his people, and fight in defence of them; and the breast being the seat of wisdom and prudence, of affection and love, may signify how necessary such qualities were for kingly government, to know how to go in and out before the people, and be heartily concerned for their good: and Samuel said,

behold that which is left; not by the guests, and what they could not eat; for till Samuel came they did not begin to eat; and as for this part, it was but just brought in, and was never set before the guests, but it was left by Samuel in the hands of the cook, and reserved for the use of Saul:

set it before thee, and eat; it was already set before him, but he would have him keep it by him, and eat of it, and make his meal of it, it being the best dish at the table:

for unto this time hath it been kept for thee; by which he gave him to understand that he knew of his coming before hand, and therefore had made this provision for him; and which might serve to persuade him of the truth and certainty of what he had hinted to him:

since I said I have invited the people; not the thirty persons before mentioned, for it does not appear that they were invited by Samuel, but rather by those who brought the peace offerings, who had a right to invite any of their friends they thought fit; but by “the people” are meant Saul and his servant; for in the eastern languages two or three persons, and even

one, are called a people; and this Samuel had said to his cook, when he bid him set by the shoulder, and what was on it, because he had invited some, for whom he had designed it:

so Saul did eat with Samuel that day: they dined together.

Ver. 25. *And when they came down from the high place into the city,* etc.] After the feast was ended; and though Ramah itself was situated on an eminence, yet it seems this high place was higher than that, being without the city upon an hill, and therefore they are said to come down from the one to the other; or they came down from the high place, and then ascended the hill to the city:

Samuel communed with Saul upon the top of the house: of Samuel's house; when they were come thither, Samuel took Saul up to the roof of his house, which was flat, as the roofs of houses in this country were; (see ~~<628>~~Deuteronomy 22:8) on which they could walk to and fro, and converse together; hence you read of preaching and praying on housetops, (~~<402>~~Matthew 10:27 ~~<410>~~Acts 10:9) what they communed about is not said, but may be guessed at, that it was about Saul's being made king; of the certainty of it, by divine designation; of the manner of executing that office wisely and justly; about the objections Saul had made of the smallness of his tribe and family; and of Samuel's willingness to resign the government to him, with other things of the like kind.

Ver. 26. *And they arose early,* etc.] Neither of them being able to sleep, as Abarbinel supposes; not Samuel for thinking what he was to do the next morning, anoint Saul king over Israel; nor Saul for what Samuel had hinted to him about the desire of all Israel being upon him, and for the honour done him at the feast, and because of the conversation they had together afterwards:

and it came to pass about the spring of the day; or the "ascents of the morning"^{f194}, when day was about to break, before the sun was up:

that Samuel called Saul to the top of the house; where they had conversed together the evening before:

saying, up, that I may send thee away; meaning not rise from his bed, for he was risen; but that he would prepare to set out on his journey, that Samuel might take his leave of him for the present, when he had accompanied him some part of his way, as he intended; and he was the

more urgent upon him, because there was something to be done before people were stirring:

and Saul arose, and they went out both of them, he and Samuel, abroad; out of Samuel's house, without doors, into the street.

Ver. 27. *And as they were going down to the end of the city,* etc.] That end of it that led the way to the place where Saul was going. As this city was built on an hill, going to the end of it was a declivity, a descent:

Samuel said to Saul, bid the servant pass on before us; being another man's servant, he did not choose of himself to bid him go on, but desired his master to order him to go before them, that he might not hear what Samuel had to say to Saul, or see what he did unto him; for as the choice of Saul to be king was to be declared by lot, as coming from the Lord, all those precautions were taken of rising early, and going abroad, and sending the servant before them, that it might not be thought that Samuel did this of himself:

and he passed on; his master bidding him:

but stand thou still a while; that he might hear the better, and more attentively than in walking; such a posture was most fitting also for what was to be done, anointing him with oil:

that I may show thee the word of God: tell him more of the mind of God concerning his being king, and declare more fully the word, will, and decree of God about that matter, by an action which would put it out of all doubt that he was the man God designed to be king, as in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 10

INTRODUCTION TO FIRST SAMUEL 10

In this chapter we read of Saul's being anointed king by Samuel, (1 Samuel 10:1), and of certain signs given as confirming the same, which should come to pass, and did, before Saul got to his father's house, (1 Samuel 10:2-13), of his arrival at his father's house, and of what passed between him and his uncle there, (1 Samuel 10:14-16), of Samuel's calling all Israel together at Mizpeh, and of the election of Saul by lot to be king, and of his being declared such, (1 Samuel 10:17-25), and of his return to his city, being respected by some, and despised by others, (1 Samuel 10:26,27).

Ver. 1. *Then Samuel took a vial of oil*, etc.] Out of his pocket very probably, which he brought along with him on purpose for the use he made of it: this, as the Jews^{f195} say, was not the anointing oil that was in the tabernacle, which was at another and distant place, and with which only the kings of the house of David were anointed; but common oil, or, as they say, oil of balsam; and this was not an horn, but a vial, which held a small quantity, and was brittle; and they observe that Saul and Jehu, who were anointed with a vial, their reigns were short, whereas David and Solomon, who were anointed with a horn, their reigns were long; and as oil is a symbol of the gifts and graces of the Spirit, it may denote a smaller measure conferred on Saul than on David and Solomon:

and kissed him; congratulating him on the dignity he was raised to, and in reverence and respect to him, because of the high office he was arrived to; and as a token of subjection and homage, and to testify his well pleased in his being king, and that he readily, willingly, and with pleasure resigned the government to him:

and said, is it not because the Lord hath anointed thee to be captain over his inheritance? the people of Israel, so called, (Deuteronomy 32:9) and which is observed here to show, that though Saul was anointed king over them, they were the Lord's possession still, and he was accountable to him for his government and usage of them, over whom he was to be a

captain, leader, and commander, to go before them, and fight their battles for them, of which his being anointed with oil was a token; and therefore it is said, "is it not?" or dost thou not see by this? or knowest thou not, as R. Isaiah supplies it, that this is of the Lord? for it was the Lord that anointed him, or Samuel by his orders; and such questions as these, as Kimchi observes, are for the greater confirmation of what is spoken; and if Saul had any doubt upon his mind, as perhaps he might because of his meanness, and the high honour designed hereby, not only this question is put, but three following signs are given him, whereby he might be assured of the truth of it.

Ver. 2. *When thou art departed from me today*, etc.] Not as soon as he was departed, for he had some few miles to go from Ramah to Rachel's grave near Bethlehem:

thou shalt find two men by Rachel's sepulchre, in the border of Benjamin, at Zelzah; the Jews move a difficulty here, that Rachel's sepulchre should be said to be in the border of Benjamin, when it was by Bethlehemephraim, in the tribe of Judah, (^{<013519>}Genesis 35:19 ^{<3812>}Micah 5:2) and which they solve by observing, that these men were now, at the time Samuel was speaking, by the grave of Rachel, but as they were coming on he would meet them at Zelzah, in the border of Benjamin ^{f196}; but there is no need of this, Rachel's grave was not at Bethlehem, but in, the way to it; and besides, as these two tribes were contiguous, and this city being on the borders of both, it might be said at one time to be in the border of Benjamin, and at another in the border of Judah, or in Judah, without any contradiction. Of Zelzah we nowhere else read, but it is plain it was near the sepulchre of Rachel, and perhaps nearer than Bethlehem. The Arabic geographer ^{f197} speaks of Rachel's grave as in the midway between Jerusalem and Bethlehem; and says there were twelve stones upon it, and a stone arched vault over it; and the same is affirmed by Benjamin of Tudela ^{f198}, who makes it to be but half a mile from Bethlehem. Jarchi would have Zelzah to be the same with Jerusalem, which is not probable:

and they will say unto thee, the asses which thou wentest to seek are found; as Samuel had before told Saul they were, (^{<0020>}1 Samuel 9:20)

and, lo, thy father hath left the care of the asses; or had left all thoughts about them, and concern for them, not minding whether he heard of them or not, and this before they were found; or otherwise it would have been no strange thing to drop all thoughts about them, when they were found:

and sorroweth for you; for Saul, and his servant; such was the anxiety and distress of his mind lest any evil should befall them, having been gone so long in quest of the asses, that he had as it were forgot them, and lost all care and concern about them, in comparison of his son and servant; but especially his sorrow rose high for his son, as follows:

saying, what shall I do for my son? though he was concerned for his servant, yet most for his son; he might have another servant, and not another son, and Saul seems to be his only one, which made his grief for him the greater, (see ^{<1383>}1 Chronicles 8:33 9:39). Now as these were contingent events here foretold, as meeting with two men at a certain place described, the words related expressly they should say to him when he met them, and these exactly coming to pass, would most clearly prove Samuel to be a true prophet, and confirm Saul in the belief of what he had said and done to him concerning the kingdom. Another sign follows.

Ver. 3. *Then shall thou go on forward from thence*, etc.] From Zelzah and Rachel's sepulchre there:

and thou shall come to the plain of Tabor; not that which lay at the bottom of the famous and well known mountain Tabor; for that was in the tribe of Zebulun, at a great distance from hence: but a plain, so called perhaps from the name of the owner of it:

and there shall meet thee three men going up to God to Bethel: the same with Luz, where Jacob built an altar, and called upon God; and so Elohimbethel here is the same with Elbethel, (^{<1386>}Genesis 35:6,7). Here was an high place as at Ramah, whither in those times, when there was no fixed place for worship, the tabernacle at one place, and the ark at another, the people went up to worship; and they might the rather choose this, because it was a place devoted to the worship and service of God by their father Jacob; so the Targum paraphrases it, "going up to worship God in Bethel;"

so Josephus ^{f199}, they were going thither to pray, and, as it seems by what follows, to sacrifice: one carrying three kids; which were used in sacrifice, and were a pretty heavy load if carried far; though, according to Josephus ^{f200}, it was but one kid:

and another carrying three loaves of bread; for the minchah, the meat offering, or rather bread offering, (^{<1388>}Leviticus 2:4)

and another carrying a bottle of wine; for the drink offering, the fourth part of an hin of wine being required for each kid, (^{<Q153>}Numbers 15:5,11). This bottle, Ben Melech says, was a bottle made of skin, a leathern bottle or bag, or a potter's vessel or pitcher; the Targum renders it, a flagon of wine.

Ver. 4. *And they will salute thee*, etc.] Not as king, of which they knew nothing, but in a common way; and though a stranger and unknown to them, yet finding their hearts disposed and affected towards him, would inquire of his welfare, and wish him all happiness, peace, and prosperity:

and give thee two [loaves] of bread; which was pretty much that they should give him two out of three, and leave but one for themselves, and especially if they were going to sacrifice; but perhaps they knew they could buy more bread at Bethel, and so were disposed to give two of their loaves to Saul, one for himself and another for his servant; though Kimchi thinks that these are not the same before called loaves; and indeed the word "loaves" is not in the text, but cakes of bread, which were lesser than loaves, and which they carried for their own use, besides three loaves of bread:

which thou shall receive of their hands; being sent out by Samuel early that morning without eating any food, and having travelled some miles, might become weary and faint, and which the three men might discern, and so had compassion on them, and relieved them; and Saul was not to refuse the offer of them, but take them at their hands, though he was anointed to be king; and this was to teach him humility, and to be kind to the poor and needy, and relieve them when he was in more elevated circumstances. All these actions also were contingent, and when they came to pass, as they did, must be still more confirming than the former sign.

Ver. 5. *After that thou shall come to the hill of God*, etc.] The Targum is, the hill in which was the ark of the Lord, and that was in the house of Abinadab, on a hill in the city of Kirjathjearim, (^{<Q101>}1 Samuel 7:1) and so the Jewish commentators generally interpret this hill of God of Kirjathjearim; but rather it was Geba, a city of Benjamin, partly because by this time he must have got out of the tribe of Judah into the tribe of Benjamin, and even almost to the end of his journey, and among those that were his relations, (^{<Q101>}1 Samuel 10:11,14) and partly because it is certain there was a garrison of the Philistines at Geba, (^{<Q103>}1 Samuel 13:3) as there was at this place, as follows:

where is the garrison of the Philistines; which they were allowed by the terms of peace made between Israel and them; or which through their growing power over them in the latter days of Samuel they placed there, and which yet they kept, without giving the people any molestation in their worship and service:

and it shall come to pass, when thou art come thither to the city; to the city Geba, or near it:

that thou shall meet a company of prophets; of Scribes, as the Targum; which were, as Kimchi observes, disciples; for the disciples of the wise men were called Scribes, and these were the disciples of prophets, the same with the sons of the prophets; and the prophets that were at this time, as he says, from Eli to David, were Elkanah, Samuel, Gad, Nathan, Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun; here was a school or college of young prophets, where they were trained up, under the care and tuition of one or other of the above prophets, in the knowledge of the word of God, in psalmody, and other religious exercises; for though the word of the Lord was scarce and precious in the beginning of Samuel's time, yet through his industry, influence, and encouragement, divine knowledge was greatly promoted, and many were trained up and qualified to instruct the people; who, though they had not the gift of foretelling future events, or of the vision of prophecy, yet had gifts qualifying for the edification of the people; and out of these schools and colleges God sometimes raised up prophets in the highest sense, who foretold things to come, and to whom the Lord appeared in dreams and visions. And this company Saul would meet

coming down from the high place; where they had been to worship, to sacrifice, or to pray, for here was an high place for such service, as well as at Ramah:

with a psaltery, and a tabret, and a pipe, and a harp, before them; which were several instruments of "music" used in singing praises to God in those times:

and they shall prophesy; or praise, as the Targum, sing praises at the same time they played on their instruments of music; and singing praises is one sort of prophesying, (see ^{<1320>}1 Chronicles 25:1-3), and in which sense it seems to be used in (^{<410>}1 Corinthians 11:4,5).

Ver. 6. *And the Spirit of the Lord will come upon thee*, etc.] As a spirit of prophecy, so the Targum; whereby he would be enabled at once to

compose psalms and hymns of praise, and sing them in a proper manner, though he had not been trained up in this exercise in the school of the prophets; which made it more wonderful to those that knew him:

and thou shalt prophesy with them: or “praise” with them, as the same Targum; join with them in singing praises, and perform this service in an orderly manner, as if he had been instructed in it, and used to it:

and shall be turned into another man; for the Spirit of God would not only operate on him in that way, as to fit him for composing and singing psalms and hymns, but inspire him with wisdom, and prudence, and greatness of mind, and with every qualification necessary for a king; so that he would appear quite another man than he was before, in his outward behaviour, as well as in the endowments of his mind; and from a rustic, an husbandman, a farmer’s son, would appear with the air of a prince, and in the majesty of a king; and, as Procopius Gazaeus, have a royal mind or heart given him.

Ver. 7. *And let it be, when these signs are come unto thee,* etc.] And are all fulfilled, especially the last:

that thou do as occasion shall serve thee: as his circumstances would require, and as he in his great wisdom and prudence, with which he should now be furnished, would see necessary to prepare for his taking upon him the kingdom he was anointed to, and would be in a little time openly chosen to, and invested with. Some understand this of royal ornaments befitting a king, or of preparing arms for the defence of the kingdom:

for God is with thee; or the Word of the Lord is thy help, as the Targum, and therefore he need not fear engaging in any enterprise that might be for the glory of God, and good of the kingdom.

Ver. 8. *And thou shall go down before me to Gilgal,* etc.] Not immediately; for the first summons of the people, and of Saul, and the first meeting of them by Samuel, were at Mizpeh, where Saul was chosen by lot; nor the first time of Saul’s being at Gilgal, when the kingdom was renewed; for Saul had no need to wait seven days there, since he and Samuel went together, (⁴⁹¹¹⁴1 Samuel 11:14) rather at the second time of his being there, where not staying the time quite up, was reprov’d for it, which was two years after this, (⁴⁹¹¹³1 Samuel 13:1,8,13), though it may be this was a general rule to be observed by Saul, that whenever anything turned up of importance to the children of Israel, and was a difficulty with him, he should go to Gilgal, and there wait seven days for Samuel, from

the time he gave him notice of it, who would come at the appointed time, and would give him what advice and instructions were necessary; and this place was the rather appointed, because it was the place where the Israelites first pitched their camp when they came over Jordan, and where the tabernacle first was; and where prayer and sacrifices were wont to be made; and where the kingdom of Saul was renewed; and which lay convenient for all the tribes, both on the one and the other side of Jordan:

and, behold, I will come down to thee to offer burnt offerings, and to sacrifice sacrifices of peace offerings; so he did when the kingdom was renewed, and Saul was confirmed in it, (⁹¹¹⁵1 Samuel 11:15) but two years after, Saul not staying the full time, he offered them himself by another, for which he was reprov'd, (⁹¹³³1 Samuel 13:9-13)

seven days shalt thou tarry till I come to thee; either from the time of the notice he should give to Samuel of his going thither, or from the time of his arrival there; for it can by no means be understood as from the time of his present departure from him, for the reasons before given:

and show thee what thou shalt do; in the then present emergency or difficulty on his hands; and this he said to encourage him under the weight and burden of government laid upon him.

Ver. 9. *And it was so, that when he had turned his back to go from Samuel*, etc.] When he had taken his leave of him, and set forward on his journey:

God gave him another heart; not in a moral or spiritual sense, not a new heart, and a new spirit, as in conversion, but in a civil sense, a right heart, a heart fit for government; filled with wisdom and prudence to rule a people; with courage and magnanimity to protect and defend them against their enemies, and fight for them; a heart not taken up with the affairs of husbandry, with care for his father's asses, and looking after his herds, but filled with concern for the civil welfare of Israel, and with schemes and contrivances for their good, and with warm resolutions to deliver them out of the hands of their enemies:

and all these signs came to pass that day; the two first, which are not particularly mentioned as fulfilled, being more private, as finding two men at Rachel's sepulchre, and meeting with three others going to Bethel, which came to pass just as they were described; and the third, which was

more public, and gave Saul more reverence and respect among the people, is next particularly observed.

Ver. 10. *When they came thither to the hill*, etc.] Or, to Gibeah, as the Targum, and so Josephus ^{f201}:

behold, a company of prophets met him; as foretold, (~~4005~~1 Samuel 10:5), *and the Spirit of the Lord came upon him, and he prophesied among them*; the spirit of prophecy, as the Targum, and he sung praises among them; he joined with them in their psalmody, and performed it as regularly as if he had been brought up with them. The Jews say ^{f202} he prophesied of the world to come, of Gog and Magog, and of the rewards of the righteous, and of the punishment of the wicked.

Ver. 11. *And it came to pass, that when all that knew him before time*, etc.] As there must be many that personally knew him, and were acquainted with him, since Gibeah, the place he was near to, was his native place:

saw that, behold, he prophesied among the prophets; or praised among them, as the Targum, sung psalms and hymns with them:

what is this that is come unto the son of Kish? a rustic, a plebeian, that never was in the school of the prophets, or learned music, and yet is as dexterous at it as any of them:

is Saul also among the prophets? an husbandman, an herdsman that looked after his father's farms, fields, and cattle, and now among the prophets of the Lord, bearing his part with them, and performing it as well as any of them: this was matter of wonder to those who knew his person, family, and education; and so it was equally matter of admiration that Saul the persecutor, one of the same tribe, should be among the preachers of the Gospel, (~~4000~~Acts 9:20,21).

Ver. 12. *And one of the same place answered, and said*, etc.] One of the same city, and in the same company, that expressed their admiration at what was come to Saul, and at what he did, and wondering how he came into such company, and to have such a gift, who was of so mean an education:

but who is their father? the father of the prophets; their fathers were not prophets, no more than Saul's was; their Father that taught them is the

Lord, and he was able to teach Saul, and bestow on him the gift of prophecy, as well as on them; and so the Targum, who is their master or teacher; for though they might have an undermaster or teacher, as Samuel, or another prophet, yet their chief teacher was God; who could and did give men the gift of prophecy, and even in the highest sense, who had neither prophets for their fathers, nor were indeed trained up in any of the schools of the prophets, which was the case of Amos:

therefore it became a proverb, is Saul also among the prophets? that when a person of a mean parentage, and of a low life and education, was raised up to any degree of dignity in sacred and civil things, they used to apply this proverbial expression to him, or speak of him in this manner, is Saul among the prophets?

Ver. 13. *And when he had made an end of prophesying,* etc.] For, as Procopius Gazaeus observes, he had not the gift of prophecy always; it did not continue with him, but, like that of the seventy elders in the times of Moses, it was designed to make him respectable among the people, and to be taken notice of as a person that God had honoured with a peculiar gift, that so, when he should be chosen king, they would the more readily receive him:

he came to the high place; to return thanks to God for the gift bestowed on him, and for that high honour and dignity he was raised unto, of which he had private knowledge; and to pray God to fit him more and more for government, and to, assist him in it, and help him to discharge his office in a wise and faithful manner.

Ver. 14. *And Saul's uncle said unto him, and to his servant, whither went ye?* etc.] Since they had been absent so long a time. This was his father's brother, as the Targum, and so Aquila; whose name was Ner, the father of Abner, (¹Samuel 14:50,51) who met with him at the high place, or found him in the city, in his father's house it may be. Josephus^{f203} says, Saul went into the house of his kinsman Abner, whom he loved above all his relations, and that it was he that discoursed with Saul, and asked him, the questions before and after related:

and he said, to seek the asses: he first observes the end of their going, the business they went upon, in which not succeeding, then he answers more directly to the question:

and when we saw that [they were] nowhere; could not see them, nor find them any where, or hear of them where they went:

we came to Samuel; at Ramah, to inquire of him, if he could direct us which way to go, and what methods to take, to find the asses.

Ver. 15. *And Saul's uncle said*, etc. | On hearing he had been with Samuel, and perceiving so great an alteration in Saul, perhaps he began to suspect something about the kingdom; it being what everyone was talking of, and expecting every day to hear from Samuel who should be king, according to the Lord's appointment:

tell me, I pray thee, what Samuel said unto you; the earnestness with which he put this question seems to confirm the above conjecture.

Ver. 16. *And Saul said unto his uncle*, etc.] In answer to his question:

he told us plainly the asses were found; or "in telling told us"^{f204}; not only plainly in so many words, but he affirmed it with the greatest certainty that the asses were found, and we need not give ourselves further trouble about them:

but of the matter of the kingdom, whereof Samuel spake, he told him not; he said not one word about that, which is commonly ascribed to his modesty; or he might conceal it, as Josephus^{f205} observes, because he thought it would not be believed by his relations, or might create in them envy to him; and besides, he knew it was the pleasure of Samuel that it should be kept a secret until the election by lot was over, lest it should be thought to proceed from Samuel himself; and Saul chose it should remain so, that it might not be thought to be of his own seeking; and by keeping it from his relations and friends, it would be a clear case that he did not make interest for it.

Ver. 17. *And Samuel called the people together unto the Lord at Mizpeh.*] Not that in Gilead, but in the tribe of Benjamin, where the people had been before convened on a certain occasion, (^{CHAP}1 Samuel 7:5) and the people called together could not be every individual of the nation, but the heads and elders of the people, their representatives, and who were summoned by the orders of Samuel; perhaps by an herald making proclamation and cry of the same, as the word signifies; and these were gathered together to the Lord, to have the following affair transacted before him, and under his guidance and direction; the priest perhaps being here with the Urim and

Thummim, as Kimchi thinks, and who also conjectures that the ark might be brought hither at this time, the symbol of the divine Presence; though wherever the church and people of God were gathered together in his name, in a solemn manner, there the Lord was.

Ver. 18. *And said unto the children of Israel,* etc.] In the name of the Lord, using the phrase which the prophets used when they spoke in the name of the Lord:

thus saith the Lord God of Israel; the great Jehovah, the Being of beings, the covenant God of his people Israel:

I brought up Israel out of Egypt; when in bondage there, with a mighty hand and outstretched arm, by means of signs and wonders done by the hands of Moses and Aaron; the Lord working mightily with them, and thereby inclining Pharaoh and his people to let them go:

and delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians; at the Red sea, drowning them in it, when they threatened Israel with an utter destruction:

and out of the hand of all kingdoms, [and] of them that oppressed you; as the Arabic writers, the kingdoms of Og and Bashan in their way to Canaan, and the Mesopotamians, Moabites, Canaanites, Midianites, Ammonites, and Philistines, in the times of the judges; all which is observed to show their ingratitude, and aggravate their guilt.

Ver. 19. *And ye have this day rejected your God,* etc.] As their king, by desiring another to be set over them;

who himself saved you out of all your adversity and your tribulations; that they had been in at any time in Egypt, in their passage through the wilderness to Canaan, and after they were settled there:

ye have said unto him, [nay], but set a king over us: they did as good as say God should not be their King, but they would have one set over them like the kings of the nations about them; Samuel reminds them of this their request and resolution to have a king, which they had expressed some time ago, that it might appear to them that this was wholly of their own seeking; the motion came from themselves, and not from the Lord, nor from Samuel, and therefore, whatever ill consequences might follow upon it, they had none to blame but themselves:

now therefore present yourselves before the Lord by your tribes, and by your thousands; by the heads of their tribes, and by the rulers of the thousands into which their tribes were divided, that it might be known either by Urim and Thummim, or rather by casting lots, out of which tribe, and out of which thousand, house, and family in it, their king was to be chosen; which method, an it would clearly appear to be a choice directed by the Lord, so it would prevent all contention and discord among themselves.

Ver. 20. *And when Samuel had caused all the tribes to come near*, etc.] The heads and representatives of them, to the place where the lots were cast:

the tribe of Benjamin was taken; the lot fell upon that tribe for the choice of a king out of it; not the tribe of, Reuben, who was the firstborn, nor the tribe of Judah, to whom the kingdom was promised, but the tribe of Benjamin, the least of all the tribes, and which sprung from the youngest son of Jacob, contrary, as it were probable, to the expectation of all.

Ver. 21. *And when he had caused the tribe of Benjamin to come near by their families*, etc.] By the heads of them, to have lots cast for them, out of which of the families the king should be chosen:

the family of Matri was taken; that is, by lot; the lot fell upon that family for the choice of a king out of them: in the account of the families of the tribe of Benjamin, (^{ERROR}1 Chronicles 8:1-40) no mention is made of this family, nor any where else, and yet no doubt there was such a family, and Saul was of it; it seems to have its name from the butt or mark arrows were shot at; some of the Benjamites being famous for their skill in darting and slinging, and perhaps this family might be so:

and Saul the son of Kish was taken; the lot being cast upon the men in the family of Matri, though it is not expressed, fell upon Saul; for though he was not there, as Jarchi observes, the lot fell upon him; for their names were written on a piece of paper, and put into a box, and the prophet put in his hand and took out one, and on that was the name of Saul, and this was the manner of the lot:

and when they sought him, he could not be found; because he had hid himself, as in the next verse; it is very probable, and indeed plain, that he was in this assembly at the first opening of it; and knowing what Samuel had said and done to him, and perceiving in what way the lot was going

concerning the same, the tribe of Benjamin being taken, he concluded how it would issue, and therefore left the assembly, and hid himself, as follows.

Ver. 22. *Therefore they inquired of the Lord further*, etc.] Or again, by lot, by which they knew who the person was the was chosen king, but they did not know where he was, and therefore inquire further how they must come at him; and this inquiry was made either before the high priest by Urim and Thummim, or by Samuel the prophet of the Lord: and the inquiry was,

if the man should yet come thither; whether he was already come, or would come there, and if not, what methods they must take to find him:

and the Lord answered, behold, he hath hid himself among the stuff the word signifies household stuff, vessels, utensils, arms, etc. which the people had brought along with them for their use, and were laid up in some one place; and among these baggages Saul hid himself, hoping that if he was not found they would proceed to another choice, so free from ambition was he, and such was his modesty; nor does this seem to be affected and dissembled, but real; though afterwards, when he was settled in the kingdom, he did not care to part with it, and sought to kill David, whom he looked upon as his rival: there were many things which now concurred, that made him uneasy and unwilling to assume the government of the people; partly the envy and ill will of some of them, which he must expect; chiefly the sense he had of his own unfitness for such an office, being of a mean family, and having had so mean an education, and so little knowledge of the maxims of government; and besides, must at once, as soon as on the throne, enter into a war with the Ammonites; but what might most of all distress him, he perceived by Samuel's speech to the people, that the affair of a king was displeasing to the Lord, though he condescended to grant the people's request; and therefore what comfort and happiness could he expect in such a situation?

Ver. 23. *And they ran and fetched him thence*, etc.] Being in haste to see their king elect, and proclaim him:

and when he stood among the people; being brought among them, and presented to them:

he was higher than any of the people, from the shoulders, and upwards; which made him look very graceful and majestic; height of stature, and a comely form, as Kimchi observes, recommend to royal dignity; and make the people stand more in awe of a prince, and have always been reckoned

among all other nations to make a prince venerable, (see Gill on “^(BBD-1)1 Samuel 9:2”).

Ver. 24. *And Samuel said to all the people, see ye him whom the Lord hath chosen*, etc.] For the choice being made by lot, the disposal of which is of the Lord, it is properly attributed to him, and the people could not object to it, but must allow it was the Lord’s doing. Eupolemus^{f206}, an Heathen writer, says, that Saul was made king by Samuel by the counsel or will of God; and Samuel appeals to their eyes for the goodness of the choice, a better could not have been made:

that there is none like him among the people? so graceful, so stately, so prince like and majestic; they wanted to have a king like such the nations had; and Saul was such an one, had all the outward appearance of grandeur that could be wished for, and which in other nations recommended persons to the imperial dignity:

and all the people shouted; made a general ado:

and said, God save the king; or “let the king live”^{f207}; they owned and saluted him as their king, and prayed he might live long to reign over them; the Targum is, “let the king prosper”; let his reign be prosperous and glorious, and let him enjoy all health and happiness, peace and prosperity.

Ver. 25. *Then Samuel told the people the manner of the kingdom, &c.*] According to Ben Gersom, he laid before them the power a king had over his people, and the punishment he might inflict upon them, if they rebelled against him; and some think this is the same he delivered in (^(BBD-1)1 Samuel 8:10-17) concerning the arbitrary power of their kings, and how they would be used by them; and which he here repeated, and then wrote it, that it might be a testimony against them hereafter; with which what Josephus^{f208} says pretty much agrees, that in the hearing of the king he foretold what would befall them, and then wrote it, and laid it up, that it might be a witness of his predictions; but that in ^(BBD-1)1 Samuel 8:10-17. Samuel said, was the manner of their king, or how he would use them, but this the manner of the kingdom, and how the government of it was to be managed and submitted to, what was the office of a king, and what the duties of the subject; and yet was different from, at least not the same with that in (^(BBD-1)Deuteronomy 17:15-17), for that had been written and laid up already:

and wrote it in a book, and laid it up before the Lord; in the ark of the Lord; as Kimchi; or rather by the ark of the Lord, on one side of it, as Ben

Gersom; or best of all, as Josephus^{f209}, in the tabernacle of the Lord, where recourse might be had to it, at any time, at least by a priest, and where it would be safe, and be preserved to future times:

and Samuel sent all the people away, every man to his house; for though Saul was chosen king, he did not take upon him the exercise of government directly, but left it to Samuel to dismiss the people, who had been for many years their chief magistrate.

Ver. 26. *And Saul also went home to Gibeah*, etc.] His native place, where was his father's house, to which he retired; where were no royal palace, or princely court, nor any of the ensigns of kingly majesty; and whither it does not appear that he was followed by the nobility or princes of the tribes, only accompanied by a few men, as next observed:

and there went with him a band of men; an army, or part of one they seem to be military men, at least men of strength, valour, and courage; gallant men, who, in honour to their king elect, freely offered themselves to be his body guard, however, until he was come to his house at Gibeah; the Targum is only, "some of the people"

whose heart God had touched; and inclined to show honour and respect to their king; the Targum describes them,

"men that feared to sin, and in whose hearts the fear of God was put."

Ver. 27. *But the children of Belial said*, etc.] Wicked, dissolute, lawless persons; men without a yoke, as the word signifies, who did not care to be under the yoke of government, at least not under the yoke of Saul; and these might be men of wealth, and of larger tribes, and better families than Saul was of, and therefore envied him, and thought themselves better for government than he was; and in a jeering scornful manner said,

how shall this man save us? whose family is so mean, and whose tribe is so small, that they can give but little assistance to deliver us out of the hands of our enemies, the Philistines and Ammonites; intimating, that a king ought to have been of a rich family, and a large tribe, and a prince in it, whose interest and influence were great, not only in his own tribe, but in others, which would enable him to engage in war with an enemy, and protect the people; but what, as if they should say, can be expected from "this man?", this mean contemptible man, of no birth nor fortune, brought

up in an obscure manner, and altogether inexpert in things civil and military?

and they despised him; on account of the above things, not only in their hearts, but spared not to speak out, and use opprobrious language, and with which their actions and conduct agreed:

and brought him no presents; as others did, and as it was usual when a king came to the throne; nor were any visits made unto him, in token of their subjection to him, and complacency in him, and by way of congratulation of him, (see ^{<102>}1 Kings 4:21 ^{<475>}2 Chronicles 17:5) the Targum is, they did not salute him, or ask of his welfare:

but he held his peace, or “was as one that is deaf and dumb”^{f210}; took no notice of what they said, as if he was deaf and heard it not, and was as silent as if he had been a dumb man, which showed his wisdom and prudence; for had he taken notice of them, he must have punished them, and he judged it more advisable to use lenity and mildness, and not begin his reign with contention and bloodshed.

CHAPTER 11

INTRODUCTION TO FIRST SAMUEL 11

This chapter relates the distress the inhabitants of Jabeshgilead were in on account of the Ammonites, (^{<0100>}1 Samuel 11:1-3) upon which they sent messengers to Saul, whose spirit was immediately stirred up to help them, (^{<0104>}1 Samuel 11:4-6), and prepared for it, and came up soon enough for their relief, and slew their enemies, (^{<0107>}1 Samuel 11:7-11), which gained him much honour and reputation among the people, and occasioned the renewal of the kingdom to him, (^{<0112>}1 Samuel 11:12-15).

Ver. 1. *Then Nahash the Ammonite came up, and encamped against Jabeshgilead,* etc.] A month after, as in the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions, that is, a month after Saul was chosen king; so Josephus ^{f211}: this prince was preparing for war against Israel before, which they hearing of, requested they might have a king to go before them in battle, (^{<0122>}1 Samuel 12:12) but now he actually marched from his own country, and besieged Jabeshgilead, a city in the land of Gilead, from whence it had its name, and lay in the half tribe of Manasseh, on the other side Jordan, (see ^{<0208>}Judges 21:8). It lay near to the Ammonites, and was part of the country they laid claim to in the times of Jephthah, which they now renewed, and attempted to gain it by force. This Nahash was king of the Ammonites, as he is called in the Targum, and by Josephus ^{f212}, and so in the Arabic version, (see ^{<0122>}1 Samuel 12:12)

and all the men of Jabeshgilead said unto Nahash, make a covenant with us; they desired to be his allies and confederates, live in peace and friendship with him, and enjoy their religion and liberties on certain conditions they were willing to come into; and this was the sense of them all, or at least the greatest part, which showed a mean and abject spirit in them, to make no defence of themselves, but as soon as besieged to move for a capitulation. This doubtless arose from a sense of their weakness, not being able to hold it out long, and from an apprehension that their brethren the Israelites, on the other side Jordan, could give them no assistance, being in an unsettled condition, having chosen a king, and he scarcely on the throne, and the Philistines having great power over them:

and we will serve thee; not as slaves, but as tributaries; they were willing to pay a yearly tax to him.

Ver. 2. *And Nahash the Ammonite answered them*, etc.] In a very haughty and scornful manner:

on this condition will I make a covenant with you, that I may thrust out all your right eyes; some Jewish writers go into a mystical and allegorical sense of these words, as that Nahash ordered the book of the law to be brought, which was their right eye, that he might erase out of it these words,

an Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord; others understand it of the sanhedrim, which were the eyes of Israel; and others, which come a little nearer to the sense, of the slingers and archers, the desire of the eyes of Israel; and who, by having their right eyes thrust out, would be in a great measure spoiled for taking aim; for the words are to be understood literally; the intention of Nahash was to disable them for war, and that they might become quite unfit for it, as Josephus observes^{f213}; the left eye being under the shield, as it usually was in war, and the right eye plucked out, they would be as blind men: he did not choose to have both their eyes thrust out, for then they could have been of no use and service to him as slaves or tributaries:

and lay it for a reproach upon all Israel; that they did not come up to the relief of their brethren, and defend them, and signifying that they must all expect the same treatment from him.

Ver. 3. *And the elders of Jabesh said*, etc.] The magistrates and principal men of the city:

give us seven days' respite, that we may send messengers to all the coasts of Israel; that is, cease from besieging them, from throwing in darts into the city, or any other missive weapons, and from attempting to break open the gates, or break down the walls of it, and storm it; such a space of time they desire, which was as little as could be granted, to go and return in, and without this it would not be a reproach to all Israel, if they were ill used by them, since they had no knowledge of their case, nor time to come up for their assistance:

and then, if there be no man to save us, we will come out to thee; and submit to be used at thy pleasure. And it seems that this was granted by

Nahash out of a bravado, and to reproach and insult all Israel, and bid them defiance; with whom he sought to quarrel, having a design upon their land, and knowing very well their condition, being awed by the Philistines; and having just chosen a king, and he an inexperienced man in the affairs of war, and had no army; nor was it likely that one could be assembled in so short a time, and come to the relief of this people, and therefore he thought himself safe enough in granting their request.

Ver. 4. *Then came the messengers to Gibeah of Saul*, etc.] Where he was born, and brought up, and now dwelt; and he being elected king, it brought an honour to the place; and from hence had this name, to distinguish it from the others, and this is the first time it was so called. Now the messengers from Jabesh came hither directly, because they knew that Saul, the chosen king, dwelt here, and the Benjaminites, of all the tribes, had great reason to show regard to them, since it was from thence they had four hundred wives, when they were reduced to six hundred men only, in order to raise up their tribe:

and told the tidings in the ears of the people; Saul being not at home in the city, but in the fields, they reported to them the hardships their city was under, being besieged by the Ammonites, and threatened that if not relieved in such a time, all their right eyes would be plucked out:

and all the people lifted up their voices, and wept; moved with sympathy to their brethren, and who by their intermarriage with them were nearly related to them; and who might fear they would not stop there, but having taken that place would march forward, and come to them, and use them in like manner; the thought of which was very distressing to them.

Ver. 5. *And, behold, Saul came after the herd out the field*, etc.] Where he had been to look after the and take care of them, and see what condition they were in, and followed them on their return home; for though he was elected king, he was not inaugurated, and did not take upon him any state; and being despised by some, and no provision as yet made for his support and maintenance as a king, and no business as such for him to do, Samuel still acting in his office, he returned to his father's house, and employed himself in rustic affairs, as he used to do: though some think this was casual, that he had been in the field to recreate himself, or to meditate on the affairs of government, and happened to return just as the herd came out of the field, and so followed them; thus Jarchi interprets it not of his coming after the herd, but of his coming after the fixed and usual time of

the herd's coming out of the field; but Josephus^{f214} is clear for it, that he had been about some rustic business, some part of husbandry in the field, and returned to the city; nor has it been unusual for emperors and kings, and persons in high offices among Greeks and Romans, and other nations, in times of peace, to employ themselves in husbandry; so did the judges of Israel, as Shamgar, and Gideon, and Boaz, (~~ORBI~~Judges 3:31 6:11 ~~ORBI~~Ruth 3:2) so Quinctius Cincinnatus being taken from the plough and made dictator, after he had conquered his enemies, returned to his husbandry^{f215}:

and Saul said, what aileth the people, that they weep? he supposed some evil had befallen them, and desired to know what it was, that, if it lay in his power to help them, he might:

and they told him the tidings of the men of Jabesh; the message they brought, and the account they gave of the distressed case of their city.

Ver. 6. *And the Spirit of God came upon Saul when he heard those tidings,* etc.] And filled him with pity and compassion to the inhabitants of Jabesh, and with wisdom and prudence, and set his thoughts at work to contrive ways and means for their relief, and with fortitude, courage, and resolution, to attempt their deliverance; so the Targum,

“the spirit of fortitude from the Lord dwelt on Saul:”

and his anger was kindled greatly; against Nahash the Ammonite for insulting Israel, and threatening to use the inhabitants of Jabesh in such a cruel manner.

Ver. 7. *And he took a yoke of oxen,* etc.] Of his own or his father's, which he had just followed out of the field, and for which chiefly that circumstance is mentioned:

and hewed them in pieces; as the Levite did his concubine, (~~ORBI~~Judges 19:29)

and sent them throughout all the coasts of Israel by the hands of messengers; some carrying a piece one way, and some another, throughout all the tribes; for to them all the government of Saul extended, and which by this he let them know it did:

saying, whosoever cometh not after Saul and after Samuel; he names both, because he himself, though chosen king, was not inaugurated into his office, nor was Samuel put out of his; and because he knew he was

despised by some, who would not object to and refuse the authority of Samuel, and therefore if they would not follow him, they would follow Samuel; and he mentions himself first, because of his superior dignity:

so shall it be done unto his oxen; be cut to pieces as these were; he does not threaten to cut them in pieces, but their oxen, lest he should seem to exercise too much severity at his first coming to the throne:

and the fear of the Lord fell on the people; they feared, should they be disobedient, the Lord would cut them to pieces, or in some way destroy them, as well as Saul would cut their oxen to pieces; for their minds were impressed with a sense of this affair being of the Lord:

and they came out with one consent; or “as one man”, ^{f216}, as if they had consulted together; being under a divine impulse, they set out from different parts about much the same time, and met at a place of rendezvous next mentioned.

Ver. 8. *And when he numbered them at Bezek*, etc.] Which was the place appointed to meet at, the same with that in (~~1000~~Judges 1:4), (see Gill on “~~1000~~Judges 1:4”) though some take the word to be an appellative, and not the proper name of a place, and render it, “with a stone”; with which he numbered, taking a stone from each, and laying them on a heap, and then telling them ^{f217}; so Bizakion signifies little stones ^{f218} with the Greeks: or “with a fragment”; either of an earthen vessel, or of a stone, or of the branch of a tree they carried in their hands, and so the king’s servants numbered not the men, but the branches ^{f219}:

and the children of Israel were three hundred thousand men; who came together on this occasion; these were of the eight tribes and a half on this side Jordan:

and the men of Judah thirty thousand; which tribe is mentioned distinctly, because a noble and warlike tribe, which usually first went up to battle; and though the number of them at this time assembled may seem comparatively small, yet this may easily be accounted for; because they bordered upon the Philistines, who watched every opportunity to take an advantage of them, and therefore could not leave their tribe destitute, but reserved a sufficient number to guard their coasts, and yet were desirous to testify their obedience to Saul, though chosen king out of another tribe, when they might have expected from prophecy that the dominion belonged to them. Josephus ^{f220} has made a gross mistake in the numbers here, he makes the

men of Israel to be 700,000, and the men of Judah 70,000, contrary to the text, the Targum, Syriac and Arabic versions; but the Septuagint comes pretty near him, which has 600,000 of the men of Israel, 70,000 of the men of Judah.

Ver. 9. *And they said unto the messengers that came*, etc.] From Jabeshgilead, that is, Saul and Samuel said to them, as follows:

thus shall ye say unto the men of Jabeshgilead: when they returned unto them, as they were now upon the departure:

tomorrow, by that time the sun be hot; when it smites with the greatest heat, as at noon: this morrow seems not to be the next from their return home, or going from Saul, but the morrow after they were got home, and should deliver the message to those that sent them, (^{Q110}1 Samuel 11:10) and so Josephus^{f221} says, it was on the third day the assistance was promised them:

ye shall have help; Saul with his army by that time would come and raise the siege: and the messengers came and showed it to the men of Jabesh; what Saul had promised, and what a numerous army he had raised, and had now upon the march for their relief, and tomorrow would be with them:

and they were glad; it was good news and glad tidings to them; it cheered their hearts, and gave them spirit.

Ver. 10. *Therefore the men of Jabesh said*, etc.] To Nahash the Ammonite:

tomorrow we will come out unto you; meaning if they had no help, which they were well assured they should have; but this condition they expressed not, which they were not obliged to, but left him to conclude they had no hope of any, the messengers being returned, and the next being the last of the seven days' respite; and by this artifice the Ammonites were secure, and not at all upon their guard against an approaching enemy:

and ye shall do with us all that seemeth good unto you; make shows of them, pluck out their eyes, or put them to death, or do what they would with them.

Ver. 11. *And it was so on the morrow*, etc.] After the messengers were returned, and delivered their message, and the men of Jabeshgilead had

given the Ammonites reason to expect that they would come out to them according to their agreement:

that Saul put the people into three companies; or “heads”^{f222}, under so many commanders, assigning to each their number, if equally, 110,000 in each, as Gideon divided his three hundred into three companies, one hundred in each, (^{<0716>}Judges 7:16) and Abimelech, (^{<0703>}Judges 9:43) it seems to have been their way of fighting in those days:

and they came unto the midst of the host: that is, of the Ammonites:

in the morning watch; the third and last watch of the night, by break of day, or before, however before the sun was up; so quick was Saul and his men in their march, though on foot. Bunting^{f223} computes the distance from Gibeah to Bezek forty miles, and from thence to Jabesh sixteen; it is commonly reckoned that it was about sixty miles from Gibeah to Jabesh. Josephus^{f224} says it was ten “schaeni”, each of which contained five or six miles:

and slew the Ammonites until the heat of the day; that is, till noon, so that from the morning watch till noon he was making slaughter of them:

and it came to pass, that they which remained were scattered; those that were not cut off by the sword of Saul were broken and dispersed, they could not stand their ground against him:

so that two of them were not left together; to flee together, but every one shifted for himself, and fled alone.

Ver. 12. *And the people said unto Samuel*, etc.] By which it seems that Samuel accompanied Saul in this expedition; though it is somewhat difficult to account for it, that a man of his years should be able to attend so quick a march that Saul made; it may be, therefore, that he might follow after him gently, and meet him quickly after the battle was fought, when the people made the following speech to him:

who is he that said, shall Saul reign over us? is such a mean inexperienced man fit to rule over us? who can bear his government, and submit to it? what can be expected from him, that he should deliver and save us out of the hands of our enemies? in this they had respect to the sons of Belial, and what they said, (^{<0727>}1 Samuel 10:27), but now it appeared he was

sufficiently qualified, and God had made him an instrument of salvation, and was a proper person to be king over them:

bring the men, that we may put them to death; so transported were they with affection to Saul, and indignation against those men.

Ver. 13. *And Saul said*, etc.] Preventing Samuel from giving an answer, being ready to forgive injuries; as it was in his power as a king, and him only, to pardon those persons that treated him in so ill a manner, and it was policy so to do, especially in the beginning of his reign; and it plainly appears that this temper did not always continue with him; though there is no reason to believe otherwise, that this was now owing to his lenity as well as his prudence:

there shall not be a man put to death this day; who by their appearance to his summons had testified their obedience, and by their courage and valour had showed their attachment to him, and to the interest of their country. Ben Gersom takes the sense to be, that it might be right after, but not on this day to put them to death; or that this was an artifice of Saul to deliver those men out of the hands of the Israelites, suggesting as if it was his intention hereafter to put them to death, though not now, for the following reason:

for today the Lord hath wrought salvation in Israel; he does not ascribe the victory to the quick dispatch he made, to his wisdom and prudence in forming the scheme he did, and to his valour and courage, and that of his troops, but to the power and goodness of God.

Ver. 14. *Then said Samuel to the people*, etc.] Agreeing to what Saul had said, and in order to put them off from demanding the lives of the offenders, and willing to take them while they were in a good disposition:

come, and let us go to Gilgal; which was the nearest place to them, on the other side Jordan, from which they now were, and where the children of Israel first encamped when they passed over Jordan, where the tabernacle and ark first were, and an altar was built, and where meetings used to be held on certain occasions; all which might be reasons why Samuel proposed to go to this place. According to Bunting^{f225}, this place was thirty six miles from Jabeshgilead:

and renew the kingdom there; that is, recognize Saul, own and declare him king of Israel.

Ver. 15. *And all the people went to Gilgal,* etc.] Agreed to the motion, and marched along with Saul and Samuel thither:

and there they made Saul king before the Lord in Gilgal; that is, they declared him to be king there; he was inaugurated into, and invested with his office, otherwise it was God only that made him king, who only had the power of making one, (see ^{<4126>}Acts 2:36). Josephus says ^{f226} that Samuel anointed him with the holy oil; and so the Septuagint version here renders it,

“and Samuel anointed Saul there to be king;”

and it is not improbable, that as he privately anointed him, he did it publicly also; if not at the election of him, then at this time; and it is observable, that in the next chapter, and not before, he is called the Lord’s anointed. Now this was “before the Lord”; in this place; this being, as Abarbinel observes, a sanctified place, where the tabernacle and ark of God had been; and he supposes it probable that the ark was brought hither; but it was enough that the people and congregation of the Lord were here, and who, when assembled in his name, his presence was with them:

and there they sacrificed sacrifices of peace offerings before the Lord; where an altar was built, and on which they offered these peace offerings by way of thanksgiving, partly for the victory obtained over the Ammonites, and partly for the renewal of the kingdom to Saul, and their unanimity in it, as well as to implore and obtain future peace and prosperity:

and there Saul, and all the people of Israel, rejoiced greatly; they in their king, and he in the good will of his people, and both in the great salvation God had wrought for them.

CHAPTER 12

INTRODUCTION TO FIRST SAMUEL 12

In this chapter Samuel, resigning the government to Saul, asserts the integrity with which he had performed his office, and calls upon the people of Israel to attest it, who did, (⁽⁹¹²¹⁾1 Samuel 12:1-5), he then reminds them of the great and good things the Lord had done for them in times past, (⁽⁹¹²⁶⁾1 Samuel 12:6-11) and whereas they had desired a king, and one was given them, it was their interest to fear and serve the Lord; if not, his hand would be against them, (⁽⁹¹²⁰⁾1 Samuel 12:10-15) he terrifies them by calling for thunder in an unusual time, (⁽⁹¹²⁶⁾1 Samuel 12:16-19) and then comforts and encourages them, that in doing their duty God would be with them, and not forsake them, otherwise they might expect nothing but ruin and destruction, (⁽⁹¹²³⁾1 Samuel 12:20-25).

Ver. 1. *And Samuel said unto all Israel,* etc.] When assembled at Gilgal, after they had recognized Saul as their king, and he was established in the kingdom, and while in the midst of their mirth and joy:

behold, I have hearkened unto your voice in all that ye have said unto me; respecting the affair of a king, to which it must be limited, as appears by what follows; otherwise it is possible, in some things they might apply to him about, he did not think fit to hearken to them, and grant their request, or speak for them:

and have made a king over you; that is, had by the direction and appointment of God chosen one by lot, anointed and declared him king; for it was the Lord alone, that, properly speaking, made him a king.

Ver. 2. *And now, behold, the king walketh before you,* etc.] He invested with his office, and in the exercise of it, and goes in and out as the captain, commander, and leader of the people; it is expressive of his being in the full possession of regal power and authority, and therefore Samuel might speak the more freely, as he could not be thought to have any hope and expectation of being reinstated in his government, or to have parted with it with any regret; and he wisely took this opportunity of reproving the people for their sin of desiring a king, when Saul was settled and

established in his kingdom, and when they were in the midst of all their mirth and jollity, who might, from the success that had attended this first adventure of their king, conclude that they had done a right and good thing in requesting to have one:

and I am old, and grey headed; and so unfit for government, and very willing to be eased of the burden of it: he must surely be more than fifty two years of age, as the Jews generally say he was, since it is not usual at such an age to be grey headed, (see Gill on “~~1~~ Samuel 8:1”); however, on this account he merited reverence and respect, and demanded attention:

and, behold, my sons are with you; as private persons in the condition of subjects, making no pretension to government; and if they had committed anything criminal, they were open to the law, and might be charged, and tried, and treated according to their deserts; and there they were, and might be asked what questions they thought proper with respect to what they knew of his conduct; and to be hostages or bail for him, if they could prove anything against him; or to be taken to make satisfaction for any injuries committed by him:

and I have walked before you from my childhood unto this day; his manner of and conversation from his infancy to this time was well known to them, and he had spent all his days in the service of God, and for the good of Israel.

Ver. 3. *Behold, here I am,* etc.] No longer the supreme governor, but a subject, and accountable for any misdemeanour charged upon me, and to which I am ready to give answer, being now at your bar to be tried and judged before you:

witness against me before the Lord, and before his anointed; signifying, that if they had anything to lay to his charge, that they would produce it, and give proof and evidence of it in the presence of God, in whose name they met, and of Saul, anointed king, and supreme judge and ruler of the nation:

whose ox have I taken? by force to employ in his own service in ploughing his ground, or treading out his corn:

or whose ass have I taken? to ride about on in his circuit, or to carry any burden for him:

or whom have I defrauded? of their money or goods, by any artifice circumventing and cheating them:

whom have I oppressed? struck, beaten, broken, or caused to be so used wrongfully; to whose person have I been injurious any more than to their property? Some derive the word from a root which signifies favour and goodwill, and interpret it as some of the Rabbins do, of his not taking money of persons with their goodwill; or rather, that he had done nothing as a judge for favour and affection, but had acted the upright part, without regard to rich or poor, friends or foes:

or of whose hand have I received any bribe to blind mine eyes therewith? his meaning is, that he had never taken a gift or present from any person to favour his cause, that was to be brought before him, and give it for him right or wrong; to connive at any injury he had done, or to turn away his eyes from seeing where the justice of the cause lay; or that he had not received money to spare the life of a criminal that deserved to die; for the word used for a bribe signifies a ransom price, (see ^{f169}Deuteronomy 16:19)

and I will restore it to you; the ox or ass, money or goods, gifts and presents, or bribes taken, or make compensation for any injury done to the persons or estates of men. Some render it, “I will answer you”, ^{f227}, or give in an answer to any such charges when exhibited.

Ver. 4. *And they said,* etc.] One in the name of the rest, or they all cried out as one man:

thou hast not defrauded us, nor oppressed us; had done them no wrong, neither privately nor publicly, by fraud or by force:

neither hast thou taken ought of any man's hand; as a gift, present, or bribe, to fit your his cause. Some would infer hence that he took nothing of them for his support and maintenance, and that he lived upon his own substance; but that is not likely or reasonable; it was but just that they should support him and his family suitably to his character as a judge, whose whole life was spent in their service.

Ver. 5. *And he said unto them, the Lord is witness against you, and his anointed is witness this day,* etc.] Should they hereafter reproach and vilify him, and charge him with any acts of corruption, injustice, and violence:

that ye have not found ought in my hand; that they had nothing to accuse him of and charge him with throughout his whole administration, but had asserted his innocence and integrity, had honourably acquitted him, and given him a fair character: and they answered, he is witness; the omniscient God is a witness against us, should we depart from this testimony, and Saul, the Lord's anointed, is a witness that we have fully cleared thee from any imputations of maladministration. The word is singular, he "said" or answered ^{f228}, that is, Israel said, the whole body of the people, they all replied as one man: the reason why Samuel made such a speech at this time, when he resigned his government to Saul, was not only to secure his own character, but to suggest to Saul how he should rule and govern according to his example; and that having established his own character, he could the more freely, and with the better grace, reprove the people for their sin, as in some following verses.

Ver. 6. *And Samuel said unto the people*, etc.] Having cleared and established his own character, he proceeds to lay before the people some of the great things God had done for them formerly, and quite down to the present time, the more to aggravate their ingratitude in rejecting God as their King:

[it is] the Lord that advanced Moses and Aaron; raised them from a low estate, the one in a foreign country in Midian, the other in bondage in Egypt, to be deliverers, guides, and governors of his people Israel. Kimchi thinks this refers to what goes before, and that the sense is, that God, that raised Moses and Aaron to great honour and dignity, was a witness between him and the people; in which he is followed by some Christian interpreters. Ben Gersom makes mention of the same, but rather approves of the connection of the words with what follows, as does Abarbinel, and is doubtless most correct; the Targum is,

“who hath done mighty things by the hands of Moses and Aaron:”

and that brought your fathers up out of the land of Egypt; when they were in bondage there, and that by the means of Moses and Aaron, by whose hands he wrought signs and wonders and inflicted plagues on the Egyptians, which made them willing at last to let Israel go.

Ver. 7. *Now therefore stand still*, etc.] Keep your place, and do not as yet break up the assembly, but wait a little longer patiently, and with reverence and attention hearken to what I have further to say:

that I may reason with you before the Lord; as in his presence; and which he observes to command the greater awe upon their mind, and the greater regard to the subject of his discourse and resolutions; which would be,

of all the righteous acts of the Lord, which he did to you and to your fathers; not only in a way of judgment delivering them into the hands of their enemies, when they sinned against him, but rather in a way of mercy and kindness in delivering them out of their hands.

Ver. 8. *When Jacob was come into Egypt*, etc.] With his family to see his son Joseph, and dwelt there; or rather the posterity of Jacob are meant, who settled in Egypt, and continued there many years, and at length were oppressed by the Egyptians, and brought into hard bondage:

and your fathers cried unto the Lord; by reason of their bondage, for help and deliverance:

then the Lord sent Moses and Aaron, which brought forth your fathers out of Egypt; after various messages carried by them from the Lord to Pharaoh king of Egypt, and after many signs and wonders wrought by them, by which the heart of that king was at last brought to consent to their dismissal:

and made them dwell in this place; the land of Canaan; they conducted them through the Red sea, guided them through the wilderness, and accompanied them, especially Moses, to the borders of the land of Canaan; for neither of them went into it, but died before the people's entrance there. Joshua, the successor of Moses, of whom Samuel makes no mention, introduced Israel into it, conquered the land for them, and settled them in it; though Moses and Aaron, as they were the instruments of bringing them out of Egypt, were the cause, by conducting them through the wilderness, and by their prayers, counsels, and instructions, of their entrance into and settlement in it: besides, Moses appointed Joshua in his stead, and ordered him to lead the people there, and directed to the division of the land among them, yea, two tribes and an half were settled by him on the other side Jordan; the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, read in the singular number, "he made them dwell, that is, the Lord".

Ver. 9. *And when they forgat the Lord their God*, etc.] The worship of the Lord their God, as the Targum; that is, they fell into idolatry, which is a

plain instance and proof of forgetfulness of God; for such that neglect his worship, and serve idols, may be truly said to forget him:

he sold them into the hand of Sisera, captain of the host of Hazor; who was general of the army of Jabin king of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor, (^{<OR1E>}Judges 4:2), where they are said to be sold into the hands of Jabin, here into the hands of Sisera; because it is highly probable he was sent against them by Jabin, and subdued them, as he afterwards was sent by him, when they rebelled against him, and were delivered out of his hand:

and into the hand of the Philistines: as they were in and before the times of Samson, (^{<OR1E>}Judges 13:1)

and into the hand of the king of Moab; as in the times of Ehud, (^{<OR1E>}Judges 3:14,15), the exact order of these things is not observed:

and they fought against them; the king of Moab, Sisera, and the Philistines, and overcame them, and so they fell into their hands.

Ver. 10. *And they cried unto the Lord*, etc.] When in the hands of their enemies, and in bondage to them, and cruelly oppressed by them:

and said, we have sinned; the word for “said” is in the Cetib, or written text, singular, and in the Keri, or marginal reading, plural; and may signify, that everyone of them had a sense of their sin, and made acknowledgment of it; their confession was universal, as their sin was:

because we have forsaken the Lord; the Word of the Lord, as the Targum:

and have served Baalim and Ashtaroth; (see Gill on “^{<OR21>}Judges 2:11”), (see Gill on “^{<OR21>}Judges 2:13”).

but now deliver us out of the hand of our enemies, and we will serve thee; they did not ask for a king to go before them, and fight their battles, as they did now, but applied to the Lord for deliverance, promising to serve him as their King and their God.

Ver. 11. *And the Lord sent Jerubbaal*, etc.] Or Gideon, as the Targum, for Jerubbaal was the name given to Gideon, when he first became a judge, (^{<OR1E>}Judges 6:32)

and Bedan; if this was one of the judges, he must have two names, or is one that is not mentioned in the book of Judges; the Targum interprets it of Samson; so Jerom ^{f229}, for the word may be rendered “in Dan”; one in Dan,

who was of the tribe of Dan, as Samson was; and it was in the camp of Dan the Spirit of God first came upon him; and Kimchi observes that it is the same as Bendan, the son of Dan, that is, a Danite; and though he was after Jephthah, yet is set before him, because he was a greater man than he; and this way go the generality of Jewish writers ^{f230}; but a man of this name being among the posterity of Manasseh, (^{<13077>}1 Chronicles 7:17). Junius, and who is followed by others, thinks that Jair is meant, and is so called to distinguish him from a more ancient Jair, the son of Manasseh, and with whom the order of the judges better agrees, (see ^{<0434>}Numbers 32:41 ^{<0704>}Judges 10:3,4) but the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions read Barak; and he may rather be thought to be meant, because he was the instrument of delivering Israel out of the hand of Sisera, the captain of the host of Hazor before mentioned, (^{<0924>}1 Samuel 12:9) and agrees with the words of the apostle, (^{<5813>}Hebrews 11:32), who mentions those judges much in the same order:

and Jephthah, and Samuel; meaning himself, who was the last of the judges, and who speaks of himself as of a third person, as Lamech does, (^{<0023>}Genesis 4:23) and this he did not out of ostentation, but to observe that God had made him an instrument of delivering them out of the hand of the Philistines, which must be fresh in their memory, as he had made use of others before him, when he sent judges, and not kings, and therefore they had no need to ask a king. The Syriac and Arabic versions read Samson instead of Samuel, and which also agrees best with (^{<5813>}Hebrews 11:32)

and delivered you out of the hands of your enemies on every side; not the judges, but the Lord; for the word for “delivered” is of the singular number:

and ye dwelled safe; in the greatest security and confidence, without any fear of enemies, having God their King in the midst of them, and stood in no need of any other king to protect and defend them.

Ver. 12. *And when ye saw that Nahash the king of the children of Ammon came against you*, etc.] Or “but yet” ^{f231}; however, notwithstanding though the Lord had been so kind and gracious to them, as to raise up judges one after another to deliver them, when they cried unto him, yet when they perceived that Nahash the Ammonite was preparing to make war with them, instead of applying to the Lord for his protection, they desired to have a king to go before them, and fight their battles, as follows: nay,

but a king shall reign over us; though Samuel told them they had no need of one:

when the Lord your God was your King; and would protect and defend them, if they applied to him, and would put their trust in him; and he himself Samuel was their judge, and would be their general and commander, and they had experience of success under him to the utter destruction of their enemies, (~~1~~ Samuel 7:10) and yet, notwithstanding all this, they insisted upon it to have a king. According to Abarbanel, this preparation of Nahash to war with them was after they had asked for a king, and was a punishment of them for their request; and yet they repented not of it, but in effect said, though Nahash, and all the enemies in the world come against us, we will not go back from our request, but insist on it, that we have a king to reign over us; such was their obstinacy and perverseness.

Ver. 13. *Now therefore behold the king whom ye have chosen, and whom ye have desired*, etc.] For though God chose their king for them, it was at their request; they chose to have a king, and desired one, and they approved of and consented to, and confirmed the choice he had made, and so it was in effect their own:

and, behold, the Lord hath set a king over you; he gratified them in their desires; though he did not suffer them to make themselves a king, he suffered them to have one, and he gave them one; this power he reserved to himself of setting up and pulling down kings at his pleasure.

Ver. 14. *If ye will fear the Lord, and serve him, and obey his voice*, etc.] All worship and service of God, and obedience to his word and ordinances, should spring from fear and reverence of him; and therefore the whole of worship, both external and internal, is sometimes expressed by the fear of the Lord:

and not rebel against the commandment of the Lord; break it, and thereby exasperate him, and provoke him to wrath and bitterness:

then shall both ye, and also the king that reigneth over you, continue following the Lord your God; the Targum is,

“after the worship of the Lord your God;”

which was their duty to do, and is expressed in the preceding clauses; and this therefore is rather a promise of some benefit and privilege to their

duty, and to encourage them to it, since it stands opposed to the threatening of punishment in the next verse; and the words in the original are, “then shall ye etc. be after the Lord your God”^{f232}: that is, though they had in effect rejected the Lord from being their King, by asking and having one; yet notwithstanding, if they and their king were obedient to the commands of the Lord, he would not cast them off; but they should follow him as their guide, leader, and director, and he would protect and defend them as a shepherd does his sheep that follow after him; so Jarchi takes it to be a promise of long life and happiness to them and their king,

“ye shall be established to length of days, both ye and the king.”

Ver. 15. *But if ye will not obey the voice of the Lord, but rebel against the commandment of the Lord*, etc.] They and their king, by sinning, disregarding his precepts, both affirmative and negative:

then shall the hand of the Lord be against you; by sending some judgments upon them, as famine, sword, or pestilence, particularly captivity and subjection to their enemies:

as it was against your fathers; who had no king; and it is suggested that their case, who had one, would be no better than theirs; their king would not be able to save them from the hand of God: the words in the original are, “and against your fathers”^{f233}; which is interpreted in the Talmud^{f234} of their fathers dead, and in their graves, and of their enemies digging them up, and taking them out in contempt; but much better, by Kimchi, of their kings, who are, or should be, fathers of their subjects, as Augustus Caesar was called the father of his; and so the Septuagint version renders it, “and upon their king”; signifying that both they and their king should feel the weight of the hand of the Lord, if they rebelled against him.

Ver. 16. *Now therefore stand*, etc.] Which does not so much respect the position of their bodies as the fixed attention of their minds:

and see this great thing which the Lord will do before your eyes; meaning the storm of thunder and rain which presently followed; which coming at a time when such things were not usual, and on a day when there was no appearance or likelihood of anything of this kind, and suddenly, at once, upon the prayer of Samuel, it was no less than a miracle, and might be called a “great thing”, new and unheard of, and the pure effect of almighty power.

Ver. 17. *Is it not wheat harvest today?* etc.] Of the time of wheat harvest, (see Gill on “^{<0063>}1 Samuel 6:13”). Rain usually fell in Judea only twice a year, called the former and the latter rain; and from the seventeenth of Nisan or March, to the sixteenth of Marchesvan or October, it was not usual for rain to fall, and so not in harvest, at that time especially, (see ^{<0061>}Proverbs 26:1 ^{<0067>}Amos 4:7). R. Joseph Kimchi says, in the land of Israel rain never fell all the days of harvest; and this is confirmed by Jerom, who lived long in those parts; who says ^{f235}, at the end of the month of June, and in the month of July, we never saw rain in those provinces, especially in Judea. And Samuel not only by putting this question would have them observe that it was the time of wheat harvest in general, but on that day in particular the men, were at work in the fields reaping the wheat, etc. and so was not cloudy, and inclining to rain, but all serene and clear, or otherwise they would not have been employed in cutting down the corn; all which made the following case the more remarkable:

I will call unto the Lord, and he shall send thunder and rain; in a miraculous and preternatural way, there being nothing in nature preparatory thereunto, and this purely at the prayer of Samuel:

that ye may perceive and see that your wickedness is great, which ye have done in the sight of the Lord, in asking you a king; was attended with aggravated circumstances, and highly offensive to God, though he had gratified them in it, of which this violent storm would be an indication, and might serve to convince them of their folly, as well as of their wickedness, and that they had no need of a king, since Samuel their judge could do as much or more by his prayers than a king could do by his sword; and of which they had had sufficient proof before this, and that in the same way, (^{<0070>}1 Samuel 7:10).

Ver. 18. *So Samuel called unto the Lord,* etc.] Not in an authoritative way, or by way of command, but by prayer; so the Targum renders the clause in the preceding verse,

“I will pray before the Lord:”

and the Lord sent thunder and rain that day; immediately, though there was no appearance of it; it was harvest time, and a fine harvest day. Josephus says ^{f236} he sent thunder, lightning, and hail, a terrible storm and tempest it was:

and all the people greatly feared the Lord and Samuel; the Lord that sent this tempest, and Samuel who had such power with God in prayer. Clement of Alexandria^{f237} thinks that from hence the Greeks borrowed their fable concerning Aeacus invoking God, when there was a drought in Greece; and as soon as he prayed, immediately there was thunder, and the whole air was covered with clouds; but perhaps they rather framed it from the instance of Elijah praying for rain^{f238}, at whose request it came, (^{<1182>}1 Kings 18:42-45).

Ver. 19. *And all the people said unto Samuel*, During the tempest, and in the midst of it; it was the general cry of the people, they were unanimous in it:

pray for thy servants unto the Lord thy God, that we die not; though they had rejected him as their judge and supreme governor in desiring a king, now they were his humble servants, at least feignedly; and knowing what interest he had with God in prayer, they entreat him to make use of it on their behalf, who having sinned so greatly, had not the assurance to call the Lord their God, though they had no doubt of his being the God of Samuel, whose prayers he had heard, of which this tempest was a full proof; and was so violent, that if it continued, they were afraid they should be destroyed by the thunder and lightning, or they and their cattle, with the fruits of the earth, be washed away with the prodigious rain:

for we have added unto all our sins this evil, to ask us a king; though Samuel had laid before them the evils and inconveniences of having a king, and had in the name of the Lord charged them with rejecting God as their king; yet nothing convinced them of their evil till this storm came, and then all their sins came fresh to their minds; and this added to the weight of them, and lay heaviest on them, that they had rejected the Lord, and slighted his prophets, and, notwithstanding all remonstrances, resolved on having a king.

Ver. 20. *And Samuel said unto the people, fear not*, etc.] Being destroyed by the tempest:

ye have done all this wickedness; in asking a king; that is, though they were guilty of so heinous a sin, yet there were grace and mercy with God, and they should not despair of it, so be it that they did not depart from him, but cordially served him; the Targum is,

“ye have been the cause of all this evil;”

the storm of thunder and rain; and though they had, he would not have them despond or indulge slavish fear;

yet turn not aside from following the Lord; the worship of the Lord, as the Targum; provided they did not depart from the Lord, and forsake his worship, word, and ordinances, they need not fear utter ruin and destruction, though they had been guilty of this sin:

but serve the Lord with all your heart; if their service of God was kept up, and was hearty and sincere, they might still expect things would go well with them.

Ver. 21. *And turn ye not aside*, etc.] From his worship: for then; if they turned aside from that:

should ye go after vain things; idols, which are vanity, and less than vanity:

which cannot profit nor deliver; neither bestow good things on their votaries, nor deliver them from evils, or from the hands of their enemies

for they are vain; empty, useless, and unprofitable; an idol is nothing in the world, (~~4100~~1 Corinthians 8:4).

Ver. 22. *For the Lord will not forsake his people for his great name's sake*.] For the sake of himself, his honour and glory; should he forsake his people, and suffer them to come to ruin, his name would be blasphemed among the Heathens; he would be charged either with want of power to help them, or with want of faithfulness to his promise to them, and with inconstancy to himself, or want of kindness and affection for them; all which would reflect upon his honour and glory:

because it hath pleased the Lord to make you his people; it was not owing to any worth or worthiness in them that they became his people, but to his own sovereign good will and pleasure; and therefore, as it was nothing in them that was the cause of their being taken by him for his people, so nothing in them could be the cause of their being rejected by him as such; it was of free grace and favour that they were taken into covenant with him, and by the same would be retained: the Vulgate Latin version is,

“the Lord hath sworn to make you a people for himself;”

so Jarchi interprets it, he swore, and takes it to have the same sense as in (~~0142~~1 Samuel 14:24).

Ver. 23. *Moreover, as for me,* etc.] As he had given them reason to believe that God would forgive their sin, by which they had offended him, rejecting him as their King, so he likewise forgave their offence against him in rejecting him as their governor under him, and so neither need fear the Lord nor him with a servile fear; and as God would still be gracious to them, if they abode by his service, so he, Samuel, would do all the good offices for them that lay in his power:

God forbid that I should sin against the Lord, in ceasing to pray for you; for since they had returned to the Lord, and acknowledged their sin, it would have been an evil in him not to pray for them, that they might share in the pardoning grace and mercy of God, and have all good things bestowed upon them they stood in need of; this he judged to be his duty to do, and therefore abhorred the thought of being indifferent to it, negligent of it, or of dropping it:

but I will teach you the good and the right way; would not only pray for them, but instruct them in the way of their duty; a way that was a good one, agreeable to the will and word of God, and in walking in which good things were enjoyed, and which being a good way, must needs be a right way; though Samuel ceased to be a judge and chief magistrate among them, he should not cease to act the part of a prophet to them, both by his prayers and by his instructions.

Ver. 24. *Only fear the Lord, and serve him in truth with all your heart,* etc.] Fear him not with a servile fear, which is before dehorted from, but with a filial fear, a reverential affection for God; and includes the whole of religious worship, internal and external; explained further by serving him according to the truth of his word, and in a cordial, sincere, and affectionate manner; and if this was wanting in them, he suggests that his prayers and instructions would be of little avail, and not to be depended on:

for consider how great things he hath done for you; in bringing them out of Egypt: settling them in the land of Canaan; giving them his laws, statutes, commands, and ordinances; sending prophets unto them, and raising up judges for them, and bestowing all good things on them, in nature, providence, and grace; though some restrain this to the great thing he had done that day, to convince them of their sin, and by which they were returned to the Lord, namely, the violent storm of thunder; which wonderful instance of the power of God, and token of his displeasure

against them, they were to lay up in their minds, and not forget, that it might be a means of preserving them from sin for the future.

Ver. 25. *But if ye shall still do wickedly*, etc.] Continue to rebel against God, revolt from him, and depart from his worship, and despise his prophets, and serve idols:

ye shall be consumed, both ye and your king; their king would be so far from protecting, that he should perish with them, be killed by the sword, as Saul their first king was, or go into captivity, as others of their kings did.

CHAPTER 13

INTRODUCTION TO FIRST SAMUEL 13

This chapter relates how Saul disposed of his army, (^{<0911>}1 Samuel 13:1,2) that Jonathan his son smote a garrison of Philistines, which provoked them to come out with a large army against them, to the great terror of the Israelites, many of whom fled to secret places, and to distant parts, (^{<0913>}1 Samuel 13:3-7), that Saul tarried at Gilgal waiting for Samuel, but he not coming so soon as expected, offered sacrifice himself, (^{<0918>}1 Samuel 13:8-10) for which Samuel, when he came, reprov'd him, and told him the kingdom should not continue with him, but be given to another man, (^{<0931>}1 Samuel 13:11-14) on which Saul departed to Gibeah, where he continued, the Philistines being encamped at Michmash, (^{<0935>}1 Samuel 13:15,16) from whence went out spoilers, in three companies, into the land of Israel, where they met with no opposition; for there were no weapons in the hands of any but Saul and Jonathan, the Philistines having taken care that there should be no smith in the land of Israel to make them any, so that they were defenceless, (^{<0937>}1 Samuel 13:17-23).

Ver. 1. *Saul reigned one year*, etc.] “Or the son of a year in his reigning”^{f239}; various are the senses given of these words: some interpret them, Saul had a son of a year old when he began to reign, Ishbosheth, and who was forty years of age when his father died, (^{<1120>}2 Samuel 2:10), others, who understand the words of Saul himself, think there is an “ellipsis” or defect of the number, and that it may be supplied, that Saul was the son of thirty or forty years, or whatsoever age he may be supposed to be at when he began his reign; others take the words in a figurative sense, that he was like a child of a year old, for purity and innocence; so the Targum,

“as the son of a year, in whom there are no faults, so was Saul when he reigned;”

or he was but a year old, reckoning from the time he was turned into another man, and had another heart, which was immediately after he was anointed king at Ramah by Samuel; or he was but a year old with respect to his kingdom: the inauguration of a king is “natalis imperil”, the birthday

of his kingdom, and therefore the words are well enough rendered by us, “Saul reigned one year”; which is to be reckoned either from his unction at Ramah, or rather from his election at Mizpeh, to the renewal of the kingdom at Gilgal:

and when he had reigned two years over Israel; which the Jewish chronologers ^{f240} make to be the whole of his reign, which is not probable, considering the many things done in his reign, the many battles he fought with all his enemies on every side of him, and his long persecution of David; and there were no less than three high priests in his reign; Josephus says ^{f241} he reigned eighteen years in the lifetime of Samuel, and twenty two years after his death, in all forty; which agrees with (~~4132~~ Acts 13:21). Some interpret it he reigned two years well, and the rest in a tyrannical way; or that at the end of two years, when David was anointed, the kingdom was not reckoned to him, but to David; and to this purpose Dr. Lightfoot writes, that he had been king one year from his first anointing by Samuel at Ramah, to his second anointing by him at Gibeah (Gilgal I suppose he means); and he reigned after this two years more, before the Lord cast him off, and anointed David; and the time he ruled after that was not a rule, but a tyranny and persecution ^{f242}; but the sense Ben Gersom gives is best of all, that one year had passed from the time of his being anointed, to the time of the renewal of the kingdom at Gilgal; and when he had reigned two years over Israel, then he did what follows, chose 3000 men, etc. In the first year of his reign was done all that is recorded in the preceding chapter; and when he had reigned two years, not two years more, but two years in all, then he did what is related in this chapter.

Ver. 2. *Saul chose him three thousand men of Israel*, etc.] Out of the 300,000 that went with him to fight the Ammonites, and returned with him to Gilgal, where he now was, and had stayed as may be supposed about a year, since now he had reigned two years. These 3000 men some of them doubtless were appointed as a guard about his person, and the rest were a standing army to preserve the peace of the nation, to protect them from their enemies, to watch the motions of the Philistines, and to be ready on any sudden invasion:

whereof two thousand were with Saul in Michmash, and in Mount Bethel; “Michmash”, according to Bunting, ^{f243} was four miles from Gilgal. Jerom ^{f244} says, in his time it was shown a large village on the borders of Aella, or Jerusalem, retaining its ancient name, nine miles distant from it, near the

village Rama. Adrichomius ^{f245} says it is now called Byra, and Mr. Maundrell ^{f246} observes that it is supposed by some to be the same with Beer, whither Jotham fled after he had delivered his parable, (^{<0021>}Judges 9:21). Michmash is in the Misnah ^{f247} celebrated for the best wheat being brought from it; and near to it, as appears from hence, was Bethel, and the mount of that name; and so Jerom ^{f248} speaks of Bethel as over against Michmash; and this mount very probably is the same said to be on the east of Bethel, where Abraham built an altar, (^{<0128>}Genesis 12:8) for Michmash lay to the east of Bethel:

and one thousand were with Jonathan in Gibeah of Benjamin; the native place of Saul, and this Jonathan was the son of Saul, (^{<0316>}1 Samuel 13:16). According to Bunting ^{f249}, Gibeah, where Jonathan was stationed, was eight miles from Michmash:

and the rest of the people he sent every man to his tent; to their own houses; or, as the Targum, to their cities; these were they that came at his summons, and were numbered at Bezek, and went with him to the relief of Jabeshgilead, and had been with him ever since, and now dismissed.

Ver. 3. *And Jonathan smote the garrison of the Philistines that was in Geba*, etc.] Not the same with Gibeah of Benjamin, as Jarchi; for it can hardly be thought that Jonathan should place himself with his thousand men where the Philistines had a garrison; or that if this was the same with that in the preceding verse, that it should be called by another name in this; but Gibeah and Geba were two places, as Kimchi observes, both indeed in the tribe of Benjamin, and it is very probable not far from one another; (see ^{<0524>}Joshua 18:24,28). This seems to be the same with the hill of God, where was a garrison of the Philistines, (^{<0105>}1 Samuel 10:5), who after their defeat by Samuel contented themselves with some strong holds and garrisons in some parts of the land to keep Israel in awe; the Targum understands this of a single person, a governor of the Philistines in this place, whom Jonathan slew, and so Jarchi; and according to R. Isaiah he was one that was appointed to gather the tax for them:

and the Philistines heard of it, which alarmed them, and made them prepare for war:

and Saul blew the trumpet throughout all the land; not he in person, for he was at Gilgal, as the next verse shows; but he ordered it to be blown, being aware of the preparations the Philistines were making to attack him:

saying, let the Hebrews hear; both what his son had done, and what the Philistines were doing.

Ver. 4. *And all Israel heard say that Saul had smitten a garrison of the Philistines*, etc.] For though it was smitten by Jonathan, yet it was by the order of Saul, and so ascribed to him; it seems to be a concerted thing to fall upon the garrisons of the Philistines, and get them out of their hands, and so deliver Israel entirely from them; but it was not wise for Saul, if he had such a scheme in his head, to disband his large army, as he had lately done:

and that Israel also was had in abomination with the Philistines; who were highly incensed against them by this action, and vowed revenge; the name of an Israelite was abhorred by them; and perhaps this action might be attended with much craft and cruelty; and if these garrisons were held by agreement, they might charge them with perfidy, with breach of articles, and so their name was made to stink among them, as the word signifies:

and the people were called together after Saul to Gilgal; by sound of trumpet.

Ver. 5. *And the Philistines gathered themselves together to fight with Israel*, etc.] To prevent their further encroachments on them, and designs against them; for they perceived they intended to cast off their yoke, and free themselves entirely from them:

thirty thousand chariots, and six thousand horsemen; it may seem incredible that so small a people as the Philistines were, who only were possessed of five cities, or lordships, with the villages belonging to them, except what they had taken from Israel; and even if assisted by the Tyrians, the author of Sirach in the Apocrypha says:

“And he destroyed the rulers of the Tyrians, and all the princes of the Philistines.” (Sirach 46:18)

though he seems to have respect not to this time, but when Samuel discomfited them, (^{<4070>}1 Samuel 7:10). I say it may seem incredible that they should bring such a number of chariots into the field; wherefore this must either be understood of 30,000 men that fought in chariots, as Lyra interprets it, and in which sense it is plain and certain the word chariots is sometimes used, as in (^{<4008>}2 Samuel 10:18 ^{<4221>}1 Kings 20:21 ^{<4398>}1 Chronicles 19:18), or else of some sort of carriages, not chariots of war, at

least not all of them; but what were brought to carry the baggage of their infantry, which was very large, and to carry away the goods and substance of the Israelites; some have thought that there is a mistake of the copier, who instead of çl ç , “three”, read myçl ç , “thirty”: so Capellus; and the rather because in the Arabic and Syriac versions it is only “three thousand”; but even this is too great a number, understood of chariots of war; for never any people in the world was known to have so many chariots of war; Pharaoh in his large host had but six hundred, (^{<1247>}Exodus 14:7) Jabin king of Canaan had indeed nine hundred, (^{<0048>}Judges 4:3) and David took from the king of Zobah one thousand chariots; but whether they were all chariots of war is not certain, (^{<1004>}2 Samuel 8:4). Solomon indeed had one thousand and four hundred chariots, but they do not appear to be chariots of war, but some for use, and some for state and grandeur. Wherefore, if a mistake in the copy is admitted of, and this can be confirmed by some MSS, yet we must recur to one or other of the above senses; some of them must be understood of other sort of carriages, or of men that fought in these chariots; and allowing ten men to a chariot, which seems to be the usual number by comparing (^{<1008>}2 Samuel 10:18) with (^{<1398>}1 Chronicles 19:18) then 3000 men would fill three hundred chariots, which are as many as it can well be thought the Philistines had Zerah the Ethiopian, who brought into the field an army of million men, had no more than three hundred chariots, (^{<1449>}2 Chronicles 14:9), and no more had Antiochus Eupator in his army,

“And with him Lysias his protector, and ruler of his affairs, having either of them a Grecian power of footmen, an hundred and ten thousand, and horsemen five thousand and three hundred, and elephants two and twenty, and three hundred chariots armed with hooks.” (2 Maccabees 13:2)

Darius in his vast army had but two hundred ^{f250}, and in the very large one which Mithridates brought against the Romans there was but one hundred; and now 3000 men in three hundred chariots were but a proportion to 6000 horsemen, which in those times and countries was a large cavalry:

and the people as the sand which is on the sea shore in multitude; the infantry was so large as not to be numbered; however, the phrase denotes a great multitude of them; Josephus says ^{f251} there were 300,000 footmen:

and they came up, and pitched in Michmash, eastward from Bethaven; where Saul, before he went to Gilgal, had his quarters, (^{<0932>}1 Samuel 13:2).

Bethaven was a place near Bethel, on the east of it, (^{<0102>}Joshua 7:2) though Bethel itself was afterwards so called when Jeroboam had set up the worship of the calves there, (^{<2015>}Hosea 4:15) it signifying the house of vanity or iniquity.

Ver. 6. *When the men of Israel saw they were in a strait, for the people were distressed,* etc.] By reason of the vast army that the Philistines brought into the field, greatly superior to theirs, and were likely to be encompassed by them on every side; so that nothing but destruction was expected, which gave them the utmost anxiety and uneasiness; though Abarbinel refers this last clause, not to the people of Israel, but to the people of the Philistines, and takes it in this sense,

for the people drew nigh; the army of the Philistines was approaching, and got near to them; and so they were in great danger of being quickly attacked by them, and destroyed, their numbers being so great:

then the people did hide themselves in caves; of which there were many in the land of Judea, capable of receiving a large number, as the cave of Adullam, the cave of Engedi, etc. and such as the Israelites made to hide themselves when oppressed by the Midianites, (^{<0102>}Judges 6:2)

and in thickets; woods and forests, or among thorns, as Jarchi; where there was a very great number of brambles and thorn bushes; some, as Kimchi, interpret the word of munitions, garrisons, and fortified places, to which they betook themselves:

in rocks, and in high places, and in pits; in the holes of rocks and mountains, particularly in Mount Ephraim; (see ^{<0142>}1 Samuel 14:22) and where there were any pits or ditches, high or deep places, where they might be out of sight, and be sheltered from their enemies.

Ver. 7. *And some of the Hebrews went over Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead,* etc.] As far off as they could from the Philistines, who lay on the west of the land of Israel, and these countries were to the east. Kimchi observes, that the land of Reuben is not mentioned, which was on the other side Jordan also; because that was nearer to it than what was inhabited by Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh; and therefore they chose to go further, thinking themselves there safer:

as for Saul, he was yet in Gilgal; where he stayed till Samuel should come to him, as directed, (^{<0108>}1 Samuel 10:8) to have his advice and counsel:

and all the people followed him trembling; all that were with him, the army as distinct from the common people; they abode by him, and were at his command, and were ready to go where he should direct them; but with trembling hearts when they saw the pain of the people, fleeing into holes and corners, and considered what a huge host the Philistines were coming upon them with, and Samuel their prophet not with them to encourage and counsel them.

Ver. 8. *And he tarried seven days, according to the set time that Samuel had appointed*, etc.] He tarried to the seventh day, but not to the end of it, or towards the close of it, as he should have done:

but Samuel came not to Gilgal; so soon as Saul expected:

and the people were scattered from him; many deserted him, the Philistines drawing nigh, and Samuel not coming, as Saul expected, and had given the people reason to expect.

Ver. 9. *And Saul said*, etc.] Being impatient, and seeing the people deserting him apace, and unwilling to engage in a battle without first sacrificing to God, and imploring his help and assistance:

bring hither a burnt offering to me; that is, a creature for a burnt offering, a bullock, sheep, goat, or lamb:

and peace offerings; which also were either of the herd, or of the flock:

and he offered the burnt offering; either he himself, or by a priest. In this unsettled time, while the tabernacle, altar, and ark, were at different places, and not yet fixed, it is thought that such who were not priests might offer, and that in high places, and where the tabernacle and altar were not.

Ver. 10. *And it came to pass, that as soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt offering*, etc.] And before he could offer the peace offerings:

behold, Samuel came; and it was told Saul that he was come:

and Saul went out to meet him; left off sacrificing, and would proceed no further, leaving the rest for Samuel and out of respect to him, and to prevent a chiding of him, he went forth to meet him:

that he might salute him, or “bless him”^{f252}; congratulate him on his coming, ask of his health and welfare, and wish him all peace and prosperity.

Ver. 11. *And Samuel said, what hast thou done?* This question he put to bring him to a confession of what he had done, otherwise he guessed at it by his countenance; or rather, by the prophetic spirit he was endowed with, he knew it certainly that he had offered the sacrifices without waiting for him:

and Saul said because I saw the people were scattered from me; they were deserting, and he feared, if he stayed any longer, they would all leave him; this was one reason of doing what he did:

and that thou camest not within the days appointed; seven days were appointed, and because the seventh day was come, though it was not gone, he concluded Samuel would not come at all; and that was another reason why he did what he did; and by this would have laid the blame on Samuel, as if he did not keep his time; whereas it was Saul’s impatience that hurried him to this action:

and that the Philistines gathered themselves together to Michmash; where his station before was, and from thence he might quickly expect them at Gilgal; and this was another reason why he hastened the sacrifice.

Ver. 12. *Therefore said I.* etc.] That is, within himself:

the Philistines will come down now upon me to Gilgal; on a sudden, unprepared for them, especially in a religious way:

and I have not made supplication to the Lord; for his direction and assistance, and for success in the war; which it seems went along with sacrifices, or was implied in them:

I forced myself therefore, and offered a burnt offering; it was reluctant to him, it was against his will as well as the command of Samuel, to offer before he came, he suggests; but such were the circumstances he was in, that he was obliged to it; these are the reasons or excuses he made, and some of them have a specious appearance in them.

Ver. 13. *And Samuel said to Saul, thou hast done foolishly*, etc.] Not by intruding himself into the priest’s office, with that he is not charged, but not waiting the full time till Samuel came; which showed his impatience,

disregard to Samuel, and distrust of God; and though he thought he had acted wisely, and taken the proper precautions in his circumstances, yet he acted foolishly; and though a king, Samuel being a prophet of the Lord, and in his name, spared not to tell him so:

thou hast not kept the commandment of the Lord thy God, which he commanded thee; by his prophet, that he should wait seven days for his coming, who would then offer sacrifices, and tell him what he should do; and not to keep the commandment of God was acting a foolish part:

for now would the Lord have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever; that is, for a long time, on his son, and son's son; and then, according to promise and prophecy, it would come to one of the tribe of Judah; but now seeing he had acted such a part, it should not continue long in his family, no longer than his own life, and quickly come into other hands.

Ver. 14. *But now thy kingdom shall not continue,* etc.] That is, in his family, nor in his tribe, but be removed to another:

the Lord hath sought him a man after his own heart: who was David; though as yet Samuel knew him not, he knew by divine revelation that there was another one chosen, to whom the kingdom would be given; a man every way agreeable to the will of God, and who would fulfil his will, though he knew not particularly who he was:

and the Lord hath commanded him to be captain over his people; that is, had appointed him to be king over Israel. God's decrees have the force of a law in them, and must be fulfilled; and cannot be resisted so as to be frustrated:

because thou hast not kept that which the Lord hath commanded thee; it matters not whether the thing commanded is greater or less, it is disobedience to the command that is the sin, and is resented: this might seem a small thing, since to offer the sacrifice was not criminal; but doing it before the time, a little before it should have been done, not waiting long enough for the prophet; yet it being against the command of God, or in neglect of it, it was sinful, and severely chastised; and the rather, that it might be an example to all succeeding kings how they offended, or broke the least of God's commandments; and this being the first king of Israel, he was made an example of to the rest.

Ver. 15. *And Samuel arose*, etc.] Seemingly in wrath and displeasure, not staying to offer up the peace offerings which remained; and though no mention is made of Saul's going with him, yet it seems as if he did, or at least quickly followed him, as appears from the next verse:

and got him up from Gilgal unto Gibeah of Benjamin; the native place of Saul, thereby directing Saul where he should go, and which might be a stronger place than Gilgal; or however where he might expect to be joined by more persons of his own tribe, as well as in the first place protect and defend that; and it looks by Samuel's going thither, though he was displeased with Saul, yet that he did not intend to forsake him directly and entirely:

and Saul numbered the people that were present with him, about six hundred men: which was done either before he left Gilgal, or as soon as he came to Gibeah; so great a desertion was there from him, that of the 3000 first chosen by him, and of the people after called and gathered to him at Gilgal, only six hundred remained with him; a small number indeed to encounter so large an army the Philistines had brought into the field, and which therefore Saul could not face.

Ver. 16. *And Saul, and Jonathan his son*, etc.] Who were now joined to their men, on Saul's coming to Gibeah:

and the people that were present with them; the six hundred men before numbered: abode in Gibeah of Benjamin; being perhaps a strong fortified place, not choosing to go forth to meet the army of the Philistines, so vastly superior to them:

but the Philistines encamped at Michmash; the old quarters of Saul before he went to Gilgal, (^{OR}1 Samuel 13:2).

Ver. 17. *And the spoilers came out of the camp of the Philistines in three companies*, etc.] Saul not daring to come out to fight them, and there being none throughout the land to oppose them, they sent out three companies of soldiers to ravage and spoil the country; of so little use and service was a king to Israel, they were so extremely desirous of; and this was suffered, to convince them of their vain confidence in him, and that their trust ought to be in the Lord their God; never was their country more exposed to rapine and violence than now:

one company turned unto the way that leadeth to Ophrah; a city in the land of Benjamin, of which (see ^{<61823>}Joshua 18:23) and lay southwest from Michmash, where the army of the Philistines were:

unto the land of Shual: which the Targum paraphrases,

“the land of the south;”

it seems to have had its name from the multitude of foxes in it, Shual signifying a fox.

Ver. 18. *And another company turned the way to Bethhoron*, etc.] Of which name there were two cities, the upper and nether, and both in the tribe of Ephraim, of which (see ^{<61813>}Joshua 16:3,5) this lay northwest from the camp of the Philistines at Michmash; eight miles from it, according to Bunting ^{f253}:

and another company turned to the way of the border, that looketh towards the valley of Zeboim, toward the wilderness; some take this to be the Zeboim which was destroyed with Sodom and Gomorrah; and the wilderness, the wilderness of Jordan; but as that, so the valley in which it stood, was turned into a bituminous lake; this seems to be a city in the land of Benjamin, (^{<61813>}Nehemiah 11:34) near to which was a valley, and this towards the wilderness of Jericho, and so lay eastward; the Targum calls it the valley of vipers, perhaps from its being infested with many; and so David de Pomis ^{f254} says it is the name of a place where plenty of serpents were found, and which he says were called so because of the variety of colours in them; with which agrees Kimchi’s note on the place; they seem to mean serpents spotted ^{f255}, as if they were painted and dyed of various colours, as the Hebrew word which is thus paraphrased signifies: according to Bunting ^{f256}, it was eight miles from Michmash.

Ver. 19. *Now there was no smith found throughout all the land of Israel*, etc.] The Philistines, when they ruled over them, having removed them into their own country, and forbid any to learn or exercise that trade in Israel:

for the Philistines said, lest the Hebrews make swords or spears: this they did to prevent their having arms, and the use of them, that they might not rebel against them, and fight with them, and overcome them; it was a piece of policy to keep them subject to them; so Nebuchadnezzar, when he conquered the Jews and carried them captive, took care particularly to carry away their smiths, and left none but the poorest sort of people in the

land, (²²⁴⁴2 Kings 24:14 ²²⁰¹Jeremiah 24:1) and Porsena, king of the Etrusci, when he made a covenant with the Romans, upon the expulsion of their kings, made this a condition of peace with them, that they should use no iron but in husbandry^{f257}. When this course was taken by the Philistines with the Israelites, and how long it had continued is not certain; it is probable it might be in the space of forty years they ruled over Israel, in which Samson was born, for we never read of any sword or spear that he made use of; and though there were two battles in the times of Eli, in both which Israel were beaten, they might make use only of bows and arrows, slings, and stones, clubs, etc, as also in the battle of Saul with the Ammonites; and as for the defeat of the Philistines in the time of Samuel, it was by thunder; and though the Philistines were then subdued, yet, as Samuel grew old, they regained their power in a good measure, and the Israelites had not spirit enough to oppose them, nor diligence and industry to learn and revive the trade of smiths among them; not even for what was necessary to husbandry, as the following verse shows.

Ver. 20. *But all the Israelites went down to the Philistines,* etc.] Were obliged to go into Palestine, into some one or other of the cities of the Philistines, or to their garrisons, where the trade of a smith was exercised:

to sharpen every man his share, and his coulter; which are the parts of the plough made of iron, with which the earth is cut and thrown up:

and his axe and his mattock; or pick axe; with the one wood is felled and cut, and with the other stones are dug; and each of these for their several uses needed sharpening; and when they did, they were obliged to go to the Philistines to have them done, they having no smiths among them.

Ver. 21. *Yet they had a file for the mattocks, and for the coulters, and for the forks, and for the axes,* etc.] Those that would not go to the Philistines, or were not able, or thought it too much trouble, these kept files by them to sharpen those several instruments with upon occasion; though the words are by some rendered in connection with the preceding, to this sense, that they went to the Philistines to sharpen them, when the mouths, or edges, of the mattocks, coulters, etc. were dull; or “blunt”^{f258}; and so needed sharpening; and even

to sharpen the goads; with which they pricked and pushed on the oxen in ploughing, when sluggish and remiss.

Ver. 22. *So it came to pass in the day of battle,* etc.] When that drew near, and they were called to it, and obliged to fight or flee, or surrender:

that there were neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any of the people that were with Saul and Jonathan: which was not owing to their leaving them behind in the camp, or casting them away from them through fear, as they followed Saul with trembling, but to the cause now mentioned. In what manner some preceding battles were fought with the Philistines and Ammonites, notwithstanding, have been accounted for on (^{<0139>}1 Samuel 13:19), but it is strange that the Israelites did not furnish themselves with the arms of the Philistines at the defeat of them in Ebenezer, (^{<0170>}1 Samuel 7:10,11) and with the arms of the Ammonites at Jabeshgilead, (^{<0111>}1 Samuel 11:11) and that such a warlike prince as Saul appeared at his first setting out to be should not in the first place take care to provide armour for his men by some means or another; for that those that left him should have arms, and not those that abode with him, does not seem reasonable. It may be the Benjamites, being expert in slinging, were indifferent to and neglected the use of any other weapon, or method of fighting:

but with Saul and with Jonathan his son was there found; swords and spears, and with them only.

Ver. 23. *And the garrison of the Philistines went out to the passage of Michmash.*] According to Jarchi, these two places, Michmash where the Philistines were, and Gibeah where Saul and Jonathan were, lay on two hills over against each other, and there was a valley between them; and the garrison of the Philistines drew nigh to the passage of Michmash, which led to the side of Gibeah, to the valley between them, either with an intention to besiege Gibeah, or to dare Israel to come out and fight them: but rather it seems to be some strong pass between the rocks near Michmash, where the garrison placed themselves to guard and keep against any sudden surprise; (see ^{<0144>}1 Samuel 14:4). The Targum is,

“the governor of the Philistines went out to the ford or passage of Michmash;”

and Kimchi interprets it of the princes or generals of the army; these might go to mark out a camp, and pitch upon a proper place to draw up in a line of battle.

CHAPTER 14

INTRODUCTION TO FIRST SAMUEL 14

This chapter gives an account of an adventure of Jonathan and his armourbearer smiting a garrison of the Philistines, (^{<0940>}1 Samuel 14:1-14), which with other circumstances struck terror into the whole army; which being observed by Saul's spies, he and his men went out against them, and being joined by others, pursued them, and obtained a complete victory, (^{<0945>}1 Samuel 14:15-23), but what sullied the glory of the day was a rash oath of Saul's, adjuring the people not to eat any food till evening which Jonathan not hearing of ignorantly broke, (^{<0942>}1 Samuel 14:24-31) and which long fasting made the people so ravenous, that they slew their cattle, and ate them with the blood, contrary to the law of God, for which they were reprov'd by Saul, (^{<0943>}1 Samuel 14:32-34), upon which he built an altar, and inquired of the Lord whether he should pursue the Philistines all that night till morning, but had no answer; which made him conclude sin was committed, and which he inquired after, declaring that if it was his own son Jonathan that had committed it he should surely die, (^{<0945>}1 Samuel 14:35-39), the people being silent, he cast lots, and the lot fell upon Jonathan; who had it not been for the resolution of the people that rescued him out of his hands, because of the great salvation he had wrought, must have died, (^{<0944>}1 Samuel 14:40-46) and the chapter is cited with an account of Saul's battles with the neighbouring nations in general, and of his family, (^{<0947>}1 Samuel 14:47-52).

Ver. 1. *Now it came to pass upon a day*, etc.] At a certain time, a little after the garrison of the Philistines had made the movement, (^{<0933>}1 Samuel 13:23) and it is not to be taken strictly for the day time; for it is probable it was in the night that the following proposal was made, and began to be carried into execution; for Josephus ^{f259} says it was day light when Jonathan and his armourbearer came to the camp of the Philistines; he had formed his scheme perhaps the night before, and he and his man set out in the night time, and by break of day came up to the garrison, as after related:

that Jonathan the son of Saul said unto the young man that bare his armour; as was usual in those times for generals of armies to have such,

and so in later times; such were Automedon to Achilles, and Achates to Aeneas, as Grotius observes:

come and let us go over to the Philistine garrison that is on the other side; that is, go over the valley which lay between Michmash and Gibeah, to the Philistines, that lay on the other side the valley beyond it; and so was not in it, but at a pass on the hills, at the bottom of which this valley lay, and could be seen at a distance, and pointed at with the finger, as Jarchi notes:

but he told not his father; lest he should disapprove of his project, and hinder him from pursuing it; and had not his spirit been stirred up to this by the Lord, of which he was fully persuaded, he would have acted not only a rash part, but contrary to military discipline, in engaging in an enterprise without the knowledge and direction of his general; unless we can suppose he had all unlimited commission from his father to attack the enemy, at discretion, at any time, and any where.

Ver. 2. *And Saul tarried in the uttermost part of Gibeah,* etc.] Not daring to go out against the Philistines, but remained in the furthest part of Gibeah, at the greatest distance from the camp of the Philistines, in the strongest part of the city, or deeply entrenched in the outer, part of it in the field:

under a pomegranate tree; where were his headquarters; his tent or pavilion was erected under a large spreading pomegranate, which protected him from the heat of the sun: or

under Rimmon; the rock Rimmon; under the shelter of that, and in the caverns of it; where a like number of Benjaminites he now had with him formerly hid themselves, (~~1724E~~ Judges 20:47)

which is in Migron; a part of Gibeah, or rather of the field of Gibeah, so called; for near it it certainly was; and is also mentioned along with Michmash, and as lying in the way of the march of Sennacherib king of Assyria, to Jerusalem, (~~2308B~~ Isaiah 10:28)

and the people that were with him were about six hundred men; which is observed to show that no addition was made to his little army; it was the same it was when he came thither, the people did not flock to his assistance, being in fear of the army of the Philistines, which was so powerful; (see ~~0915~~ 1 Samuel 13:15).

Ver. 3. *And Ahiah the son of Ahitub, Ichabod's brother,* etc.] Ichabod was the child that Phinehas's wife bore prematurely on hearing the news of the ark being taken and of the death of her husband and father-in-law, which name she gave him on that account, and died; (see ^{<0019>}1 Samuel 4:19-22), he, it seems, had an elder brother, called Ahitub, who died young, and this Ahiah was the son of him; for not he, but Ahitub, was Ichabod's brother:

the son of Phinehas; so Ichabod was:

the son of Eli; so Phinehas was:

the Lord's priest in Shiloh; this refers not to Ahiah for he was not now priest in Shiloh, which was destroyed: and besides, he was now in the camp of Saul; but to Eli, who when living exercised the priest's office in Shiloh:

wearing an ephod; as Ahiah now did; not such as common priests wore, but the ephod the high priest wore, which had the breastplate of judgment, the Urim and Thummim, in it, by which inquiry was made, (^{<0147>}1 Samuel 14:37). The meaning of all this is, that the high priest is now with Saul, and the ark also, which and the high priest might be sent for on this occasion, (^{<0148>}1 Samuel 14:18)

and the people knew not that Jonathan was gone; or they would have gone with him, namely, the military men that were particularly with him; he and Saul were in two different parts of Gibeah, with distinct bodies of men; whether the thousand that Jonathan first had with him all continued is not certain; it seems probable they did not; it can hardly be thought he should have more with him than were with Saul; (see ^{<0142>}1 Samuel 14:2), though from (^{<0147>}1 Samuel 14:17) they seem now to have been together.

Ver. 4. *And between the passages by which Jonathan sought to go over unto the Philistines' garrison,* etc.] One of which is called the passage of Michmash, (^{<0123>}1 Samuel 13:23) and was that by which they went from Gibeah to Michmash; the other, which might be called the passage of Gibeah, was that by which they went from Michmash to Gibeah, and in effect was but one; and this was seized by the garrison of the Philistines, on that part of it which was towards Michmash; so that there was no way of access to the camp of the Philistines, which Jonathan therefore proposed to go over to and destroy, but his difficulties were very great:

there was a sharp rock on the one side, and a sharp rock on the other side; not that there was on each side of the passage or passages to the right and

left a cragged rock, between which men passed as they went from place to place; for the position of them in the next verse shows the contrary; but there was “the tooth of a rock”^{f260}, as it is in the original text; or a promontory or prominence on the one side towards Michmash, which stood out like a tooth; and another promontory or prominence on that towards Gibeah; so that both must be gone over to get to the camp, the only passage being guarded by the garrison; and indeed it seems to me there was but one rock, and two precipices at the opposite parts of it, and which stood between the passages, which precipices must be climbed over:

and the name of the one was Bozez, and the name of the other Seneh; which, according to the Targum, the one signifies “lubrication”, being smooth and slippery, and the other “treading”, being more trodden and beaten: but Hillerus^{f261} derives both from clay, which seems not so agreeable to a rock; though in another place^{f262} he makes the former to have its name from whiteness, which is the colour of some rocks and cliffs; and one should think the latter rather has its name from bushes, brambles, and thorns, that might grow upon it.

Ver. 5. *The forefront of the one was situate northward, over against Michmash,* etc.] The northern precipice of this rock was towards Michmash, where the Philistines lay encamped, and where was the passage of Michmash the garrison went into and possessed:

and the other southward, over against Gibeah; the southern precipice faced Gibeah, and both precipices were to be got over before he could get to the garrison, these lying between the two passages; the one at one end, called the passage of Michmash, the other at the other, which might be called the passage of Gibeah.

Ver. 6. *And Jonathan said to the young man that bare his armour,* etc.] A second time, as Abarbinel thinks; the young man giving no answer to him the first time, perhaps through fear, he repeats it, and enlarges upon it for his encouragement:

come, and let us go over unto the garrison of these uncircumcised; as these Philistines were, whereas several of the other nations, though Heathen, were circumcised; as the Edomites, Arabians, and others; and this Jonathan observes to the young man, in hope that they being such the Lord would deliver them into their hand:

it may be that the Lord will work for us; a sign, as the Targum, a miracle, as indeed he did; and of which Jonathan was persuaded in his own mind, though he did not choose to express himself in a confident way; not knowing in what manner, and whether at this time the Lord would appear, and work salvation and deliverance; and yet had a strong impulse upon his mind it would be wrought, and therefore was encouraged to try this expedient:

for there is no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few; he is not limited to numbers, and can easily work salvation by a few as by many. It is no difficult thing to him to save by few, nor can anything hinder him, let the difficulties be what they will, when he has determined to deliver his people.

Ver. 7. *And his armourbearer said unto him*, etc.] Very readily and cheerfully:

do all that is in thine heart; whatever is thy pleasure, that thou hast a mind to do, that is upon thy heart, and thou art desirous of, and strongly inclined and affected to:

turn thee; which way thou wilt, towards the garrison of the Philistines, or elsewhere:

behold, I am with thee, according to thy heart; I will go with thee wherever thou goest, and do whatsoever thou wouldest have me to do; I am at thy command, and according to thy wish and desire, and in all things subject to thy will; I am as thine own heart.

Ver. 8. *Then said Jonathan, behold, we will pass over to these men*, etc.] Over the precipices to them, as steep and as cragged as they are:

and we will discover ourselves to them; present themselves to them at daylight, and let them know plainly who they were, that they were Hebrews.

Ver. 9. *If they say thus unto us*, etc.] By this and what follows he gives his man a sign by which both might know how they should conduct themselves in this expedition, and what would be the issue, whether they should succeed or not: should they say,

tarry until we come to you; this, as it would express boldness in the men of the garrison, and show that they were ready to come out and fight, would portend evil, and then what they had to do was to be upon the defensive:

then we will stand still in our place; wait till they came to them, and make the best defence of themselves as they could, showing as little fear as possible, and not attempting to retreat and flee:

and will not go up unto them; neither go backwards nor forwards; not backward, which would show fear; nor forward, to expose themselves to too much danger from the garrison, they appearing to be bold and intrepid.

Ver. 10. *But if they say unto us, come up unto us*, etc.] Which however spoken in contempt of them, yet would discover some fear, that they did not care to come out of their hold to them, and expose themselves to any danger; and besides being bid to come up, though it might be in a sneering ironical way, as supposing it impracticable for them; yet this would lead them on to make the attempt; and while the men were careless and secure, they might obtain their point:

then we will go up: the precipice, which was supposed impassable:

for the Lord hath delivered them into our hands: they being afraid to come out, and scornful and self-confident in their garrison: and this shall be a sign unto us; a direction how to behave, what steps to take, and a confirming sign assuring of success. Bishop Patrick and others observe, from Herodotus^{f263}, something similar to this, of the Paeonians, who went to war with the Perinthians, directed by the oracle; and were ordered that if the Perinthians provoked them to fight, calling them by name, then they should invade them; but, if not, should abstain; and so they did, and overcame; for when they met, there were three single combats; in the two first the Perinthians were conquerors, and began to triumph and insult; upon which the Paeonians said to one another, now is the oracle fulfilled, now is our business, and so fell upon them, and left few of them.

Ver. 11. *And both of them discovered themselves unto the garrison of the Philistines*, etc.] They passed over the valley that lay between Michmash and Gibeah, and presented themselves at the bottom of the hill or rock on which the garrison was, to the open view of it; and who might easily discern who they were, that they were Hebrews, as they did, as follows:

and the Philistines said, behold, the Hebrews came forth out of the holes where they had hid themselves, being in want of provisions, and almost starved, and so obliged to come out to seek for sustenance; (see ¹⁹⁴⁵1 Samuel 14:6).

Ver. 12. *And the men of the garrison answered Jonathan and his armourbearer,* etc.] The guards that were set to watch the garrison, who descrying them, called to them, and said:

come up to us, and we will show you a thing; we have something to say to you, a pretty thing to show you, when you shall pay dear for your boldness and impudence, in daring to come so near; not imagining that they could come, or would dare to attempt to come any further:

and Jonathan said unto his armourbearer, come up after me; follow me, and never fear but we will find a way to come up to them, however difficult it may be:

for the Lord hath delivered them into the hand of Israel; he knew by their language that God had given them a spirit of fear, that they durst not come out of their hold, and come down to them; and that he had cast them into a spirit of security and vain confidence, that they could never come at them, and give them any trouble; and from thence he concluded deliverance was at hand for the people of Israel, he seeking not his own private interest and glory, but the public good; and which he was ready to ascribe not to his own valour and courage, but to the power, kindness, and goodness of God.

Ver. 13. *And Jonathan climbed up upon his hands and upon his feet,* etc.] He did not attempt to go up the way or pass the Philistines kept, but turned aside and climbed up a precipice thought inaccessible, and came upon them unseen, and at unawares; for had he attempted to come up in any part where he was seen, they could easily have beat him down, and prevented his ascent; but though the place he climbed was so very steep and cragged, yet going on all four, as we say, he surmounted the difficulty; for he took this method of going on his hands and feet, not so much that he might not be seen; but because otherwise he could not have got up, not being able to stand on his feet; some think it was the precipice called Bozez he climbed, which, according to the Targum, had its name from its being lubricous and slippery:

and his armourbearer after him; who clambered up in the same manner, in imitation of his master, and as taught and directed by him:

and they fell before Jonathan, and his armourbearer slew after him; Jonathan, coming upon them at an unawares, knocked them down; or falling upon them, and laying about him with great dispatch, wounded them, and laid them prostrate to the ground; and his armourbearer

following them, put them to death, dispatched them at once; and so between them both made quick riddance of them.

Ver. 14. *And the first slaughter which Jonathan and his armourbearer made was about twenty men*, etc.] Or the first blow they struck, as the Targum, they killed about twenty men; that is, they did not stop smiting, but followed their blows so quickly, that in a very little time, as well as in a very small space of ground, so many were killed:

even within as it were an half acre of land, which a “yoke” of oxen might plough; that is, in one day; the word is used for a furrow, (^{<40308>}Psalm 129:3) and is supposed by some ^{f264} to be the length of one furrow; but if so, it must be a circular furrow; so much ground was given to Horatius Cocles as could be ploughed round about in one day, for his brave opposition to Porsena, king of the Etruscans, when he endeavoured to restore the family of the Tarquins ^{f265}. This was a space of ground which the Romans call “actus”, a measure of land one hundred and twenty feet square, which being doubled made an acre, called by them “jugerum”, being as much as a yoke of oxen could plough in one day, as Pliny says ^{f266}; so that an acre was two hundred and forty feet long, and one hundred and twenty broad, and contained an area of 28,800 four square Roman feet; and this space here mentioned, which was half an acre, contained 14,400 Roman feet ^{f267}; and within this space of ground, without going any further, twenty men were killed, which struck a panic into the whole garrison and host, supposing there was a large army of men behind them coming on, as follows. The Septuagint version renders these words as representing the slaughter made “with darts, and the casts of stones, and flints of the field” ^{f268}.

Ver. 15. *And there was trembling in the host in the field*, etc.] Belonging to Michmash, where the army lay encamped:

and among all the people; the inhabitants of Michmash, or that attended the army, and furnished them with provisions, trafficking with them; the common people, as distinguished from the soldiers:

the garrison; those that were in it, who did not sally out, but perceiving a great slaughter made of their outer scouts, were seized with a panic:

and the spoilers they also trembled; who had been about the country, ravaging and plundering it, and were returned with their booty; (see ^{<49317>}1 Samuel 13:17)

and the earth quaked; the inhabitants of it thereabout, or the earth itself literally; a real earthquake was caused at the same time, which increased the terror:

so that it was a very great trembling; both with respect to the numbers that were affected with it throughout the camp and garrison, and the causes of it; the terrible apprehension they had of a large army just ready to rush upon them; the earth quaking and opening in various places, threatening to swallow them up; and perhaps suspicions of treachery among themselves, they consisting of various nations, and some among them Hebrews; hence they fell upon and slew one another, (⁹⁴1 Samuel 14:20,21), or “a trembling of God”^{f269}; either in the same sense to which we translate it, as cedars of God, flame of God, etc. that is, large and great ones; or which came from God; it was he that sent this trembling among them, struck their minds with fear and dread, so that they were in the utmost consternation, and knew not what to do, nor which way to take, and had no heart to oppose the enemy, and defend themselves.

Ver. 16. *And the watchmen of Saul in Gibeah of Benjamin looked*, etc.] The city of Gibeah was built on an hill, from where it had its name; and these watchmen or sentinels of Saul were set by him no doubt in the highest part of it, whereby they could overlook the army of the Philistines as they lay encamped, and could observe their motions, and give notice accordingly; and it being now broad day light, could see the condition they were in:

and, behold, the multitude melted away; like snow gradually, and yet apace; they could discern their numbers lessening more and more, through the slaughter of many made among them by one another, and the flight of others; and they went on beating down one another; they could perceive they fled with great precipitation, throwing one another down in running, tumbling over one another, and trampling on each other which were in their way.

Ver. 17. *Then said Saul unto the people that were with him*, etc.] To some of the officers, particularly the muster master;

number now, and see who is gone from us: for he concluded that this agitation and confusion in the host of the Philistines were occasioned by an enterprise of some of his men, who by some stratagem or another had thrown them into this disorder:

and when they had numbered: which was soon done, being but six hundred men in all:

behold, Jonathan and his armourbearer were not there; from whence it might be inferred, that this commotion the Philistines were in was occasioned by an onset of theirs on the outer guards or sentinels of their garrison or army, which had alarmed them.

Ver. 18. *And Saul said unto Ahiah, bring hither the ark of the Lord,* etc.] That he, the high priest, might put on the ephod, with the Urim and Thummim, and inquire by them of the Lord before it, concerning the affair of Jonathan, what he had done, and the agitation that was in the host of the Philistines; so the Septuagint version, “bring the ephod”, of which, with the Urim and Thummim, Kimchi interprets it; and ask, whether it was right for him to go out unto them, or continue where he was:

for the ark of God was at that time with the children of Israel; and so it always was, except a few months it was in the hands of the Philistines; so it was at Kirjathjearim, where it was last. Jarchi thinks a word is wanting, and to be supplied thus,

“the ark of God was [there] at that time with the children of Israel,”

at Gibeah; perhaps it might be removed first to Gilgal, when Saul and Samuel were there, and when they came to Gibeah it was brought along with them; but the last words may be considered as a distinct clause, and, literally tendered, are, “and the children of Israel”: which Abarbinel accounts for thus, and Saul said this,

bring hither the ark of the Lord; and the children of Israel said so likewise, joined with him in it: though the ark had been with Saul, and the people, some time, and also the high priest, yet we do not find that Saul in all his straits and difficulties consulted the Lord before; but perceiving something extraordinary was doing, and might turn to his advantage, he begins to inquire.

Ver. 19. *And it came to pass, while Saul talked with the priest,* etc.] With Ahiah about bringing the ark, and inquiring before it:

that the noise that was in the host of the Philistines went on, and increased; the shrieks and cries of those that were beat down and trampled upon, and were bruised and wounded; and indeed the cry of the whole

host, being alarmed with the enemy being upon them, or among them; and it seems that not only their motions could be seen, but the noise of them heard at this distance:

and Saul said unto the priest, withdraw thine hand; from putting on the ephod, or opening the breastplate of Urim and Thummim, or placing the ark in a proper position, to inquire before it, or from lifting up both hands in prayer for direction. Saul by the noise he heard concluded the army of the Philistines was routed, and therefore there was no need to consult the Lord, and he had no leisure for it; no time was to be lost, the advantage was to be taken directly, and the enemy pursued, to complete the victory. The Jews look upon this as a piece of profaneness in Saul, as no doubt it was, and reckon it one of the sins for which his kingdom was not prolonged ^{f270}.

Ver. 20. *And Saul, and all the people that were with him, assembled themselves,* etc.] The six hundred men that were with him, unless we can suppose the 1000 that had been with Jonathan in Gibeah were here still, (see ^{493E}1 Samuel 13:2)

and they came to the battle; to the field of battle, the place where the army of the Philistines had lain encamped:

and, behold, every man's sword was against his fellow; taking one another for Hebrews, or treacherous and disaffected persons; so that, though the Israelites had neither swords nor spears, they needed none, for the Philistines destroyed one another with their own swords; and there was a *very great discomfiture;* noise, tumult, confusion, slaughter, and destruction.

Ver. 21. *Moreover, the Hebrews that were with the Philistines before that time,* etc.] Who either were their servants and bondsmen they brought along with them, or such in whose cities they dwelt, or had taken as they came along, and forced into their army; or it may be some of them were renegades from the Israelites, deserters, who for safety and subsistence betook themselves to them as the stronger party. The Greek version reads,

“the servants that were with the Philistines:”

which went up with them into the camp [from the country] round about; either willingly or by force; the words, “from the country”, are not in the

text, wherefore some observe, as Kimchi and Abarbinel, that this respects their being round about the camp, and that they were not within it, but without it, that if possible they might escape fighting against the Israelites:

even they also turned to be with the Israelites that were with Saul and Jonathan; who were now joined; when they saw the dread and confusion in the camp of the Philistines, and them destroying one another, and the Israelites prevailing over them, victorious and pursuing, they took part with them, and assisted them in completing the victory.

Ver. 22. *Likewise all the men of Israel which had hid themselves in Mount Ephraim*, etc.] In the caves and rocks, thickets and pits there, (see ^{<0936>}1 Samuel 13:6) when

they heard that the Philistines fled; now being delivered from their fears, and thinking themselves safe, ventured out of their lurking places:

even they also followed hard after them in the battle; they joined the pursuers who came their way, and stuck to them, and closely pursued the flying army of the Philistines. According to Josephus ^{f271}, the army of Saul was now increased to 10,000.

Ver. 23. *So the Lord saved Israel that day*, etc] And a wonderful salvation it was, that two men should throw such a vast army into confusion, which issued in the utter rout and destruction of them; this only could be of the Lord, to whom it is justly ascribed, and was the effect of his sovereign good will and pleasure, and of his unmerited goodness; a free favour bestowed on an undeserving prince, who had behaved ill to his prophet at Gilgal, and now to him and his high priest at Gibeah:

and the battle passed over unto Bethaven; the men of battle or war; those that made war, as the Targum, these pursued and went as far as Bethaven, or rather “passed Bethaven” ^{f272}; they not only, went as far as that, but “from” it, as Ben Gersom and Abarbinel interpret it; they passed that place, and went on from thence in pursuit of the Philistines; for their camp at Michmash was eastward from this place, and had it on the east, (^{<0935>}1 Samuel 13:5).

Ver. 24. *And the men of Israel were distressed that day*, etc.] By reason of the following order Saul gave with an oath, forbidding any to taste meat till evening, when the people were faint and weary, which is the common sense of interpreters; but Jarchi interprets it, the men of Israel were ready,

forward, and hasty, and drew nigh to fight with the Philistines, and so refers it to the persons before mentioned, who came out of their lurking places; and this sense is approved of by Abarbinel: “for”, or “and Saul had adjured”, or “did adjure the people”; or willed them, signified to them his will and pleasure, which would not have been so much amiss, had he not annexed a curse to it, as follows:

saying, cursed be the man that eateth any food until the evening: or “bread”, which comprehends all food, and among the rest honey; the design of which was, that no time might be lost, and that he might make the victory over the Philistines, and their destruction, as complete as possible; though it may seem a little too hard and severe upon the people, and too imperious in him, as well as imprudent; since a little refreshment would have animated and enabled them to have pursued their enemies with more ardour and rigour; and yet by the lot afterwards made, it seems to have been countenanced by the Lord:

that I may be avenged on mine enemies; who long tyrannised over the people of Israel, more or less for many years, and lately had sadly spoiled and plundered them:

so none of the people tasted any food; so observant were they of, and so obedient to the order of their king, and so much awed by the oath or imprecation annexed to it; though they were faint and hungry, and had an opportunity of refreshing themselves as follows, which was no small temptation to disobedience.

Ver. 25. *And all they of the land came to a wood,* etc.] Which lay between Bethaven and Aijalon; by whom are meant not all the inhabitants of the land of Israel, but all that came with Saul and Jonathan, and that joined them in the pursuit:

and there was honey upon the ground; which dropped upon it, as in the following verse, or where it was produced by bees; for Aristotle^{f273} reports, that bees in some places make their combs upon the ground; this was wild honey, which Diodorus Siculus^{f274} speaks of as common in Arabia, and which perhaps John the Baptist ate of, (~~4100~~ Matthew 3:4). Jarchi says, this was the honey of canes, or sugar canes, which grew in the land of Israel; and affirms from Nathan an Ishmaelite, that in the Ishmaelitish or Arabic language they call honey, sugar; but neither of these can be proved.

Ver. 26. *And when the people came into the wood, behold, the honey dropped*, etc.] Either from trees, which produced it; so Diodorus Siculus ^{f275} speaks of trees in some countries which produce honey; or from the sugar canes, as Jarchi; or rather from the honeycombs which were framed in trees by bees; so Hesiod ^{f276} speaks of bees making their nests or combs in trees. Ben Gersom thinks that bee hives were placed here in rows by the wayside, from whence the honey flowed; or “went” ^{f277}, or there was a going of it; perhaps the combs being pressed by the Philistines as they fled: the land of Canaan was a land flowing with milk and honey:

but no man put his hand to his mouth; that is, took not any of the honey and ate it, though it was so near at hand, and there was plenty of it:

for the people feared the oath: Saul adjured them by, or the imprecation he made on the person that should eat any food that day.

Ver. 27. *But Jonathan heard not when his father charged the people with the oath*, etc.] Which charge was given, either before he came from Gibeah, before he came to Jonathan, or while pursuing, when Jonathan was with another party either fighting or pursuing:

wherefore he put forth the end of the rod that was in his hand: the staff with which he walked, or rather the spear which he carried in his hand, and fought his enemies with:

and dipped it in an honeycomb; or sugar cane, as Jarchi; or in wood honey, as the margin of our Bibles; but best, in the honeycomb, as the word is rendered, (^{צֶמֶרֶת} Song of Solomon 5:1) and so the Targum, into the nest of honey ^{f278}:

and he put his hand to his mouth; first he took the honey off of the top of his rod, and then put it to his mouth and ate it;

and his eyes were enlightened: which before were dim and dull through want of food, which is a common case; but became brisk and lively on eating the honey, nourishment being presently communicated, and he refreshed with it, and his spirits revived; and which quickly appeared in the briskness and sparkling of his eyes: honey being of a subtle nature, gives immediate refreshment and rigour; hence this phrase is frequently used by Jewish writers ^{f279} for refreshment, after hunger, fatigue, and weariness; and which virtue is ascribed by them to fine bread, wine, oil, and particularly to honey.

Ver. 28. *Then answered one of the people, and said,* etc.] To Jonathan, who might direct and encourage the people to do as he had done, at least so he did by his example, if not by words; the latter is not improbable: and therefore one of the men that came along with Saul, and had now joined Jonathan, and who heard what Saul had said, replied,

thy father straitly charged the people with an oath; gave them a strict charge, with an oath or imprecation annexed to it:

saying, cursed be the man that eateth any food this day; that is, until the evening, as in (⁰⁹⁴²1 Samuel 14:24)

and the people were faint; which is either the observation of the writer of the book; or it may be the words of the man, imputing the faintness of the people to this adjuration of Saul restraining them from food; or as taking notice how strictly the people observed it, though they were hungry, faint, and weary.

Ver. 29. *Then said Jonathan, my father hath troubled the land,* etc.] The people of the land, as the Targum, the soldiers in his army; afflicted and distressed them, and made them uneasy in their minds, like troubled waters; the Arabic version is,

“my father hath sinned against the people;”

hath done them injury by forbidding them to eat. This was not wisely said by Jonathan; how much soever his father was to be blamed, it did not become him as a son thus to reflect upon him, and it might have tended to mutiny and sedition:

see, I pray you, how mine eyes have been enlightened, because I tasted a little of this honey; the benefit he received by it was very visible; it might easily be discerned that he was greatly refreshed with it, and his spirits invigorated by it; it was to be seen in the cheerfulness of his countenance, and the briskness of his eyes: and he suggests it would have had the same effect upon the people, had they eaten of it, as he had done.

Ver. 30. *How much more, if haply the people had eaten freely today of the spoil of their enemies which they found?* etc.] That is, had they been, allowed eat freely of the provisions, of bread, wine, etc. they found in the enemy's camp, they would have been much more refreshed and strengthened than it could be supposed he was with eating a little honey; if

that had had such an effect upon him, of what service would a full meal have been to the people?

for had there not been now a much greater slaughter among the Philistines? the people would have had more strength to smite them, and would have pursued them with greater ardour and swiftness, and so have made a greater slaughter among them than they had; he intimates that Saul's end would have been better answered by suffering the people to eat, than by forbidding them.

Ver. 31. *And they smote the Philistines that day from Michmash to Aijalon*, etc.] Michmash was the place where the camp of the Philistines was when Jonathan first attacked them, and from whence they fled, and they were pursued by the Israelites that day as far as Aijalon. There was a city of this name in the tribe of Dan, famous for the moon standing still in a valley adjoining to it, in the time of Joshua, (^{<06012>}Joshua 10:12 19:42) and another in the tribe of Zebulun, (^{<0712>}Judges 12:12), but they both seem to be at too great a distance to be the place here meant, which rather seems to be Aijalon in the tribe of Judah, (^{<4110>}2 Chronicles 11:10) according to Bunting ^{f280}, it was twelve miles from Michmash:

and the people were very faint; as they might well be, with pursuing the enemy so many miles, and doing so much execution among them, without eating any food.

Ver. 32. *And the people flew upon the spoil*, etc.] Like a swift and ravenous bird, as the eagle, and which seems to have its name in Greek from this word, (see ^{<2361E>}Isaiah 46:11). When the evening was come, and they were free from the oath of Saul, and being extremely hungry, faint, and weary, they were even ravenous for food and with the greatest haste and eagerness laid hold on what came first to hand:

and took sheep, and oxen, and calves, and slew [them] on the ground; and there they lay in their blood, which in such a position would not run out freely as when slain and hang up:

and the people did eat them with the blood; they were so hungry they could not stay the dressing of them, but ate them raw with the blood in them, not being squeezed or drained out, at least not half boiled or roasted. Some of the Jewish Rabbins ^{f281} are of opinion

Ver. 33. *Then they told Saul*, etc.] Some that were more conscientious and religious, were more circumspect, and strictly attended to the laws forbidding the eating of blood, and were concerned at the indecent behaviour of others, and therefore thought fit to acquaint Saul with it, to restrain it:

behold, the people sin against the Lord, in that they eat with the blood; by breaking the laws of God respecting the eating of blood in (^{<0004>}Genesis 9:4 ^{<0017>}Leviticus 3:17 7:26,27 17:10,11), especially in (^{<0026>}Leviticus 19:26)

and he said, ye have transgressed; the above laws of God; that is, Saul said to some persons who were accused of the breach of them, and were ordered to come before him, and did come:

roll a great stone unto me this day; pointing, perhaps, at one which lay at some distance from him, and which he ordered to be rolled to him; this was done, that the creatures might be slain on it, and their blood drawn out from them, or to offer sacrifice upon, and indeed for both.

Ver. 34. *And Saul said, disperse yourselves among the people*, etc.] In the camp, some one way, and some another, and make proclamation throughout it; this he said to some of his officers, whom he sent out as heralds, to publish his will and pleasure:

and say unto them, bring me hither every man his ox, and every man his sheep, and slay them here; on the great stone he had ordered to roll to the place where he was:

and eat them; in the same place, being rightly slain, and the blood let out; all this was to be done, the slaying of the beasts, and eating them, in the presence of Saul, and under his inspection, that every thing might be done decently, and in order, and according to the law of God:

and sin not against the Lord, in eating with the blood; as some of them had done, (^{<0432>}1 Samuel 14:32) and all the people brought every man his ox with him; and his sheep also, though not expressed, yet to be supplied from the preceding clause: and these every man brought “with him that night”; the Jewish Rabbins ^{f282} are divided about these creatures slain, whether for sacrifices or common food; and those that think sacrifices are meant dispute whether it was lawful to slay them in the night, which some allow to be lawful, if on a small and private altar, but not upon a large and public

one; but these were slain no doubt for common food, which all agree might be slain in the night:

and slew them there; before Saul, and on the great stone rolled unto him.

Ver. 35. *And Saul built an altar unto the Lord*, etc.] To offer peace offerings upon, in thankfulness for the victory obtained over his enemies, or sin offerings to make atonement for the sin of the people, perhaps both, however the former:

the same was the first altar that he built unto the Lord; for though he had offered sacrifice at Gilgal, there was an altar ready built for him: or “he began to build”; he laid the first stone of it, and the builders built upon it; so some others say, that he was the first of the kings that built an altar to the Lord ^{f283}; others, the first of the judges that built one; though Gideon built one, it was for his own private use, not for all Israel, as this, so R. Isaiah; but Ben Gersom, and so Abarbinel, refer this to the great stone Saul ordered to be rolled to him, and take the sense to be, that that began to be built an altar to the Lord; that was the beginning of one; for he did not now stay to finish it, being eager on his pursuit of the Philistines, as follows.

Ver. 36. *And Saul said*, etc.] To his son Jonathan, or to some of the principal officers of his army:

let us go down after the Philistines by night; or tonight, that same night; which is another hardship he laid his troops under; as he had restrained them from eating all that day until evening, now he proposed they shall take no sleep that night, but proceed on in their pursuit of the Philistines, having eaten, and drank, and refreshed themselves. The Arabic version is, “let us go down to the Philistines”; and so Noldius ^{f284} chooses to render the words; which I pretty much wonder at, and especially at what he observes in favour of it, and against the common rendering; that at this time the Philistines had not turned their backs, so that the Israelites could not be said to go after them, but were in a camp opposite to them; but that they had fled, and were pursued, is most certain from (^{<0142>}1 Samuel 14:22,23,31),

and spoil them until the morning light; or kill of them, as the Targum, and so the Arabic version; for spoiling must be meant of killing; for as for the spoil of their provisions, riches, etc. that had already fallen into their hands, (^{<0143>}1 Samuel 14:30), and this is confirmed by what follows:

and let us not leave a man of them; great numbers had been slain already, partly by their falling upon one another, and partly by the swords of Jonathan and his armourbearer at the first onset, and by Saul and his men in the pursuit of them; and so intent was Saul in the utter destruction of them, that he was for following and cutting them off, that none of their prodigious army might return home:

and they said, do whatsoever seemeth good unto thee; they had religiously observed his oath, in refraining from food all the day, and now they were as willing to be obedient to his command in denying themselves refreshing rest in sleep:

then said the priest, let us draw near hither unto God; Ahiah the priest, Josephus^{f285} calls him Ahitob, who was present with the ark, agreed to the proposal of Saul, only moved, that before they set forward they would seek the Lord; perhaps reflecting upon the abrupt manner in which Saul departed from Gibeah, just as he was consulting the Lord, and not staying for an answer from him; which the priest might fear would be resented by him, and therefore proposes first to draw nigh to God; not to the altar Saul had built, or had just begun to build, but to the ark, with which the high priest was, and was a symbol of the divine Presence: the Targum is,

“let us draw near hither, and inquire by the word of the Lord.”

Ver. 37. *And Saul asked counsel of God*, etc.] He agreed to the motion of the high priest, and asked counsel by Urim and Thummim; the Targum is, as before,

“inquired by the Word of the Lord:”

shall I go down after the Philistines? pursue after them in their flight to their own country, which, lying to the sea, was a descent:

wilt thou deliver them into the hand of Israel? what remain of them, otherwise a victory over them was obtained:

but he answered him not that day; no answer was returned by Urim and Thummim, so that he was left in suspense whether he should pursue or no; the Targum is,

“he received not his prayer that day;”

this was treating him in a righteous manner; since he would not stay for an answer from the Lord, (~~1~~ 1 Samuel 14:19), the Lord now will not give him any; though the principal view was, that he might take the step he did.

Ver. 38. *And Saul said, draw ye near hither all the chief of the people,* etc.] Or, the corners of the peoples ^{f286}; the princes, as Jarchi interprets it: and so the Targum, the heads of the people, in allusion to the cornerstones in buildings, which are the ornament, strength, and cement of them, (see ~~3104~~ Zechariah 10:4), though Abarbinel thinks the tribes themselves are meant, which lay encamped everyone in a corner by themselves, separated from one another; and these he would have brought together; not the heads only, but everyone, small and great, that it might be seen and known where the sin lay; but he should have observed, that the tribes of Israel were not now present with Saul, but a small number of them:

and know and see wherein this sin hath been this day; he concluded, from having no answer from the Lord, that sin had been committed, which was the cause of it; but never thought of his own rash oath, which was the cause of the people's sinning, and had brought his son into danger; nor the sin of the people in eating the flesh with the blood; nothing ran in his mind but the breach of the oath with which he had adjured the people, and this he was determined to find out, if possible.

Ver. 39. *For as the Lord liveth, which saveth Israel,* etc.] And had saved them that day with a great salvation and had wrought a great deliverance for them in freeing them from the Philistines, who had threatened the ruin of the whole nation. This is the form of an oath:

though it be in Jonathan my son, he shall surely die; that is, though the sin should be found in him, or he should be found guilty of the breach of what he had charged them with an oath to observe, namely, to eat no food that day till evening:

but there was not a man among all the people that answered him; who knew that Jonathan had tasted of honey, but they would not acquaint him with it; partly because they knew he did it ignorantly, having no knowledge of his father's charge and oath, and partly because of their great affection to him, who had been the instrument of their deliverance and salvation that day.

Ver. 40. *Then said he unto all Israel*, etc.] As many of them as were present; not the principal men only, but the common people; not the officers only, but the common soldiers in the army:

be ye on one side, and I and Jonathan my son will be on the other side: so they divided to the right and left, one went one way, and the other the other; there were two boxes or urns, as Kimchi says, in one of which were the names of Saul and Jonathan, and in the other Israel; though Abarbinel observes, that such a partition of them on one side, and the other, is not according to the manner of lots; and he suspects that Saul knew that Jonathan had tasted of honey, being told it by the man that saw him eat it; and who said to him then, “thy father straitly charged”, etc. (^{<0147>}1 Samuel 14:27) but chose this way to make it manifest to the people, and to show what a strict regard he had to justice:

and the people said unto Saul, do what seemeth good unto thee; they were very obsequious to him in everything, (see ^{<0146>}1 Samuel 14:36).

Ver. 41. *Therefore Saul said to the Lord God of Israel*, etc.] After the division was made between him and his son on one side, and the people of Israel on the other, and everything was ready for the drawing of the lot; Saul put up to God the following petition, as knowing that though the lot is cast into the lap, the disposing of it is of the Lord:

give a perfect lot; or man, let it fall upon the guilty person, and let the innocent go free; the Targum is,

“cause it to come in truth;”

let truth and righteousness take place; let the right man be found out, and taken; the petition seems to be too arrogant and presumptuous, and insinuates as if the Lord did not always dispose the lot aright:

and Saul and Jonathan were taken; the lot being cast, it fell upon them:

but the people escaped; from the lot, and appeared to be innocent, clear of any blame; so that it was not the sin they had been guilty of, in eating flesh with the blood, which was the cause that no answer was returned.

Ver. 42. *And Saul said, cast [lots] between me and Jonathan my son*, etc.] Which showed his regard strict justice, and that he had no consciousness of guilt in himself, and should not spare his own son if found guilty:

and Jonathan was taken: the lot fell upon him, which was so directed, that his ignorance of his father's charge and oath might appear; and that the affection of the people might be discovered; and that a regard is to be had to the orders and commands of princes, and obedience to be yielded to them in all in which conscience is not concerned, though they may be grievous; and to bring Saul to a sense of rashness in making such an oath, which brought his own son into so much danger.

Ver. 43. *Then Saul said to Jonathan, tell me what thou hast done*, etc.] What sin he had committed, the lot having fallen on him, and found him out:

and Jonathan told him; the whole of the matter, all the truth, without any reserve:

and said, I did but take a little honey with the end of the rod that was in mine hand; he speaks of the fact as a trivial thing, as if it was not deserving of death, though he was willing to submit to it; yet it seems strange he should say nothing of his ignorance of the charge and oath of Saul, and plead that in excuse of it; though Josephus^{f287} makes him to take notice of it: and, "lo, I must die"; am condemned to die, as the Targum; for which he was prepared and ready, being willing to testify an entire subjection to his father's authority and will. Josephus^{f288} represents him speaking with a generosity and greatness of soul, after this manner,

"death is most sweet to me, which is for the sake of maintaining thy piety and religion; and after so glorious a victory, it is the greatest consolation to me to leave the Hebrews conquerors of the Philistines."

Ver. 44. *And Saul answered, God do so and more also*, etc.] A form of an oath imprecating evils upon him more and greater than he chose to mention, see the like form in (⁴⁰¹⁷Ruth 1:17), though Abarbinel thinks this is not the form of an oath, but an asseveration of a curse that would befall him; as that God would not answer him when he inquired of him, and that he would add to do so again and again, if he died not:

for thou shall surely die, Jonathan; such words from a father must be very striking to a son, and argue a want of paternal affection in Saul, that could call his son by his name, and deliver such a speech unto him in so strong a manner.

Ver. 45. *And the people said unto Saul*, etc.] Hearing such words, and filled with grief, pity, and sympathy for Jonathan, as Josephus^{f289} observes:

shall Jonathan die, who hath wrought this great salvation in Israel? no, he shall not; what, such a man as he die, who, under God, has been the instrument of so great deliverance, who first began it himself with one man only with him, and has proceeded in it to the finishing of it?

God forbid: this shall not be so; they speak of it with the utmost abhorrence and detestation, as a shocking piece of cruelty and ingratitude, unheard of, and not to be paralleled:

as the Lord liveth, there shall not one hair of his head fall to the ground; as Saul swore he should die, they also swear he should not, expressing their firm resolution to stand by him, and preserve his life; and so far should it be from him to have his life taken away, that an hair of his head should not be touched, or the least injury done to his person; for though they had yielded a ready obedience to all the orders and commands of Saul, which were distressing to themselves, they were determined to oppose him in this case of his son:

for he hath wrought with God this day; God has been with him, assisted him to do great things for Israel, and therefore should not die for a thing so trivial; and it being not done in disobedience to his father, nor in contempt of him, but through pure ignorance, as some of them well knew; so the Targum,

“for it is known before the Lord, that in ignorance he did it this day:”

so the people rescued Jonathan, that he died not; not by force, but by their resolution and importunity; or “redeemed” him^{f290}, by exposing their own lives to danger in opposing their king, and by their petitions to him for him; and, as Josephus says^{f291}, by their prayers to God for him, that his fault might be forgiven.

Ver. 46. *Then Saul went up from following the Philistines*, etc.] Returned home to his own city, finding that he could get no answer from the Lord, whether he should pursue further or not, and losing the time and opportunity of doing it, by examining into the affair of his son, and casting lots to find it out:

and the Philistines went to their own place; their country and cities, such of them as remained, who were not cut off by their own and the sword of the Israelites. Josephus ^{f292} says, Saul killed about 60,000 of them. It seems to be the will of God that they should not now be utterly destroyed, that they might be a rod of correction in his hand, to chastise the people of Israel hereafter.

Ver. 47. *So Saul took the kingdom over Israel*, etc.] Which seemed to be almost taken from him when he was shut up in Gibeah, and the Philistines ravaged his country at pleasure; but now, having obtained a victory over them, he recovered his kingdom, and reassumed his power and authority; or he was now strengthened in it, as Kimchi interprets it; the people seeing that he succeeded in his wars with their enemies, they readily submitted to his government without any hesitation, and obeyed his commands; so the Targum,

“Saul prospered in the kingdom over Israel;”

and, according to Abarbanel, these words will admit of another sense, that whereas, after he was anointed and made king, he followed the herd, and attended rustic affairs; but now, after this victory over the Philistines, he took upon him the state and majesty of a king, and no more concerned himself with his farm and cattle, but betook himself wholly to regal and military affairs, as follows:

and fought against all his enemies on every side; who invaded his kingdom from different quarters; he defended himself against them, and preserved his kingdom:

against Moab, and against the children of Ammon; who lay to the east of him:

and against Edom; which was on the southern border of his land:

and against the king of Zobah; a part of Syria, which was to the north of the land of Israel, and was near Damascus, (see ^{<1018B>}2 Samuel 8:3,5), and, according to Benjamin of Tudela ^{f293}, the same with Haleb, or Aleppo, There never were but two kings of it, Rehob and Hadadezer, who lived in the reigns of Saul and David, (^{<1018B>}2 Samuel 8:3)

and against the Philistines; who were on the western border of the land of Canaan:

and whithersoever he turned himself, he vexed them; disturbed and disquieted them, and made them very uneasy; he terrified and distressed them; the Targum is, he “condemned” them, he treated them as wicked and ungodly persons, and punished them as such.

Ver. 48. *And he gathered an host*, etc.] A large army; for after the battle with the Ammonites he disbanded his army, and sent them home, retaining only 3000 men, and these deserted him to six hundred, which were all the men he had with him, when he fought last with the Philistines; but now, finding he had enemies on every side of him, he gathered a numerous host to defend his country against them, and particularly to attack the people next mentioned:

and he smote the Amalekites; a people that Israel, by the law of God, were bound to destroy, and blot out their name; a particular account of his expedition against them is given in the following chapter:

and delivered Israel out of the hands of them that spoiled them; the nations before mentioned, Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Syrians, and Philistines.

Ver. 49. *And the sons of Saul were Jonathan*, etc.] Who seems to be his firstborn, of whom, his valour and success, we read in this and the preceding chapter:

and Ishui; the same with Abinadab, (^{<1183>}1 Chronicles 8:33 9:39) for he had two names:

and Melchishua; and besides these three there was another, whose name was Ishbosheth, sometimes called Eshbaal, (^{<1183>}2 Samuel 2:8 ^{<1183>}1 Chronicles 8:33) who succeeded him in the kingdom; for which reason Abarbinel thinks he is not mentioned here, because he was a king; though it is generally supposed the reason why these only are named is, because they went out to war with him, and died with him, but this did not; he had other children by a concubine, or secondary wife, whose name was Rizpah, not mentioned here, (^{<1183>}2 Samuel 21:8),

and the names of his two daughters were these, the name of the firstborn Merab; who was afterwards married to Adriel the Meholathite, (^{<1183>}1 Samuel 18:19) and the name of the younger Michal; who became the wife of David, (^{<1187>}1 Samuel 18:27).

Ver. 50. *And the name of Saul's wife was Ahinoam, the daughter of Ahimaaz,* etc.] Who very probably was the mother of all the above children, and therefore taken notice of; and Abarbinel conjectures that Ishbosheth was not a son of her's, but the son of Saul by another wife, and which he takes to be another reason why he is not mentioned here; but though Saul had a concubine, we nowhere read of his having another wife:

and the name of the captain of his host was Abner the son of Ner, Saul's uncle; not Abner, but Ner, was Saul's uncle; for Kish the father of Saul, and Ner, were brothers, as Josephus^{f294} says, and as appears from the next verse; and Abner was first cousin to Saul, whom he raised and advanced to be captain of his army, and a very valiant man he was: we hear of him again in this history, and in the beginning of David's reign.

Ver. 51. *And Kish was the father of Saul,* etc.] (see ~~1~~1 Samuel 9:1)

and Ner the father of Abner was the son of Abiel; this Abiel was the father both of Kish and Ner, and the grandfather of Saul, (see ~~1~~1 Samuel 9:1).

Ver. 52. *And there was sore war against the Philistines all the days of Saul,* etc.] For notwithstanding the late victory over them, and slaughter made among them, they recovered themselves, and came out again to battle, and gave Saul a great deal of trouble, and he at last died in battle with them:

and when Saul saw any strong man, or any valiant man, he took him unto him; to be his bodyguard, as Josephus^{f295} says; or for soldiers and officers in his army, even such, as the same writer observes, that exceeded others in comeliness of person, and in largeness and height; such as were in some measure like himself, that were strong, able bodied men, and of courage, and valour, and fortitude of mind.

CHAPTER 15

INTRODUCTION TO FIRST SAMUEL 15

In this chapter are recorded the order Saul had from the Lord to destroy Amalek utterly, (^{0150E}1 Samuel 15:1-3) the preparation he made to put it in execution, and the success thereof, (^{0150B}1 Samuel 15:4-9) the offence the Lord took at his not obeying his order thoroughly, with which Samuel was made acquainted, and which grieved him, (^{0150D}1 Samuel 15:10,11), upon which he went out to meet Saul, and reprove him; and a long discourse upon the subject passed between them, the issue of which was, that by an irrevocable decree he was rejected from being king, (^{0150I}1 Samuel 15:12-31) and the chapter is concluded with an account of Samuel's hewing in pieces Agag king of Amalek, and of his final departure from Saul, (^{0150Z}1 Samuel 15:32-35).

Ver. 1. *Samuel also said unto Saul*, etc.] When and where he said to him what follows, it is not easy to determine, perhaps at Gilgal, where they after met again:

the Lord sent me to anoint thee to be king over his people, over Israel; that is, he gave him orders to anoint him king of Israel, otherwise Saul was in providence sent to Samuel to be anointed, and not Samuel to Saul:

now therefore hearken thou unto the voice of the words of the Lord; for so great a favour, and such high honour he had conferred on him, laid him under great obligation to obey the commands of the Lord; and whereas he had been deficient in one instance before, for which he had been reprov'd, he suggests, that now he should take care to observe and do, particularly and punctually, what should be enjoined him.

Ver. 2. *Thus saith the Lord of hosts*, etc.] Of the celestial host of angels, and of the army of Israel, yea, of all the armies of the earth: this is premised to engage the attention of Saul:

I remember that which Amalek did to Israel; four hundred years ago:

how he laid wait for him in the way when he came up from Egypt; in the valley of Rephidim, just before they came to Mount Sinai, and fell upon the rear of them, and smote the feeble, and faint, and weary, (see ^{f1778}Exodus 17:8 ^{f1517}Deuteronomy 25:17-19

Ver. 3. *Now go and smite Amalek*, etc.] This was one of the three things the Israelites were obliged to do when they came into the land of Canaan, as Kimchi observes; one was, to appoint a king over them, another, to build the house of the sanctuary, and the third, to blot out the name and memory of Amalek, (see ^{f1519}Deuteronomy 25:19) and this work was reserved for Saul, their first king:

and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; all were to be devoted to destruction, and nothing remain to be made use of in any way, to any profit and advantage; living creatures were to be put to death, and everything else burnt and destroyed:

but slay both men and women, infant and suckling; neither sex nor age were to be regarded, no mercy and pity shown to any; they had shown none to Israel when weak and feeble, and by the law of retaliation none was to be exercised on them:

ox and sheep, camel and ass; though useful creatures, yet not to be spared; as not men, women, and children, through commiseration, so neither these through covetousness, and neither of them on any pretence whatsoever. Children suffered for their parents, and cattle because of their owners, and both were a punishment to their proprietors; an ox, or any other creature, might not be spared, lest it should be said, as Kimchi observes, this was the spoil of Amalek, and so the name and memory of Amalek would not be blotted out.

Ver. 4. *And Saul gathered the people together*, etc.] Or “made them to hear” ^{f296}, by the sound of a trumpet; or by sending heralds into all parts of the land to proclaim the above order of the Lord, and summon them to come to him, perhaps at Gilgal; so the Septuagint version, and Josephus ^{f297}.

and numbered them in Telaim; thought to be the same with Telem, a place in the tribe of Judah, (^{f1534}Joshua 15:24), the word signifies “lambs”; hence the Vulgate Latin version is,

“he numbered them as lambs;”

and the Jews ^{f298} say, because it was forbid to number the children of Israel, which was the sin of David; therefore every man had a lamb given him, and so the lambs were numbered, by which it was known what was the number of the people; and the Targum says, this was done with the passover lambs, it being now the time of the passover; but the numbering here made was not of the people of the land in general, and so there was no occasion of such a precaution, only a numbering and mustering of the army when got together and rendezvoused in one place: the sum of which is here given,

two hundred thousand footmen and ten thousand men of Judah; which last were reckoned separately, as distinct from the other tribes of Israel, to show their obedience to Saul, who was of another tribe, though the kingdom was promised to theirs; but R. Isaiah observes, that the reason why so few of the men of Judah came, in comparison of the other tribes, was, because they envied the government being in one of the tribe of Benjamin, when they thought it should have been in one of theirs; the number is greatly increased in the Septuagint version, which makes the whole to be 400,000, and 30,000 men of Judah; and so Josephus ^{f299}.

Ver. 5. *And Saul came to a city of Amalek*, etc.] With his army, perhaps the nearest city of it to the land of Israel; though some think that Amalek was the name of the city, and was the metropolis of the nation, and had its name from thence: and laid wait in the valley; which was near the city, to intercept the inhabitants when they should come out against him: or “he contended” ^{f300} as some render it, he fought with them there; the Targum,

“he ordered his army,”

set them in battle array, or pitched his camp there.

Ver. 6. *And Saul said unto the Kenites*, etc.] Who were of the posterity of Jethro the father-in-law of Moses, or related to him; why Josephus ^{f301} calls them the nation of the Sicimites, who dwelt in the midst of the land of Midian, I know not:

go, depart, get ye down from among the Amalekites; for though some of these people came with Israel into the land of Canaan, and were first at Jericho, and then came into the wilderness of Judah, (^{f301b} Judges 1:16) and were in other tribes also; yet as they removed from place to place, and from country to country, for the convenience of their flocks and herds, they dwelling in tents, might come into the country of Amalek and pitch there, and as they chose to dwell in rocks, and the caverns of them, to be near

their flocks and herds in the valleys, they are called upon to get down from thence, (see ^{<0221>}Numbers 24:21)

lest I destroy you with them; they dwelling among the Amalekites, might perish with them; and especially as the Amalekites, upon their being routed, would naturally flee to the rocks, hills, and mountains, where these people had their tents, they would be in the greater danger of being destroyed with them, unless they removed:

for ye showed kindness to all the children of Israel when they came up out of Egypt; as Jethro, by the advice he gave to Moses to appoint proper officers in Israel, and Hobab, by being eyes to the people, in conducting them through the wilderness, and accompanying them to the land of Canaan:

so the Kenites departed from among the Amalekites; took the advice of Saul, and removed and pitched their tents, elsewhere.

Ver. 7. *And Saul smote the Amalekites*, etc.] Engaging in battle with them, he overcame them, and beat them, and slew great numbers of them:

from Havilah until thou comest to Shur, that is over against Egypt; having routed them in the valley, or in whatsoever place the battle was fought, he pursued them from one end of their country to the other; from Havilah, which lay to the northeast, to Shur, which lay to the southwest, and destroyed all that came in his way between those two points, (see ^{<0258>}Genesis 25:18).

Ver. 8. *And he took Agag the king of the Amalekites alive*, etc.] This name seems to be a common name of the kings of these people, as Pharaoh was of the Egyptians, (see ^{<0242>}Numbers 24:2). When this king fell into the hands of Saul, he did not put him to death, as he should have done, but preserved him; for what reasons, see in the following verse:

and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword; that is, all that came in his way, or fell into his hands; all between Havilah and Shur; all excepting those that made their escape, for we after read of Amalekites, and that in large bodies, (^{<0278>}1 Samuel 27:8 30:1).

Ver. 9. *And Saul and all the people spared Agag*, etc.] Perhaps Saul made the motion to spare him, and the people agreed to it; it may be, out of respect to him as a king; or because of the comeliness of his person, the

height of his stature, and the largeness of his body, as Josephus^{f302} notes; or to carry him in triumph in a public show, (see ^{<OR52>}1 Samuel 15:12)

and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings; or “of the second sort”, as in the margin, the second best; or rather which shed their two long teeth, as sheep at two years old did when reckoned at their full strength, and fittest for sacrifice^{f303}:

and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them; as they were commanded, but kept them for their own private use and advantage, and this not only the best and fattest of the flocks and herds, but of their household goods:

but everything that was vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly: such of the cattle that were poor and lean, lame or blind, or had any defect in them, and household goods that were mere rubbish and lumber; such they entirely destroyed, killed the creatures, and burnt the goods; in doing which they thought they fulfilled the will of God.

Ver. 10. *Then came the word of the Lord unto Samuel*, etc.] The word of prophecy, as the Targum; this came to him in a dream or vision, or by an articulate voice:

saying; as follows.

Ver. 11. *It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king*, etc.] Which is not to be understood of any change of mind, counsel, purpose, or decree in God, which is not consistent with his unchangeable nature; but of a change of dispensation, and outward dealings, and is spoken after the manner of men, who, when they repent of anything, change the course of their conduct and behaviour; and so the Lord does without any change of his mind and will, which alters not; and though he changes the outward dispensations of his providence, yet he never changes and alters in the matters and methods of his grace; though he repented he made Saul king, he never repents of his making his saints kings and priests for himself; his outward gifts he sometimes takes away, as an earthly crown and kingdom; but his gifts and calling, which are of special grace, are without repentance, (see Gill on “^{<OR66>}Genesis 6:6”).

for he is turned back from following me; from after my worship, as the Targum, from doing his will and work:

and hath not performed my commandments: particularly in this affair relating to Amalek:

and it grieved Samuel; that Saul should so soon be rejected from being king, and that he should do anything to deserve it; and whom Samuel had anointed king, and for whom he had a cordial respect, and to whom he wished well, both for his own personal good, and for the good of the people of Israel; so far was he from rejoicing at his fall, who came in his stead, and to whom he gave way in the affair of government:

and he cried unto the Lord all night; or prayed, as the Targum; either that the Lord would inform him of the particulars wherein Saul had done amiss, or that he would forgive his sin, and not reject him from the kingdom.

Ver. 12. *And when Samuel rose early to meet Saul in the morning*, etc.] Having had no sleep since the revelation of the will of God was made unto him, and therefore rose early, being in haste to converse with Saul about it:

it was told Samuel, saying, Saul came to Carmel; not to Carmel where Elijah offered sacrifice, for that was very remote from hence; but to Carmel, a city in the tribe of Judah, which lay in the way of Saul's return from Amalek, (^{<0655>}Joshua 15:55)

and, behold, he set him up a place; to divide his spoil in, as the Targum; or to encamp in, as Kimchi; or to build an altar on, as Jarchi, who takes it to be the same that Elisha after repaired; but, as before observed, this place was at a great distance from Mount Carmel where Elijah sacrificed. The word for a "place" signifies a hand; and, according to the Vulgate Latin version, it was a triumphal arch, and was perhaps an obelisk or pillar, a trophy or monument erected in memory of the victory he had obtained over the Amalekites. So Jerom says ^{f304}, when a victory was obtained, they used to make an arch of myrtle, palm, and olive branches, a sign of it; these trophies were sometimes of brass, sometimes of marble; some were only heaps of stones, others a remarkable tree with the branches cut off ^{f305} so the pillar Absalom erected is called his hand, (^{<0655>}2 Samuel 18:18)

and is gone about, and passed on, and gone down to Gilgal; he took a circuit, and moved in great pomp and parade, carrying the king of the Amalekites in triumph with him, and the spoil he had taken and reserves. To Gilgal he went, expecting to meet Samuel there, and offer up peace offerings to the Lord for the victory he had got.

Ver. 13. *And Samuel came to Saul, etc.]* At Gilgal:

and Saul said unto him, blessed be thou of the Lord; signifying that he had abundant reason to bless the Lord on his account, not only that he had anointed him king, but had sent him on such an errand, in which he had succeeded so well, and it was a pleasure to him that he might report it to him:

I have performed the commandment of the Lord; either he was really ignorant that he had done amiss; and thought that his sparing Agag, when he had destroyed all the rest, and reserving some of the best of the cattle for sacrifice, could not be interpreted a breach of the orders given him; or if he was conscious he had broken the commandment of the Lord, this he said to prevent Samuel's reproof of him, and to sooth him with flattering words.

Ver. 14. *And Samuel said, what meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, etc.]* For the orders were to destroy all living creatures belonging to the Amalekites, (^(915B)1 Samuel 15:3) if therefore Saul had performed the commandment of the Lord, as he said he had, from whence were these sheep Samuel heard bleating?

and the lowing of the oxen which I hear? where do they come from? these questions he put to convict him of the falsehood he had delivered; the bleating and lowing of these creatures proved him a liar, and were witnesses of his breach of the divine command; and one would think every bleating and lowing of these must alarm his conscience, unless dreadfully stupefied.

Ver. 15. *And Saul said, they have brought them from the Amalekites, etc.]* That is, the people, laying the blame upon them, as Adam did on his wife, as if he had no concern at all in it, when it is clear from (^(915B)1 Samuel 15:9) he was the principal one; nor is it probable the people should do this of themselves, without his consent and authority, which was so directly contrary to the express order of God; and then to excuse the people as well as he could, on whom he laid the blame, he observes this was not done for their own private profit and advantage, but for the service and worship of God:

for the people spared the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God; by way of gratitude and thankfulness for the victory they had obtained; and therefore, since they had so good an end

and design in sparing what they had, and those the best and fittest for sacrifice, he hoped they would easily be excused; and that the prophet would use his best interest with the Lord, who was his God, to whom they designed to do honour, that he would overlook what was amiss in them:

and the rest we have utterly destroyed; as they were commanded; but then it was only the vile and the refuse, the best they had reserved for their own use; though he now coloured it with this specious pretence of sacrificing to God, when he found it was taken notice of, and was resented.

Ver. 16. *Then Samuel said unto Saul, stay*, etc.] Stop a little, do not be in haste to be gone, as he might seem to be, fearing a reproof, and that something would be said to him not very agreeable; or “suffer”^{f306} me, that is, to speak, give me leave to say a few words; for Saul being a king, Samuel treats him as such, and asks audience of him, or leave of him to deliver what he had to say to him:

and I will tell thee what the Lord hath said to me this night; and since it was not anything from himself, but from the Lord, he had to say, he might expect the rather to be heard, and especially since it was what had lately, even that very night, been told him:

and he said unto him, say on; he gave him leave, perhaps hoping he should hear something said in his praise, commending him for what he had done in destroying the nation of Amalek, (see ^{<074>}Luke 7:40). There is a double reading of this clause, the Cetib or textural reading is, “and they said unto him”; meaning Saul, and the elders with him; the Keri, or marginal reading is, which we follow, “and he said unto him”; meaning Saul, as Kimchi notes.

Ver. 17. *And Samuel said, when thou [wast] little in thine own sight*, etc.] Humble and lowly, and had a mean opinion of himself, his family and tribe, and judged himself unworthy of the kingdom; (see ^{<002>}1 Samuel 9:21) suggesting, that now he was proud and haughty, and would have his own will and way:

wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel; not of his own tribe only, which was the least, but of all the tribes, and so they were all subject to him, and at his command:

and the Lord anointed thee king over Israel; all which is observed, partly to point out unto him the high honour he was raised unto, from a low

estate, which laid him under obligation to serve the Lord, and obey him; and partly as an answer to him, excusing himself, and laying the blame upon the people; whereas seeing he was made king over them, his business was to rule and govern them, guide and direct them in the right way, and restrain them from that which was evil; and since he was anointed by the Lord, and not by the people, he ought to have obeyed him, and not regarded the pleasure of them.

Ver. 18. *And the Lord sent thee on a journey*, etc.] And therefore he ought to have attended to the errand sent upon, and executed the orders given; in vain, therefore, was it to lay the blame on the people:

and said, go, and utterly destroy the sinners, the Amalekites; those notorious sinners, who deserve no mercy at the hands of God or men; who had so highly offended the Lord, and had been so injurious to his people at their first coming out of Egypt. The orders were plain, not to be mistaken, and full and strong for the utter destruction of them without any exception, and therefore nothing could be pleaded in excuse for the violation of them:

and fight against them until they be consumed; entirely; they were not to be left until an end was made of them; or “until they had consumed them”^{f307}, the people of Israel, or the soldiers with Saul.

Ver. 19. *Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of the Lord*, etc.] Who had made him king, and sent him on this errand, and gave him such plain directions, and such strong orders to make an entire consumption of Amalek:

but didst fly upon the spoil; like a bird of prey, such as an eagle or vulture, not to devote it to the Lord, by an entire destruction of it, but to seize it for his own use, as being greedily desirous and covetous of it:

and didst evil in the sight of the Lord? by disobeying his commands, from whose sight nothing can be hid.

Ver. 20. *And Saul said to Samuel, yea, I have obeyed the voice of the Lord*, etc.] Here Saul breaks in upon Samuel before he had declared all that the Lord had said unto him; for having expostulated with him for not obeying the voice of the Lord, he could not forbear interrupting him, but with the utmost assurance affirms he had obeyed the voice of the Lord; but then it was very imperfectly, and poor proof does he give of it:

and have gone the way which the Lord sent me; it is very true he went into the country of Amalek, but he did not do there all the Lord commanded him:

and have brought Agag the king of Amalek; took him alive, and brought him captive; whereas he ought to have destroyed him at once, and not have reserved him for triumph; a sad proof this of his obeying the voice of the Lord:

and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites; all that came in his way, in which he did right; but then he had not destroyed the principal of them, their king.

Ver. 21. *But the people took the spoil, the sheep and oxen*, etc.] Still he continues to lay the blame on the people, when he, as king, ought to have restrained them:

the chief of the things, which should have been utterly destroyed; this betrays him, and is an evidence against him; he could not plead ignorance, he knew and he owns, that according to the command of God they were all devoted to destruction; and therefore he ought not to have suffered the people to have spared any on whatsoever pretence, but to have seen all destroyed; but he was as deeply in it as they, and therefore palliates the thing, and endeavours to excuse them by observing, that their end was good, the service and glory of God, which perhaps were never thought of till now: namely,

to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God in Gilgal; as peace offerings, by way of thanksgiving for the victory obtained, (^{<0915>}1 Samuel 15:15).

Ver. 22. *And Samuel said*, etc.] In reply to Saul:

hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? no, certainly, the one being merely ceremonial, the other moral; the one supposes sin committed, for which sacrifice is offered; the other moral, and is a compliance with the will of God, and is neither sinful, nor supposes anything sinful, and therefore must be the more acceptable:

behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams; which always was claimed by the Lord as his right and due; or the fattest rams or best sacrifices, of whatever sort, whether burnt offerings, or

sin offerings, or peace offerings; for had man obeyed the will of God, and not sinned, there would have been no need of sacrifice; and that was only acceptable to God when offered with a heart truly sensible of sin, and penitent for it, and in the faith of the great sacrifice of Christ, of which all sacrifices under the law were typical, and led unto.

Ver. 23. *For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft*, etc.] Or divination ^{f308}, in whatsoever way it was exercised; for there were various sorts of it among the Heathens, and all condemned by the law of God, (^{f580}Deuteronomy 18:10). Now rebellion against God, or disobeying his commands, though in things otherwise, were they not forbidden by him, lawful to be done, is as heinous a sin as to be guilty of witchcraft, or any kind of divination forbidden by the law of God, and deserves as sore a punishment:

and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry: for a man, when he has committed a sin, to persist in it obstinately, or to vindicate himself in it, and insist on his innocence, which was Saul's case, is as hateful to God as any iniquity whatever; yea, as bad as idolatry, or making use of the teraphim, as is the word here; of which (see ²⁸⁰⁴Hosea 3:4) than which nothing is more abominable to the Lord:

because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord; disregarded his command, treated it with contempt and abhorrence:

he hath rejected thee from being king; not actually, for he continued to exercise kingly power and authority to his death, and was treated as a king by his subjects, and even by David, though anointed by the Lord; but the sentence of rejection was pronounced upon him, and the bestowal of the government on his posterity was cut off.

Ver. 24. *And Saul said unto Samuel, I have sinned*, etc.] This confession of his sin does not appear to be ingenuous, cordial, and sincere, and was made chiefly for the sake of getting the sentence of rejecting him from being king reversed:

for I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord, and thy words; which last seems to be added to colloque with Samuel, and to ingratiate himself with him; and Abarbinel thinks that Saul suspected that Samuel had aggravated the matter of himself, and that he did not really transgress the words of the Lord, but as the words of Samuel; and therefore according to the words of Samuel he had sinned, but not according to the words of the Lord only;

because I feared the people; Doeg the Edomite, who was reckoned as all of them, Jarchi says: this was a mere excuse of Saul's, he stood in no fear of the people, he kept them in awe, and did as he would with them, as a sovereign prince:

and obeyed their voice; in sparing the best of the cattle; so he pretended, when it was his own will, and the effect of his covetousness.

Ver. 25. *Now therefore, I pray thee, pardon my sin*, etc.] It can hardly be thought that Saul was so ignorant as to imagine that Samuel could pardon his sin, as committed against God, which none but God can do, but that he would forgive it, so far as he had offended him; or rather his meaning is, that as he was a prophet of the Lord, and had great interest in him, that he would make use of it on his behalf, and pray to God that his sin might be forgiven him, and the sentence reversed concerning his rejection from the kingdom; which perhaps is the chief thing he means by the pardon of his sin, which sometimes means no more than averting a threatened judgment, or freedom from punishment:

and turn again with me; to Gilgal, for he was come out from thence to meet Samuel, having heard that he was coming:

that I may worship the Lord: by offering sacrifice, either in thankfulness for the victory obtained, or to atone for his sin, and seek pardon for it, or both; this he thought would be a motive and inducement to Samuel to go along with him.

Ver. 26. *And Samuel said unto Saul, I will not return with thee*, etc.] Not being satisfied with his repentance and confession, he still extenuating his sin, and laying the blame of it on the people. This he said by way of resentment, and as expressing his indignation at him, though he afterwards did return with him on a change of his mind; which a good man may be allowed to make, without any imputation of falsehood or a lie unto him:

for thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, and the Lord hath rejected thee from being king over Israel; which is repeated from (⁴⁰¹⁵²³1 Samuel 15:23) for the confirmation of it, and to let Saul know that his pretended confession and repentance had made no alteration in the decree and sentence of God respecting the kingdom.

Ver. 27. *And as Samuel turned about to go away*, etc.] From Saul, a different way from Gilgal, perhaps towards his own city Ramah, with an

intention to have nothing more to say to Saul, or to do with him, or to see his face no more; so displeased was he with him:

he laid hold upon the skirt of his mantle; in order to detain him, and prevent his departure from him, and his going a different way:

and it rent; Samuel twitching away from him with great vehemence and warmth. The Jewish ^{f309} Rabbins are divided about this, whose skirt was rent; some say it was Samuel that rent the skirt of Saul, and by this signified to him, that he that cut off the skirt of his garment should reign in his stead; whereby Saul knew that David would be king when he cut off the skirt of his robe, (^{<0204>}1 Samuel 24:4,20), others, that Samuel rent the skirt of his own mantle himself, which is the way of good men when things are not right; but the plain sense is, that Saul rent the skirt of Samuel's mantle, which, when Samuel saw, he understood what that rent was a sign of, as expressed in the following verse.

Ver. 28. *And Samuel said unto him, the Lord hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day*, etc.] Seeing his mantle rent by Saul, he took occasion from thence to predict, and no doubt it was impressed on his mind by the Spirit of God, that his kingdom should be in a like manner rent from him, on account of his own evil conduct and behaviour; and from this day forward he might expect it; the sentence was gone forth from God, and it would not be reversed; and by a like sign was signified the rending of the ten tribes from the kingdom of Solomon in his son Rehoboam, (^{<1113>}1 Kings 11:30,31),

and hath given it to a neighbour of thine, that is better than thou; who was David, a man after God's own heart, that would fulfil his will, who was more holy, just, and wise than Saul; whose works were better and righter than his, as the Targum; who was an Israelite, of the same nation and religion as he, and so his neighbour; and though he was not of the same tribe, yet of a neighbouring tribe; Benjamin, and Judah, of which tribe David was, joining closely to one another. It is highly probable that at this time Samuel knew not personally who he was that was designed to be made king in his room, though under the direction of the Spirit of God he thus describes him; for after this he is bid to go to Jesse's family, from thence to anoint a king, and several passed before him ere the Lord pointed out the proper person to him.

Ver. 29. *And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent,* etc.]

Neither of the evil which he had threatened to Saul in taking away the kingdom from him; nor of the good which he had promised to David in giving it to him; nor of his purpose and promise to Israel to protect and defend them, save and deliver them from the Philistines, and continue them a nation and kingdom: and for the confirmation of all this, this title or character of the Lord is given, “the Strength of Israel”; hence he cannot lie, which is the effect of weakness; nor repent or change his mind, as men do, when something unforeseen arises, which hinders the execution of their first design, and which through weakness they cannot surmount: and hence God would support Israel as a nation, and strengthen them against their enemies, and work deliverance and salvation for them: or “the victory of Israel”, ^{f310}; the author of Israel’s victories, and to whom they are to be ascribed, and who is able to give them more, and would; and as he did especially by David, to whom the kingdom is promised: or “the eternity of Israel”, ^{f311}; that gives firmness, permanency, and duration to them; all which is true of Israel in a spiritual sense; he gives them spiritual strength, victory over their enemies, sin, Satan, and the world, permanent duration, everlasting salvation, immortality, and eternal life:

for he is not a man, that he should repent; men are weak and feeble, and cannot perform what they purpose or promise, and therefore repent; but God, the Strength of Israel, is able to perform whatever he has purposed or promised, and therefore repents not; men are changeable in their minds, and repent of their first thoughts and designs; but God is unchangeable, and never alters his counsels, breaks his covenant, reverses his blessings, repents of his gifts, nor changes his affections to his Israel. Abarbinel says this may be understood of Saul, and so be given as a reason why God would not repent of the evil he had threatened him with, because he was a man that repented not of his sin; but the first sense is best, and agrees with and is confirmed by (⁰²³⁹Numbers 23:19).

Ver. 30. *Then he said, I have sinned,* etc.] So he had said before, (⁰¹⁵⁴1 Samuel 15:24) but his confession there was attended with an extenuation of his sin, pleading in excuse of it that it was through fear of the people, but here it is without any; and yet by what follows it appears to be not ingenuous and sincere, but hypocritical:

yet honour me now, I pray thee, before the elders of my people, and before Israel; with his company; since should he be slighted openly by the Lord,

and by his prophet, he would fall into contempt both with the principal men, and with the common people; wherefore he seemed more concerned for the loss of honour and reputation with the people, than for his sin against God, which is always the case of hypocrites:

and turn again with me, and worship the Lord thy God; (see Gill on “^{<-0152>}1 Samuel 15:25”).

Ver. 31. *So Samuel turned again after Saul,* etc.] Though he before said he would not, (^{<-0156>}1 Samuel 15:26) yet he did, changing his mind, as he might without being chargeable with a lie; and he also might have an impulse from the Lord so to do, and which he did not in order to worship with Saul, which it does not appear he did, but rather the contrary; but that Saul might not be despised by the people, and his authority lessened, while he continued king; and that he might do what Saul had neglected to do, destroy Agag: and Saul worshipped the Lord; alone, by offering sacrifice to him.

Ver. 32. *Then said Samuel, bring you hither to me Agag the king of the Amalekites,* etc.] This he said very probably to some of Saul’s officers, and in his presence, and before all the people met together for sacrifice:

and Agag came unto him delicately; fat and plump, as the Vulgate Latin version, and yet trembling, as that and the Septuagint; well dressed, in the garb and habit of a king, and with the air and majesty of one; or with pleasure and joy, as Kimchi, choosing rather to die than to be a captive, and live in such reproach as he did; though R. Isaiah and Ben Gersom give the sense of it, that he came bound in chains, and fetters of iron, according to the use of the word in (^{<-0381>}Job 38:31)

and Agag said, surely the bitterness of death is past; this he said, either as not expecting to die, that since he had been spared by Saul, the king of the nation, a fierce and warlike prince, he had nothing to fear from an ancient man and a prophet, and who now bore not the sword of justice; and especially when he came into his presence, and saw his form, which showed him to be a man of clemency and mercy, as Ben Gersom observes: or as expecting it, and so Kimchi interprets it to this sense, “the bitterness of death is come”; and is near at hand, and will be soon over; or suggesting that that which was bitter, to others grievous and terrible, was to him sweet and desirable; but the former sense seems best by what follows.

Ver. 33. *And Samuel said, as thy sword hath made women childless*, etc.] Or, “bereaved^{f312}” them, not of their children only, but of their husbands also, and so made them both childless and widows; by which it appears that he was a cruel prince, and justly died for his own barbarity and wickedness, as well as for the sins of his ancestors four hundred years ago:

so shall thy mother be childless among women; which was according to the law of retaliation, and what the Jews call measure for measure:

and Samuel hewed Agag in pieces before the Lord in Gilgal; either before the ark of the Lord, the symbol of the divine Presence; or before the altar, where Saul and the people had been sacrificing; this he did either himself, though an old man, or by others to whom he gave the orders; and which he did not as being the chief magistrate, and by virtue of his office, but acting as on a special occasion, at the command of God, and to show his zeal for him, and indignation at such a breach of his command. In what manner this was done, is not easy to say; he was not torn to pieces by the hand, without an instrument, as Baebius by the Romans^{f313}; or sawn asunder, as some by Caligula^{f314}; and as Isaiah the prophet is said to be by Manasseh, king of Judah, to which it is thought the apostle alludes, (^{<3813>}Hebrews 11:37). According to Ben Gersom, the word signifies he cleaved him, as wood is cleaved; or divided him into four parts, as Jarchi; perhaps he slew him with the sword, and then quartered him; that is, ordered it to be done.

Ver. 34. *Then Samuel went to Ramah*, etc.] His native place, and where was his usual residence:

and Saul went up to his house to Gibeah of Saul; which was also his birth place, and where was his father’s house, and where he had his palace, and kept his court; and took its name from him, to distinguish it from another Gibeah; and so Josephus^{f315} says it was called Gabathsaoule, and was about thirty furlongs or four miles from Jerusalem.

Ver. 35. *And Samuel came no more to see Saul until the day of his death*, etc.] Or “added not to see him”^{f316}; not that he saw him no more, he saw him afterwards, (^{<0924>}1 Samuel 19:24), but it was accidentally, he did not go to see him, but Saul came to him; and Abarbinel supposes he might not see him then, but hid his face from him; and he observes that it is said,

until the day of his death; which intimates, he thinks, that he saw him after his death, when raised up by the witch of Endor; but that Samuel was then really raised, and was seen, wants proof. The meaning of the expression

here is no more than this, that Samuel afterwards did not visit Saul as he used to do; he did not go to him, to give him his advice and counsel, as he wanted:

nevertheless Samuel mourned for Saul; because of his sin, his impenitence, and hypocrisy; and because of the loss of the kingdom to him, and to his posterity; and he might be concerned also about his eternal welfare; for he appears to have a natural affection for him, and was far from envying him as his rival, and rejoicing at his fall:

and the Lord repented that he made Saul king over Israel; nor was his mind altered, neither by the hypocritical confession of Saul, nor by the cordial prayers and heart of Samuel; (see ^{<051>}1 Samuel 15:11).

CHAPTER 16

INTRODUCTION TO FIRST SAMUEL 16

In this chapter Samuel is ordered to anoint a king among the sons of Jesse of Bethlehem, (^{<0961>}1 Samuel 16:1-5) all whose sons were made to pass before him, excepting David, (^{<0965>}1 Samuel 16:6-10) who being then with his father's sheep, was sent for and was anointed, (^{<0961>}1 Samuel 16:11-13), after which the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and he became melancholy, and it was advised to seek out a musician for him, and David was mentioned to him as a proper person, (^{<0964>}1 Samuel 16:14-18) upon which he was sent for, and acted as a musician to Saul, and also became his armourbearer, which was the first rise of him, (^{<0969>}1 Samuel 16:19-23).

Ver. 1. *And the Lord said unto Samuel*, etc.] In a vision or dream, or by an articulate voice: how long wilt thou mourn for Saul? he does not blame him for mourning, but for mourning so long; but how long that was cannot be said; and though his affection for him might cause him to indulge to it, yet it was in vain, seeing the sentence was irreversible:

seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? that is, his posterity; for he himself reigned as long as he lived, though in a very inglorious manner:

fill thine horn with oil; with common oil; for that this was the holy anointing oil kept in the tabernacle, as the Jewish writers generally suppose, with which they say David and Solomon, and the kings of Judah, were anointed, there is no reason to believe; since the tabernacle, where this oil was, was at a distance from Samuel, and which seems to have been only for the anointing of the priests. This was not a phial he was bid to take, as when he anointed Saul; but an horn, denoting the abundance of gifts bestowed on David, and the firmness and duration of his kingdom:

and go, and I will send thee to Jesse the Bethlehemite; the son of Obed, whom Boaz begat of Ruth the Moabitess, (^{<0902>}Ruth 4:21,22)

for I have provided me a king among his sons; but which he says not; this was reserved for an later discovery; however God had in his own mind

picked him, whom he would hereafter make known; this was a king for himself, raised up to fulfil his will; Saul was chosen by him, but then it was at the request of the people, and so he was rather their king than his; but this was not at their desire, nor with their knowledge, but of his own good will and pleasure; the one was given in wrath, and the other in love; the one was to the rejection of God as King, the other to the rejection of Saul by the will of God.

Ver. 2. *And Samuel said, how can I go?* etc.] Which argues weakness of faith in Samuel, and fear of man, and a diffidence in and distrust of divine power; for otherwise he that sent him on such an errand could protect him:

if Saul hear it, he will kill me; should hear that Samuel went and anointed another king, it would so enrage him, that he would either immediately lay hands on him, and put him to death, or order him to be put to death; and indeed were it not that this was done by the command of God, he would deserve to die; it being an overt act of treason to anoint another king:

and the Lord said, take an heifer with thee, and say, I am come to sacrifice to the Lord; a peace offering, which might be done any where in those unsettled times, the ark being at one place, and the tabernacle at another; and might be offered upon a private altar, and by a private person; and as it seems Samuel used to sacrifice at different places; (see ⁽¹⁵⁰⁾1 Samuel 7:9 11:15). Ben Gersom relates it as the sense of one of their Rabbins in his age, that there was a person slain in those parts, not known by whom he was slain; and so Samuel is ordered to take an heifer to fulfil the law in (⁽¹⁵¹⁾Deuteronomy 21:1-9) and therefore Saul would make no inquiry into his reason of going thither with an heifer, and this is commended both by him and Abarbinel.

Ver. 3. *And call Jesse to the sacrifice,* etc.] His family, both him and his sons, to partake of the peace offerings; as every offerer had a right to invite his friends, and whomsoever he pleased, to eat of those parts of them which belonged to him, as a feast before the Lord:

and I will show thee what thou shall do; when Jesse and his family were with him:

and thou shalt anoint unto me him whom I name unto thee; that is, anoint him to be king over Israel, whom he should point out so plainly to him, as if he called him by name.

Ver. 4. *And Samuel did that which the Lord spake*, etc.] He filled a horn of oil, and took an heifer with him:

and came to Bethlehem; where Jesse and his family lived, which, according to Bunting^{f317}, was sixteen miles from Ramah; though it could hardly be so much, since Ramah was six miles from Jerusalem on one side, as Bethlehem lay six miles from it on the other^{f318};

and the elders of the town trembled at his coming; for he being now an old man, and seldom went abroad, they concluded it must be something very extraordinary that brought him thither; and they might fear that as he was a prophet of the Lord, that he was come to reprove them, or denounce some judgment upon them for their sins. The Targum is,

“the elders of the city gathered together to meet him;”

out of respect and in honour to him, and to the same sense Jarchi’s note is,

“they hastened to go out to meet him”;

(see  Hosea 11:11)

and, said comest thou peaceably? the word “said” is singular; one of the elders put this question, the chiefest of them, perhaps Jesse; and the meaning of it is, whether he came with ill news and bad tidings, or as displeased with them himself on some account or another; or with a message from God, as displeased with them; or whether he came there for his own peace and safety, to be sheltered from Saul; and which, if that was the case, might not be for their peace and good; but would draw upon them the wrath and vengeance of Saul; for they doubtless knew that there was a variance, at least a shyness, between Saul and Samuel.

Ver. 5. *And he said, peaceably I am come to sacrifice unto the Lord*, etc.] Which he could say with truth, it being one end of his coming, though not the only one for which he came, and which he was not obliged to tell:

sanctify yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice; prepare themselves for it, which was done by washing their garments, etc. and then attend with him, and assist him in the sacrifice:

and he sanctified Jesse and his sons, and called them to the sacrifice; he ordered them to sanctify themselves; he distinguished them from the rest of

the inhabitants, and invited them to partake of the feast, the remainder of the peace offerings.

Ver. 6. *And it came to pass, when they were come*, etc.] Jesse and his sons, into the house where the entertainment was; and perhaps before they sat down, went into a private apartment by the direction of Samuel, where he acquainted Jesse with the business he came upon:

that he looked on Eliab; who was Jesse's firstborn, (¹²¹³1 Chronicles 2:13), called Elihu, (¹²⁷⁸1 Chronicles 27:18)

and said, surely the Lord's anointed is before him; or this is the person it is his pleasure should be anointed king.

Ver. 7. *But the Lord said to Samuel*, etc.] By a secret impulse upon his mind, as if he had spoken with an articulate voice to him:

look not on his countenance; which was comely and majestic:

or on the height of his stature; which was like that of Saul's; and because the Lord had chosen him, who was superior to the people in this respect, Samuel thought he meant to have such an one now anointed king:

because I have refused him; or it is not my pleasure that he should be king; though Ben Gersom thinks this refers to Saul, that the Lord had rejected him, though of an high stature, and therefore Samuel should not look out for such a person to be king; and Abarbinel refers it to the height of stature itself, that God had rejected that, and laid it aside as a qualification of a king, or as a rule to judge of a proper person to be a king; but no doubt it respected Eliab:

for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; man only sees what is without, but the Lord sees what is within; only the outward visible form of the body is seen by man, but the inward qualifications and endowments of the mind are seen by the Lord:

for man looketh on the outward appearance; the comeliness of a man's person, the majesty of his countenance, the height of his stature, and size of his body, things which recommended men to be kings among the nations of the world; (see Gill on "⁹⁹²1 Samuel 9:2"), or "to the eyes"^{f319}; the liveliness, and briskness, and sharpness of them, thereby to judge of the sagacity and penetration of the mind, as physiognomists do; who guess at

the disposition of men by them, when they are small or great, watery or dry, of this or the other colour^{f320};

but the Lord looketh on the heart; and knows what is in that, what wisdom and prudence, justice and integrity, mercy and goodness, and other princely qualifications are in that. The Jewish writers conclude from hence that the heart of Eliab was not right; it may be, full of wrath, pride, envy, etc. which disqualified him for government.

Ver. 8. *Then Jesse called Abinadab*, etc.] His second son, (^{<0973>}1 Samuel 17:13)

and made him pass before Samuel: that he might take a full view of him:

and he said, neither hath the Lord chosen this; which he knew by a private suggestion from him.

Ver. 9. *Then Jesse made Shammah to pass by*, etc.] His third son, (^{<0973>}1 Samuel 17:13), sometimes called Shimma, and Shimeah, (^{<1323>}1 Chronicles 2:13 ^{<0132>}2 Samuel 13:3)

and he said, neither hath the Lord chosen this; which he knew in the same way as before.

Ver. 10. *Again Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel*, etc.] Not seven more, for he had but eight sons in all with David, (^{<0972>}1 Samuel 17:12) but four more, which with the other three made seven; three of these four are mentioned by name, Nathanael, Raddai, and Ozem, (^{<1324>}1 Chronicles 2:14,15), but the fourth we nowhere read of; perhaps he died quickly after this, was an obscure person, and of no fame and note, or might be by another woman:

and Samuel said unto Jesse, the Lord hath not chosen these; not anyone of them.

Ver. 11. *And Samuel said unto Jesse, are here all thy children?* etc.] For neither of these being the person God would have anointed king, and yet it was one of Jesse's sons that was to be anointed, he concluded he must have more, at least one more, and therefore puts this question to him:

and he said, there remaineth yet the youngest; or, "the little one"^{f321}; not of a little diminutive stature, for he was a mighty man, a man of strength, courage, and valour, (^{<0918>}1 Samuel 16:18) or of a puerile age, for the Jews

say ^{f322} he was now twenty nine years of age; but that is not likely, he hardly exceeded more than twenty, or was so much; thereabout he might be; but he is so called because he was the youngest son, as we render it:

and, behold, he keepeth the sheep: and from following them, he was taken and anointed king; (see ^{<1980>}Psalm 78:70,71). Some of the greatest of men have been taken from rustic employment, as Moses, Gideon, Saul, and others:

and Samuel said unto Jesse, send and fetch him; out of the field by a messenger:

for we will not sit down till he come hither; that is, at table, to eat of that part of the peace offerings which belonged to the offerer Samuel, and which he had invited Jesse and his sons to partake of.

Ver. 12. *And he sent and brought him in*, etc.] Sent messengers into the field and to the flock for him, and being come home Jesse introduced him into the room where Samuel was:

now he was ruddy; which some understand not of the ruddiness of his complexion, or of his cheeks, but of the redness of his hair; the former seems best:

and withal of a beautiful countenance; of comely features: or “beautiful eyes” ^{f323}; bright, clear, and sparkling; eyes that are black or blue are reckoned beautiful:

and goodly to look to; of a pleasant countenance, delightful to behold; he carried sweetness as well as majesty in his face; in this he was a type of Christ, (^{<2150>}Song of Solomon 5:10,16). A beautiful aspect, as well as shape and height, recommended persons for government, as with the Ethiopians, as Aristotle ^{f324} relates; so Agamemnon is represented by Priamus ^{f325} for his personable appearance, as like a king, and fit to be one:

and the Lord said, arise, anoint him, for this is he; that he had spoken to him of, and who it was his pleasure should be anointed king; and therefore, by a secret strong impulse upon his mind, was put upon doing it immediately, without any hesitation or delay.

Ver. 13. *Then Samuel took the horn of oil*, etc.] Out of his pocket, which he brought along with him by the direction of God:

and anointed him in the midst of his brethren; not in the presence of them, they sitting around, or standing by and seeing the ceremony performed; which is not consistent with the secrecy with which Samuel was directed to manage this affair, and which was necessary to observe, to keep it from the knowledge of Saul; and with Eliab's treatment of David afterwards, who would never have addressed him in the manner he did, had he known that he was anointed king, (⁽⁹¹⁷⁸⁾1 Samuel 17:28) but the sense is, according to Kimchi and Abarbinel, that he was selected out of them, and separated from them, and privately anointed by Samuel, and at most only his father Jesse present; wherefore some observe, that the words may be rendered, "anointed him from the midst of his brethren"^{f326}; that is, he took him apart from them, and anointed him:

and the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward; not as a spirit of grace and holiness, which probably had come upon him before this time; but a spirit of prophecy, as did on Saul after his unction; and which particularly showed itself in music and poetry, in which he immediately became very eminent, and he was taken notice of for it, and which was the means of bringing him into Saul's court; and a spirit of wisdom and prudence, in civil as well as in sacred things; and a spirit of fortitude, as the Targum, of strength of body, and courage and valour of mind; whereby he was enabled to encounter with the lion and bear, and get the mastery of them; which, with all other gifts of the spirit fitting him for government, he was now endowed with, and which continued with him:

so Samuel rose up and went to Ramah his native place, and where he resided; that is, after the festival of the peace offerings, to which Jesse and his sons were invited; for the anointing seems to be before that.

Ver. 14. *But the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul*, etc.] As a spirit of prophecy as at first, as a spirit of wisdom and prudence in civil government, and as a spirit of fortitude and courage, as the Targum:

and an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him; the reverse of the former, which by the permission of God, and as a punishment to him for his sins, came upon him; he seemed to be a demoniac, as Josephus represents^{f327} him, as if possessed with the devil; by whom he was almost suffocated and strangled, as well as was distracted in his counsels, and became weak and foolish; lost all courage and greatness of mind, was timorous and fearful, and alarmed by everything, and was full of envy, suspicion, rage, and despair.

Ver. 15. *And Saul's servants said unto him,* etc.] His courtiers, who observing him to act in a frantic manner, to be dull and melancholy, timorous, and irresolute, unsteady, divided, and distressed; or his physicians, who were called in to assist him, and remove his disorder from him:

behold, now an evil spirit from God troubleth thee: the disorder was not from any natural cause, or any bodily disease, and therefore out of the reach of physicians to do any service, but was from an evil spirit suffered of God to harass and disturb him.

Ver. 16. *Let our Lord now command thy servants which are before thee,* etc.] Meaning either themselves, or some of a more inferior rank, who were in some post and office at court, waiters there, such as yeomen of the guards:

to seek out a man who is a cunning player on the harp: a musical instrument much in use in those days:

and it shall come to pass, when the evil spirit from God is upon thee; when in a melancholy mood, and Satan takes the advantage of it to distress and terrify, to spread the gloom, and stir up evil passions, and promote distraction and confusion:

that he shall play with his hand: upon the harp, that being not an instrument of wind, but of hand music:

and thou shalt be well: music being a means of cheering the spirits, and removing melancholy and gloomy apprehensions of things, and so of restoring to better health of body and disposition of mind; and that music has such an effect on the bodies and minds of men is certain from observation and experience in all ages. Music has been found to be medicine to various diseases, not only for the curing of the bite of vipers, and of the tarantula, but for easing the pains of the sciatica, and for helping persons labouring under the disorders of the frenzy^{f328}; and Pythagoras used to compose the mind, and remove the perturbations of it, by the use of the harp^{f329}, the thing here advised to.

Ver. 17. *And Saul said unto his servants,* etc.] Approving of, and pleased with the advice they gave:

provide me now a man that can play well, and bring him to me; for being a sovereign prince, he could command whom he would to attend to his person and service.

Ver. 18. *Then answered one of the servants*, etc.] Which the Jews say ^{f330} was Doeg the Edomite, who out of envy and ill will to David spake of him, that Saul might have an opportunity of slaying him; but this is not at all likely; rather it was one of David's friends and acquaintance, that was desirous of promoting him at court, and no doubt was directed to that motion by the overruling providence of God:

and said, behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite; he does not mention the name of his son, but so describes him, that he might be easily known by those who knew anything of the family of Jesse; besides it was sufficient that he was one of Jesse's sons, to find him out:

[that is] cunning in playing; that is, on the harp; has good skill in music, and is expert in it:

and a mighty valiant man; as appeared by his encountering with and slaying the lion and the bear; an event now past, as very probable:

and a man of war some think this character of him was given after the affair of his fighting with Goliath and killing him, but here put by a prolepsis or anticipation; and indeed if David had been taken into Saul's court before that affair, it is difficult to account for Saul's ignorance of him, since he must be so near him, and so often with him, as his musician and armourbearer; though that difficulty may be removed, as may be observed in its proper place:

and prudent in matters; in his talk and conversation, and conduct and behaviour; knew how to carry himself, even in a prince's court: and a comely person; which always recommended to the courts of the eastern nations; (see Gill on "~~2004~~ Daniel 1:4").

and the Lord is with him; prospering and succeeding him in whatsoever he is engaged; and seeing the Lord was with him, it might be expected the evil spirit would depart from Saul, when this person, with whom the Lord was, was in his presence. The Targum is,

“the Word of the Lord is for his help;”

all that is said of him showed that he was fit to be in the palace of a king, and a proper person to be with Saul in his present circumstances.

Ver. 19. *Wherefore Saul sent messengers to Jesse*, etc.] For David; not choosing to take him without his leave, though Samuel suggests that kings would do so, (^{<0881>}1 Samuel 8:11)

and said, send me David, thy son, which is with the sheep; he had learnt his name, and what was his employment; and which last he mentions not by way of contempt, it not being reckoned mean and despicable even in the sons of great personages, in those times and countries, to attend flocks and herds: so with the Arabs, as Philo^{f331} testifies, young men and maids of the most illustrious families fed cattle; and with the ancient Romans, the senator^{f332} fed his own sheep. Paris, son of Priamus, king of Troy, is said^{f333} to feed his father's oxen and sheep; and Saul himself had done the same; but to describe him particularly.

Ver. 20. *And Jesse took an ass [laden] with bread*, etc.] Laden with a load of bread, as the Targum; with as much as it could carry, or was used to carry; the Septuagint version is, an omer of bread, which was as much as a man could eat in one day; and, according to Kimchi and Ben Melech, it may be interpreted an heap of bread, agreeably to the use of the word in (^{<07516>}Judges 15:16), and a bottle of wine; or a skin of wine, a leather bag or sack, which held more than our bottles; the Targum is, a flagon of wine:

and a kid; of the goats, as the same Targum:

and sent [them] by David his son unto Saul; some think that Jesse suspected that Saul had known the secret of David's being anointed, and was fearful that he had a design upon his life, and therefore sent this present by his son to pacify him, and ingratiate him unto him; but rather he sent it as a token of respect and subjection to his sovereign, and according to the custom of those times, when men used to carry presents when they waited upon princes, and indeed in their common visits; and do in the eastern countries to this day; (see Gill on "^{<0881>}1 Samuel 9:7").

Ver. 21. *And David came to Saul, and stood before him*, etc.] As a servant, and ministered to him in the way, and for the purpose for which he was sent:

and he loved him greatly; being a comely person, and a well behaved youth, and especially as he was serviceable to him with his music, in driving away melancholy from him:

and he became his armourbearer; that is, he appointed him to this office, though we never read that he exercised it; nor did he go with Saul in this capacity to the battle related in the following chapter: it may be literally rendered: “and he was to him a bearer of vessels”, or “instruments”^{f334}; and Abarbinel thinks this is to be understood not of instruments of war, but of instruments of music to play with; which he brought in and bare before him when he went in to the king.

Ver. 22. *And Saul sent to Jesse, saying, let David, I pray thee, stand before me*, etc.] Continue in his service; which was great condescension in him, and great respect shown to Jesse, not to detain his son without his leave, and to ask it as a favour of him:

for he hath found favour in my sight: was very acceptable to him which must be very pleasing to Jesse to hear; especially if he was in any fear that Saul had an ill design upon him, when he first sent for him.

Ver. 23. *And it came to pass, when the [evil] spirit from God was upon Saul*, etc.] (see ^{<D164>}1 Samuel 16:14,15) though the word evil is not in the text here; wherefore Abarbinel thinks that this here was the Spirit of God, which stirred up in him thoughts of divine things, put him in mind of what God had said, that he had rejected him from being king, and had rent the kingdom from him; and this filled him with grief and trouble, and he became melancholy:

that David took an harp, and played with his hands; upon it; and, as Josephus^{f335} says, at the same time sung hymns and psalms; made use both of vocal and instrumental music:

so Saul was refreshed, and was well; became cheerful, his grief was removed, his black and gloomy apprehensions of things were dispersed, and he was cured of his melancholy disorder for the present:

and the evil spirit departed from him: at least for a while; he had his fits and intervals; of the effects of music in a natural way, (see Gill on ^{<D166>}1 Samuel 16:16”), though no doubt the music of David was more than natural, being attended with the power and blessing of God, in order to raise his fame and credit at court.

CHAPTER 17

INTRODUCTION TO FIRST SAMUEL 17

This chapter relates how the armies of Israel, and of the Philistines, prepared for battle, and where, (^{<01701>}1 Samuel 17:1-3), describes a champion of the Philistines, who defied the armies of Israel, (^{<01704>}1 Samuel 17:4-11), and while he was so doing, it informs us that David came into the camp, and he heard his words, and signified to one and another his inclination to fight with him, (^{<01712>}1 Samuel 17:12-30), which being reported to Saul, David was sent for by him, and much discourse passed between them about it, (^{<01731>}1 Samuel 17:31-37) when we are told the manner in which he engaged with the Philistine, and the victory he obtained over him, (^{<01738>}1 Samuel 17:38-51) upon which the Philistines fled, and Israel pursued them; and on account of this action David was taken notice of by Saul, and brought to court again, as the following chapter shows, (^{<01752>}1 Samuel 17:52-58).

Ver. 1. *Now the Philistines gathered together their armies to battle*, etc.] Josephus ^{f336} says this was not long after the things related in the preceding chapter were transacted; and very probably they had heard of the melancholy and distraction of Saul, and thought it a proper opportunity of avenging themselves on Israel for their last slaughter of them, and for that purpose gathered together their dispersed troops:

and were gathered together at Shochoh, which belongeth to Judah; a city of the tribe of Judah, (^{<01535>}Joshua 15:35), which shows that, notwithstanding their last defeat, they had great footing in the land of Israel, or however had penetrated far into it in this march of theirs:

and pitched between Shochoh and Azekah; which were both in the same tribe, and near one another, of which (see Gill on “^{<01010>}Joshua 10:10”), (see Gill on “^{<01535>}Joshua 15:35”).

in Ephesdammim; which, by an apocope of the first letter, is called Pasdammim, (^{<01113>}1 Chronicles 11:13) which the Jews ^{f337} say had this name because there blood ceased.

Ver. 2. *And Saul and the men of Israel were gathered together*, etc.] He being cured, at least being better of his disorder, through the music of David, and alarmed and aroused by the invasion of the Philistines, which might serve to dissipate any remains of it, or prevent its return, got together his forces:

and pitched by the valley of Elah; which Jerom^{f338} says Aquila and Theodotion interpret “the valley of the oak”; but the Vulgate Latin version, the valley of Terebinth; which, according to our countryman Sandys^{f339}, was four miles from Ramaosophim, where Samuel dwelt; for he says,

“after four miles riding, we descended into the valley of Terebinth, famous, though little, for the slaughter of Goliath;”

and in the Targum this valley is called the valley of Butma, which in the Arabic language signifies a “terebinth”, or turpentine tree; though some translate it “the oak”; and, according to some modern travellers^{f340}, to this day it bears a name similar to that; for they say it is

“now called the vale of Bitumen, very famous all over those parts for David’s victory over Goliath:”

and set the battle in array against the Philistines; prepared to give them battle.

Ver. 3. *And the Philistines stood on a mountain on the one side, and Israel stood on a mountain on the other side*, &c.] Before the Israelites are said to encamp in or by the valley; but here they are said to take the higher ground, and face the Philistines, who were on a mountain or hill on the other side over against them, which Kimchi reconciles thus; the whole or the grand army lay encamped in the valley, and, they that were set in array, or the first ranks, the first battalion, ascended the mountain to meet the Philistines. Vatablus takes it to be the same mountain, that on one part of it the Philistines formed their first battalion, and the rest of the army was in the valley; and on the other part of the mountain the Israelites pitched their camp:

and there was a valley between them; the same as in the preceding verse.

Ver. 4. *And there went out a champion out of the camp of the Philistines*, etc.] Or a “middle person”, or a man “between two”^{f341}; meaning either one that went and stood between the two armies of Israel and the

Philistines, as the Jewish writers generally interpret it: or a “dueller”^{f342}, as others, with which our version agrees; one that proposed to fight a duel, and have the war decided by two persons, of which he would be one:

named Goliath of Gath; which was one of the places where the Anakims or giants were driven, and left, in the times of Joshua, and from whom this man descended, (^{f3412}Joshua 11:22)

whose height was six cubits and a span; and taking a cubit after the calculation of Bishop Cumberland^{f343} to be twenty one inches, and more, and a span to be half a cubit, the height of this man was eleven feet four inches, and somewhat more; which need not seem incredible, since the coffin of Oresteia, the son of Agamemnon, is said^{f344} to be seven cubits long; and Eleazar, a Jew, who because of his size was called the giant, and was presented by Artabanus, king of the Parthians, to Tiberius Caesar, is said by Josephus^{f345} to be seven cubits high; and one Gabbara of Arabia, in the times of Claudius Caesar, measured nine feet nine inches, as Pliny^{f346} relates, and who elsewhere^{f347} speaks of a people in Ethiopia, called Syrbotae, who were eight cubits high; the Septuagint version makes Goliath to be only four cubits and a span high, and so Josephus^{f348}; that is, about eight feet.

Ver. 5. *And he had an helmet of brass upon his head*, etc.] This was a piece of armour, which covered the head in the day of battle; these were usually made of the skins of beasts, of leather, and which were covered with plates of iron, or brass; and sometimes made of all iron, or of brass^{f349}; as this seems to have been:

and he was armed with a coat of mail; which reached from the neck to the middle, and consisted of various plates of brass laid on one another, like the scales of fishes^{f350}, so close together that no dart or arrow could pierce between:

and the weight of the coat was five thousand shekels of brass: which made one hundred and fifty six pounds and a quarter of zygostatic or avoirdupois weight; and therefore he must be a very strong man indeed to carry such a weight. So the armour of the ancient Romans were all of brass, as this man’s; their helmets, shields, greaves, coats of mail, all of brass, as Livy says^{f351}; and so in the age of the Grecian heroes^{f352}.

Ver. 6. *And he had greaves of brass upon his legs*, etc.] Which were a sort of boots, or leg harnesses, which covered the thighs and legs down to the

heels; such as Iolau^{f353} and the Grecians usually wore, as described by Homer; which are supposed to be double the weight of the helmet, reckoned at fifteen pounds, so that these must weigh thirty pounds of avoirdupois weight:

and a target of brass between his shoulders; the Targum is,

“a spear or shield of brass, which came out of the helmet, and a weight of brass upon his shoulders.”

Jarchi says the same, and that it was in the form of a spear to defend the neck from the sword; it seems to be a corslet of brass, worn between the helmet and the coat of mail for the defence of the neck, supposed to weigh thirty pounds^{f354}

Ver. 7. *And the staff of his spear was like a weaver’s beam*, etc.] The wooden part of it, held in the hand; this for thickness was like the beam in the weaver’s loom, about which the warp, or else the web, is rolled; and it is conjectured that, in proportion to the stature of Goliath, his spear must be twenty six feet long, since Hector’s in Homer^{f355} was eleven cubits, or sixteen feet and a half:

and his spear’s head weighed six hundred shekels of iron; the iron part of the spear, the point of it, which has its name in Hebrew from a flame of fire, because when brandished it looks shining and flaming; and being the weight of six hundred shekels, amounted to eighteen pounds and three quarters of avoirdupois weight, and the whole spear is supposed to weigh thirty seven pounds and a half; and the whole of this man’s armour is thought to weigh two hundred and seventy two pounds, thirteen ounces^{f356}; which was a prodigious weight for a man to carry, and go into battle with; and one may well wonder how he could be able with such a weight about him to move and lay about in an engagement; though this is nothing in comparison of the weight some men have carried. Pliny^{f357} tells us that he saw one Athanatus come into the theatre clothed with a leaden breastplate of five hundred pounds weight, and shod with buskins of the same weight:

and one bearing a shield went before him; which when engaged in battle he held in his own hand, and his sword in the other; the former was reckoned at thirty pounds, and the latter at four pounds, one ounce; though one would think he had no occasion for a shield, being so well covered with armour all over; so that the carrying of it before him might be only a

matter of form and state. His spear is the only piece of armour that was of iron, all the rest were of brass; and Hesiod^{f358}, writing of the brazen age, says, their arms and their houses were all of brass, for then there was no iron; and so Lucretius^{f359} affirms that the use of brass was before iron; but both are mentioned together, (see Gill on “~~0002~~Genesis 4:22”), hence Mars is called *χαλκεος αρης*^{f360}.

Ver. 8. *And he stood and cried unto the armies of Israel*, etc.] He stood in the valley between the two armies, and cried with a loud voice that he might be heard; and as he was of such a monstrous stature, no doubt his voice was very strong and sonorous; and as the battalions of Israel designed by armies were posted on the mountain or hill, his voice would ascend, and be the more easily heard:

and said unto them, why are ye come out to set your battle in array? either as wondering at their boldness, to set themselves in battle array against the Philistines; or rather suggesting that it was needless, since the dispute between them might be issued by a single combat:

am not I a Philistine, and you servants to Saul? a common Philistine, according to Jarchi; not a captain of a hundred, or of a thousand; and yet would fight anyone of them, their general officers, or be they who they would; or rather, as Abarbinel, he was a prince among the Philistines, and king of Gath; and though he was, and it was usual with great persons to engage with their equals, yet he did not insist on that; but would engage with any man, though of an inferior rank, even with any of Saul’s servants; and by calling the Israelites the servants of Saul, he might have some respect to Saul’s arbitrary government over them; and since they must be servants and slaves, it was as well to be servants to the Philistines as to him:

choose you a man for you, and let him come down to me; according to Jarchi and the Targumist, the challenge first respects Saul their king; that if he was a man of fortitude and courage, let him come and engage with him; if not, choose another, and send him down into the valley to fight with him. These same writers represent him as blustering and bragging that he killed the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, took the ark captive, and carried it into the temple of Dagon; that he had been used to go out with the armies of the Philistines, and had obtained victories, and slain many, and yet had never been made captain of a thousand among them; all which is

improbable, and some of it notoriously false; for in every battle after the taking of the ark the Philistines had been beaten.

Ver. 9. *If he be able to fight with me, and to kill me, then will we be your servants,* etc.] For which it does not appear he had any commission or authority to say; nor did the Philistines think themselves obliged to abide by what he said, since, when he was slain, they did not yield themselves servants to the Israelites:

but if I prevail against him, and kill him, then shall ye be our servants, and serve us; to which terms also the Israelites did not consent; nor did David, who engaged with him, enter the fray on such conditions.

Ver. 10. *And the Philistine said, I defy the armies of Israel this day,* etc.] Or “reproach” ^{f361} them; that is, should they not accept his challenge, and send down a man to fight with them, he should then upbraid them with cowardice; and now he disdained them, as if there was not a man among them that dared to encounter with him:

give me a man that we may fight together; and so decide the controversy between us; such as were those duels fought between Paris and Menelaus in the Trojan war, and between the Lacedemonians and the Argives in the times of Orthryades, and between the Athenians and Romans by the Horatii and Curiatii, as Grotius observes.

Ver. 11. *When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine,* etc.] For they were delivered with such a tone and strength of voice, as to be heard very generally, at least by many, and which soon was reported through the whole army:

they were dismayed, and greatly afraid; which may seem strange, when there were so many valiant men among them, as Saul himself, who had behaved with so much courage against the Ammonites, Philistines, and Amalekites; but now the Spirit of God was departed from him, and he was become timorous and fearful; and though he was much better than he had been, yet still he was not the man of spirit and resolution as before: there was also Abner, the general of his army, a very valiant man, a great man in Israel, and yet appears not on this occasion; and, what is more wonderful, Jonathan the son of Saul was present, as appears from (~~1~~1 Samuel 18:1) who had not only smitten a garrison of the Philistines, but with one man more only had attacked another garrison, and routed the whole army of the Philistines, and yet now shows not his head against a single man: so it is

when God cuts off the spirits of princes, or takes away their courage; victory over this man, and the glory of it, were reserved for David; and all this fear and dread throughout the armies of Israel were suffered, that he might appear the more glorious.

Ver. 12. *Now David was the son of that Ephrathite of Bethlehemjudah,* whose name was Jesse, etc.] Before made mention of, (^{<1361>}1 Chronicles 16:1)

and he had eight sons; seven only are mentioned, (^{<1321>}1 Chronicles 2:13-15) one of them being, as is thought by some, a grandson, perhaps Jonadab the son of Shammah; or was a son by another woman, or died without children, as Jarchi, and therefore not mentioned:

and the man went among men for an old man in the days of Saul; the phrase, “among men”, either signifies that he was ranked among old men, infirm and unfit for war, and so excused, and his sons went in his room, so Kimchi; or he was reckoned among men of the first rank, men of esteem, credit, and reputation, so Jarchi and R. Isaiah, with which agrees the Targum; or whenever he went abroad, he was attended by many men, had a large retinue, which sense Abarbinel mentions, and is that of Ben Gersom, and agrees with the Talmud ^{f362}; but the Syriac and Arabic versions read “stricken in years”, which seems most agreeable.

Ver. 13. *And the three eldest sons of Jesse went and followed Saul to the battle,* etc.] Either of their own accord, or rather at their father’s motion, or however with his knowledge and consent, who because he could not go himself, willed them to go; and these were forward, and some of the foremost that followed Saul to the battle, being zealous and well disposed to defend their king and country:

and the names of the three sons that went to the battle were Eliab the firstborn, and next unto him Abinadab, and the third Shammah; who are the three mentioned by name that passed before Samuel, when he came to anoint one of Jesse’s sons to be king, (^{<1366>}1 Samuel 16:6,8,9).

Ver. 14. *And David was the youngest,* etc.] For the sake of whom this account is given of Jesse and his family, and who after this makes a considerable figure in the camp and court of Saul:

and the three eldest followed Saul; as before related, and which is repeated, that it might be observed that they only of Jesse’s sons followed

Saul; not David particularly, but who was providentially sent to the army at the time the Philistine was defying it.

Ver. 15. *But David went, and returned from Saul,* etc.] Or “from above Saul”; Josephus^{f363} says, the physicians of Saul advised to get a man to stand *υπερ κεφαλης*, “over his head”, and sing psalms and hymns to him; and Saul being recovered from his frenzy and melancholy, by means of David’s music, he was dismissed from him, or had leave to go home, or he returned upon Saul’s taking the field; though one would think, if he was now his armourbearer, he would have gone with him, (see ~~<0962>~~ 1 Samuel 16:21). It seems that when he was called to the court of Saul, that he did not continue there, but was going and coming, was there at certain times when Saul wanted him; and so when in the camp he might go and return as there was occasion for it:

to feed his father’s sheep at Bethlehem; for though he was anointed king, and was called to court, yet such was his humility, that he condescended to attend this employment of keeping sheep; and though Jesse knew all this, yet he kept him at home to this business, when it might be more reasonably thought he would have lain in the way of preferment, had he followed Saul to the camp, and appeared in the army; but he chose to leave things to the providence of God to work the way for him, and by which he was directed to take the following step, though perhaps without any design to his son’s future promotion.

Ver. 16. *And the Philistine drew near morning and evening,* etc.] Twice a day he came near the camp, within the hearing of it. The Jews^{f364} say, he took those seasons on purpose to disturb them in reading their “Shema”, or “hear, O Israel”, etc. and saying their prayers morning and evening:

and presented himself forty days; Successively, before the armies of Israel, daring them to send down a man to fight with him, and reproaching them for their cowardice in not doing it.

Ver. 17. *And Jesse said unto David his son,* etc.] His youngest son, that was at home with him keeping sheep; he had three more at home, and who were elder than David, and yet he is directed by the providence of God to pick and send him on the following errand, there being work for him to do Jesse knew nothing of:

take now for thy brethren an ephah of this parched [corn]; pointing to a quantity of it in a certain place; this was wheat or barley dried in a furnace

or oven, and ground into meal, and being mixed with water, or milk, or butter, or honey, or oil, was eaten, and reckoned very delicious; and besides this, there was another sort of “kali”, the word here used, which was parched pulse, as beans, peas, etc. parched, and which to this day is by the Arabs called by this name ^{f365}; of both which mention is made, (^{<10728>2} Samuel 17:28). Now an “ephah” was as much as ten men could eat in a day, it consisted of ten omers, (^{<10166>} Exodus 16:16,36), and the number ten is after used of loaves and cheese:

and these ten loaves of bread; or cakes of bread, as Kimchi interprets it; pieces or morsels of bread, as the Targum; which seems not so agreeable as loaves or cakes, which are not in the text, but to be supplied:

and run to the camp to thy brethren; which, according to Bunting ^{f366}, was four miles from Bethlehem; and whither it seems he went on foot, and is bid to make haste, and even to run, as his brethren might be in want of provision; and Jesse was very desirous of relieving them, and hearing from them as soon as possible; it is very likely he had a servant or servants to attend him, and assist in carrying this load of provision, which, with what follows, was too much for one man to run with.

Ver. 18. *And carry these ten cheeses unto the captain of their thousand*, etc.] Their chiliarch or colonel, who had the command of 1000 men, and under whom Jesse’s sons fought; Jarchi thinks this was Jonathan, who had 1000 men with him at Gibeah, and so now, (^{<10132>1} Samuel 13:2), these cheeses were sent by Jesse to the captain, to be distributed among his men, or a present to himself, that he might use his sons well who were under his command:

and look how thy brethren fare; whether in good health, in good spirits, and in safety:

and take their pledge; that is, if they had been obliged for want of money to pawn any of their clothes, or what they had with them to buy food with, that he would redeem and take up the pledge, by paying the money for which they were pawned; for it is thought that soldiers at this time were not maintained at the expense of the king and government, but at their own, and the families to which they belonged: though some are of opinion that this was some token which they had sent by a messenger to their father, by which he might know he came from them, so Ben Gersom; and which David was now to take with him, and return it; or a token that he

was to bring from them, whereby he might be assured of their welfare; and so the Targum, “and bring their goodness”, a token of their being in good health. The Jews^{f367} understand it of bills of divorce to be given to their wives, that if they should die in battle, or be taken captive, that their wives might marry after three years.

Ver. 19. *Now Saul, and they*, etc.] That is, the sons of Jesse, and brethren of David:

and all the men of Israel; the soldiers in the army:

were in the valley Elah; or “by” it, near unto it; for they were set in array on the mountain on the side of it:

fighting with the Philistines; not actually engaged in battle, but drawn up for it; prepared and in readiness to engage whenever it was necessary, or they were obliged to it; and perhaps there might be now and then some skirmishes in the outer parts of the camp.

Ver. 20. *And David rose up early in the morning*, etc.] Being very ready and eager to obey his father’s orders, and visit his brethren:

and left the sheep with a keeper; which showed his care and faithfulness in the discharge of his office; he was not unmindful of his father’s sheep, any more than of his commands:

and took; the ephah of parched corn, the ten loaves, and the ten cheeses:

and went, as Jesse had commanded him; went and carried them to the camp, according to his orders:

and he came to the trench; foss or ditch, which was cast up all around the army, partly to prevent the enemy falling on them before, and partly to prevent deserters from them behind; or the word signifying a wagon or carriage, which is here used, this might be a fence around the camp made of wagons fastened to each other; though it may only signify, the camp itself, which lay in a circular form, with proper guards about it to watch the enemy. Now David came up to it just

as the host was going forth to the fight; preparing and getting every thing ready to the battle, and in motion, and upon the march to meet the enemy:

and shouted for the battle; which was usually done when about to make the onset, to animate the soldiers, and strike the greater terror into the

enemy; and this noise was sometimes made with the voice in a hideous and howling way, and was called “barritus”^{f368} by the Romans; with the Trojans it was like the noise of cranes in the air^{f369}; it was also attended with the clashing of shields and spears^{f370}; with the Persians, it was a rough, boisterous, and confused noise^{f371}.

Ver. 21. *For Israel and all the Philistines had put the battle in array*, etc.] Both sides prepared for it, and drew up in line of battle:

army against army; rank against rank, battalion against battalion, the right wing of the one against the left of the other, etc.

Ver. 22. *And David left his carriage in the hand the keeper of the carriage*, etc.] That is, he left load of provisions he brought with him in the hand of the keeper of the bag and baggage of the army, their clothes, and such like things; not having an opportunity to deliver them to his brethren, who were just going to engage in battle:

and ran into the army; which showed the valour and courage of David, who chose rather to expose himself in battle, than to abide with the keeper of the carriages:

and came and saluted his brethren; asked them of their welfare, in his father’s name and his own.

Ver. 23. *And as he talked with them*, etc.] About their health, and the errand he came upon, and the message of his father to them, and how it was with him, who sent them his best wishes:

behold, there came up the champion, the Philistine of Gath, Goliath by name: of whom (see ^{<0708>}1 Samuel 17:4); he came out of the valley, and drew near to the mountain the Israelites were descending:

out of the armies of the Philistines: from the plains where they were encamped, as Kimchi, though they seem to have been encamped on a mountain as the Israelites were; or from the ranks of the Philistines; according to the marginal reading, he came out of one of the battalions that were set in array:

and spake according to the same words; which he had spoken time after time forty days successively, namely, what is expressed (^{<0708>}1 Samuel 17:8-10);

and David heard [them]; and observed them.

Ver. 24. *And all the men of Israel, when they saw the man,* etc.] Even as it should seem before they heard him; knowing who he was, and what he was about to say, having seen and heard him forty days running:

fled from him, and were sore afraid; it is pretty much a whole army should be afraid of one man, and flee from him; they must be greatly forsaken of God, and given up by him, (see ^{<653>}Deuteronomy 32:30); but perhaps they were not so much afraid of personal danger from him, as that they could not bear to hear his blasphemy.

Ver. 25. *And the men of Israel said,* etc.] To one another:

have ye seen this man that is come up? taken notice of him, and observed him?

surely to defy Israel is he come up; to challenge them to fight with him, and upbraid them with cowardice that they did not:

and it shall be [that] the man who killeth him; this, and what follows, they said to encourage any person to engage with him, though none of them cared to encounter him themselves:

the king will enrich him with great riches; give him a large gratuity, make a present of a great sum of money to him:

and will give him his daughter to be his wife, in like manner as Caleb promised to give his daughter in marriage to the person that should take Kirjathsepher, (^{<1012>}Judges 1:12);

and make his father's house free in Israel; from all tributes, taxes, levies, impositions, king's service, and duty; or, as the Targum,

“make his father's house freemen, nobles;”

raise it to the rank of nobility.

Ver. 26. *And David spake to the men that stood by him,* etc.] Who were next to him, looking upon the Philistine, and hearing what he said,

saying, what shall be done to the man that killeth this Philistine, and taketh away the reproach from Israel? which he asked not for the sake of the reward, but to observe the necessity there was of some man's engaging

with him, and killing him, or otherwise it would be a reproach to Israel, and to signify that he had an inclination to attempt it:

for who [is] this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God? there were two things which provoked David, and raised indignation in him against this man; the one was, the character of the person that reproached, a Philistine, an uncircumcised person, a profane man, that had no true religion in him, an alien from the commonwealth of Israel, and a stranger to the covenants of promise; and the other was the persons whom he reproached, the armies of the living God, of the King of kings, and Lord of lords; and which in effect was reproaching the Lord himself, and which David, filled with zeal for God, and for his people, could not bear; and the consideration of these things animated him to engage with him, not doubting of success.

Ver. 27. *And the people answered him after this manner,* etc.] Told him what was proposed to be done in honour to the man that should attempt to kill him, and succeed:

saying, so shall it be done to the man that killeth him; as before related, that he should be enriched, marry the king's daughter, and his family be ennobled, (⁴⁹¹⁷⁵1 Samuel 17:25).

Ver. 28. *And Eliab his eldest brother heard when he spake unto the men,* etc.] Heard the questions he put to them, by which he perceived his inclination:

and Eliab's anger was kindled against David; because what he had said carried in it a tacit reproach of him, and others, that they had not the courage, and did not attempt to encounter with the Philistine; or the displeasure he expressed was either out of affection to him, fearing, or being assured almost he would perish in the enterprise; or rather out of envy to him, lest succeeding in so bold an action, he should gain superior glory to him, and the rest of his brethren, who yet was the youngest of them:

and he said, why comest thou down hither? for though David had talked with his brethren, or had begun to talk with them, yet he had not sufficiently explained the reasons of his coming:

and with whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness? the wilderness of Judea, or some wilderness near Bethlehem; by this he would

not only insinuate a charge of unfaithfulness, in not taking care of his father's flock committed to him; but his view was to make him look little and mean in the eyes of the people, that in the family he belonged to he was thought to be fit for nothing but to keep sheep, and those but a small flock, and in doing this was negligent and careless:

I know thy pride, and the haughtiness of thine heart; that he was too proud to keep sheep, and wanted to advance himself in the army, and make a figure there, and thereby gratify his vanity and ambition, which was the reverse of David's character; for, such was his humility, that, though he was anointed king, and had been preferred in Saul's court, yet condescended with all readiness to keep his father's sheep; and what he now proposed was not from any bad principle in his heart, but purely for the glory of God, and the honour of the people of Israel, who were both reproached:

for thou art come down that thou mightest see the battle: out of curiosity, and to take every advantage and opportunity of signaling and making himself famous.

Ver. 29. *And David said, what have I now done?* etc.] That is criminal and blameworthy; as if he should say, I have only expressed an indignation against this uncircumcised Philistine, and a concern for the glory of God, and the honour of the people of Israel:

[is there] not a cause? either for his coming to the camp, being sent by his father; or of his expressing himself with indignation at the Philistine's defiance of the armies of Israel. Some take the sense to be, that he had done nothing, he had not committed any fact; it was mere words what he had said, he had attempted nothing, and therefore there was no reason to bear so hard upon him; to this purpose is the Targum,

“what have I done as yet? is it not a word “only” which I have spoken?”

but the former sense seems best.

Ver. 30. *And he turned from him towards another,* etc.] From his brother Eliab, to another person right against him, and directed his discourse to him:

and spake after the same manner: as in (^{<0172>}1 Samuel 17:26); inquiring what encouragement would he given to a man that should attempt to kill the Philistine, and expressing his concern to hear the armies of the living God defied by such a wretch:

and the people answered him again after the former manner; telling him what gratuities and honours would be conferred on such a person, as in (^{<0175>}1 Samuel 17:25); and the design of his talking to one, and to another, was, that what he had said might spread and reach to the ears of Saul, to whom in modesty he did not choose to apply himself.

Ver. 31. *And when the words were heard which David spake*, etc.] To one, and to another, and these reported to other persons, and so they went from one to another through many hands:

they rehearsed [them] before Saul; coming to the ears of some of his courtiers and counsellors, or officers about him, they told him what such an one had said:

and he sent for him; to his tent or pavilion where he was, to talk with him on this subject. The whole of (^{<0171>}1 Samuel 17:11-31) is wanting in the Septuagint version, according to the Vatican exemplar; and these “twenty” verses are thought, by some ^{f372}, to be an interpolation; and it must be owned there are difficulties in them, and that the connection of (^{<0171>}1 Samuel 17:11) with the following is very clear and consistent, as also is (^{<0170>}1 Samuel 17:50) left out in the same version; and likewise the last four of the chapter, (^{<0175>}1 Samuel 17:55-58), and five with which the next begins, (^{<0181>}1 Samuel 18:1-5).

Ver. 32. *And David said to Saul, let no man’s heart fail because of him*, etc.] The Philistine, though so gigantic, mighty, and blustering: this he said within himself, so Kimchi; as David perceived the hearts of most, if not all, did, since none dared to go out and fight him, but on the contrary fled from him:

thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine; and therefore there need be no thought, care, or concern to look out for another man.

Ver. 33. *And Saul said to David, thou art not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him*, etc.] Had neither strength of body, nor skill in military affairs, to encounter with a man of his stature, and warlike genius and practice:

for thou [art but] a youth; some say about fourteen or sixteen years of age, but very probably about twenty, and not more, and so not only weak, but inexpert in the art of fighting:

and he a man of war from his youth; a gigantic man, trained up in, inured to, and expert in the affairs of war; so that David could not, on any account, be a competitor with him, and a match for him.

Ver. 34. *And David said unto Saul*, etc.] In answer to his objection of inability to encounter with one so superior to him; and this answer is founded on experience and facts, and shows that he was not so weak and inexpert as Saul took him to be:

thy servant kept his father's sheep; which he was not ashamed to own, and especially as it furnished him with an stance of his courage, bravery, and success, and which would be convincing to Saul:

and there came a lion and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock; not that they came together; though Kimchi so interprets it, “a lion with a bear”; but these are creatures that do not use to go together; and besides, both could not be said with propriety to take one and the same lamb out of the flock: to which may be added, that David in (⁴⁹⁷⁵1 Samuel 17:35) speaks only of one, out of whose mouth he took the lamb; wherefore the words may be rendered, “a lion or a bear”^{f373}; and if the copulative “and” is retained, the meaning can only be, that at different times they would come and take a lamb, a lion at one time, and a bear at another.

Ver. 35. *And I went out after him*, etc.] Whether a lion or a bear; but mention after being made of his beard, a lion rather is meant:

and smote him; with his fist, or rather with his shepherd's staff:

and delivered [it] out of his mouth; snatched it out from thence, or obliged him to drop it, by beating him:

and when he arose against me; after he had let go the lamb, threatening to tear him in pieces for attempting to disturb him in his prey, and take it away from him;

I caught [him] by his beard; such as lions have; hence a lion is often called in Homer^{f374} *λις ηευγενειος*, the well-bearded lion. Kimchi thinks the beard with the nether jaw is meant, which David caught hold on:

and smote him, and slew him; tore him to pieces, as Samson did, (⁴⁷⁴⁵Judges 14:5,6), or slew him with some weapon in his hand.

Ver. 36. *Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear*, etc.] At different times, and several of them at one time or another; whenever any of them came into the flock, he used to lay hold on them and kill them, with all the ease imaginable. The Jews suppose this phrase denotes many of them ^{f375}.

And this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them; as he was like them in nature, savage, cruel and unclean, so he would be in his end, killed as they; of this David was fully persuaded and assured in mind having an impulse from the Spirit of God, by which he was certified of it:

seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God; so that as he justly deserved to die, he made no doubt of it it would be his case.

Ver. 37. *And David said moreover*, etc.] For the further confirmation of it, and as more strongly expressing his faith of it; not as owing to any natural strength or skill of his, but to the power of God, of whose assistance he made no question:

the Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear; for to him he ascribes his deliverance from those savage creatures, and his victory over them, and on him he relied for help and salvation in the present case:

he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine; David did not go forth in his own name and strength, but in the name and strength of the Lord of hosts:

and Saul; seeing him so positive, and fully assured of victory:

said unto David, go, and the Lord be with thee; to help and assist him, to deliver him out of the hand of the Philistine, and give him victory over him; the Targum is,

“the Word of the Lord be for thy help.”

Ver. 38. *And Saul armed David with his armour*, etc.] Not with what he wore himself; for it cannot be thought he would strip himself of his armour in the field of battle, and when just going to it; and besides what suited the one would not be fit for the other, their bulk and stature being different i

but this was some armour Saul had brought with him, besides what he himself wore, to furnish any with that might want it:

and he put an helmet of brass upon his head; such an one, though not so large as Goliath had, these being usually made of brass; (see Gill on “⁴⁹⁷⁵1 Samuel 17:5”);

also he armed him with a coat of mail; which probably was of brass also, and like that of Goliath’s too, only lesser, (⁴⁹⁷⁵1 Samuel 17:5).

Ver. 39. *And David girded his, sword upon his armour*, etc.] Which Saul also perhaps furnished him with:

and he assayed to go; made an attempt, and had a mind to go thus accoutred; he at first showed an inclination to go in such an habit, but afterwards would not:

for he had not proved [it]; as warriors were wont to do; so Achilles did ^{f376}; he never made trial of such armour before, he had not been used to it, and knew not how to behave in it, or walk with it on him; it was an encumbrance to him: Abarbinel renders it, “but he had not proved [it]”; he would have gone with it but for that reason; the Targum is,

“because there was no miracle in them;”

because if he had made use of this, there would have been no appearance of a miracle in getting the victory over the Philistine, as was by using only a sling and stones:

and David said unto Saul, I cannot go with these, for I have not proved [them]; he thought fit to acquaint Saul with it that he could not go thus accoutred, and his reason for it, lest he should be offended with him:

and David put them off him; took off the helmet from his head, ungirt the sword upon his armour, and stripped himself of his coat of mail, and went forth entirely unarmed.

Ver. 40. *And he took his staff in his hand*, etc.] His shepherd’s staff, which he used in keeping his father’s sheep, and chose rather to appear in the habit of a shepherd than of a soldier:

and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook; which ran in the valley, which became smooth by lying in the water running over them; and which being smooth were fitter for his purpose, being the more easily cast out of

the sling; though De Dieu is of opinion that these were parts or pieces of stones, cleft ones, which were rough and rugged, and which would more easily and firmly be fixed in the forehead of the Philistine:

and put them in a shepherd's bag which he had, even in a scrip; in which he had been wont to put things he needed for the good of the flock, and was such as travellers put their food in; and this might also be the use of it with shepherds; but, according to the Ethiopic interpreters^{f377}, it was that piece of the leather in the midst of the sling, in which the slingers used to put the stones, that they might stick the more firmly:

and his sling [was] in his hand; which he intended to use in slinging the stone or stones he had in his scrip; and which was an exercise he had been accustomed to in all likelihood, and for which the Benjaminites his neighbours, of the next tribe, were very famous:

and he drew near to the Philistine; marched towards him, thereby signifying that he accepted his challenge, and would enter the list with him.

Ver. 41. *And the Philistine came on, and drew near unto David*, etc.] By slow paces, because of the weight of his armour, and bulk of his body, yet with a haughty air, and a proud gait:

and the man that bare the shield [went] before him; (see Gill on "^{4917b}1 Samuel 17:7").

Ver. 42. *And when the Philistine looked about, and saw David, he disdain'd him*, etc.] He looked about for his antagonist, to take a view of him, what sort of a man he was, expecting to see one much like himself; but observing a puny young man, he despised him in his heart, and perhaps looked upon it as an affront to him to send such a man to fight with him:

for he was [but] a youth; his age was one reason why he despised him, being, as before observed, about twenty years of age, and not come to his full strength, a stripling, as he is called, (^{4917c}1 Samuel 17:56), another reason follows,

and ruddy, and of a fair countenance; looked effeminate, had not the appearance of a soldier, of a weather beaten veteran, exposed to heat and cold, and inured to hardships.

Ver. 43. *And the Philistine said unto David, [am] I a dog?* etc.] Truly David did not think him much better, because of his impudence, impurity,

and barking blasphemy against God, and the armies of Israel; the Targum is,

“am I a despised dog?”

verily he was by David:

that thou comest to me with staves? or with a staff, the plural for the singular, to beat him with it as a dog is beaten, and as David used to beat his dog with, while keeping his father’s sheep, when the dog he had with him did not do his business as he should; he says nothing of his sling and stones, they being out of sight:

and the Philistine cursed David by his gods: by Dagon and others; he made an imprecation by them, and wished the greatest evils might befall him from them; he devoted him to them, and doubted not to make a sacrifice of him.

Ver. 44. *And the Philistine said to David, come to me,* etc.] He seems to have stood still, disdainingly: to take another step towards such a pitiful combatant, and therefore bids him come up to him, and he would soon dispatch him; unless he said this, because David was light and nimble, and he heavy and unwieldy because of his bigness, and the burden of armour on him, and therefore could not make such haste as he wished to destroy his adversary, of which he made no doubt:

and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field; the wild beasts he means; though Jarchi thinks he spoke improperly, since it is not the way of the beasts of the field, as sheep, oxen, etc. to devour a man, or even to eat any flesh; and therefore he observes, when David comes, he uses another word, which signifies the wild beasts of the earth, and so we render it, (¹⁷⁴⁶1 Samuel 17:46); but Kimchi shows that even these are comprehended in the word here used, (see ²⁸⁸⁶Isaiah 18:6).

Ver. 45. *Then said David to the Philistine,* etc.] In answer to the contempt he held him in, and to the threatening words he gave him:

thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield; the word for “shield” is not the same with that so rendered, (¹⁷⁴¹1 Samuel 17:41); which his armourbearer carried before him, but with that translated a “target”, which was between his shoulders, (¹⁷⁷⁶1 Samuel 17:6); however, they were all weapons of war, either defensive or offensive:

but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied; the Lord of all hosts, in heaven and in earth in general, and in particular the God of the armies of Israel; which he was at the head of, led on, protected and defended, having a kind and merciful regard unto them, and which this Philistine had defied, reproached, and blasphemed; and now David was come, by a commission from this great Jehovah, to vindicate his honour, and to avenge his people on him: he had asked for a man, and now the Lord of hosts, as the Jews^{f378} observe, comes forth as a man of war, for the battle was his, as in (^{<0174>}1 Samuel 17:47); and David was his messenger, and came in his name, and was the man into whose hands he should be given.

Ver. 46. *This day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hands*, etc.] Of which he was assured by divine inspiration, by the impulse of the Spirit of God upon him; or otherwise he could not have expressed himself with such certainty, and have given the particulars of what he should do, as in the following clauses:

and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and yet he had no weapon in his hand to do it with, (^{<0173>}1 Samuel 17:50), but it was revealed to him that he should do it, and he believed it; though the Philistine no doubt looked upon all this as romantic:

and I will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; not only this man's carcass, which should fall and become a prey to fowls and wild beasts, but the carcasses of the Philistine army, which fleeing upon the fall of their champion, and pursued by the Israelites as they were, would be cut off, and become the food of wild creatures, (see ^{<0172>}1 Samuel 17:52); though some think the plural is put for the singular, and that it only means his carcass, who was a Philistine; but the host of the Philistines, carries it to the other sense: and this would be done,

that all the earth may know there is a God in Israel; not only the land of Canaan or Palestine, but the whole earth, and all the inhabitants of it, who should hear of the fall of this giant by such means, and of the rout of the Philistine army upon it; the report of which no doubt was spread far, and near.

Ver. 47. *And all this assembly shall know*, etc.] The congregation of Israel, and church of the living God, great part of which were now gathered together, and were spectators of this wonderful event:

that the Lord saveth not with sword and spear; that is, by outward means and instruments, by arms and armed men; he does not save by them only, or by them always; he can save as well without them as with them:

for the battle [is] the Lord's; it is under his direction; the issue and event of it depend on his will, and are owing to him; or, as the Targum,

“from the Lord is the victory of wars,”

it is he that gives it to whom he pleases:

and he will give you into our hands; not only this Philistine into the hands of David, but the army of them into the hands of the Israelites; David knew, and was assured of this by the Lord, and it was on this he relied, and was what animated him to engage with this champion in the manner he did.

Ver. 48. *And it came to pass, when the Philistine arose*, etc.] Or prepared for the encounter, and was in all probability in great wrath and fury at hearing what David said, and which hastened him to it:

and came and drew nigh to meet David; as fast as his unwieldy body, and heavy load of armour on him, would admit of:

that David hasted and ran toward the army; the army of the Philistines, from whence this champion came:

to meet the Philistine; to get up to him before he could draw his sword, or put himself in a posture to make use of any weapon to strike at David with.

Ver. 49. *And David put his hand in his bag*, etc.] The shepherd's scrip, in which he had put the five stones he took out of the brook:

and took thence a stone; and put it into his sling he had in his hand:

and slang [it], and smote the Philistine in his forehead; it is made a difficulty of how he should smite him on his forehead, when he had a helmet of brass upon his head, (¹1 Samuel 17:5); in answer to this Kimchi observes, that some say, that when David said he would give his flesh to the fowls of the air, at the mention of that he looked upwards, and what was upon his forehead fell backwards, and then David slung and

smote him; or he might put back his helmet to talk with David, and hear and be heard the better; and having nothing to fear from an unarmed man, might neglect to put it forward again; or there might be some open space left in the helmet for him to look through, in at which the stone might pass; so the Targum renders it, he smote him in the house of his eyes, so the stone passed through the eye hole into his brain: but after all, supposing his forehead ever so well covered, as the stone slung by David was under a divine direction, so as to hit a person in motion, it came with a divine power, which nothing could resist; and supposing this, of which there need no doubt, it could as easily pass through the helmet of brass, as pierce into his forehead and sink there; nor can this be thought the least incredible, if what Diodorus Siculus^{f379} relates of the Baleares be true, that they were so dexterous at slinging, that they not only would sling stones bigger than others could, and were so directed, that they seldom missed their mark, being inured to it from their youth, but would even in battle break in pieces shields, helmets, and all kinds of armour, with which bodies were covered:

that the stone sunk into his forehead; and so into his brain, as a stone is immersed and sinks in water, when thrown into it; with such force did it go, and with so much ease did it make its way, through the direction and power of God:

and he fell upon his face to the earth; Jarchi observes, that it was most natural for him to have fallen backwards, being struck upon his forehead; but so it was, that David might have no trouble to cut off his head, for by this means he fell nearer to him.

Ver. 50. *So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone*, etc.] And with them only, without any other warlike weapon:

and smote the Philistine, and slew him; smote him with the stone, which brought him to the ground, and then slew him with his own sword, as afterwards related:

but [there was] no sword in the hand of David; when he engaged with the Philistine, and smote him, for he had put off all his armour, (⁽⁴⁰⁷³⁾1 Samuel 17:39).

Ver. 51. *Therefore David ran and stood upon the Philistine*, etc.] Upon his carcass, as it lay prostrate on the ground, and trampled on him, in just contempt of him who had defied, reproached, and despised the armies of Israel:

and took his sword, and drew it out of the sheath thereof; which no doubt was a very large one, and required a good deal of strength to unsheathe it, and use it; and therefore either David, though so very young, was naturally very strong, or he had at this time a more than ordinary measure of strength given him:

and slew him; for it seems that by the blow of the stone he was only stunned, and fell to the ground, but still had life in him, which David soon put an end to by his own sword:

and cut off his head therewith; by which it would appear to both armies looking on that his business was done, and he was thoroughly dispatched:

and when the Philistines saw their champion was dead; of which the cutting off his head was a demonstrative proof, and which they could discern at a distance:

they fled; being struck with a panic at this unexpected event, and no doubt by the Lord; for otherwise, had they given themselves the least time to reflect on their own numbers and strength, they had no just occasion to flee; their safety not depending on a single man, though ever so strong: upon this occasion David penned the ninth psalm; (see ^{<300>}Psalm 9:1-20).

Ver. 52. *And the men of Israel and of Judah arose*, etc.] From their encampment and entrenchment, or they prepared for a pursuit:

and shouted, and pursued the Philistines; shouted when they first set out, and continued shouting as they pursued, to animate their own troops, and terrify the enemy:

until thou come to the valley, and to the gates of Ekron; which was one of the five principalities of the Philistines; so that they pursued them to their own cities, and to the very gates of them:

and the wounded of the Philistines fell down by the way to Shaaraim; a city in the tribe of Judah, and seems to be the same with Sharaim, (see Gill on ^{<656>}Joshua 15:36"). Josephus says ^{f380}, there were killed of the Philistines thirty thousand, and twice as many wounded:

even unto Gath, and unto Ekron; Josephus ^{f381} has it, to the borders of Gath, and to the gates of Ashkelon, which were two other principalities of the Philistines; according to Bunting ^{f382}, the whole chase was this, to the valley and river Sorek four miles; from thence to Ekron eight miles; to

Ashkelon twenty miles, and to Gath twenty four miles; that is, from the place where Goliath was killed.

Ver. 53. *And the children of Israel returned from chasing after the Philistines*, etc.] The remainder that escaped having got into their fortified cities:

and they spoiled their tents; which they left in their camp, all their armour, goods, money, and provisions, they found there, they seized upon as their prey and booty; these they did not stay to meddle with as soon as the Philistines fled, but first pursued them, and slew as many of them as they could, and then returned to the spoil; which was wisely done.

Ver. 54. *And David took the head of the Philistine, and brought it to Jerusalem*, etc.] After he had been introduced with it to Saul, and when he had passed through various cities in Israel, carrying the head in triumph; where he was congratulated by the women, who came out singing and dancing, and speaking highly in his commendation and praise: why he carried it to Jerusalem is not easy to say, this not being a royal city, nor was it wholly in the hands of the Israelites; part of it indeed was in the possession of Judah and Benjamin, but the stronghold of Zion was possessed by the Jebusites; and it is generally thought that it was to the terror of them that the head of Goliath was carried there. R. Joseph Kimchi thinks, that Nob, where the tabernacle was at this time, was surnamed Jerusalem, but for what reason cannot be said:

but he put his armour in his tent; not where the army was encamped before the engagement; for David had not his tent there, and beside the camp broke up upon this victory obtained; but rather in his tent or apartment at Bethlehem, when he returned thither, and where he laid up the armour he took from Goliath; though Abarbinel thinks, and so other Jews ^{f383}, that by his tent is meant the tabernacle of the Lord, called David's, because of his attachment to it; and certain it is that the sword of Goliath was either now, or at least hereafter, laid up there, (see ¹²²¹⁹1 Samuel 21:9); where all that went to sacrifice might see it, and call to mind this wonderful instance of the power and goodness of God, and praise him for it.

Ver. 55. *And when Saul saw David go forth against the Philistine*, etc.] Set out to meet him, and engage with him, as he might from the side of the mountain, where he was encamped:

he said unto Abner, the captain of the host; his own cousin, whom he had raised to this high post in the army, (^{<0143>}1 Samuel 14:50);

Abner, whose son [is] this youth? it is thought strange by many that Saul should not know who he was, when he had been often at his court, and served him as a musician, and had been very useful to him, and he loved him, and made him his armourbearer, and even had just now conversed with him about encountering with the Philistine, and had clothed him with his own armour: to get rid of the former part of the objection, some have supposed that this event happened before David was his musician and armourbearer, and is by anticipation spoken of in (^{<0164>}1 Samuel 16:14-23), but that the connection with this and the following chapter will not admit of; and besides, before this event, David is said to return home from Saul, (^{<0175>}1 Samuel 17:15); so that it is certain he had been at Saul's court, and in his presence before: but to remove this seeming difficulty it may be observed, that Saul, having laboured under a disorder of body and mind, might easily forget David, and his serving him in the above capacity; and to which the multiplicity of business, and of persons in a court, might greatly contribute; and what with the distance of time, and the different habits in which David appeared, sometimes as a musician, and sometimes as a shepherd, and at other times as a soldier, and always as a servant, it is no wonder the king should not know him again; though after all it is not about his person that he inquires, but whose son he was, what was his father's name, and from what family he sprung; for though Saul was made acquainted with this in the time of his disorder, and therefore sent to his father Jesse for him, and afterwards desired leave for his continuance; yet this might slip out of his memory in a course of time, he having had no personal knowledge of Jesse, nor any correspondence with him, but just at that time; and it behoved him to know the pedigree of David, since, if he was victorious, he was not only to be enriched by him, but to have his daughter for wife, and his family ennobled:

and Abner said, [as] thy soul liveth, O king, I cannot tell; he swore by the life of Saul, as Joseph by the life of Pharaoh, that he knew nothing of him; which need not at all seem strange, that a general of an army, always employed in military affairs, and often abroad, should know nothing of a domestic servant of Saul's, under the character of a musician, and not always at court either; and still less that he should be ignorant of his family, and know nothing of his father, who lived in obscurity in Bethlehem, and was an old man in those days.

Ver. 56. *And the king said, inquire thou whose son the stripling [is].*] Still the question is the same, being very desirous of knowing of what family he was, for the reason before given, (see Gill on “~~17:55~~ 1 Samuel 17:55”).

Ver. 57. *And as David returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, etc.]* Carrying his head in triumph, and no doubt accompanied with the acclamations of the people:

Abner took him and brought him before Saul, with the head of the Philistine in his hand; to give an answer to the king’s question concerning him, who could best do it himself; and that Saul might have the opportunity of rewarding him, according to his merit, for so great a piece of service he had done for Israel, of which the head in his hand was a sufficient proof.

Ver. 58. *And Saul said unto him, whose son [art] thou, [thou] young man? etc.]* Still the question was such as did not necessarily imply ignorance of his person, but of his family:

and David answered, I [am] the son of thy servant Jesse the Bethlehemite; which doubtless refreshed the memory of Saul, and he quickly called to mind who he was. This interview was very probably at Gibeah of Saul, which was the place of his birth and residence, (~~10:26~~ 1 Samuel 10:26), and where he kept his court, and to which he returned after the above victory was obtained.

CHAPTER 18

INTRODUCTION TO FIRST SAMUEL 18

This chapter gives an account of the respect shown to David by Saul and Jonathan, by the servants of Saul, and all the people, and of what was said in his praise in the songs of the women, (^{Q1801}1 Samuel 18:1-7); which latter gave Saul a great offence, and upon which he envied him, and eyed him, and indeed sought his life, and removed him from him; and yet still he continued the darling of the people, behaving wisely among them, which greatly embarrassed Saul, that he knew not what to do, (^{Q1808}1 Samuel 18:8-16); he proposed his eldest daughter to him in marriage, which he had a claim to by killing the Philistine, and then he cheated him by giving her to another, (^{Q1817}1 Samuel 18:17-19); and then he offered his youngest daughter to him, on condition that he would bring him an hundred foreskins of the Philistines, execution of which he thought his life would be exposed to danger, which yet he performed, (^{Q1820}1 Samuel 18:20-27); and having the affection of his wife, and the good esteem of the servants of Saul, Saul was more afraid of him, and became his enemy, (^{Q1828}1 Samuel 18:28-30).

Ver. 1. *And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul,* etc.] In answer to his questions about his descent and family, and doubtless more things were talked of than are recorded:

that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David: he won his heart, made a conquest of his affections, these went out towards him, and cleaved unto him; such were the comeliness of his person, his graceful mien and deportment, his freedom and fluency of expression, his courage and undauntedness, joined with prudence, modesty, and integrity, that they strongly attached him to him:

and Jonathan loved him as his own soul; not only according to the excellency of David's soul, and the greatness of it, as that deserved respect and love, as Abarbinel suggests, but he loved him as he loved himself. There was a similarity in their persons, in their age, in the dispositions of their minds, in their wisdom, courage, modesty, faithfulness, and openness

of soul, that attracted them to each other, that they became as another self; as one soul, as Aristotle speaks ^{f384} of true friends: instances of very cordial friendship are given by Plutarch ^{f385}, as in Theseus and Pirithous, Achilles and Patroclus, Orestes and Pylades, Pythias and Damon, Epaminondas and Pelopidas; but none equal to this.

Ver. 2. *And Saul took him that day*, etc.] Not only into his favour, and into his service, but into his court; even on that very day he slew the Philistine, or however as soon as it could be done:

and would let him go no more home to his father's house; as he used to do before; when he only served as a musician to him, then he was only at court when Saul was in a melancholy disposition, and wanted him, and so was going and returning, and in the intervals kept his father's sheep, (⁴⁹⁷⁵⁻¹ Samuel 17:15); but now he would not suffer him to attend such business any longer, since he was not only to become a courtier, and be made a prince or noble, but to marry his daughter, according to the declaration he had made, with respect to any man that should kill Goliath.

Ver. 3. *Then Jonathan and David made a covenant*, etc.] A covenant of friendship; entered into a solemn agreement to keep up and maintain a cordial respect to each other, and to support each other's interest both in life and after death, whoever was the survivor; and in consequence of this David had a friend at court, when Saul fell out with him, and who pleaded his cause, and discovered his father's plots, and was the means of preserving David's life:

because he loved him as his own soul; so that this covenant was not founded in mere words, but in sincere and cordial affection, and was lasting and inviolable.

Ver. 4. *And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that [was] upon him*, etc.] As a token of his hearty love and true friendship, and that David might appear at court not in the habit of a shepherd, but in that of a prince:

and gave it to David, and his garments; his other garments besides his robe, and so clothed him from tip to toe, and which fitted him; for as there was a similarity in their souls, and the disposition of them, so in the make and hulk of their bodies, and in the stature of them:

even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle; these he gave him to accoutre himself with, that he might appear as a soldier, as well as like a

prince, and as another Jonathan, or rather the same; that they might seem as one, as alike in body, so in garb and habit.

Ver. 5. *And David went out whithersoever Saul sent him*, etc.] About any business whatsoever, especially about martial affairs, for which he was abundantly qualified:

[and] behaved himself wisely; in the management of them, using great prudence and discretion, and so failed not of success, and of recommending himself; the Targum renders it “prospering”; he was prosperous and successful in whatsoever he engaged, for the Lord was with him, and blessed him:

and Saul set him over the men of war; that is, of some of them, gave him the command of a troop; for Abner was captain or general of the army, and continued so:

and he was accepted in the sight of all the people; of all the people in the land in general, of all that knew or heard of him; being looked upon as a wise, valiant, and successful commander, and which gained him the esteem and affection of the people:

and also in the sight of Saul's servants; which was very much, and a rare thing, for servants are too apt to envy such as are rising in their credit and reputation; though this must not be understood of all, without exception; but of the generality of them; nor is the word “all” used of them, as is of the people; for some of them took the part of Saul afterwards against David, and were secretly his enemies, (see ¹⁰⁸²²1 Samuel 18:22-26).

Ver. 6. *And it came to pass, as they came*, etc.] The armies of Israel, with their commanders at the head of them:

when David was returned from the slaughter of the Philistine; either from the slaughter of Goliath, with his head in his hand, going to Jerusalem, and Saul accompanying him; or rather from the slaughter of the Philistines at some other time, the singular being put for the plural; since, according to the order of the history, this seems to be done after David was brought to court, and had been made a captain, and had been sent out on military expeditions, and had been successful therein, and from one of which he now returned:

that the women came out of all the cities of Israel; through which they passed:

singing and dancing; as were usual after great victories obtained, and deliverances wrought, the female sex being generally greatly affected with such things; since when things go otherwise they suffer much, and their fears rise high in time of battle; and when victory goes on their side, it gives them great joy, and which they used to express in this way:

to meet King Saul; the commander-in-chief, with his other officers, and David among the rest:

with tabrets, with joy, and with instruments of music; with pipes or flutes, which they both blew with their mouths, and played on with their hands, and other musical instruments exciting joy; the last word is, by the Targum, rendered,

“with cymbals;”

and so the Septuagint version; it signifies a musical instrument of three cords, according to Kimchi; and others, as Ben Gersom, understand it of principal songs, in which things wonderful, excellent, and honourable, were spoken of: (see ^{<0150>}Exodus 15:20 ^{<0134>}Judges 11:34). Such sort of women were among the Romans called Cymbaltriae and Tympanistriae ^{f386}, who shook the cymbals, and beat upon tabrets and drums at times of rejoicing.

Ver. 7. *And the women answered [one another] as they played*, etc.] They sung vocally to their instruments, and that by turns, one rehearsing one line or verse in the song, and then the other another:

and said, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands; which, if to be referred to the battle in the preceding chapter, as it commonly is, must be understood thus, that though Saul, in pursuit of the Philistines, slew many thousands of them, and David but one, even Goliath; yet the slaying of him was the occasion of slaying ten thousands, and therefore it is ascribed to him: but it seems rather that in some after battles David had been more prosperous and victorious than Saul, and therefore superior commendations are given him by the author of the song the women sung; which, however just it might be to give them, was not wise, since it served to irritate their king, as follows.

Ver. 8. *And Saul was very wroth, and the saying displeased him,* etc.] Partly because they called him plain Saul, and not King Saul; did not give him his royal title, which might serve to strengthen his suspicion, after suggested; and chiefly because they attributed a greater number of slain to David than to him, as follows:

and he said, they have ascribed unto David ten thousands, and to me they ascribed [but] thousands; and so had given more honour to an inferior officer than to the commander-in-chief, more to a subject than to a sovereign:

and [what can] he have more but the kingdom? there is nothing left out of their song, and nothing remains to be given him but that; some think that Saul knew, by the prudent behaviour of David, and the favour he was in with God and men, and by these commendations of the women, that the kingdom would be his; and that the words of Samuel were true, and would be confirmed, that the kingdom would be rent from him, and given to his neighbour better than he. This clause, with (~~OR~~ 1 Samuel 18:9-11), is left out of the Greek version, according to the Vatican copy.

Ver. 9. *And Saul eyed David from that day and forward.*] Instead of looking pleasantly, and with a smile, upon him, as a courtier and favourite, he was justly entitled to by his gallant behaviour, he looked at him with a sour, ill natured look; he looked at him with an evil, spiteful, malicious, and envious eye; or he diligently watched and observed all his motions and actions, whether they tended to disloyalty and treason, to dethrone him, and take the kingdom to himself, which he was suspicious of; he laid wait for him, as the Targum, and laid snares too, as the following history shows.

Ver. 10. *And it came to pass on the morrow,* etc.] After the women had met him with their music and dancing, and when returned home:

that the evil spirit from God came upon Saul; thinking on the above things that had passed, he became melancholy:

and he prophesied in the midst of the house; either really, delivering out divine songs, as the prophets did; according to Abarbinel, he foretold that David would be king, and the kingdom would be taken from him, and given to him; or he feigned himself a prophet, mimicking their motions and gestures; or, as the Targum, acted like a mad man, or a fool, uttering foolish words, and using ridiculous gestures, which seems most agreeable to the evil spirit in him:

and David played with his hand as at other times; upon his harp, to remove the evil spirit, or melancholy disposition from Saul; for though he was now advanced at court, and an officer in the army, and high in the affections and applause of the people: yet he did not think it below him to act as a musician, to do service to his prince; of such an humble, kind, and ingenuous disposition was he:

and [there was] a javelin in Saul's hand; a kind of spear, or half pike, which he had taken into his hand on purpose to kill David while playing; for persons in such circumstances as his, as they are very mischievous, so very subtle at contriving.

Ver. 11. *And Saul cast the javelin*, etc.] Out of his hand at David:

for he said; in his heart, determining in his mind:

I will smite David even to the wall [with it]; he determined to cast it with such force and violence, that it should pierce through David, and enter into the very wall, by the side of which David was:

and David avoided out of his presence twice; to escape the javelin cast at him; either he went out at the first time of its being thrown, and then came in again, when he threw it a second time at him, upon which he also withdrew; or this was one of the times, and the other some time after, of which (see ¹⁹¹⁰1 Samuel 19:9). Abarbinel thinks, that David, while he was playing, his eyes were so fixed upon his own hands, that he was not aware of the javelin, and turned himself from Saul without intention both times, and so escaped without knowledge of it; such was the good providence of God towards him, and which, when Saul perceived, it wrought upon him, as follows.

Ver. 12. *And Saul was afraid of David, because the Lord was with him*, etc.] Protecting and preserving him, prospering and succeeding him, giving him victory over his enemies, and favour among the people; the Targum is,

“the Word of the Lord was for his help.”

Procopius Gazaeus interprets it of the Holy Ghost, whose grace was vouchsafed unto him: he might be afraid in his melancholy fits, that as he had attempted to take away the life of David, that David would contrive and seek an opportunity, and take away his life, and seize the kingdom which God had given him, and his being with him strengthened these fears:

and was departed from Saul; so that he was destitute of courage, and greatness of mind, and of wisdom and prudence, and became mean and abject, and exposed himself to the contempt of his subjects.

Ver. 13. *Therefore Saul removed him from him*, etc.] From court, partly that he might be out of his sight, having such an hatred of his person that he could not bear to see him, and partly that he might be safer from any designs of his upon his life, which he might fear, because of his treatment of him:

and made him his captain over a thousand; not out of respect to him, and in honour of him, but partly to cover his malice, and please the people, and partly in hope that he might be slain by the enemy at the head of his troop:

and he went out and came in before the people; or at the head of them, as the Targum; he led them out to war, and returned with them in safety, with victory and in triumph, with great honour, and highly respected by them; quite contrary to the intention and hope of Saul.

Ver. 14. *And David behaved himself wisely in all his ways*, etc.] Both in the court and in the camp, in whatsoever service he was employed; or “prospered”^{f387}, as the word also signifies; for, generally speaking, those that behave wisely succeed well; in this he was a type of Christ, (²⁵²¹³Isaiah 52:13); the reason of it follows,

and the Lord [was] with him; from whom he had his wisdom and success; the Targum is,

“the Word of the Lord was for his help.”

Ver. 15. *Wherefore when Saul saw that he behaved himself very wisely*, etc.] So that he could get no advantage against him, and he succeeded and was prosperous in all his enterprises, and was more and more in favour with the people:

he was afraid of him; lest the time was drawing near that the kingdom should be rent from him, and given to David.

Ver. 16. *And all Israel and Judah loved David*, etc.] The verb is singular, and denotes that everyone of them loved him in all the tribes of Israel, as well as in Judah his own tribe; in such general esteem was he, and so much had he got the hearts and affections of the people:

because he went out and came in before them; the people, as in (^{<09183>}1 Samuel 18:13); so the Septuagint version, in which, according to the Vatican copy, the verses (^{<09187>}1 Samuel 18:17-19) are wanting.

Ver. 17. *And Saul said to David*, etc.] Not in friendship and good will to him, but designing to lay a snare for him:

behold, my eldest daughter Merab, her will I give thee to wife; most interpreters understand it, that he was obliged to this by promise, on account of David's slaying Goliath, (^{<09175>}1 Samuel 17:25); but Abarbanel is of another mind, and he rightly observes, that the words referred to are not the words of Saul, but of the men of Israel, who might suppose what the king would do; or if they heard anything like it spoken by Saul, it was only in a hyperbolical way, signifying he did not care what he gave, and what he parted with, to the man that killed the Philistine, but was not strictly bound to this particular thereby; nor did David ever claim such promise, nor did Saul think himself bound to do it, but proposes it as an instance of his great kindness and favour, as he pretended, and therefore expected great returns for it, as follows:

only be thou valiant for me, and fight the Lord's battles: he knew he was a valiant man, and ready enough to fight; but he expected that in consideration of such a favour, and such high honour as this, that he would exert himself in an extraordinary manner, and engage in hazardous attempts, and show himself worthy to be the son of a king, in the defence of him and of his country, and for the glory of the God of Israel; all this he suggests, when his view was, that he should expose his life to such danger, that it might be hoped it would be taken away:

for Saul said; not openly and verbally, but in his heart; he thought within himself,

let not mine hand be upon him; he had attempted to lay hands on him, or to kill him with his own hands, but now he thought better, and consulted his credit among the people:

but let the hand of the Philistines be upon him; he hoped by these means that he would fall by their hands at the head of his troop, while he was displaying his valour, and hazarding his life for the good of his king and country; what Saul contrived proved his own case, he died in battle with the Philistines, (^{<09104>}1 Samuel 31:4).

Ver. 18. *And David said unto Saul*, etc.] Surprised at the offer Saul made him, yet not refusing it, but expressing himself with great modesty and humility:

who [am] I? as to his person, parentage, and employment, mean and despicable, at least in his own eyes, a type of the lowly Jesus, (⁴⁰¹²Matthew 11:29);

and what [is] my life? keeping sheep, for from thence was he taken and advanced; though some think his meaning is, that to hazard his life, as Saul proposed, was not equivalent to such an honour he meant to confer upon him, and that he was ready to do it at all times:

[or] my father's family in Israel; though in an honourable tribe, and was an honourable family, yet it seems not to be very great, at least was not in David's esteem worthy of such high advancement, as that one of it should be so nearly related to the king; Ben Gersom thinks David has reference to the original of his family, Ruth the Moabitess:

that I should be son in law to the king? as he would be by marrying his daughter.

Ver. 19. *But it came to pass, at the time when Merab, Saul's daughter, should have been given to David*, etc.] Either when the giving of her to him was talked of, or when the time fixed for her marriage was come:

that she was given to Adriel the Meholathite to wife: Saul either having in reality never designed she should be given to David, only proposed it to please the people, or to affront David, and expose him to shame and confusion by the step he meant to take, or however he soon changed his mind; though Abarbinel's notion is, that the young lady had disposed of herself to this person without her father's knowledge, which seems not likely; the person she was given to was the son of Barzillai the Meholathite, (⁴²⁰³2 Samuel 21:8); and some have observed, as the curse of God on this match, that all her sons were delivered to the Gibeonites, and hanged up, as related in the same place; for though these sons are said to be brought up by Michal, they were bore by Merab to him.

Ver. 20. *And Michal, Saul's daughter, loved David*, etc.] His youngest daughter fell in love with him, because of the comeliness of his person, his gallant behaviour, his wise conduct, and the general esteem and reputation he was had in, as may be supposed:

and they told Saul, and the thing pleased him; not that his daughter loved David, or that he should be his son-in-law, but that he should have an opportunity, as he hoped, of destroying David, which he had lost by giving his elder daughter to another; as also of retrieving his credit with the people, which was greatly sunk by using David in the manner he did, who had become the darling of the people.

Ver. 21. *And Saul said, I will give him her, that she may be a snare to him*, etc.] The cause and occasion of his fall and ruin, by means of what he should propose to him as the condition of marriage; but instead of proving a snare to him, as he hoped, she was the means of his deliverance, when Saul sent messengers to slay him, (¹⁰⁹¹1 Samuel 19:11-17),

and that the hand of the Philistines may be against him; provoked by what he should put him upon doing to them. The scheme he had in his head after appears, and what he now said was not openly said before his servants and courtiers, whom he did not trust with his secrets, but this he said within himself, conceived and contrived it in his own mind:

wherefore Saul said to David; who was as yet at court, or whom he sent for on this occasion:

thou shalt this day be my son in law in [the one of] the twain; by marrying one of his two daughters; signifying, that he would not defer the marriage, or put it off to a longer time, as he had done before, but that he should be married immediately to one or other of his daughters; and seeing he could not have the eldest, she being disposed of, he should have the youngest, and so be equally his son-in-law. If we read the words without the supplement, “shalt be my son-in-law in the two”, or in both, the sense is, that he should have them both; and so the Jews say ^{f388}, that he married them both, first Merab, and after her death Michal; or that he should be his son-in-law on two accounts, one by betrothing Merab, though he was not married to her, and the other by being married to Michal, so that he would be doubly his son in law; but the sense, according to the supplement, is best.

Ver. 22. *And Saul commanded his servants, [saying], commune with David secretly*, etc.] And persuade him to marry Michal, and assure him of Saul’s real regard to him, and good intention towards him; for it seems that David being ill used in the affair of his eldest daughter, did not listen to the

proposals of Saul as to the youngest, and therefore Saul took this method to bring him into them:

and say, behold, the king hath a delight in thee; bore a good will towards him, had an high opinion of him, and it would be a pleasure to him that he should be his son-in-law:

and all his servants love thee; which might be true in general, excepting some few; which was no small mortification to Saul, though he here pleads it, and puts his servants on making use of it to gain his present purpose:

now therefore be the king's son in law; accept of the proposal he has made, and marry his youngest daughter.

Ver. 23. *And Saul's servants spake these words in the ears of David,* etc.] Those before related, which Saul commanded them to speak, which they delivered exactly according to their orders, with an audible voice, clearly, plainly, and distinctly, so that David might hear and understand them:

and David said, seemeth it to you [a] light [thing] to be a king's son in law; a small a trifling matter, an easy thing to come into, every thing requisite to it:

seeing that I [am] a poor man; and not able to give a dowry suitable to the daughter of a king; it being usual in those times for a man to give a dowry to, and not receive a portion with a wife; and which also was the custom of the Germans, as Tacitus^{f389} relates; and this was to be according to the rank and quality of the person married, and which in this case David was not equal to:

and lightly esteemed? not by the people of Israel and Judah, who loved him, as he was loved even by the servants of Saul, at least in profession; but by Saul himself, who had slighted him in giving his elder daughter to another man, when he had promised her to him, which was discouraging to David, and resented by him.

Ver. 24. *And the servants of Saul told him, saying, on this manner spake David.*] Such and such words were spoken by him, to this purpose; the sum and substance of them were expressive of his unworthiness to be a king's son-in-law, and of his inability to bring a dowry suitable to her quality.

Ver. 25. *And Saul said, thus shall ye say to David*, etc.] In answer to his objections, and in order to remove them, and especially what concerned the dowry:

the king desireth not any dowry, but an hundred foreskins of the Philistines, to be avenged of the king's enemies; that is, he required or desired no other dowry of David, but that he would slay an hundred Philistines, and bring their foreskins to him; by which he would be able to know that they were Philistines he slew, not Israelites who were circumcised; though it cannot well be thought that Saul should have any suspicion of that, or take such a method to prevent it; but as those were almost, if not altogether, the only uncircumcised persons that were their neighbours, since the Arabians, Edomites, Midianites, etc. received circumcision from their ancestors, it would be a clear case to him that these were the men he slew; and whom he the rather pitched upon, because they were his enemies, and the enemies of Israel, and abhorred of the Lord; which carried in it a show of zeal for the glory of God, and the good of his people, and because he hoped David would fall by them in the enterprize, or however render himself very odious to them, and they would bear him ill will, and seek his ruin. Strabo^{f390} reports of the people in Carmania, that no man among them marries a wife before he cuts off the head of an enemy, and brings it to the king; and the king lays up the skulls in a treasury, and he is the most famous that has the most heads brought unto him. Saul chose not heads, but foreskins, for the reasons before given:

but Saul thought to make David fall by the hand of the Philistines; he hoped in the enterprize the Philistines would be too powerful for him, and kill him.

Ver. 26. *And when his servants told David these words*, etc.] That the king desired no other dowry than an hundred foreskins of the Philistines:

it pleased David well to be the king's son in law; on such conditions; partly because of the honour of it, and partly because of his love to Michal; and chiefly because it would give him an opportunity of destroying the enemies of God, and of his people, as well as such a match would lead the way, and be a step in Providence to ascend the throne designed for him in due time:

and the days were not expired; neither for the bringing in of the foreskins, nor for the consummation of the marriage.

Ver. 27. *Wherefore David arose and went, he and his men, and slew of the Philistines two hundred men,* etc.] This he did himself, for the verb is singular, and which were an hundred more than required; this he did to show his regard to the orders of Saul, and his obedience to him, and to testify the sincerity of his afflictions to his daughter, for whose sake he risked his life in this expedition, as well as to express his zeal for God, and his country, against their avowed enemies; the Greek version has only one hundred men, (see ^{<10184>}2 Samuel 3:14);

and David brought their foreskins; along with him to Saul's court, having taken them off when slain. Josephus says ^{f391} he cut off their heads, and brought them to him, and he makes the number to be six hundred; neither are according to the text, but to make his history more agreeable to the Gentiles, (see ^{<10182>}1 Samuel 18:21); an Arabic writer ^{f392} makes mention of a people, that cut off the genital parts of men, and gave them to their wives for their dowry:

and they gave them in full tale to the king; the messengers David sent in with them, even the full tale of two hundred, which were as many more as were demanded:

that he might be the king's son in law; being now as desirous of it as the king was:

and Saul gave him Michal his daughter to wife; which he could not in honour refuse to do, seeing he had performed the condition he had required. David's marriage of the younger sister, when upon various considerations it might have been expected that he should have married the elder, may be an emblem of Christ's espousing the Gentile church, when the Jewish church, her elder sister, is neglected by him, she having rejected him.

Ver. 28. *And Saul saw and knew that the Lord [was] with David,* etc.] This he perceived by the favour he gave him among men, by overruling all the steps Saul took to do him hurt, for his good, and in giving him success in all that he engaged in; the Targum is,

“that the Word of the Lord was for the help of David:”

and [that] Michal, Saul's daughter, loved him; and therefore could entertain no hope of making use of her as an instrument of his ruin, but, on

the contrary, would, out of her great affection to her husband, betray the designs of her father against him, and do all she could to preserve him.

Ver. 29. *And Saul was yet the more afraid of David*, etc.] Because the Lord was with him, and his wife loved him; so that he feared he should never be able to accomplish his designs, and that this marriage, which he intended as the means of his ruin, would pave the way for his ascending the throne:

and Saul became David's enemy continually; was every day giving fresh evidence of his enmity against him; before it was by fits, and at certain times, there were some intervals; but now enmity was rooted and habituated, and was constant and continually showing itself.

Ver. 30. *Then the princes of the Philistines went forth*, etc.] Out of their cities in troops, to revenge and spoil the land of Israel, being enraged at their defeat when Goliath their champion was slain, and at the injury and dishonour done them by David very lately in slaying two hundred of them, and taking off their foreskins; and, as the Jews say^{f393}, having heard of the marriage of David, and understanding the Israelites had a law, that a newly married man might not go to the war the first year, took this opportunity of invading and spoiling them; whereas David understood that law better than they, and knew it referred not to a voluntary war, but to that which was the command of God against the seven nations; and even in that case, as some think, it did not oblige such persons to remain at home, but left it to their choice to do as they pleased:

and it came to pass after they went forth; and were met and opposed by the Israelites, by the troops of Saul, under different commanders:

[that] David behaved himself more wisely than all the servants of Saul; showed himself to be more expert in the art of war, and formed designs with great wisdom and prudence, and which he as wisely executed, as well as with great courage and valour, to the annoyance and defeat of the enemy, and to the advantage, defence, and safety of the people of Israel; or he was more “prosperous” than they, as the Targum, and so others interpret it; he was more successful in his attacks on the Philistines, and in his skirmishes with them:

so that his name was much set by; he was in high esteem with the people; his name was “precious”^{f394} to them, as the word signifies; they made mention of it, as, Ben Gersom interprets it, with great honour and glory; so

that Saul failed much, and was greatly disappointed in the scheme he had formed against him,

CHAPTER 19

INTRODUCTION TO FIRST SAMUEL 19

This chapter relates the dangers David was exposed unto through Saul's enmity at him, and his deliverance from them, as by the notice Jonathan gave him of his father's designs against him, and by his kind interposition on his behalf, (^{<0910>}1 Samuel 19:1-7); by David's slipping out of Saul's presence, when he was about to cast a javelin at him, (^{<0918>}1 Samuel 19:8-10); by Michal's letting him down through a window, when Saul sent messengers to kill him, and by deceiving them with an image laid in his bed in the room of him, (^{<0911>}1 Samuel 19:11-17), and again by Samuel's protection of him at Naioth, whither David fled, and where Saul sent messengers after him, and at length came himself; and instead of laying hands on David, both he and the messengers were set a prophesying, (^{<0918>}1 Samuel 19:18-24).

Ver. 1. *And Saul spake to Jonathan his son*, etc.] Who was heir to his crown; and though he knew he loved David, and was in strict friendship with him, yet he might hope, that as his succession to the kingdom was in danger, as he thought, and that David was his rival in it, his mind would be alienated from him; and that he would listen rather to a father than a friend, and would see where his true interest lay, and abandon David, yea, seek his ruin, which Saul was intent upon

and to all his servants; who yet pretended to love David, and as he himself said they did, and some of them might; with these he might rather hope to succeed, as they were attached to him, and might be secretly enemies of David, and therefore to these, as well as to his son, he spake, and gave his orders:

that they should kill David; as if he was a traitor, and an usurper of his throne, and one that had a design upon that, and upon his life; finding he could do nothing by the schemes, and snares, and stratagems, he used in a private manner, he grew outrageous and furious, and openly declared his views, and laid his injunctions on his son and servants to take away David's life, as a very dangerous person to his crown and government.

Ver. 2. *But Jonathan, Saul's son, delighted much in David,* etc.] In his company and conversation; he loved him with a love of complacency, and was constant and steadfast in it, and which was a kind providence to David; for by this means he came to the knowledge of Saul's designs upon him, and could the better guard against him:

and Jonathan told David, saying, Saul my father seeketh to kill thee; to inform him of which was acting the part of a sincere and faithful friend:

now therefore, I pray thee, take heed of thyself until the morning: it seems it was now evening when he informed him of it; and as he knew not what emissaries Saul might have out that night in quest of him, he advises him to take care of himself, and not expose himself to any danger, and to keep a strict guard about him; and in the morning he would try to conciliate his father to him, when he might hope, having slept upon it, that he would be in a better temper, and more disposed to hear what might be said to him:

and abide in a secret [place], and hide thyself; he seems to suggest as if it was not safe for him to be in his own house, and in his own bedchamber that night, but that it was advisable to retire to some private place, where it might not be known or suspected that he was there. By what follows he means some field, and a private place in it.

Ver. 3. *And I will go out,* etc.] In the morning, at the same time his father used to take his morning walk:

and stand beside my father in the field where thou [art]; on that side of him next to David, that he might not see him, and yet be so near, that David might hear what passed between them:

and I will commune with my father of thee; speak in favour of him, and endeavour to dissuade him from attempting to take away his life, which was of so much importance and usefulness in the commonwealth of Israel:

and what I see that I will tell thee; what David could not well hear he would inform him of, and what he could perceive in the countenance of Saul, as well as conclude from his words, that he would make known to David, that so he might know better what he had to do, and provide for his safety.

Ver. 4. *And Jonathan spake good of David unto Saul his father,* etc.] Observed to him what a good man he was, and what good things he had

done, what wisdom and prudence he had shown in the management of all his affairs, what valour and courage in all his expeditions, what faithfulness and integrity to his king and country in every instance:

and said unto him, let not the king sin against his servant, against David; by taking away his life; which would have been a great sin indeed, a sin against the law of God, which forbids murder, and which would have been attended with sad aggravations of cruelty and ingratitude:

because he hath not sinned against thee; had not disobeyed any of his orders, but faithfully served him in everything, and much less ever thought to take away his life, or seize his crown, as he might imagine:

and because his works [have been] to thee-ward very good; by slaying the Philistines, when he and his army were in the utmost terror; by driving away the evil spirit from him, through playing on his harp before him; as well as by commanding his troops, and leading them against the Philistines, and obtaining victory over them.

Ver. 5. *For he did put his life in his hand,* etc.] Exposed himself to the utmost danger, when no one in all the camp of Israel would do the like:

and slew the Philistine; Goliath of Gath, who defied the armies of Israel; against him he went unarmed, only with his sling and stones, and fought him, and slew him:

and the Lord wrought a great salvation for all Israel; by his hand, so that they were delivered from their enemies, who fled before them, and they pursued them, and got a complete victory over them:

thou sawest [it], and didst rejoice; he was an eyewitness of David's going forth against the Philistine, and slaying him, and of all the happy effects of it, which then greatly affected him, and he could not forbear expressing great joy on that occasion:

wherefore then wilt thou sin against innocent blood, to slay David without a cause? and so entail the guilt of it on himself and family.

Ver. 6. *And Saul hearkened unto the voice of Jonathan,* etc.] Not only heard him out what he had to say, but was affected with it, and wrought upon by it, and was convicted for the present that he was wrong in seeking the life of David, and therefore would desist from it; the Lord working

upon his mind by what Jonathan said, and inclined him to listen to it, and act accordingly:

and Saul sware, [as] the Lord liveth, he shall not be slain; this oath he added to what he said to Jonathan, for the confirmation of it; and which was taken either with a real intention to keep it, though that intention did not long continue; or with a view to deceive Jonathan, that he might acquaint David with it, and so prevent his flight and escape, and that he might the more easily fall into his hands; but the former seems rather to be the case.

Ver. 7. *And Jonathan called David*, etc.] Out of his lurking place in the field, after Saul was returned home:

and Jonathan showed him all these things: which had passed between him and his father, and particularly the oath he had made that he should not be slain:

and Jonathan brought David to Saul: introduced him at court again, and into the presence chamber of Saul; who, in appearance, received him courteously, and a reconciliation was seemingly made:

and he was in his presence as in times past; when he was first received at court, and in great esteem both with Saul and his courtiers.

Ver. 8. *And there was war again*, etc.] Between Israel and the Philistines; it does not appear that either of them sent out their whole force, only some parties or detachments, between which there were skirmishes:

and David went out and fought with the Philistines; he went out with his thousand men, over which he was made captain, (^{ORIG}1 Samuel 18:13); for he had not the command of the whole army; that belonged to Abner:

and slew them with a great slaughter, and they fled from him; he killed many of them in his engagements with them, and the rest fled, and he returned victorious; which stirred up the envy and increased the jealousy of Saul, to observe which this is related.

Ver. 9. *And the evil spirit from the Lord was upon Saul*, etc.] His melancholy and frantic disorder returned upon those victories of David, and he grew envious, jealous, spiteful, and malicious:

as he sat in his house with his javelin his hand; which either describes the posture he was in when the evil spirit came upon him; or the effects of it, he became dull and melancholy, did not care to go abroad, but kept at home, and was suspicious of everybody; and therefore kept a javelin in his hand to defend himself; or it may be rather to dispatch David with it, when an opportunity should offer, which quickly did:

and David played with [his] hand; on some instrument of music, particularly the harp, to drive away the evil spirit, the melancholy disorder, from Saul; which showed his humility, that though he was an officer in the army, had a considerable post in it, yet deigned to act the part of a musician to Saul, and his great kindness and affection for him his sovereign, willing to serve him what he could to promote his health and comfort, and the trust and confidence he put in his promise and oath, or rather in the providence of God for his protection in the way of his duty, though he knew how spiteful and injurious Saul had been to him.

Ver. 10. *And Saul sought to smite David even to the wall with his javelin,* etc.] To strike it through him, and fasten him to the wall with it, as he had attempted before, (^{<D>}1 Samuel 18:11);

but he slipped away out of Saul's presence: he perceived his design, and being of great agility of body, moved out of his place before him very nimbly:

and he smote the javelin into the wall; he threw it with such force that it entered into the wall, and stuck there; so great was his resolution to destroy David, and such the rage and passion that he was in, and such his strength of body, and which, in person; in his circumstances, is strangely exerted at times:

and David fled, and escaped that night; it being towards night, or in the evening, very probably, when this affair happened; upon which he departed from Saul's court, and went to his own house, and so escaped the danger he was exposed to for the present.

Ver. 11. *And Saul sent messengers unto David's house,* etc.] Supposing that he was gone thither; where this was is not said, very likely in Gibeah, where Saul lived:

to watch him; that he might not get out from thence in the night:

and to slay him in the morning; the reason why he did not order them to break into the house, and slay him at once, but wait till morning, seems to be, lest should he be alarmed by their breaking in, he might take the advantage of the night, and easily escape, or another person through mistake might be slain for him; and therefore, that they might be sure of him, they were to watch till it was broad daylight, when they could not well miss him. Josephus ^{f395} says, the orders to watch him until morning were, that he might be taken and brought to a court of judicature, and be condemned and put to death, which was usually held in a morning; but Saul's orders to the messengers were to put him to death themselves, and he had no notion of dealing with him according to a formal process of judgment:

and Michal, David's wife, told him, saying, if thou save not thy life tonight, tomorrow thou shalt be slain; meaning, if he did not take the benefit and advantage of the night to make his escape, he would not be able to do it in the morning; the house being so beset, as she perceived, by persons whom she might suspect were sent by Saul to destroy him, knowing the ill will her father bore to him, or a messenger at the same time might be dispatched to her, either from her brother Jonathan, or from one of her friends at court, acquainting her with the design against David, and the danger he was in. Upon this occasion David penned the fifty ninth psalm, (see ^{<480>}Psalm 59:1-17).

Ver. 12. *So Michal let David down through a window*, etc.] In like manner as Rahab let down the spies from her house in Jericho, when the king's messengers were in quest of them, (^{<00215>}Joshua 2:15); and as the disciples let down the Apostle Paul at Damascus, to preserve him from the designs of the Jews upon him:

and he went, and fled, and escaped; he departed from his house, and ran with all the haste he could, and escaped the messengers that had beset the house, and were waiting for him.

Ver. 13. *And Michal took an image*, etc.] Or "teraphim", as the word is; which, if the same with those that Rachel stole from her father, they seem to be of the same sort with the penates or household gods of the Heathens, which were privately kept by Michal; for, had David known of them, he would not have suffered them to have been in his house. Aben Ezra supposes they were images made in the form of men under such a constellation, a sort of talismans, to receive the heavenly influences, and

which being consulted, foretold things to come; and R. Isaiah is of opinion, that Michal chose and placed these in the bed, that her father might conclude, when he should hear of them, that David had found them; and by thus means know that his intention was to kill him, and therefore fled; but to consult such images was very far from David, and without it he knew Saul's intention. Abarbinel makes mention of several sorts of teraphim, some for idolatry, some to draw down the heavenly influences, some to know the time of the day, a sort of dials; some were made after the form of a man known, and like him in his form and features; and women, he says, used to have the forms or statues of their husbands, that they might have them continually before them, because of the great love they had to them; and of this sort he supposes were the teraphim of Michal, and which is approved of by Abendana; and that this image had the likeness of an human face is very probable, or it could not have so well answered her purpose:

and laid [it] in the bed; where David used to lie, that it might seem to be he himself;

and put a pillow of goats' [hair] for his bolster; she took the finest of the goats' hair, which she had in the house, women being used to spin in those days, even great personages, and put it into a pillow, and made a bolster of it, and put it under the head or block of the image, which would sink it, being soft, and so look like a sick man, whose face could not easily be discerned; though some think this goats' hair was put about the head of the image, to make it look the more like an human head; goats' hair being very much like human hair ^{f396}, and of different colours, and such a colour might be chosen as was most like David's, (see ~~2001~~ Song of Solomon 4:1); the Targum interprets it, a bottle of goats skins, that is, a leathern bottle or bag made of goats skins, such as they used to put wine into; hence the conceit in the Midrash ^{f397}, that a bottle of wine was put instead of David: but the pillow or bolster had the form of a leathern bag or bottle; the Septuagint version is very odd,

“and put the liver of goats at his head;”

and so Josephus says ^{f398}; and it is observed ^{f399}, that the liver of a goat will move a long time after it is taken out, and so make a show of the palpitation of the heart: but then this was put, not within the bed, but at the head of the image:

and covered [it] with a cloth; to keep her sick husband warm, as she would have it understood.

Ver. 14. *And when Saul sent messengers to take David*, etc.] Either the same who in the morning inquired for David, or those staying longer than Saul expected, and fearing they were negligent or corrupted, he sent others: to whom

she said, he [is] sick; and in bed, and cannot be spoke with; this lie she told through her affection to David, and to preserve his life; and this stratagem she devised to gain time, that while she was amusing the messengers with this tale of hers, before they could discover the truth of the matter David would be out of their reach; whereas, had she denied his being at home, or signified that he had made his escape, they would have immediately pursued after him, and he would have been in danger of being taken by them.

Ver. 15. *And Saul sent the messengers [again] to see David*, etc.] Not to visit him, or to see how he was, or inquire of his health, in a kind manner, but to see his person, whether he was sick or not, and whether he was there or not; for Saul might suspect some deceit was used, because the messengers took the report of Michal, and saw not David, nor attempted to see him; but now they have strict orders to see him, and not take Michal's word as before, (~~1~~1 Samuel 19:14); wherefore the supplement again may be left out:

saying, bring him up to me in the bed; if so bad that he was not able to rise, or not fit to be taken out of his bed, his orders were, that he should be brought to him in it; resolved he was to have him, sick or well:

that I may slay him: not content that he should die a natural death, or willing to wait for it, he is in haste, being full of wrath and malice, to slay him himself.

Ver. 16. *And when the messengers were come in*, etc.] To David's house, and into the room where he was supposed to lie:

behold, [there was] an image in the bed to their great surprise; they expected to see David, but instead of him the teraphim, as in (~~1~~1 Samuel 19:13); if they had been in the room before, and thought they had seen David in the bed, they might be the more surprised to find that it was only an image they saw:

with a pillow of goats' [hair] for his bolster; (see Gill on “¹ Samuel 19:13”).

Ver. 17. *And Saul said unto Michal*, etc.] After the messengers returned and reported what they had seen, when Saul either came to her at her house, or sent for her to his palace:

why hast thou deceived me so; for deceiving his messengers was deceiving him, by pretending David was sick and in bed, when she had placed an image there, and had let him down through a window, and he was gone:

and sent away mine enemy, that he is escaped? as if she was more obliged to gratify the wicked passion of a father, than to provide for the safety of her husband:

and Michal answered Saul, he said unto me, let me go, why should I kill thee? though she was concerned for the preservation of her husband, yet not for his honour and credit, nor for her own veracity; she attempted not to vindicate her husband from the charge of being an enemy to Saul, as she might; but suggested that he was so desperate a man, that if she had offered to have detained him, he would have murdered her, and threatened, if she did, he would do when both were false; that he should say to her let me go, when it was she that advised him to go, and that if she refused he would kill her; which lies were framed by her to excuse herself, at the expense of her husband's reputation.

Ver. 18. *So David fled and escaped*, etc.] Fled from his own house, and escaped falling into the hands of the messengers of Saul, and so of Saul himself:

and came to Samuel to Ramah; the place where Samuel dwelt: to him David chose to come, by whom he had been anointed king, that his faith might be strengthened by him with respect to the kingdom, which might be weakened by what had happened to him; and that he might have some advice and direction from him what he should do, and what course he should take in his present circumstances, and that he might receive some comfort from him under his present troubles:

and told him all that Saul had done to him; how he had spoken to his servants to kill him, had cast a javelin at him himself, and had sent messengers to his house to slay him:

and he and Samuel went and dwelt in Naioth; which was in or near to Ramah, as appears by (~~1~~1 Samuel 19:19); which perhaps was a more retired place, and so chosen for the sake of conversation between them, or reckoned a more safe place. Here being a school or college of the prophets, might be a kind of an asylum, and where it might be thought Saul would not attempt to lay hands on David, should he know where he was; for if the Philistines gave no disturbance to the hill of God, and the prophets in it, (~~1~~1 Samuel 10:5); it might be reasonably concluded Saul would not; so the Targum paraphrases it, “he and Samuel went and dwelt in the house of doctrine”, or in the school, the school of the prophets. R. Abimi the Nothite, or Naiothite, mentioned in the Talmud^{f400}, is supposed^{f401} to be of this place; it is said^{f402} to be six miles from Jerusalem to the north.

Ver. 19. *And it was told Saul*, etc.] By some officious persons who saw David at Ramah, and observed that he and Samuel went together to Naioth:

saying, behold, David [is] at Naioth, in Ramah; or near it; according to R. Isaiah, Ramah was the name of a hill, or mountain, so called from its height, and Naioth the name of a place on it; it signifies pastures and pleasant places, as meadows and pastures are; and here in the fields near Ramah was the house of doctrine, as the Targum calls it, or the school of the prophets, being pleasant and retired, and fit for study.

Ver. 20. *And Saul sent messengers to take David*, etc.] Notwithstanding the sacred place he was in, so bent was he upon his destruction:

and when they saw the company of the prophets prophesying; or praising, as the Targum; singing hymns and songs of praise to God, under the inspiration and influence of the Spirit of God, who endited these songs for them, and excited them to sing them; these prophets belonged to the school or college of prophets at Naioth, whom the messengers saw when they came thither, and found them thus employed; or “when he saw”,^{f403} for the word is singular, that is, the chief of the messengers, or everyone of them, so Kimchi:

and Samuel standing [as] appointed over them; he was president of the college, and he stood to instruct and teach them in the knowledge of divine things: so the Targum,

“standing, teaching over them or by them,”

and to direct and assist them in singing their songs of praise:

the Spirit of the Lord was upon the messengers of Saul, and they also prophesied: or praised, as the Targum; sung hymns and songs of praise as the prophets did, and were so taken up with these religious exercises, that they forgot, or were inattentive to the business they were sent to do. Ben Gersom thinks they foretold things to come, and so Abarbanel; and particularly that they prophesied that David should rule over all Israel, and that God would not suffer Saul to slay him; and so were indifferent to, and negligent of doing the errand they were sent on, yea, purposely avoided it.

Ver. 21. *And when it was told Saul,* etc.] That the messengers he had sent, instead of seizing on David, were prophesying of him, or however were attending to services of a different nature than what they were sent upon:

he sent other messengers, and they prophesied likewise; when they came to the same place:

and Saul sent messengers again a third time, and they prophesied also; joined the rest in singing praises, or foretelling future events.

Ver. 22. *Then went he also to Ramah,* etc.] That is, Saul; his messengers not returning to him, when he sent one after another to take David, at length he set out himself from Gibeah to Ramah:

and came to a great well that [is] in Sechu; which was either the name of a man, the owner of the well, or a place near to which the well was, and is commonly thought to be the same with Shochoh, (~~1~~ 1 Samuel 17:1); at such places there was generally a concourse of people at certain times, to fetch water for the inhabitants of the place, and for the watering of flocks and herds, and so a proper place to stop at, and ask the following questions:

and he asked and said, where [are] Samuel and David? for his messengers not returning to him, he could not be sure where they now were, though he had heard they were at Naioth:

and [one] said, behold, [they be] at Naioth in Ramah; at the house of doctrine, or school in Ramah, as the Targum; thus one at the well replied, in answer to his question, who had seen them go there, or knew they were there.

Ver. 23. *And he went thither to Naioth in Ramah*, etc.] He went on from the well towards the place:

and the Spirit of God was upon him also; as well as upon his messengers; even the spirit of prophecy, as the Targum:

and he went on and prophesied until he came to Naioth in Ramah: in this he differed from his messengers; they did not prophesy till they came to that place, but Saul began to prophesy before he came thither, as he was in his way from the well to it.

Ver. 24. *And he stripped off his clothes also*, etc.] Not all his clothes, but his upper garments, as men in such circumstances used to do, as the prophets sometimes did, and as it seems his messengers had done; according to Jarchi, R. Isaiah, and others ^{f404}, he stripped himself of his royal robes, and put on the habit of the scholars, the disciples, and sons of the prophets:

and prophesied before Samuel in like manner, as the messengers had done, singing such like songs, or foretelling such like things as they did; he and they speaking not of themselves, but as they were moved by the Holy Spirit of prophecy; for such gifts have sometimes been bestowed on men that were destitute of the grace of God, as Balaam, Caiaphas, and others;

and lay down: or “fell down” ^{f405}, as persons in an ecstasy or trance: and lay

naked all that day, and all that night; not entirely naked, both without his upper garment or royal robes, or else his armour; so an unarmed man is said to be naked, though otherwise he has his clothes on: thus Gelon having conquered the Carthaginians, and made himself master of all Sicily, went into the forum “naked” (i.e. unarmed), and declared he would restore the government to the citizens, wherefore a naked statue for him was erected in the temple of Juno ^{f406}; so Quinctius Cincinnatus was found ploughing naked ^{f407}, who cannot be supposed to be without any clothes on him. Jarchi, from Menachem, reports, that he had heard from an Arabian, that the word the Targum makes use of for “naked”, signifies, in the Arabic language, one that is furious or mad, as persons in an ecstasy, or under a prophetic spirit, sometimes seemed to be; now Saul was kept and held in such circumstances a whole day and night, that David might have an opportunity of making his escape, and getting at such a distance from him that he could not overtake him:

wherefore they say, [is] Saul also among the prophets? this became a common saying, a proverbial expression, at least was now revived and observed with admiration; that Saul, who had behaved himself in so ill a manner, as an enemy to so good a man, should be found among the prophets of the Lord, and prophesying as they did.

CHAPTER 20

INTRODUCTION TO FIRST SAMUEL 20

David fleeing from Naioth came to Jonathan, and acquainted him with his circumstances, and entreated his favour, (~~1~~1 Samuel 20:1-8); which Jonathan promised, and renewed the covenant with him, (~~1~~1 Samuel 20:9-17); a scheme was formed between them, by which David might know whether Saul was reconciled to him, and he might come to court, (~~1~~1 Samuel 20:18-23); which being tried, Jonathan found it was not safe for him to appear, (~~1~~1 Samuel 20:24-34); of which he gave notice by the signals agreed on, (~~1~~1 Samuel 20:35-40); and they took their leave of one another with strong expressions of affection and attachment to each other, (~~1~~1 Samuel 20:41,42).

Ver. 1. *And David fled from Naioth in Ramah*, etc.] While Saul was prophesying, or lay in a trance there:

and came; to Gibeah, where Saul dwelt, and had his palace, and kept his court:

and said before Jonathan; whom he found there, and for whose sake he thither fled to have his advice, and to use his interest with his father, and be his friend at court:

what have I done? what [is] mine iniquity? and what [is] my sin before thy father, that he seeketh my life? surely, as if he should say, I must have been guilty of some very great crime, and yet I am not sensible of it; canst thou tell me what it is that has so provoked thy father, that nothing will satisfy him but the taking away of my life, which he seeks to do?

Ver. 2. *And he said unto him, God forbid, thou shalt not die*, etc.] He could not believe his father had any such intention; and that if he discovered anything of that kind, it was only when he was in a frenzy, and a melancholy disorder had seized him; and that David had nothing to fear on that head, and that he would secure him from all danger in that respect; the thing was too gross and detestable to be credited:

behold, my father will do nothing, either great or small, but that he will show it me; such an interest had he in him, and in his favour, being his son and heir to his crown, and having done many warlike exploits, which had the more endeared him to him, that he made him privy to all his secret designs, and took his opinion in all matters of moment and importance:

and why should my father hide this thing from me? his design of taking away the life of David, if he had really formed one:

it [is] not [so]; Jonathan concluded, from his ignorance of it, there was nothing in it, and that it was only a surmise of David's; and yet it is strange that Jonathan should know nothing of the messengers being sent to David's house to take him, and of others sent to Naioth after him, and of Saul's going there himself with such a design; and if he did know anything of the matter, he made the best of it to David, partly to allay his fears, and partly that his father might not appear so black and vile as he really was.

Ver. 3. *And David sware moreover, and said*, etc.] To assure Jonathan of the truth of it, that he did most certainly seek after his life, of which, as he had no doubt himself, by an oath he endeavoured to remove any that might be in Jonathan, who was not willing to believe his father could be guilty of so foul a crime:

thy father certainly knoweth that I have found grace in thine eyes: that he was high in his favour, that he had a great value for him, and he had a large share in his love and friendship, and that was the reason why he hid from him his base intentions:

and he saith, let not Jonathan know this, lest he be grieved; as he would be, both for the evil his father would be guilty of, and the danger David, his beloved friend, would be in:

but truly, [as] the Lord liveth, and [as] thy soul liveth, [there is] but a step between me and death; as appeared by his casting a javelin at him, (^{<0981>}1 Samuel 18:11), sending messengers to his own house to slay him, (^{<0991>}1 Samuel 19:11), and others to Naioth to seize him, (^{<0992>}1 Samuel 19:20), and coming himself thither with an intention to kill him, (^{<0993>}1 Samuel 19:22,23), and in each of these instances he had a narrow escape for his life; and this he declared in the most solemn manner by an oath, for the confirmation of the truth of it to Jonathan.

Ver. 4. *Then said Jonathan unto David*, etc.] Now giving credit to what he had said, and in order to comfort and support him under the apprehensions he had of danger:

whatsoever thy soul desireth, I will even do [it] for thee; for the preservation of his life, by speaking to his father on his behalf, endeavouring to dissuade him from his evil intentions, or by hiding and concealing him in some obscure place, that he might not execute his evil designs upon him, or by any method he could point out to him.

Ver. 5. *And David said unto Jonathan*, etc.] Moved that the following method might be taken as a trial of the disposition of Saul's mind towards David:

behold, tomorrow [is] the new moon; the first day of the month, which was kept solemnly with burnt offerings and peace offerings, (see ⁴⁰⁰⁰Numbers 10:10 28:11). Some say ^{f408}this feast was not kept for the new moon, but because it was the day of the feast of trumpets or the first day of the new year, which fell together on that day; the calends, or first day of the month, was with the Heathens sacred to deity ^{f409}, in imitation of the Jews:

and I should not fail to sit with the king at meat; it had been usual for him at such a time to sit at table with the king; next to him, as Jarchi interprets it, either as his son-in-law, or as one of his princes; the custom being for the king, and his family and nobles, to eat together on that day upon the peace offerings; and it was the duty of David to attend at that time, and it might be expected he would:

but let me go; he asked [leave] of Jonathan, who had power in his father's absence to grant it, he not being yet returned from Naioth:

that I may hide myself in the fields, unto the third [day] at even; or until the time of the evening of the third day, as the Targum, which was the evening of the second day of the month; for that was the third from that evening they were discoursing together, as Ben Gersom observes; the fields he proposed to hide himself in were near to Gibeah, and he doubtless meant some cave in those fields, where he might be, and not be seen by men; though it cannot be thought that he remained, or proposed to remain, in such a place during that time, where he would be in want of food, but that he would abide incognito among his friends somewhere or another, until the festival was over.

Ver. 6. *If thy father at all miss me*, etc.] Or diligently inquires after me:

then say, David earnestly asked leave of me, that he might run to Bethlehem his city: the place of his birth, called the city of David, where he was born and had lived, (~~4004~~Luke 2:4 ~~4072~~John 7:42), which was not far from Gibeah, and whither he could soon run; and which shows the haste he proposed to make, and his eager desire to be there, and which also is signified by his earnest and importunate request; for all this might be true, and no lie of David, framed for an excuse; and after he had hid himself some time in the field, until it was evening, he might go to Bethlehem, and return soon enough to meet Jonathan in the field at the time fixed by them on the third day:

for [there] is a yearly sacrifice there for all the family; it was customary for the family of Jesse one day in a year, and as it should seem on a first day of the month, and perhaps the first day of the first month, or New Year's Day, to have an anniversary feast by way of gratitude and thankfulness for the mercies of the year past, and for the continuance of them for time to come; in which the family rejoiced together at the great goodness of God unto them, (~~4092~~1 Samuel 9:12).

Ver. 7. *If he say thus, [it is] well*, etc.] It is very well, it is very good and right in him to do so:

thy servant shall have peace; it will be a token that the wrath of the king was removed, and that his mind was well disposed towards David, and things had taken an happy turn, and would issue in his peace and prosperity:

but if he be very wroth; with Jonathan for giving leave, and with David for going away:

[then] be sure that evil is determined by him; that he has a settled obstinate malice in his heart, which is become implacable and inveterate, and confirmed in him; and that it is a determined point with him to slay David if possible, which he hoped to have an opportunity of doing at that time in which he was disappointed, and caused such wrath in him.

Ver. 8. *Therefore thou shall deal kindly with thy servant*, etc.] By informing him how his father's mind stood affected to him, that he might conduct himself accordingly, either by appearing at court, or by providing for his safety by flight:

for thou hast brought thy servant into a covenant of the Lord with thee; a covenant of friendship between Jonathan and David, of which Jonathan was the first mover, and so is said to bring or persuade him into it; called the covenant of the Lord, because made in his name and fear, and before him as a witness of it; and this David pleads as an argument with Jonathan, to deal kindly and faithfully by him in the present case:

notwithstanding, if there be in me iniquity, slay me thyself: or pass sentence upon him to be slain; which, if guilty, he might have power to do in his father's absence, and which David desires might be done, notwithstanding the covenant of friendship between them, should he appear to deserve it by any action of his, of which he was not conscious; this expresses the strong sense he had of his own integrity, and served to confirm Jonathan in his opinion of it;

for why shouldest thou bring me to thy father? deliver him up into his hands to be put to a cruel death by him, or give him the trouble of doing it, when he might as well dispatch him at once.

Ver. 9. *And Jonathan said, far be it from thee*, etc.] To entertain such a thought of me, or to have the least suspicion of me, that I should conceal my father's ill intentions against thee, if known to me;

for if I knew certainly that evil were determined by my father to come upon thee, then would I not tell it thee? certainly I would; canst thou doubt of my kindness and fidelity? surely thou hast no reason, when such a covenant of friendship subsists between us, and there has not been the least breach of it on either side.

Ver. 10. *Then said David to Jonathan, who shall tell me?* etc.] The disposition of Saul's mind towards him, whether he gave a kind answer to the report of Jonathan concerning him:

or what [if] thy father answer thee roughly? or hard words, as the Targum, whether he answers in a kind, loving, and smooth manner, or whether in a rough and angry one: the question is here, how he should be informed of this, since especially, if in the latter, it would not be safe for Jonathan to come himself to him, nor could he well trust the message with any other. Abarbinel thinks, that the first of these expressions is by way of question, who should declare to him his father's will and intention, whether good or bad: and the latter by way of outcry, woe unto me, if thy father should answer thee roughly; I greatly fear he will chide thee for my sake; my heart

will be filled with sorrow if thou shouldest suffer reproach and rebuke on my account.

Ver. 11. *And Jonathan said unto David, come, and let us go out into the field,* etc.] That they might more fully, and freely, and familiarly talk of this affair between them, without any danger of being overheard by the servants of Saul, as they were in his palace, where they now were:

and they went out both of them into the field; which belonged to Gibeah.

Ver. 12. *And Jonathan said unto David, O Lord God of Israel,* etc.] Or by the Lord God of Israel, I swear unto thee; for this is the form of the oath, as Jarchi and Kimchi observe:

when I have sounded my father about tomorrow any time, [or] the third [day]; searched, inquired, and found out how his disposition is:

and, behold, [if there be] good toward David; if he is well disposed to him, as may appear by speaking respectfully of him, or kindly inquiring after him, and by being satisfied with the account given him:

and I then send not unto thee, and show it thee; then let the vengeance of God fall upon me in some remarkable manner or another, as follows; or “shall I not then send unto thee, and show it thee”^{f410}? certainly I will; that is, I will send a messenger to thee to acquaint thee with it, who shall tell it, and cause thee to hear it, as from myself.

Ver. 13. *The Lord do so and much more to Jonathan,* etc.] Recompense evil more than can be thought of and expressed, should he neglect to inform David of the good disposition of Saul unto him:

but if it please my father [to do] thee evil; if he seems determined upon it to take away thy life:

then I will show it thee; not by a messenger, by whom it would not be safe to communicate it, lest by that means Saul would know where he was, and come and slay him; but Jonathan would come himself, and acquaint him with it:

and send thee away, that thou mayest go in peace; give him leave, and advise him to depart, and provide for his own safety, adding his blessing on him, and prayer for him:

and the Lord be with thee, as he hath been with my father; in the beginning of his reign, giving him counsel and advice in all things, and victory over his enemies, succeeding and prospering him in whatsoever he engaged in; the Targum is,

“the Word of the Lord be for thy help, etc.”

Jonathan seemed to be fully apprized that David was to succeed in the kingdom.

Ver. 14. *And thou shalt not only, while yet I live, show me the kindness of the Lord*, etc.] Such kindness as is well pleasing in the sight of God, and imitate what he shows to men, and which was covenanted, promised, and agreed to in the presence of the Lord, when David and Jonathan entered into covenant with each other; this Jonathan did not doubt of, and therefore did not make this a request:

that I die not; he had no fear nor dread on his mind, should David come to the throne while he was alive, that he would take away his life; which was usually done by tyrants and usurpers, when there were any that had a fairer title, and better claim to the throne than they.

Ver. 15. *But also thou shalt not cut off thy kindness from my house for ever*, etc.] His family should partake of it as well as himself:

no, not when the Lord hath cut off the enemies of David, everyone from the face of the earth; Saul and his sons, and everyone that should oppose his settlement in the kingdom: Jonathan’s meaning is, that the covenant between them should not be only between them personally, but include their posterity, as follows.

Ver. 16. *So Jonathan made [a covenant] with the house of David*, etc.] Not with David himself only, which was now renewed, but with his family also:

[saying], let the Lord even require [it] at the hand of David’s enemies; take vengeance on Jonathan, or on any of his posterity, should they break this covenant, by showing themselves enemies to David, and his crown; and, on the other hand, also on David, and his posterity, should they not show kindness to Jonathan and his seed, according to the tenor of this covenant.

Ver. 17. *And Jonathan caused David to swear again*, etc.] Or Jonathan added to make David swear^{f411}; having sworn himself to make a covenant of friendship with David and his family, he moved and insisted on it, that David should swear to keep covenant with him, and his family:

because he loved him; it was not so much for the good and safety of his offspring that he made this motion, and was so desirous of renewing and enlarging his covenant with David, as it was his strong love and affection for him; being on that account desirous that there might be the strictest friendship imaginable retained between the two families; or he made him swear by his love to him, as some understand it, which is not so likely; the former sense is better, for he himself swore by the Lord, (~~Q12~~ 1 Samuel 20:12,13);

for he loved him as his own soul; or “with the love of his soul”^{f412}; with the most cordial affection, with a truly hearty and sincere love, (see ~~Q15~~ 1 Samuel 18:1).

Ver. 18. *Then Jonathan said to David, tomorrow [is] the new moon*, etc.] The first day of the month, as David had before observed, (~~Q15~~ 1 Samuel 20:5);

and thou shalt be missed, because thy seat will be empty; or be inquired after, because not in his usual place at mealtime.

Ver. 19. *And [when] thou hast stayed three days*, etc.] From court, either at Bethlehem, which seems most probable, or in some other place incognito; however, not in the field he proposed to hide himself in, where he could not continue so long for want of food:

[then] thou shalt go down quickly, and come to the place where thou didst hide thyself; which makes it clear that he did not continue there during that time, but went elsewhere; from whence he was to come in haste at the expiration of three days, to the place he first hid himself in, and which was fixed upon to meet at:

when the business was [in hand]; when the affair was discoursed of, about getting knowledge how Saul was affected to David, and of informing him of it; or “on the day of work”^{f413}; or business, on a working day, as the Septuagint; and so the Targum, on a common day; when, as the Vulgate Latin, it was lawful to work on it; and such was the day when Jonathan and David conversed together about the above affair; it being the day before

the new moon, or first day of the month, on which day they used not to work: Some render it, “thou shalt three times go down”^{f414} to that place; and the sense is, that he should come on the morrow, and if he found not Jonathan there, he might conclude that as yet he knew nothing of his father’s mind, and therefore should come the day following that; and if he found him not then, to come on the third day, that so he might be on the spot, let him come on which day he would:

and shalt remain by the stone Ezel; which, because it signifies “going”, the Jewish commentators generally understand it as a sign to direct travellers which way to go; but one would think this should be an improper place for David to be near, since it must be where two or more ways met, and so a public frequented place; others think therefore it had its name from David and Jonathan often going thither, to discourse with each other; the Septuagint calls it Ergab; and so the place where Jonathan, the son of Saul, exercised himself by shooting darts, is called by Jerom^{f415}; it is said by Josephus^{f416} to be an hundred fifty furlongs (about nineteen miles), from Jerusalem, and from Jordan sixty, (about eight miles).

Ver. 20. *And I will shoot three arrows on the side [thereof]*, etc.] On the side of the stone Ezel; three are pitched upon, according to the number of the days David was missing:

as though I shot at a mark; as if he made the stone the mark he shot at; so that his shooting would not be taken notice of.

Ver. 21. *And, behold, I will send a lad*, etc.] That attended on him, and carried his bow and arrows, and fetched his arrows when he had shot them:

[saying], go, find out the arrows; where they are fallen, and return them:

if I expressly say unto the lad, behold, the arrows [are] on this side of thee, take them; on one side of him, whether the one or the other, which he would bid him take up, and bring them to him:

then come thou; David, out of the place where he hid himself:

for [there is] peace to thee, and no hurt, [as] the Lord liveth; he might appear, and not be afraid of being seen by any, since by this sign he might be assured that Saul was well affected to him, and would show him favour, and do him no injury; and that he might promise himself prosperity and safety, and be assured of it for the present.

Ver. 22. *But if I say thus unto the young man, behold, the arrows [are] beyond thee,* etc.] Being shot to a greater distance than where the young man was:

go thy way, for the Lord hath sent thee away; then he was to depart directly, without staying to have any conversation with Jonathan, which would not be safe for either of them, and so make the best of his way into the country, and escape for his life; for so it was ordered by the providence of God, that he must not stay, but be gone immediately: the signals were these, that if things were favourable, then he would shoot his arrows on one side of the lad, and David might come out and show himself at once; but if not, he would shoot them beyond him, by which he might know that he must flee for his life.

Ver. 23. *And [as touching] the matter which thou and I have spoken of,* etc.] The covenant they had made between them and their families:

behold, the Lord [be] between me and thee for ever: as a witness of the covenant, and a revenger of those that should break it; so the Targum,

“behold, the Word of the Lord be between me and thee a witness for ever.”

Ver. 24. *So David hid himself in the field,* etc.] Not directly, but at the time appointed; for he went to Bethlehem, and returned from thence before that time:

and when the new moon was come; the first day of the month, which was a solemn festival:

the king sat him down to eat meat; Saul sat down at his table to eat of the provisions that were set upon it; which it is very probable were the peace offerings for that day, which he, his family, and nobles, feasted on together; it is in the Hebrew, “he sat down at the bread”^{f417}, which is put for all the food on the table, and the provisions of it.

Ver. 25. *And the king sat upon his seat as at other times,* etc.] Upon the seat he usually sat on:

[even] upon a seat by the wall; on a couch by the side of the wall; or, as Jarchi and R. Isaiah say, at the head of the couch by the wall, which was the most honourable place; and Kimchi observes, it was the custom in

those days to eat meat sitting on beds or couches, (see ^{<0823>}1 Samuel 28:23-25);

and Jonathan arose; either in reverence to his father, when he came in and took his seat, or in respect to Abner upon his coming in, being the son of Saul's uncle, and general of the army; for though he arose, he did not depart, it is plain he sat down again, (^{<0823>}1 Samuel 20:34). Kimchi thinks, that after Jonathan had sat down at the side of his father, he arose and placed Abner there, because he would not be near his father, that if he should be wroth with him on account of David, he might not be near him to smite him:

and Abner sat by Saul's side; according to Josephus ^{f418} Jonathan sat at his right hand and Abner on the left, and it was usual for the master, or principal person, to sit in the middle; so Dido in Virgil ^{f419}. Abarbinel places them thus, Saul was at the head of the table, and David was used to sit by him, and Jonathan by David, and Abner by Jonathan; and now the king sat in his place, and Jonathan in his place, and Abner after him; and David's place being empty, Jonathan was left next to his father, without any between; wherefore he now arose from his place, and Abner sat on that side where Saul was, so that Abner was between Jonathan and Saul:

and David's place was empty; where he used to sit at table, he not being there, and no one taking it.

Ver. 26. *Nevertheless, Saul spake not anything that day*, etc.] About David's absence, took no notice of it, said nothing about it:

for he thought something had befallen him; some impurity, some nocturnal pollution, (see ^{<0856>}Leviticus 15:16);

he [is] not clean, surely he [is] not clean; which he repeated in his mind for the confirmation of it, and in contempt, and to the reproach of David; and in this way he accounted for his absence the first day, and so was easy, it not being lawful and fitting for an unclean person in a ceremonial sense to eat of the peace offerings, which Saul and his family were now partaking of.

Ver. 27. *And it came to pass on the morrow, [which was] the second [day] of the month*, etc.] The Targum is,

“and it was on the day after it, which was the intercalation of the second month;”

when the beginning of the month was judged of by the appearance of the moon, and there was a difficulty about that, what day it appeared on, two days were kept for it; and Abarbinel^{f420} is clear for it, that two days were kept in this month; but if this was not the case, since the remainder of peace offerings might be eaten the next day, (⁴⁸⁰⁷⁶Leviticus 7:16). Saul and his guests might meet on the second day for that purpose:

that David's place was empty: on that day also:

and Saul said to Jonathan his son; who he knew was David's friend and confident, and could give the best account of him:

wherefore cometh not the son of Jesse to meat, neither yesterday nor today; he accounted for his not coming yesterday, because he supposed he might be under some ceremonial uncleanness; but then that only lasted to the evening of that day; but not coming the second day when he was clean, he inquires after him; and not owning him for his son-in-law, by way of contempt, and to lessen him in the esteem of all at table, he calls him the son of Jesse.

Ver. 28. *And Jonathan answered Saul*, etc.] In reply to Saul's question, and to excuse David, he said,

David earnestly asked [leave] of me [to go] to Bethlehem; his own city, his native place, where his family lived, whom he was desirous to see, and yet chose not to go without asking leave; and as Saul was not at home, he asked leave of Jonathan, who was next to him, and acted for him; and he was very pressing and importunate in his suit, and therefore Jonathan could not well deny him it; and he hoped this would be sufficient excuse for his absence, especially when what follows should be observed.

Ver. 29. *And he said, let me go, I pray thee, for our family hath a sacrifice in the city*, etc.] In the city of Bethlehem where they lived, a peace offering on account of the new moon, and as an anniversary thanksgiving for the mercies of the year, (⁴⁹²¹⁶1 Samuel 20:6); and seeing, though he was not at the feast in one place, he observed it in another, his absence at court was the more excusable; and the rather, since it was kept by him with his own family, in his own city: besides, it is added,

and my brother he hath commanded me [to be there]; his elder brother Eliab, whose commands, as a younger brother, he judged he ought to obey; it is probable his father was now dead, since no mention is made of him, and his elder brother took upon him the command of the family:

and now, if I have found favour in thine eyes, let me get away, I pray thee, see my brethren: he should take it as a favour to have leave to depart, and be free for the present from waiting upon the king at court, and so have an opportunity of seeing his brethren, for which he had a great desire; having not seen them a long time, not even since he saw them in the camp, when he slew Goliath:

therefore he cometh not to the king's table: this was the reason of it, at least one reason of it, and Jonathan was not obliged to tell the whole.

Ver. 30. *Then Saul's anger was kindled against Jonathan,* etc.] For giving David leave to go, and for excusing him in this manner:

and he said unto him, thou son of the perverse and rebellious [woman]; most of the Jewish commentators supply it as we do, but the supplement of woman may as well be left out, and be read, "thou son of perverse rebellion"^{f421}; thou perverse and rebellious wretch, perverse in thy temper, and rebellious in thy conduct; for the design of the expression is not to reproach his mother, for which there seems no provocation, but Jonathan only; and the next clause confirms it, which expresses a concern for his mother's honour and credit; the Targum is,

"an obstinate son, whose rebellion is hard,"

or intolerable; according to which, Abarbinel says, it may refer to David:

do not I know that thou hast chosen the son of Jesse to thine own confusion, and unto the confusion of thy mother's nakedness? The above writer observes, that he does not say to his own confusion, because David would not reign in his lifetime, only after his death, but to the shame of Jonathan and his mother; to Jonathan's shame, who would be reckoned by men an arrant fool, to be so friendly to a rival, and who in all probability would jostle him out of the throne; and what would men say of him? that either he was not fit to reign, or had no right to the throne, that a son-in-law took place before him; and that his mother had played the whore, and he was no son of Saul, having nothing of his genius, temper, and disposition in him, as appeared by loving such his father hated; and besides,

his mother would not have the honour she expected, to be the mother of a king.

Ver. 31. *For as long as the son of Jesse liveth upon the ground, thou shalt not be established, nor thy kingdom,* etc.] He would not, though heir to the crown, be sure of it; it would be precarious to him, he would be in great danger of being deprived of it on the death of his father; and therefore it would be his highest wisdom to deliver David up to be slain, as it was his greatest folly to protect him, and provide for his satiety:

wherefore now send and fetch him unto me; send to Bethlehem for him to come to court directly:

for he shall surely die; or he is “the son of death”^{f422}; guilty of death, as the Targum, deserves to die, and Saul was determined upon his death if possible.

Ver. 32. *And Jonathan answered Saul his, father, and said unto him,* etc.] Making no answer to the charges of perverseness, rebellion, and folly brought against himself, which he bore with patience, but could not bear to hear his dear friend spoken against, and as worthy of death; and therefore in answer to that says,

wherefore shall he be slain? what hath he done? has he attempted to take away thy life? to deprive thee of thy crown? to settle himself upon the throne? what overt act of treason has he been guilty of; that he should die? on the contrary, has he not done many things worthy of immortal honour, for the good of the nation, and the glory of thy reign? and if God has determined the kingdom for him, and anointed him to it, what blame can be laid upon him? nay, should he not be the rather respected and honoured?

Ver. 33. *And Saul cast a javelin at him to smite him,* etc.] So provoked to wrath was he by what he said. It seems by this that Saul always had a javelin or spear in his hand, which is to be accounted for by the custom of those times; in other countries, as well as in this, the kings used to carry spears in their hands instead of sceptres, and which they used as such; so Justin^{f423}, speaking of the times of Romulus, says, that kings in those times had spears, as an ensign of royalty, which the Greeks call sceptres; and so the Greeks called sceptres spears^{f424}:

whereby Jonathan knew that it was determined of his father to slay David; for since he attempted to smite him, his own son, for speaking on his

behalf, it might be well concluded, that such was his settled wrath and malice, that he would if possible kill David, could he get him into his hands.

Ver. 34. *So Jonathan arose from the table in fierce anger*, etc.] Resenting his father's attempt to smite him, and his resolution to slay David:

and did eat no meat the second day of the month; not then at that meal he was just sat down to, nor at another time that day, his stomach was so full through indignation at his father, and grief for his friend David; and besides, being a mourner on the above accounts, he might not eat of the sacrifices:

for he was grieved for David; that his death should be determined upon by his father, and he in so much danger of it; as also that he himself must be parted from and lose so dear a friend, which was one reason he ate no meat that day: and another follows,

because his father had done him shame; the copulative “and” being wanting; and this he did by calling him a perverse and rebellious son, and representing him as an arrant fool, and particularly by casting a javelin at him to smite him.

Ver. 35. *And it came to pass in the morning*:, etc.] The next morning, the morning of the third day of the month:

that Jonathan went out into the field at the time appointed with David; he went to the place in the field, or near it, where David hid himself, and at the time agreed between them; which, Abarbinel says, was the time the nobles agreed on for walking, and motion, and for hunting, and casting of arrows, so that Jonathan could go forth without suspicion:

and a little lad with him; to carry his bow and arrows, and fetch his arrows when cast.

Ver. 36. *And he said unto his lad, run, find out now the arrows which I shoot*, etc.] He no doubt told him the mark which he should shoot at, the stone Ezel, and bid him look out about that for them:

[and] as the lad ran; before he had got to the mark:

he shot an arrow beyond him: or it; beyond the lad, or beyond the mark he shot at; purposely shooting with great strength, that he might exceed, and

thereby give notice to David how things stood, which was the sign agreed on.

Ver. 37. *And when the lad was come to the place of the arrow which Jonathan had shot*, etc.] To the mark which he told him he should shoot at, and whereabouts he might expect to find the arrow:

Jonathan cried after the lad, and said, [is] not the arrow beyond thee? he cried with a loud voice and said this, not so much that the lad might hear him, but that David, who lay hid near the place, might hear him; so that if they had no opportunity of seeing and conversing with each other through any person going by at that time, David might know by this sign that evil was determined against him, and must flee for his life; the Syriac and Vulgate Latin versions read, “behold, the arrow is beyond thee”; so Noldius^{f425}.

Ver. 38. *And Jonathan cried after the lad, make speed, haste, stay not*, etc.] But bring the arrows to him directly, that he might dismiss him; for, observing that no man was passing by, he was desirous of embracing the opportunity for a few minutes to have an interview with David alone before he fled:

and Jonathan’s lad gathered up the arrows; for though the textual reading is singular, the marginal is plural, to show, as Kimchi observes, that he cast three arrows, as he said he would, (^{<0911>}1 Samuel 20:20);

and came to his master; with them.

Ver. 39. *But the lad knew not anything*, etc.] What was meant by shooting the arrows, and by shooting them beyond where he was, and by bidding him make haste to bring them:

only Jonathan and David knew the matter; what was signified by them, those being signs agreed upon between them.

Ver. 40. *And Jonathan gave his artillery unto his lad*, etc.] “His vessels”^{f426} or instruments; his arms, as the Targum, his quiver, bow, and arrows:

and said unto him, go, carry [them] to the city; to Gibeah, to Jonathan’s house, or to his apartments at court there.

Ver. 41. *[And] as soon as the lad was gone*, etc.] Which David could observe from his lurking place:

David arose out of [a place] toward the south; to the south of the field in which he was hid, or to the south of the stone Ezel, near which he was; and so the Targum,

“and David arose from the side of the stone Atha, which was towards the south;”

Jonathan shooting his arrows to the north of it, lest the lad should have discovered David when he ran for them: and fell on his face to the ground; in reverence of Jonathan, as the son of a king, and in respect to him as his friend, who had so faithfully served him, and was so concerned to save his life:

and bowed himself three times: this was before he fell prostrate on the ground. Abarbinel observes, that bowing three; times was fit and proper to be done to a king; once at the place from whence they first see him, the second time in the middle of the way to him, and the third time when come to him; but though this may have been a custom in more modern times, it is a question whether it obtained so early; however it is certain bowing was as ancient, and therefore Xenophon^{f427} is mistaken in ascribing it to Cyrus as the first introducer of this custom; and be it that he was the first that began it among the Persians, it was in use with others before, as this behaviour of David shows:

and they kissed one another; as friends about to part:

and wept one with another: as not knowing whether they should ever see each other's face any more:

until David exceeded; in weeping more than Jonathan; he having more to part with, not only him his dear friend, but his wife and family, and other dear friends and people of God, and especially the sanctuary and service of God, which of all things lay nearest his heart, and most distressed him; (see ~~1~~ 1 Samuel 26:19); and many of his psalms on this occasion. Ben Gersom suggests that he wept more than was meet, through too much fear of Saul; but that seems not to be the case.

Ver. 42. *And Jonathan said to David, go in peace*, etc.] In peace of mind, committing himself, his family, and affairs, to the providence of God, who would take care of him, and keep him in safety from the evil designs of Saul; and particularly he would have him be easy with respect to what had

passed between them two, not doubting but it would be faithfully observed on both sides:

forasmuch as we have sworn both of us in the name of the Lord: had made a covenant with each other by an oath, in the name and presence of God as a witness to it:

saying, the Lord be between me and thee, and between my seed and thy seed for ever; as a witness of the agreement between them, including them and their offspring, and as a revenger of such that should break it. The Targum is,

“the Word of the Lord be between thee and me, etc.”

and he arose and departed; that is, David arose from the ground, and took his leave of Jonathan, and departed into the country for the safety of his person and life:

and Jonathan went into the city; into the city of Gibeah, where Saul dwelt and had his court.

CHAPTER 21

INTRODUCTION TO FIRST SAMUEL 21

This chapter relates that David went to Nob, and pretending he was on secret business for the king, got shewbread, and the sword of Goliath, from Ahimelech the priest, (^{<020>}1 Samuel 21:1-9); and that passing from thence to Gath, where he was known, through fear feigned himself mad, and so escaped from thence, (^{<021>}1 Samuel 21:10-15).

Ver. 1. *Then came David to Nob, to Ahimelech the priest,* etc.] The high priest, as Abarbinel rightly calls him; he was the brother of Ahijah, the son of Ahitub, who being dead he succeeded him; though some say ^{f428} he was the same; (see ^{<014>}1 Samuel 14:3 22:9); who was now at Nob, the tabernacle being there, whither probably it was removed by Saul, and where and at Gibeon, according to the Jews ^{f429}, it continued fifty seven years; as in the times of Joshua it was in Shiloh, in the tribe of Ephraim, of which tribe he was; and in the times of David it was placed in the tribe of Judah, to which he belonged; so in the times of Saul it was in Nob, a city of his tribe, twelve miles from Gibeah, according to Bunting ^{f430}; for that it was in the tribe of Benjamin appears by its being mentioned along with Anathoth, (^{<013>}Nehemiah 11:32); and according to Jarchi and Kimchi ^{f431} it was near Jerusalem, and so near that it might be seen from thence; some say they are the same ^{f432}; Jerom ^{f433} speaks of it as near Diospolis or Lydda. David, before he departed further off, was willing to see the tabernacle once more, and there worship his God, and inquire of him by the high priest, as he did, (^{<020>}1 Samuel 22:10); to direct him what way he should take, and that he would prosper and succeed him in it, grant him his presence, and keep him in safety:

and Ahimelech was afraid at the meeting of David; hearing that he was come or coming, he went out to meet him, but when he saw him alone he trembled; especially if he had heard of his having fallen under the displeasure of Saul, and that he now fled from him, therefore he might fear that he should fall into disgrace and danger should he entertain him:

and he said unto him, why [art] thou alone, and no man with thee? he might well wonder at it, and put such a question, seeing he was so great a man, both in the court and camp, and the king's son in law; he might therefore reasonably suspect something more than ordinary was the case, and which occasioned his fears.

Ver. 2. *And David said unto Ahimelech the priest,* etc.] In reply to his question, and to account for such an appearance he made without an equipage:

the king hath commanded me a business, and hath said unto me, let no man know anything of the business thereabout I send thee, and what I have commanded thee; he pretended he was upon a secret expedition, by the order of Saul, which none were to know of, no, not his own servants, and that was the reason why he came to him alone; which was a downright lie, and was aggravated by its being told only for the sake of getting a little food; and especially told to an high priest, and at the tabernacle of God, and when he was come to inquire of the Lord there; and was attended with a dreadful consequence, the slaughter of the Lord's priests there, which afterwards lay heavy on David's mind, (¹⁰²²1 Samuel 22:22); and is the very sin he is thought to refer to in (¹⁰²³Psalm 119:28,29). This shows the weakness of the best of men, when left to themselves; David who as much hated lying as any man did, fell into it himself:

and I have appointed [my] servants to such and such a place; to such a place, of such an one, not naming place nor person, that they might not be known; so the Targum calls it a place hidden and kept; and that David had some servants, though not now with him, who ate of the shewbread, appears from (¹⁰²⁴Matthew 12:3); whom Jonathan might send after him, to a place agreed on and appointed between them; so that this might be true.

Ver. 3. *Now therefore what is under thine hand?* etc.] Meaning, what food had he in his house?

give [me] five [loaves of] bread in mine hand; to take with him, for him and his servants in such a place:

or what there is present; or to be found ^{f434} in the tabernacle; if not five loaves, two, or three, or four, or what food soever he had by him.

Ver. 4. *And the priest answered David, and said, [there is] no common bread under mine hand,* etc.] In the tabernacle, though he might have such

in his own house; which was common for any man to eat of, even such as were not priests; but he had none there, and David was in haste to be gone because of Doeg, and could not stay till such was fetched:

but there is hallowed bread; such as was devoted to sacred use. Kimchi's father thinks this was the bread of the thank offering, to which Ben Gersom inclines; otherwise the Jewish writers in general understand it of the shewbread; and it is clear it was that from (^{<B216>}1 Samuel 21:6) and from what our Lord says, (^{<A124>}Matthew 12:4). Now this the priest had under his hand, being just taken off of the shewbread table, and was the perquisite of the priests; and which, though it was not lawful for any but priests to eat of, yet in this case of necessity he seemed willing to give it to David and his men, on this condition: if the young men have kept themselves at least from women; from their wives or others, and from any pollution by them, in any way or manner; but as this was also only of a ceremonial kind, it might as well have been dispensed with, had this been the case, as the other.

Ver. 5. *And David answered the priest, and said unto him*, etc.] In reply to the case of the young men his servants, and of himself too, who also was intended by the priest, though out of reverence to him not mentioned:

of a truth women [have been] kept from us these three days since I came out; reckoning either from the time he fled from Saul at Naioth, or from the time he left Jonathan, during which time both he and his men could have no converse with women, and receive no pollution by them; and this was the time which according to the law was required for the sanctifying of persons in this way, (^{<D295>}Exodus 19:15);

and the vessels of the young men are holy; their garments, as Kimchi, not being defiled with any ceremonial uncleanness, as by the touch of any unclean person: or what instruments soever they were provided with for their journey; or rather their bodies; (see ^{<A107>}2 Corinthians 4:7 ^{<S104>}1 Thessalonians 4:4); and with respect to the priest's saying that the bread he had was hallowed or sacred, and so not for common use, David replies,

and [the bread] is in a manner common; inasmuch as it was taken off of the shewbread table, and was now common to the priest and his family, though not to others, yet in case of necessity through hunger might be allowed to strangers:

yea, though it were sanctified this day in the vessel; even though it had been set but that day on the shewbread table, and so became holy to the

Lord; and yet even in such a case and circumstances as David and his men were in, it might be taken from thence and eaten of; for, as Abendana observes, nothing stands in the way of preservation of life, but idolatry, adultery, and murder; everything else may be done for the sake of that but them: or as in the margin of our Bibles, “especially when there is this day other sanctified bread”; that is, since other bread is this day put upon the shewbread table, in the room of that which has been taken away, whereby it is become holy to the, Lord; then that which is removed may be eaten, and be allowed to us in our circumstances. It seems by this that this was the sabbath day; for on that day the removal of the shewbread loaves was made, (⁴⁰⁸Leviticus 24:8); and R. Isaiah says, that it was at the going out of the sabbath that David came there; and which still makes it a more appropriate case, as produced by our Lord to justify his disciples in plucking ears of corn on the sabbath day, (⁴¹¹Matthew 12:1-4).

Ver. 6. *So the priest gave him hallowed [bread]*, etc.] Being satisfied with the account he gave of himself, and his young men, and of the lawfulness of it in case of necessity, acts of mercy being to be preferred to ritual services. Whether he gave him five loaves, as he desired, is not said; but the reason of his giving him such sort of bread is observed,

for there was no bread there; in the tabernacle, whatever might be in the house of the priest:

but the shewbread that was taken from before the Lord; from off of the shewbread table; and it seems to have been just taken off, it being sabbath day, and not as yet carried to the house of the priest, and divided among the other priests as usual; and which was then removed, to put hot bread, in the day that it was taken away; that is, new bread, twelve fresh cakes; for when the twelve, that had stood a week on the shewbread table were removed, twelve more were immediately put in their room, and it seems by this they were put hot there; but here arises a difficulty, how they could be put hot there, when it was not lawful to bake on a sabbath day. About this the Jews are divided; some say they were baked on the sabbath day, but the greater part say that baking did not drive away the sabbath, or it was lawful on the sabbath day; but others say that they were baked on the evening of the sabbath, and kept in the oven until the time of their being set upon the table^{f435}; and, as Abarbinel observes, the mouth of the oven might be stopped up till that time to keep in the heat; but others say^{f436} this heat was

miraculous, or that a miracle was wrought for the sake of it; which is not probable.

Ver. 7. *Now a certain man of the servants of Saul [was] there that day,* etc.] When David came to Nob, and asked bread of the priest, and had it, which this man was an eyewitness of, (^{<1371>}1 Samuel 22:9,10);

detained before the Lord; either because it was sabbath day, and so he might not travel, at least no more than two thousand cubits; or by some vow of his, which he was obliged to stay and perform; or on account of some impurity he had contracted, which he came to be cleansed from; or this detention was voluntary, in order to offer sacrifice to the Lord, or pray unto him, or to study the law of God in the tabernacle, pretending to be a very religious man:

and his name [was] Doeg, an Edomite, being by birth an Idumean, but a proselyte to the Jewish religion; or he was of the seed of Israel, but because he had dwelt in Edom, he was called an Edomite, as Kimchi thinks; just as Uriah is called for a like reason the Hittite:

the chiefest of the herdmen that [belonged] to Saul; Saul had his herds and men to look after them, and this man was set over them all, to see that they faithfully discharged their trust. The same officer the Romans called the praefect, or master of the cattle ^{f437}; (see Gill on “^{<1372>}1 Chronicles 27:29”), and (see Gill on “^{<1373>}1 Chronicles 27:31”); though this man was not only over the king’s cattle, but over those that kept them; and was in the same office as Phorbas was, under Laius king of Thebes ^{f438}, and Melanthius in Homer ^{f439}, and Faustulus to Amulius ^{f440}; but Abarbanel is of opinion that this is to be understood not of the keepers of herds and flocks, but of the shepherds or rulers of the people; and that this man was set over all the other magistrates and rulers of the people, hence said to be “set over the servants of Saul”, (^{<1374>}1 Samuel 22:9); and so Jarchi calls him “Ab Beth Din”, or father of the sanhedrim, or great court of judicature; who was detained in the tabernacle to learn the law there, that he might be the better qualified for his office; but Kimchi interprets it as we do, the chief of the keepers of the herd, and both the Septuagint and Josephus ^{f441} say that he fed the king’s mules.

Ver. 8. *And David said unto Ahimelech,* etc.] After he had given him some of the loaves of the shewbread:

and is there not here under thine hand spear or sword? any weapon, meaning in the tabernacle, and in his keeping, and at his disposal; he knew the sword of Goliath was there, and perhaps had a principal view to it, and put this question in order to get that in his possession:

for I have neither brought my sword nor my weapons with me; neither his sword, nor any part of his armour, but was come quite naked and unarmed and, as he pretended,

because the king's business required haste; still continuing his lie; whereas the true reason was, he was let down in haste by his wife through a window of his house, and could not stay to take his armour with him; and had lain hid for some time, and passed incognito from place to place, and without armour, that he might be the less known and observed, and least suspected; though it may seem strange that Jonathan had not provided him with a sword.

Ver. 9. *And the priest said, the sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom thou slewest in the valley of Elah,* etc.] (see ^{<097D>}1 Samuel 17:2,51);

behold, it [is here] wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod; the garment of the high priest, in which were the Urim and Thummim, and the breastplate, or the linen vestments of the priests; (see ^{<022B>}1 Samuel 22:18); which were laid up in a chamber for their use; and behind them the sword of Goliath was wrapped up in a linen cloth, and reserved as a monument of the goodness of God to Israel, and the salvation of them wrought by the hands of David, who slew Goliath with this his own sword, and brought it with him. The Targum understands this word, rendered “behind”, not of the place where the sword was, but of the time when the priest said this, and paraphrases the words,

“after he had inquired for him by the ephod;”

(see ^{<022D>}1 Samuel 22:10);

if thou wilt take that, take [it]; as if he should say, it is not mine to give thee, but thou mayest take it if thou pleasest; none has a better right to it; it is what thou tookest from the Philistine, and may take it again for thy use if thou art so inclined; and thou must either take this or none:

for [there is] no other save that here; in the tabernacle, nor even in the priest's house, nor in the city; for it was a city of priests, who did not wear swords:

and David said, [there is] none like that, give it me; and which, as he was capable of wielding and making use of, as it is plain he was by cutting off Goliath's head with it; so it might serve to strengthen his faith in God, as often as he looked upon it, that he would keep and preserve him, and in due time deliver him out of the hands of Saul, and all his enemies.

Ver. 10. *And David arose and fled that day for fear of Saul,* etc.] He had fled before for fear of him both from his own house, and from Naioth, (^{<0918>}1 Samuel 19:18 20:1); but now he fled out of the land of Israel, for fear of him; or it may be the reason of his fear and flight on this day was because of Doeg the Edomite, lest he should go directly to Saul, and tell him where he was; and therefore through fear of him would not stay any longer, but the same day he came, he fled:

and went to Achish the king of Gath; Gath, according to Bunting^{f442}, was twenty four miles from Nob. Achish, the king of it, is called Abimelech in the title of the thirty fourth psalm, (see ^{<0911>}Psalm 34:1), that name being common to the kings of the Philistines, as Pharaoh was to the kings of Egypt. It may seem strange that David should go into an enemy's country, and especially to the country of the Philistines, by whom he was mortally hated for the victories he had obtained over them, and the numbers of them he had slain; and particularly that he should go to Gath, the place of Goliath, their champion, whom he had slain, and whose sword he now had with him: but this is to be said for him, that such was the fury of Saul against him, and his resolution to slay him, that he was as safe in an enemy's country as in the land of Israel; and that if he must die, he might as well die in one place as another; and that he went particularly here, the reason might be, because all other lands were at peace with Saul, and so would have delivered him up to him, had he went elsewhere; but this people were at war with him, and he might hope not to be known by them; and if he was, that they might think it their interest, to detain such a person that was so serviceable to Saul, and so harmful to them; and being Saul's enemy, they might hope to engage him on their side against him; and besides, he might know that Achish was well disposed towards him, as he seems to be, and might like him never the worse for cutting off Goliath's head, who might not be heartily in the interest of Achish. After all, as

impolitic as this step of David's may seem to be, it is what great men have taken in their distress, to go over to their enemies, as Themistocles to the Molossians, and Alcibiades to the Lacedemonians.

Ver. 11. *And the servants of Achish said unto him*, etc.] Who knew who David was, and perceiving that he was respected by Achish:

[is] not this David the king of the land? of the land of the Philistines; so some render the words, "the king of this land"^{f443}; which belongs unto him for his conquest of Goliath; for this was what was proposed by him, that whoever was the conqueror should possess the kingdom; and seeing it belongs to him, O Achish, why dost thou admit him to court? thou wilt be driven from the throne, and we shall be his servants, and not thine^{f444}: but rather they mean the king of the land of Israel, having heard that he was anointed king by Samuel, and was to succeed Saul; or rather, they called him so because he led out the armies of Israel as their general, and being victorious was more respected than even Saul was; for they had heard what the women sung in their songs as follows:

did they not sing one to another of him in dances, saying, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands? which are the burden of their song, (^{Q987}1 Samuel 18:7); and from whence the servants of Achish concluded, that he was in greater authority or honour, and in greater esteem than Saul their king was.

Ver. 12. *And David laid up these words in his heart*, etc.] Pondered upon them, and thought them over in his mind, finding that he was known, and his character also, and considered with himself what might be the consequence of this:

and was sore afraid of Achish the king of Gath; lest he should be set against him, and be prevailed upon by his servants to take away his life, or deliver him up into the hands of Saul.

Ver. 13. *And he changed his behaviour before them*, etc.] Behaved like a fool, or a madman: or changed his "taste"^{f445}; which some understand of his reason, acted as if he was deprived of it; and others of his speech, his words and the accent of them, drawled them out, as such persons do:

and feigned himself mad in their hands; for in their hands he was, being taken by them, as the title of the fifty sixth psalm shows, (^{Q988}Psalm 56:1);

and this stratagem he used to get himself out of their hands, acting the part of a madman, delirious, and out of his senses:

and scrabbled on the doors of the gate; as if he was writing something there, and making marks upon them:

and let his spittle fall down upon his beard; slavered, as idiots and madmen do; and however mean this may seem in David to act such a part, it cannot be condemned as wicked, since it was only a stratagem to deliver himself, out of an enemy's hand, and stratagems are always allowed to be used against an enemy; and such a method as this has been taken by men of the greatest sense and wit, as by Brutus ^{f446} and Solon ^{f447}; and yet, according to the Vulgate Latin and Septuagint versions, this case of his was real and not feigned; that through the surprise of being known in the court of Achish, he was seized with an epilepsy; that his countenance was changed, and his mouth distorted, as persons in such fits are; that he fell among them as one convulsed, and fell at, and dashed against the doors of the gates, and foamed at the mouth, as such persons do; (see ~~1099~~ Luke 9:39); and so in the following words the Greek version is, ye see the man is an epileptic; I do not want epileptics; but the thirty fourth and fifty sixth psalms, composed by him at this time, show that as he was of a sound mind, so in good health of body, and not subject to such fits as here represented, (see ~~1381~~ Psalm 34:1-22 56:1-13); which would have rendered him unfit for such composures.

Ver. 14. *Then said Achish to his servants, lo, you see the man is mad*, etc.] Which he said, as willing his servants should think so, and therefore rather the object of their pity than of their rage and malice; or as really believing he was so, which he and they might conclude not merely from these his actions, before described, which they might judge real and not feigned; but they might suppose this was truly his case, brought upon him by the ill usage of Saul, who pursuing him from place to place, and sending after him to take away his life, had really brought him to distraction; and this they might rather conclude from his coming to Gath, an enemy's country, and whose champion he had slain, and many others of them; which it might be thought no man in his senses would have done:

wherefore [then] have ye brought him to me? for if he was brought to be employed in his service, he seemed very unfit for it, whether in the camp, or in the court; and if to be tried and condemned as an enemy, since he was a madman, he was rather to be pitied.

Ver. 15. *Have I need of madmen?* etc.] Or fools, do I want them? have not I enough of them already at my court? I want wise men, and not fools and madmen. The Jews say ^{f448} that the wife and daughter of Achish were mad; that while David was playing the fool and madman without, they were acting the same part within; so that Achish had enough of that sort of diversion, if it was to be reckoned such; as it was according to the taste of some persons, who used, as in later so in earlier times, to keep fools in their houses to make them sport; but Achish had enough of that, and too much, at least needed no more:

that ye have brought this [fellow] to play the madman in my presence? or act the part of a fool before me:

shall this [fellow] come into mine house? court or palace, and have a post there; you need be in no pain about it; he is neither agreeable to me, nor fit for any; and therefore Achish drove him away as a fool or madman, instead of imprisoning him as an enemy, or taking away his life; see the title of the thirty fourth psalm, (~~3801~~ Psalm 34:1).

CHAPTER 22

INTRODUCTION TO FIRST SAMUEL 22

This chapter gives us an account of the flight of David from place to place, from Gath to the cave of Adullam, where his relations came to him; from thence to Mizpeh in Moab, where he got leave of the king of Moab for his father and mother to dwell there; and from thence, by the advice of Gad the prophet, departed into the land of Judah, and came to the forest of Hareth, (^{<0210>}1 Samuel 21:1-5); and of the complaint of Saul to his servants of their unfaithfulness to him, and indolence and unconcern at the behaviour of Jonathan and David to him, (^{<0216>}1 Samuel 22:6-8); when Doeg the Edomite informed him of David being seen by him at Nob, and of his receiving food and a sword from Ahimelech the priest, who inquired of the Lord for him, (^{<0219>}1 Samuel 22:9,10); upon which Saul sent for Ahimelech and all the priests at Nob, and charged them with a conspiracy against him; and notwithstanding the defence the priest made, Saul ordered him and the rest of the priests to be slain by his guards; which they refusing, Doeg became the executioner of them, and of all the inhabitants of the city of Nob, and the cattle in it, (^{<0221>}1 Samuel 22:11-19); only Abiathar a son of Ahimelech escaped and fled to David with the sorrowful news; which greatly affected David, looking upon himself to be the occasion of this sad disaster, and he took Abiathar under his protection, and promised him safety, (^{<0223>}1 Samuel 22:20-23).

Ver. 1. *David therefore departed from thence*, etc.] From Gath, being driven by Achish from his court, and let go by his servants, and glad he was of the deliverance:

and escaped to the cave Adullam; which was no doubt near to a city of the same name in the tribe of Judah, of which (see Gill on “^{<0155>}Joshua 15:35”); this being a strong place, and in his own tribe, he might hope to be in greater safety; here he penned his hundred forty second psalm, (see ^{<0211>}Psalms 142:1-7):

and when his brethren and all his father’s house heard [it]; that he was come thither:

they went down thither to him; to visit and comfort him, counsel and assist him all they could; and chiefly to secure themselves from the rage and malice of Saul, who they might fear would fall upon them, and avenge himself on them for David's sake.

Ver. 2. *And everyone [that was] in distress*, etc.] In straitened circumstances, through the oppression of men, through poverty, and afflictive providences in their families:

and everyone [that was] in debt; and not able to pay their debts, and whose creditors were pressing upon them:

and everyone [that was] discontented; with Saul's government and conduct: or "bitter in soul"^{f449}; distressed and uneasy in their minds, being pinched with want, or pressed with sore afflictions, which made them very disconsolate: these

gathered themselves unto him; to help him, or rather to be helped by him; hoping in time things would take a favourable turn with him, and he should be advanced to the throne, and so their circumstances would be mended thereby:

and he became a captain over them; they enlisted themselves in his service, and he took the command of them; he might not know the circumstances of those in debt, nor of any of them thoroughly, nor their views in joining him; however he meant not to shelter them from paying their just debts if able, nor to encourage them in disloyalty to their king, only to make use of them for his own preservation for the present. In this he was a type of Christ, who receives sinners distressed with a sense of sin, discontented in their present state, and in debt, and, unable to pay their debts; (see ^{<4128>}Matthew 11:28 ^{<4174>}Luke 7:41,42) (^{<4152>}Luke 15:2);

and there were with him about four hundred men; among whom some think were the three mighty men spoken of in (^{<4123>}2 Samuel 23:13,14 ^{<5115>}1 Chronicles 11:15,16).

Ver. 3. *And David went thence to Mizpeh of Moab*, etc.] So called to distinguish it from a place of the same name in the land of Israel; which Junius says is the same with Malle, and signifies a fortified place, and refers to the Apocrypha:

“And how that many of them were shut up in Bosora, and Bosor, and Alema, Casphor, Maked, and Carnaim; all these cities are strong and great.” (1 Maccabees 5:26)

here he might think himself safer, though in an enemy’s country, than in the land of Israel:

and he said unto the king of Moab, let my father and my mother, I pray thee, come forth; out of the land of Israel, or out of the cave of Adullam, whither they were come to him:

[and be] with you; if not with the king of Moab at his court, yet in some part or other of his country, where they might be safe from the rage of Saul:

till I know what God will do for me; on whose power and providence he wholly relied, and not upon the men that flocked to him, nor upon his own power and policy, courage and wisdom; he knew the promise of God to him, and he put his trust in him for the performance of it; but knew not the time, nor way, and manner, in which it would be performed; and expected in the meanwhile to be obliged to remove from place to place; and considering that his aged parents were not fit for such quick and sudden motions, and long flights, he provided as well as he could for their settlement; which was an instance of his filial affection for them, and piety towards them. His father’s name is well known, Jesse, (^{<R042>}Ruth 4:22 ^{<D172>}1 Samuel 17:12), etc. but his mother’s name is nowhere mentioned; the Jews say her name was Natzbet, the daughter of Adal ^{f450}.

Ver. 4. *And he brought them before the king of Moab,* etc.] Having leave from him for it, and left them with him; so the Targum,

“caused them to remain before him:”

and they dwelt with him all the whole time that David was in the hold; either in the cave of Adullam, as some think; or rather at Mizpeh in Moab, which might be a fortified place; or the sense may be, while he was in any hold in those parts, as he might go from one to another; what became of David’s parents afterwards, we nowhere else read. The Jews ^{f451} say the king of Moab slew his father and his mother, and his brethren, all but one, whom Nahash the Ammonite preserved; and is the kindness David speaks of, (^{<R002>}2 Samuel 10:2); and if this was the case, now it was that his father and mother forsook him, and God took him up, (^{<R270>}Psalm 27:10).

Ver. 5. *And the prophet Gad said unto David,* etc.] Who either accompanied him in his exile, or was sent unto him on this account, being one of the company of the prophets, over whom Samuel was president, (~~1~~1 Samuel 19:20);

abide not in the hold, depart, and get thee into the land of Judah; this seems to confirm it that the hold David was in was not the cave of Adullam, because that was in the tribe of Judah; but rather some hold in the land of Moab, which he is directed by the prophet to leave, and go into the country of Judah, his own tribe, where Saul would not be so forward to pursue him, and where he would be among his friends, and in the way, upon Saul's death, to be anointed king over Judah; besides, appearing more openly would show the innocence of his cause, and his confidence in the Lord, more than to lurk about in a foreign land:

then David departed; from "Mizpeh" in "Moab"; or, however, from the hold in which he was:

and came into the forest of Hareth; where he would have places and opportunity enough to hide himself as he saw fit. Jerom^{f452} speaks of a village called Arath, where David abode, to the west of Jerusalem. Kimchi says this was a dry barren place, but for the sake of David it was made by the Lord a well watered and fruitful one.

Ver. 6. *When Saul heard that David was discovered, and the men that [were] with him,* etc.] That it was known where David was, and what number of men were gathered to him, and that they now openly appeared in the tribe of Judah; for some time Saul had heard nothing of him, but now a report had reached his ears that David was in arms, and at the head of a number of men; which now greatly alarmed Saul, and possessed him with fears and jealousies of his people, and all about him:

now Saul abode in Gibeah, under a tree in Ramah; this was Gibeah of Saul, and in or near which was a place called Ramah, or an high place, as the word signifies, on which was a remarkable tree, and under that Saul abode, being a proper shelter for him from any inclemency of the weather; for this was not Ramah where Samuel dwelt, though the Jews in the Talmud^{f453} so think, and metaphorically understand the tree in it of Samuel in Ramah praying for him, by means of which he continued two years in the height of his kingdom; but this was a tree in a literal sense. R. Jonah^{f454}

says it is possible it might be the same which in Arabia is called Ethel, and is like to a tamarisk tree:

having his spear in his hand: ready to defend himself, and revenge his enemies; or rather which he held as a sceptre in his hand; (see Gill on “~~1~~ Samuel 20:33”);

and all his servants [were] standing about him; in reverence of him, and honour to him, waiting upon him, and ready to obey his orders: these were his courtiers, or his guards, or both.

Ver. 7. *Then Saul said unto his servants that stood about him*, etc.] He took this opportunity of addressing them in the following manner, upon the report of David being at the head of a certain number of men:

hear now, ye Benjamites; for Saul being of the tribe of Benjamin, his courtiers and his bodyguards chiefly, if not altogether, consisted of persons of that tribe; and therefore as they were under obligation to him, and ought to abide by him, and adhere closely to him, so it was the more ungrateful in them, as he thought, not to be concerned for his honour and interest:

will the son of Jesse give everyone of you fields and vineyards; as Saul had done, or was capable of doing, and would do if they were faithful to him; whereas it was not in the power of David, whom in contempt he calls the son of Jesse, to do it; and even should he ever be king, and in his power to make such donations, it cannot be thought he would give them to them, but to the favourites of his own tribe:

[and] make you all captains of thousands and captains of hundreds; which he now could not do, since he had with him but four hundred men in all; and should his army increase, and the kingdom come into his hands, so far would all of them be from being advanced to posts in the army, that it was probable none of them would, but those of his own tribe and party.

Ver. 8. *That all of you have conspired against me*, etc.] For though they had not revolted from him, and been guilty of overt acts of treason, yet since they did not discover to him what he supposed they knew, and showed no concern for the circumstances in which he was, he interpreted this a conspiracy against him:

and [there is] none that showeth me that my son hath made a league with the son of Jesse; Saul did not know this certainly, he only suspected it from

the strict and close friendship between them, and imagined that some of his servants were acquainted with it, though they kept it from him; whereas none knew of it but Jonathan and David themselves:

and [there is] none of you that is sorry for me; concerned, troubled, and grieved, that he should be in such circumstances, his own son and his son-in-law in league against him: or, as De Dieu renders it, were not “solicitous” for him, cared not how things went with him, or, against him:

or showeth unto me that my son hath stirred up my servant against me to lie in wait, as at this day? which he concluded was the case, from Jonathan’s not appearing at court since Saul cast the javelin at him, (^{<0190>}1 Samuel 19:10 20:33); or, however, if he did, his countenance showed he was uneasy and discontented, and displeased with Saul; and, besides, he could not think that David, with such a handful of men he had with him, would ever attempt to invade his kingdom, and seize his crown and throne, unless he was privately encouraged by his own son; and David’s being either in the cave of Adullam, or forest of Hareth, whichever of them Saul heard of, he interpreted as lying in wait for him, whereas it was only for the security of himself; and what Saul took ill of his servants was, that none of them apprized him of his son’s concern in this matter.

Ver. 9. *Then answered Doeg the Edomite*, etc.] Josephus ^{f455} calls him a Syrian, and so the Septuagint version; (see ^{<0207>}1 Samuel 21:7); being full of enmity to David, and willing to curry favour with Saul, and eager of further preferment, which Saul seemed to promise; and being more forward than the rest of his servants, prevented them and spoke first:

(which was set over the servants of Saul): over his herdsmen; (see ^{<0207>}1 Samuel 21:7);

and said, I saw the son of Jesse coming to Nob to Ahimelech the son of Ahitub; in imitation of Saul, he calls David by way of contempt the son of Jesse; and signifies that what he had to say of him was not by report, but he himself was an eyewitness of his coming to Nob, a city of the priests, and to Ahimelech the high priest there, and of what passed between them.

Ver. 10. *And he inquired of the Lord for him*, etc.] Which not being expressed before, some have taken it to be a lie of Doeg’s, he being charged with lying by David, (^{<0208>}Psalm 52:3,4 120:2,3); but it is not at all improbable that David should desire him to inquire of the Lord for him, and that he did; and he seems to acknowledge it, (^{<0215>}1 Samuel 22:15); but

according to the Jewish writers Doeg meant by this to prove a charge of treason both against David and Ahimelech; that the former made himself king, and the latter owned him to be so, since inquiry by Urim and Thummim was not made for a private person, but for a king^{f456}:

and gave him victuals; hallowed bread, loaves of shewbread, which none but priests might eat of; such was his kindness to him:

and gave him the sword of Goliath the Philistine; which David took from him, and slew him with it. All this was true, but then he acted the deceitful part, with which he is charged in the above psalms, in not declaring how David had imposed upon the priest, by pretending he was sent in haste on the king's business; which was the reason he was so ill provided with servants, food, and armour; which if Doeg had reported faithfully, as he ought to have done, would have saved the credit and life of the priest, and of his family.

Ver. 11. *Then the king sent to call Ahimelech the priest, the son of Ahitub,* etc.] Sent messengers to him, and summoned him to appear before him:

and all his father's house; the family of Eli, which God had threatened to destroy, and now the time was hastening on:

the priests that [were] in Nob; in which dwelt none but priests, at least these were the chief of the inhabitants, and therefore called the city of the priests, (~~1~~1 Samuel 22:19);

and they came all of them to the king; not being conscious of any evil they had committed, or that could be charged upon them; or otherwise they would not have appeared, but would have fled to David for protection.

Ver. 12. *And Saul said, hear now, thou son of Ahitub,* etc.] The charge exhibited against him; in contempt of him, he does not so much as call him by his name, nor give him the title of his office, as high priest; though he was the second person in the kingdom, and to whose office a few years ago the civil government was annexed:

and he answered, here I [am], my lord; giving due honour to Saul, though he received none from him, and appearing with great boldness, as having a clear conscience, and so ready to hear what was to be said unto him.

Ver. 13. *And Saul said unto him, why have ye conspired against me, thou, and the son of Jesse?* etc.] No less than treason and rebellion is he charged with, in conjunction with David; the proof follows:

in that thou hast given him bread and a sword; the shewbread, and the sword of Goliath, (^{<0216>}1 Samuel 21:6 22:10), and so had furnished him with food and arms; one that he suggests was in rebellion against him, and therefore he must be involved in the same crime; but the stronger proof follows

and hast inquired of God for him, that he should rise against me, to lie in wait as at this day: inquired of the Lord for him by Urim and Thummim, to know his mind in this affair, and thereby encouraged him to rise up in rebellion against him, and to lie in wait, as he did at the present time, watching for an opportunity to seize his crown and kingdom.

Ver. 14. *Then Ahimelech answered the king, and said,* etc.] First with respect to David, and then with regard to himself; with respect to David as follows,

and who [is so] faithful amongst thy servants as David; I considered him, as if he should say, as a servant of thine, upon an errand of thine, and doing thy business; and as a faithful one, none more so, and as such I valued and regarded him, not as a rebel to thee, having no such thought of him:

which is the king's son in law; who has behaved himself so well, and thou hast entertained such an opinion of him, as to take him into thy family, and marry thy daughter to him; wherefore showing him favour, and doing him honour, was doing honour to thee and thy family, and surely there can be no blame in that:

and goeth at thy bidding; has always been ready to execute thy commands, and obey thine orders, let them be what they will; as to go out against an enemy, and fight Saul's battles for him:

and is honourable in thine house? behaved honourably there, and highly esteemed by all, as well as had the honour bestowed upon him to be the king's son-in-law, and made captain of a thousand; and therefore who could think that showing respect to such a man could be deemed treason and conspiracy, or he be thought to be a traitor to the king? and then with respect to himself he answers,

Ver. 15. *Did I then begin to inquire of God for him?* etc.] Was this the first time of inquiring of God for him? no; I have done this many a time, when he has been going upon the king's business, engaging in war with his enemies; he has then consulted the Lord by me, and I have inquired of the Lord for him, as I now did; and which I did as innocently, and as much for the king's service, as ever I did any. Kimchi observes it may be read without the interrogation, "that day I began to inquire of God for him"; it was the first time I ever did, and I did not know it would have been grievous to thee, or have given thee any disturbance or uneasiness. I did not know that he fled from thee, or was not in thy service, and upon thy business; had I known it, I would never have done it, and as it is the first time it shall be the last:

be it far from me; from doing such a thing, had I known it to be disagreeable to thee, or how David stood with thee:

let not the king impute [any] thing unto his servant, [nor] to all the house of my father; charge me or them with the crime of treason, or conspiracy against him, or with aiding, assisting, and abetting traitors and conspirators:

for thy servant knew nothing of all this, less or more; was entirely ignorant of this affair; which plain, honest, account of things, one might have thought, would have been satisfying to Saul; but it seems it was not by what follows.

Ver. 16. *And the king said, thou shalt surely die, Ahimelech,* etc.] He pronounces the sentence himself, without taking the opinion and advice of others, or further time; which was an act of arbitrary power, and upon an innocent person, which was an act of great injustice:

thou, and all thy father's house; more unrighteous still; but God suffered him to do this to fulfil his will, and execute his threatenings against the house of Eli, which was this priest's father's house, for former wickedness; but this is no excuse for, nor extenuation of the sin of, Saul.

Ver. 17. *And the king said unto the footmen that stood about him,* etc.] Or the "runners"^{f457}; the running footmen, that used to run before him when he went out from place to place, and were here waiting on him, ready to set out whenever he should give the orders to go elsewhere. The tradition of the Jews is, that these were Abner and Amasa^{f458}; but, as Kimchi

observes, they were not footmen, but princes, captains in the army, and the first of them the general of it:

turn and slay the priests of the Lord; he owns them to be the priests of the Lord, and calls them so, and yet gave orders to put them to death, though innocent; one would have thought this their character would have flown in his face, and stung his conscience, and deterred him from so foul a fact:

because their hand also [is] with David; as well as Ahimelech; which did not at all appear, nor that they had so much as seen him at Nob, only Ahimelech; and still less that they had entered into a conspiracy with him:

and because they knew when he fled, and did not show it to me; which also was false; they knew nothing of the flight of David, and therefore could not discover it to the king:

but the servants of the king would not put forth their hand to fall upon the priests of the Lord; their consciences would not suffer them to do it; they refused to obey the king's orders, and chose rather to expose themselves to his resentment, than to be guilty of such a crime. Saul's footmen had more sense of honour, justice, and truth, than he himself had, and were worthy of praise; but they would have been deserving of more, if they could not have prevailed upon him by entreaties and remonstrances to have forborne such a bloody execution, instead of being the tame spectators of it, they had taken him, and bound him as a madman, and so facilitated the escape of the priests, and prevented this shocking scene of wickedness.

Ver. 18. *And the king said to Doeg, turn thou and fall upon the priests,* etc.] For determined he was they should die; if one would not put them to death, another should, and who so fit for this bloody work as the false accuser of them, and false witness against them?

and Doeg the Edomite turned; immediately, he at once obeyed the king's orders, as brutish as they were:

and fell upon the priests; with his sword in hand:

and slew on that day fourscore and five persons that did wear a linen ephod; not the ephod of Urim and Thummim, which was only worn by the high priest, but a garment wholly linen, worn by common priests; the Targum is,

“who are fit to be clothed with a linen ephod;”

not that they were clothed with it, but were deserving of it; or it designs the great and more honourable among the servants of the Lord, as Kimchi observes, for such were clothed with this garment, as Samuel and David; and he thinks it suggests, that more were slain than these; and the Septuagint version makes them to be eight hundred five, and Josephus^{f459} three hundred eighty five; in the slaying of whom, as the same writer says, Doeg was assisted by some wicked men like himself; and the slaughter did not end here, as the (^{<0226>}1 Samuel 22:19) shows.

Ver. 19. *And Nob, the city of the priests, smote he with the edge of the sword*, etc.] Either Doeg or Saul; who, as Josephus^{f460} says, sent men thither to slay all the inhabitants of it:

both men and women, children and sucklings; not sparing sex nor age:

and oxen, and asses, and sheep, with the edge of the sword; Saul, who was so tender hearted and merciful in the case of the Amalekites, when his orders from the Lord were utterly to destroy them, (^{<0932>}1 Samuel 15:2,3), that he spared their king, and the best of their cattle, (^{<0937>}1 Samuel 15:7-9); yet now so cruel to a city of the priests, as to destroy all the inhabitants of it, and cattle in it; and yet this bloody affair of Saul's is not taken notice of afterwards, only his slaughter of the Gibeonites, (^{<1201>}2 Samuel 21:1); and Abarbinel is of opinion, that the inhabitants of this place were Gibeonites, who were hewers of wood, and drawers of water, to the house of the Lord here, (^{<0623>}Joshua 9:23,27). Now Saul was the more severe this city, to deter others from joining with David, who, if they did, must expect the same treatment.

Ver. 20. *And one of the sons of Ahimelech, the son of Ahitub, named Abiathar, escaped*, etc.] Who very probably was left by his father to take care of the sanctuary, and the holy things in it, when he and the rest of the priests were summoned to appear before Saul; who having heard of his bloody execution of them, before his messengers could get to Nob, took, the ephod, with the Urim and Thummim, and made his escape, as appears from (^{<0216>}1 Samuel 23:6-9); this man succeeded his father in the high priesthood, and continued in it until the times of Solomon:

and fled after David; who was now removed, or removing from the forest of Hareth to Keilah, whither Abiathar followed him, and came to him there, (^{<0216>}1 Samuel 23:6), and with whom only he could be safe, and therefore it was right to flee unto him.

Ver. 21. *And Abiathar showed David that Saul had slain the Lord's priests.*] Of which perhaps he had not as yet heard; though tidings of such a nature generally fly swiftly; and a sorrowful shocking account he had to give, and which was so to David.

Ver. 22. *And David said unto Abiathar, I knew [it] that day,* etc.] That is, he thought in his mind at that time:

when Doeg the Edomite [was] there; at Nob; in the tabernacle, at the same time that David was there:

that he would surely tell Saul; that he saw David there, and what passed between him and Ahimelech; he knew he was a spiteful mischievous man; that he was a true Edomite, though a proselyte, and bore hatred and enmity in his mind against an Israelite, and especially an Israelite indeed, as David was:

I have occasioned [the death] of all the persons of thy father's house: or have been the cause of all the evils that befell them, and the death they were put unto, not with design, but by accident; and it grieved him that he should be any ways an accessory thereunto, though without intention.

Ver. 23. *Abide thou with me, fear not,* etc.] He appeared to be in a fright; which is not to be wondered at, as not knowing what to do, and where to go and provide for his safety; when, to allay his fears, and make him easy, David invites and encourages him to stay with him, and not be afraid of Saul, nor any other:

for he that seeketh my life seeketh thy life; or, as Kimchi observes, it may be interpreted, "my life he seeks who seeks thy life"; we are in the same circumstances, and have the same common enemy, and therefore it is best and safest to be together; as the Targum,

"he that seeks to kill me seeks to kill thee;"

and as Jarchi adds, he that loves me will love thee, and he that keeps my life will keep thine:

but with me thou [shalt be] in safeguard; intimating, that he would be as careful of him as of himself; and that for this reason, as Ben Gersom suggests, because he brought the ephod with the Urim and Thummim with him, by which he could inquire of God for him; but this was the thing David was confident of, that God would preserve him, and raise him to the

kingdom, and therefore Abiathar might be sure of safety with him: at this time he penned the fifty second psalm, which shows the frame of spirit he was now in; (see ~~Psalm~~ Psalm 52:1-9).

CHAPTER 23

INTRODUCTION TO FIRST SAMUEL 23

This chapter gives an account of David's relieving Keilah, when it had like to have fallen into the hands of the Philistines, (^{<0231>}1 Samuel 23:1-6); and of Saul's design to surprise him there, which David having notice of, and inquiring of the Lord, departed from thence; which when Saul heard of, he forbore to come forth, (^{<0237>}1 Samuel 23:7-13); and of David's being in the wilderness of Ziph, where, in a wood there, he had an interview with Jonathan, (^{<0234>}1 Samuel 23:14-18); and of the Ziphites offering to deliver him up to Saul, for which he commends them, and gives them instructions how they should behave to him in that affair, (^{<0239>}1 Samuel 23:19-23); and of his seeking him in the wilderness of Maon, where David and his men were in great danger of being taken; which was prevented by the news of the Philistines invading the land coming to Saul just at the nick of time, (^{<0234>}1 Samuel 23:24-29).

Ver. 1. *Then they told David*, etc.] Either the men of Keilah sent to him, being near them, or some well wishers of theirs, and of their country, acquainted him with their case:

saying, behold, the Philistines fight against Keilah; had laid siege to it, being a fortified place, (^{<0237>}1 Samuel 23:7); it was a city in the tribe of Judah, on the borders of the Philistines; of which (see Gill on "^{<0654>}Joshua 15:44");

and they rob the threshing floors; took away the corn upon them, which they were threshing and winnowing, which were usually done without the city for the sake of wind, (see ^{<0761>}Judges 6:11 ^{<0810>}Ruth 3:2,15); it was harvest time when the three mighty men came to David in the cave of Adullam, and so now it might be the time of threshing, harvest being over, (see ^{<0221>}1 Samuel 22:1); compared with (^{<0233>}2 Samuel 23:13).

Ver. 2. *Therefore David inquired of the Lord, saying, shall I go and smite these Philistines?* etc.] For though David was well disposed to serve his country, and was desirous of freeing them from their enemies the Philistines, he might have some doubts in his mind whether it would be

right for him to engage with them now; partly because he could not act under a commission from his prince, Saul the king; and partly because he had such a small number of forces with him, that it might be hazardous for him to attack the armies of the Philistines with them, and attempt to raise the siege of Keilah; and therefore he thought it advisable, as doubtless it was, to inquire of the Lord what was his mind and will in this matter: how and by what means he inquired it is not said, very probably it was by the prophet Gad, who was with him, (^{<09275>}1 Samuel 22:5); for as for Abiathar, he was not yet come with the ephod, the Urim and Thummim, to inquire by them, (^{<09276>}1 Samuel 23:6); though some think that is observed there to show in what way David did inquire, namely, by Urim and Thummim; and so Kimchi and Abarbinel understand it; and it is supposed that he came to David when he was about Keilah, and near unto it, and so before he came thither, and time enough for him to inquire by him whether he should go thither or not:

and the Lord said unto David, go, and smite the Philistines, and save Keilah; which was not only giving him leave to go, and signifying it was his mind and will he should; but that he should be successful, and rout the Philistines, and raise the siege of Keilah, and save the city from falling into their hands.

Ver. 3. *And David's men said unto him, behold, we be afraid here in Judah,* etc.] Of Saul and his army falling upon them, and crushing them, though they were in the tribe of Judah, where they had many friends, and in the heart of that tribe:

how much more then if we come to Keilah; which, though in the same tribe, yet in the further parts of it, and on the borders of the Philistines: and there engage

against the armies of the Philistines? too numerous and powerful for them, and so by this means be driven out of their place of safety, the forest of Hareth, where they could hide themselves upon occasion; to be exposed not only to the Philistines, before them, on the edge of their country, from whence they could have re-enforcements easily, but to Saul and his army behind them; and so, being between two fires, would be in danger of being cut off.

Ver. 4. *Then David inquired of the Lord yet again,* etc.] Not for his own sake, who firmly believed it was the will of God he should go and succeed,

but for the sake of his men, and to remove the doubts and fears that hung on their minds:

and the Lord answered him, and said, arise, go down to Keilah; immediately, make no stay, nor hesitate about it, but go with all haste to the relief of the place:

for I will deliver the Philistines into thine hands; which is still more explicit, and is a promise not only of delivering Keilah out of the hands of the Philistines, but of delivering them into David's hands, and so of an entire victory; and therefore none of David's men had anything to fear after such a declaration of the will of God.

Ver. 5. *So David and his men went to Keilah,* etc.] Animated by a commission from God, and a promise of success by him:

and fought with the Philistines; encamped before Keilah:

and brought away their cattle; which they had brought with them for the support of their army; or having routed them, they pursued them into their own country, and brought off their cattle from thence:

and smote them with a great slaughter; killed great numbers of them, and put the rest to flight:

so David saved the inhabitants of Keilah; from falling into the hands of the Philistines, by timely raising the siege of the city.

Ver. 6. *And it came to pass, when Abiathar the son of Ahimelech fled to David to Keilah,* etc.] Either when he was there, or near the place:

[that] he came down with an ephod in his hand; not with a linen ephod on his back, which the priests in common wore, but the ephod with the Urim and Thummim in his hand, which was peculiar to the high priest; and his father the high priest being dead, it belonged to him, and therefore he took care to bring it with him; though the words may be literally rendered, "the ephod came down in his hand",^{f461} as it were by chance, and not with design; and so some Jewish interpreters^{f462} understand it, that in his fright and flight, among his garments and other things he took hold of to carry with him, and not minding well what he took, this happened to be, being so ordered by the providence of God; though the Targum renders it,

"the ephod he made to descend in his hand,"

or brought it in his hand; and so Kimchi and Abarbinel observe it may be interpreted, though they seem to incline to the other sense.

Ver. 7. *And it was told Saul that David was come to Keilah*, etc.] No doubt it was told him what he came thither for, to relieve it, and deliver it out of the hands of the Philistines, and what success he had; which one would have thought would have reconciled his mind to him, and made him think well of them; but instead of that, it only led him to contrive mischief against him:

and Saul said, God hath delivered him into mine hand; as if the success he had given to David was against, him, and in favour of Saul:

for he is shut in, by entering into a town that hath gates and bars; while he betook himself to caves, and fields, and woods, he had no great hopes of finding him out, and coming up with him, and seizing him; but now he had got into a fortified place, enclosed with walls, and that had gates to it, kept bolted and barred; when he brought his army against it, and surrounded it, he imagined he would not be able to get out, and escape his hands.

Ver. 8. *And Saul called all the people together to war*, etc.] Or “caused [them] to hear”, ^{f463} summoned them by an herald, whom he sent into all parts of the kingdom to proclaim war, and require them in his name to attend him; which was the prerogative of a king to do:

to go down to Keilah, to besiege David and his men; that was what he privately intended, but the pretence was to make war against the Philistines.

Ver. 9. *And David knew that Saul secretly practised mischief against him*, etc.] That is, plotted and contrived it, formed schemes in order to do him mischief, giving out one thing, and designing another; so he pretended war against the Philistines, but his intention was to come against Keilah, and take David there:

and he said to Abiathar the priest, bring hither the ephod; not for David to put on, but for the priest himself, that being clothed with it, and the Urim and Thummim in it, he might inquire for him of the Lord.

Ver. 10. *Then said David*, etc.] By the priest, for it was he that put the questions for and in the name of the inquirer:

O Lord God of Israel; the great Jehovah, the covenant God of his people, who always has a merciful regard unto them:

thy servant hath certainly heard; had good information of it, on which he could depend:

that Saul seeketh to come to Keilah; that was his intention and resolution:

to destroy the city for my sake; to besiege it, and demolish it, if that was necessary, in order to take him.

Ver. 11. *Will the men of Keilah deliver me up into his hands? will Saul come down, as thy servant hath heard?* etc.] That is, if David continued there, which is the supposition all proceeds upon. The questions are not orderly put, as may easily be observed, the last should have been first; which shows some perturbation of mind David was in upon hearing the design of Saul against him:

O Lord God of Israel, I beseech thee, tell thy servant; give an answer by Urim and Thummim, as he did:

and the Lord said, he will come down; if David abode there; that was in his thoughts, in his purpose and design, which the Lord, being omniscient, full well knew, who knows all future contingencies: hence the Jews^{f464} gather, that two things are not to be asked together; and if they are asked, only answer is made to one, and the answer is only made to that which it was proper to ask first; and that which is asked out of order should be asked again, which was the case here, as follows.

Ver. 12. *Then said David, will the men of Keilah deliver me and my men into the hand of Saul?* etc.] That is, the lords and great men of the place, the governor of the city, and the heads of it, the chief magistrates in it:

and the Lord said, they will deliver [thee] up: that is, provided he stayed there; for the Lord knew the dispositions and affections of their minds, that they were inclined to do it, and would do it, if he continues among them till Saul came down; which showed the great ingratitude of this people to their deliverer.

Ver. 13. *Then David and his men, [which were] about six hundred*, etc.] Having had an increase of two hundred since he was at the cave of Adullam, (^{4021E}1 Samuel 22:1,2), and upon his relief of Keilah, (^{4021E}1 Samuel

23:5); so that he sustained no loss of men by fighting with the Philistines, but had an addition to his small forces:

arose and departed out of Keilah, and went whithersoever they could go; not knowing whither they should go, having no particular place in view; but went where they thought they could be safest, or that appeared the most proper place for them; so the Targum,

“they went to a place which was fit to go unto;”

which was fittest for their purpose, and most for their safety and security, be it where it would:

and it was told Saul that David was escaped from Keilah; very likely some of the inhabitants informed him of it, since they were disposed to deliver David to him, had he stayed among them, and Saul had come down:

and he forbore to go forth: from the place where he was, in order to come to Keilah,

Ver. 14. *And David abode in the wilderness in strong holds,* etc.] In the wilderness of Ziph, in high and strong rocks there, as it seems to be explained by what follows:

and remained in a mountain in the wilderness of Ziph; which had its name from a city in the tribe of Judah, of which (see Gill on “⁰⁶⁵⁵Joshua 15:55”);

and Saul sought him every day; for though he did not go forth from the place where he was to Keilah, yet hearing which way he went, and whereabouts he lurked, he sought after him continually, if haply he might find him:

but God delivered him not into his hand: which suggests, that it was only the providence of God that secured him, or, in all probability, such was the diligence of Saul, that he would have found him out, and he must have fallen into his hands, as he expected.

Ver. 15. *And David saw that Saul was come out to seek his life,* etc.] Either he saw him with his bodily eyes from the top of the mountain where he was, (⁰⁹²³⁴1 Samuel 23:14); or he perceived, he understood by information given him by his friends, it may be by Jonathan, or by spies he sent to observe his motions:

and David [was] in the wilderness of Ziph in a wood; where he and his men could hide themselves among the trees in it; sometimes he was in a mountain in this wilderness, and sometimes in a wood, where he thought himself the safest; thus was this great man obliged to shift about for his safety.

Ver. 16. *And Jonathan, Saul's son, arose*, etc.] And came from Gibeah, which, according to Bunting^{f465}, was twenty two miles from the place where David was:

and went to David into the wood: having had intelligence where he was, this being a proper place to have an interview with him privately:

and strengthened his hand in God; and his heart too, his hand of faith to lay hold on God, as his covenant God and lean and rely upon him; he strengthened him in his power and in his providence, and in his promises to him; the Targum is,

“he strengthened him in the Word of the Lord;”

not only in his word and promise, but in Christ the essential Word of God, who should spring from him according to the flesh.

Ver. 17. *And he said unto him, fear not*, etc.] Distrust not the power, providence, and promises of God, nor dread the wrath of Saul, or fear falling into his hands:

for the hand of Saul my father shall not find thee; to lay hold on him, seize him, and do him any hurt:

and thou shalt be king over Israel; meaning after the death of his father; which he knew either by some special revelation made to him; or rather by being informed he had been anointed by Samuel, and which he had either from Samuel or from David himself; and this he most firmly believed, though David was now in so low a condition:

and I shall be next unto thee; not succeed him in the kingdom; but if living when he came to the throne, he should be the second man in civil affairs, as he now was, and that he should be content with:

and that also Saul my father knoweth; having knowledge of the anointing of David by Samuel; or he might, and did conclude this from various

circumstances, that David was his neighbour Samuel had told him of, God had given his kingdom to, (~~4953~~ 1 Samuel 15:28).

Ver. 18. *And they two made a covenant before the Lord*, etc.] Renewed the covenant they had before made in the name and fear of God, and before him as a witness of it. Kimchi and Abarbinel interpret this phrase,

before the Lord, of the covenant being made before Abiathar, with the Urim and Thummim in his hand; and so Jerom ^{f466}, before Gad the prophet, and Abiathar who wore the ephod:

and David abode in the wood; being a proper place for him for secrecy and safety:

and Jonathan went to his house; in Gibeah; and these two dear and cordial friends never saw one another more, as is highly probable.

Ver. 19. *Then came up the Ziphites to Saul to Gibeah*, etc.] Who though he had been out in quest of David, yet was now returned to Gibeah, the place of his residence, and where he kept his court; and hither came the Ziphites, the inhabitants of Ziph, in the wilderness of which David hid himself, with a proposal to deliver him to Saul; for though they were of the same tribe with David, yet being terrified with what Saul had done to Nob, they thought it best for their own security to inform Saul where he was, and make an offer to deliver him to him. Some interpreters, as Kimchi, think that this was done before Jonathan was with Saul, and should be rendered, “the Ziphites had come up to Saul”; and hence it is before said, and David saw, etc. for he had heard that the Ziphites should say to Saul, that David had hid himself there; and at this time it was that David wrote the fifty ninth psalm, (~~4954~~ Psalm 54:1-7):

saying, doth not David hide himself with us in the strong holds in the wood; which is in the wilderness of Ziph, in their neighbourhood; they were informed he had hid himself there, and they thought it their duty to let the king know of it: and particularly

in the hill of Hachilah, which [is] on the south of Jeshimon? Hachilah is by Jerom ^{f467} called Echela; and he speaks of a village of that name seven miles from Eletheropolis, and of Jeshimon as ten miles from Jericho to the south, near the dead sea; on the top of this hill, which was an ascent of thirty furlongs or about four miles, Jonathan the high priest built a castle, and called it Masada, often spoken of by Josephus; who says ^{f468}, that

Herod built a wall around it of seven furlongs or about a mile, twelve cubits high, and eight broad, and thirty seven towers of fifty cubits stood in it.

Ver. 20. *Now therefore, O king, come down*, etc.] From Gibeah to Ziph, and the wilderness of it, where David was:

according to all the desires of thy soul to come down; to seize such a prey which he was greatly desirous of, and of nothing more so than of that according to Abarbinel, the sense is, that the thing was ready in whatever way he should desire it; if he chose to come down himself, and lay hold on him, they invite him to come down; but if he did not choose to come down himself, they would seize him, and bring him to him, and deliver him up into his hand, and so he would be under no necessity of going down after him:

and our part [shall be] to deliver him into the king's hand; this we will take upon us to do, and save the king the trouble of coming down.

Ver. 21. *And Saul said, blessed [be] ye of the Lord*, etc.] He highly commends them for the offer they made to him, blesses God for them, and desires the blessing of God upon them for it:

for ye have compassion on me; pitied him on account of the troubles he met with from his son-in-law, were sorry for him, and sympathized with him, which others did not, of which he complained, (⁴⁹²¹⁸1 Samuel 22:8).

Ver. 22. *Go, I pray you, prepare yet*, etc.] That is, go home, return to their habitations, and get things in a greater readiness for him; inquire more diligently after David, get more intelligence of him, and inform themselves more exactly about him:

and know and see his place where his haunt is; or “foot” ^{f469} is, where that steps and walks most frequently, not only get knowledge of it by information, but if they could get sight of it with their own eyes, that they might describe it more exactly:

[and] who hath seen him there; not only seen the place, but him in the place, and that often, that it may be certain it is the place he usually resorts to:

for it is told me [that] he dealeth very subtilly; sometimes he is seen in one place, and sometimes in another; he is here today, and elsewhere

tomorrow; and by such crafty methods it is not easy to know where the place is, and where to be found; this Saul had information of from some, who knew the methods David took to keep it unknown where it was; or “it says to me”; my heart says so to me, as R. Isaiah interprets it; my mind suggests this to me, knowing the man, that he uses such wiles as these: or “he said to me”, so Kimchi; when he was with me, and we were intimate, when I used to ask him how he smote the Philistines, so and so, and preserved himself from them; his answer was, “that he dealt very subtilly”, he used a good deal of craftiness; and so I imagine he does now.

Ver. 23. *See therefore, and take knowledge of all the lurking places where he hideth himself*, etc.] Which he most frequents, that ye may be able to describe them, and the way to them, and easily find them when necessary:

and come ye again to me with the certainty; of time and place, when and where he may be certainly found:

and I will go with you; upon such certain intelligence: it is very much he did not seize this opportunity, and go directly with them; for by this delay, David being informed of the Ziphites coming to Saul to betray him, had time to depart elsewhere:

and it shall come to pass, if he be in the land; in the land of Israel, or rather in the land that is in the tribe of Judah:

that I will search him out throughout all the thousands of Judah; through all the divisions of that tribe, which, as others, were divided into thousands, (see ^{318P}Micah 5:2).

Ver. 24. *And they arose, and went to Ziph, before Saul*, etc.] Not before his person, as if he went with them, and they before him leading the way; but they went thither before he went, to prepare things more exactly, and with more certainty, before he came, and in order to return to him again and go with him:

but David and his men [were] in the wilderness at Maon; for by the time the Ziphites returned home, David had intelligence of their design, and therefore removed from the wilderness of Ziph to the wilderness of Maon; which, though in the same tribe, was a distinct place; (see Gill on ⁴¹⁵⁵Joshua 15:55”);

in the plain on the south of Jeshimon; the same as in (~~0239~~-1 Samuel 23:19); only David was now farther to the south of it, and in a plain, whereas before he was on an hill.

Ver. 25. *And Saul also and his men went to seek [him]*, etc.] Whether the Ziphites returned to him with better intelligence, or sent him word where David was, is not said, however Saul with his army came out in search of him:

and they told David; or it was told him, that Saul was come in quest of him:

wherefore he came down into a rock; either into a cave in it, or he came down from the hill Hachilah to a plain or valley, in order to go up to a rock, the same with the mountain in (~~0236~~-1 Samuel 23:26):

and abode in the wilderness of Maon; in which was the rock or mountain he came to:

and when Saul heard [that], he pursued after David in the wilderness of Maon; for upon the intelligence of the Ziphites, he came out to seek for him in the wilderness of Ziph, but hearing that he was removed to the wilderness of Maon, he pursued him there.

Ver. 26. *And Saul went on this side of the mountain, and David and his men on that side of the mountain*, etc.] Saul with his army came to the very mountain where David and his men were, the one was on one side of it, and the other on the other side; there was only one mountain between them:

and David made haste to get away for fear of Saul; he fled on one side of the mountain, while Saul was pursuing him on the other, and hastening to get round unto him:

for Saul and his men compassed David and his men round about to take them; he took methods by dividing his troops, and sending them different ways, to surround David and his men, and had very near effected it.

Ver. 27. *But there came a messenger unto Saul*, etc.] From his court, by order of his council there; though the Jews ^{f470} say it was an angel from heaven; but be it which it will, it was certainly the providence of God that directed this affair, that a messenger should come to Saul just at that very time that David was like to fall into his hands:

saying, haste thee, and come, for the Philistines have invaded the land; were come into it, and spread themselves in it, as the word signifies, which expresses their numbers they had poured in, the force they came with, and the possessions they had already got; perhaps they had taken the advantage of Saul's departure in quest of David, to penetrate into the tribe of Benjamin, where his patrimony, residence, and court were, and which were liable to fall into their hands; and therefore his presence was immediately required, and haste was necessary.

Ver. 28. *Therefore Saul returned from pursuing after David,* etc.] Stopped short at once, as soon as ever he received the message:

and went against the Philistines; to stop them in their progress, and drive them out of his country:

therefore they called that place Selahammahlekoth, which signifies the rock of divisions. David and his men, very probably, gave it this name, not only because it divided between Saul and his men, and David and his men, when they were one on one side of it, and the other on the other side of it; but because Saul was, by the providence of God, divided and separated from David here, whereby he escaped falling into his hands. The Targum is,

“therefore they called that place the rock of division, the place where the heart of the king was divided to go here and there:”

he was divided in his own mind, and at a loss what to do; he was in two minds, as Jarchi says, and did not know which to follow, whether to return and deliver his country from the hands of the Philistines, or to pursue and take David; and others represent the soldiers of Saul as divided, some saying that since the son of Jesse was just falling into their hands, they should not leave him; others, that the war of Israel should be regarded before him, who might be found at any time ^{f471}.

Ver. 29. *And David went up from thence,* etc.] From the wilderness of Maon, having had a narrow escape for his life:

and dwelt in strong holds in Engedi; another place in the tribe of Judah, and which lay in the wilderness of Judah, and from whence that is called the wilderness of Engedi; and here Dr. Lightfoot ^{f472} thinks he penned the sixty third psalm, (~~Psalm~~ Psalm 63:1-11), the wilderness about Engedi being

the most desert of all other places, that being upon the borders of the dead sea; of this place, (see Gill on "~~0652~~Joshua 15:62").

CHAPTER 24

INTRODUCTION TO FIRST SAMUEL 24

Saul being returned from following the Philistines, renews his pursuit after David, (^{<0241>}1 Samuel 24:1,2); and they meeting in a cave, where David had the opportunity of taking away the life of Saul, which his men pressed him to, yet only cut off the skirt of his robe, (^{<0243>}1 Samuel 24:3-8); which, calling after him, he held up to him to convince him he had his life in his hands, but spared it, (^{<0249>}1 Samuel 24:9,10); upon which he very pathetically reasons with him about the unreasonableness and unrighteousness of his pursuit after him, to take away his life, (^{<02411>}1 Samuel 24:11-15); which so affected Saul, that he confessed he was more righteous than he, and owned that the kingdom would be his, and only desired him to swear to him not to cut off his offspring, which David did, and so they parted, (^{<02416>}1 Samuel 24:16-22).

Ver. 1. *And it came to pass, when Saul was returned from following the Philistines*, etc.] Having, as it should seem, got the victory over them, and driven them out of his country, and pursued them to their own:

that it was told him, saying, behold, David [is] in the wilderness of Engedi; in the strong holds of it, the high rocks and mountains in it, (^{<0239>}1 Samuel 23:29).

Ver. 2. *Then Saul took three thousand chosen men out of all Israel*, etc.]. Out of his army, with which he had been pursuing the Philistines:

and went to seek David, and his men, upon the rocks of the wild goats; which were in the wilderness of Engedi; those rocks were exceeding high and terrible to look at, full of precipices, and so prominent, that to travellers they seemed as if they would fall into the adjacent valleys, that it even struck terror into them to look at them ^{f473}; called the rocks of wild goats, because these creatures, called from hence “rupicaprae”, or rock goats, (see ^{<1891>}Job 39:1); delighted to be there; and are, as Pliny ^{f474} says, of such prodigious swiftness, that they will leap from mountain to mountain, and back again at pleasure; these mountains David and his men chose for

safety, and the height and craggedness of them did not deter Saul and his men from seeking him there.

Ver. 3. *And he came to the sheepcotes by the way, where [was] a cave,* etc.] For the sheep to be led into at noon, to shelter them from the heat: such was the cave of Polyphemus, observed by Bochart ^{f475}, in which sheep and goats lay down and slept; (see Gill on “~~QREB~~Zephaniah 2:6”);

and Saul went in to cover his feet; the Targum is, to do his necessaries; and so Josephus ^{f476}; and the Jewish commentators generally understand it of easing nature; and as the eastern people used to wear long and loose garments, these, when they performed such an action, they used in modesty to gather them close about them, that no part of the body, their feet, and especially the parts of nature which should be concealed, might be seen; but the Syriac and Arabic versions render it, “and there he lay” or “slept”; which suggest, that his going into the cave was in order to take some sleep and rest, when it was usual to cover the feet, both to prevent taking cold, and the private parts of the body being exposed to view; and this accounts better for Saul not hearing David’s men in the cave, and for his being insensible of David’s cuttings off the skirt of his garment, and best agrees with the use of the phrase in (~~QREB~~Judges 3:24); the only place besides this in which it is used; (see Gill on “~~QREB~~Judges 3:24”);

and David and his men remained in the sides of the cave; unseen and unobserved by Saul, even six hundred of them; nor need this seem strange, since in those parts of the world there were caves exceeding large, made so either by nature or art. Vansleb ^{f477} speaks of a cave in Egypt so extraordinary large, that, without hyperbole, a thousand horses might there draw up in battle array, and of another larger than that; and Strabo says ^{f478}, that towards Arabia and Iturea are mountains difficult to be passed, and in which are deep caves, one of which would hold four thousand men: and as the mouths of these caves were generally narrow, and the further parts of them large, and also dark, persons at the entrance of them could be seen, when those in the more remote parts could not; and this cave is said to be extremely dark ^{f479}; which accounts for Saul’s being seen when he came into the cave, whereas David and his men could not be seen by him.

Ver. 4. *And the men of David said unto him,* etc.] Some of his principal men, who were about him, and near him, such as Joab and Abishai:

behold the day of which the Lord said unto thee: now the time was come that he spoke of to him by Samuel, or Gad, or to himself directly:

behold, I will deliver thine enemy into thine hand; and such was Saul, as appeared by his seeking to take away his life; and now he was in the hand of David to take away his life, if he pleased:

that thou mayest do to him as it shall seem good unto thee; an opportunity of this kind now offered:

then David arose; from that part of the cave in which he was, the further part of it:

and cut off the skirt of Saul's robe privily; unawares to him, and unobserved by him, which might be easily done, if Saul was asleep, and it is probable he was; and by the same way it may be accounted for that he did not hear the discourse that passed between David and his men.

Ver. 5. *And it came to pass afterward, that David's heart smote him*, etc.] His conscience accused him, and he repented of what he had done:

because he had cut off Saul's skirt; which though less than what his servants put him upon, and he might have thoughts of doing, yet was considered by him as a great indignity to his sovereign, and therefore sat uneasy on his mind.

Ver. 6. *And he said unto his men*, etc.] When he returned and brought the skirt of Saul's garment in his hand; or else he said this before that, though here mentioned, when they moved it to him to dispatch him, as he had a fair opportunity of doing it:

God forbid that I should do this thing unto my master, the Lord's anointed; and which he could not think of but with detestation and abhorrence, since he was his sovereign lord and master, and he a subject of his, and was anointed by the order of God, and his person sacred:

to stretch forth my hand against him; to take away his life; to cut off the skirt of his garment gave him uneasiness; but to slay him, the thought of it was shocking to him:

seeing he [is] the anointed of the Lord; anointed by Samuel to be king, (^{<0001>}1 Samuel 10:1), by order of the Lord, (^{<0007>}1 Samuel 9:17).

Ver. 7. *So David stayed his servants with these words*, etc.] Or pacified them, as the Targum, and made them quiet and easy in that he had not slain him, and reconciled their minds to his conduct, and restrained them from laying hands on him, by observing to them, that he was the anointed of the Lord:

and suffered them not to rise against Saul; to take away his life; he not only argued with them, but laid his commands on them that they should not slay him:

but Saul rose up out of the cave, and went on [his] way; he rose from his sleep, and went out of the cave unhurt, and proceeded on in the way he came to the sheepcotes, and which led on further, (^{021B}1 Samuel 24:3).

Ver. 8. *David also arose afterward*, etc.] After Saul was gone:

and went out of the cave; where he had been all the time that Saul had been in it:

and cried after Saul: with a loud voice: my lord the king; by which titles Saul would know that he was called unto:

and when Saul looked behind him; to see who it was that called unto him:

David stooped with his face to the earth, and bowed himself: giving reverence and honour to him as a king; (see Gill on "^{021B}1 Samuel 20:41").

Ver. 9. *And David said to Saul, wherefore hearest thou men's words*, etc.]

The false charges and accusations, that some of Saul's courtiers brought against David, as Doeg the Edomite, and such like sycophants and flatterers, to whom Saul hearkened, and believed what they said, and acted upon it. David chose rather to lay the blame on Saul's courtiers than on himself; and he began with him in this way, the rather to reconcile him to him, and cause him to listen to what he had to say: and represents them as

saying to him,

behold, David seeketh thy hurt? seeks to take away thy life, and seize upon thy crown and throne; than which nothing was more foreign from him.

Ver. 10. *Behold, this day thine eyes have seen*, etc.] Or may see; there is full proof and evidence of it, and which will be presently shown:

how that the Lord had delivered thee today into mine hand in the cave; from whence they were both just come:

and [some] bade [me] kill thee; some of the men that were with David, some of his officers or principal friends put him upon it, having a fair opportunity, and thinking it no evil, since he was his enemy, and sought his life; or “it said, kill thee”; my heart prompted me to it, that said so at first, as Ben Gersom interprets it; some refer it to God, who in his providence said so, or so it might be understood by David, as if Providence directed him to it, by giving him such an opportunity of doing it:

but [mine eye] spared thee; had pity on him, and notwithstanding the suggestions of friends, and of his own heart at first, or the seeming direction of Providence, yet he had mercy on him, and forbore slaying him:

and I said, I will not put forth my hand against my lord; and king, whose subject I am:

for he [is] the Lord’s anointed; the Lord has raised him to this dignity; invested him with the office of a king, and as such I regard him, and therefore have refrained mine hand from him, from hurting him,

Ver. 11. *Moreover, my father,* etc.] So he was in a natural sense, as having married his daughter; and in a civil sense, as he was a king, and was, or ought to have been, the father of his country, and to treat his subjects as his children, and David among the rest:

see, yea see, the skirt of thy robe in my hand; look on it again and again; view it with the eyes of thy body intently, that thou mayest be satisfied of it, and behold with the eyes of thy mind and understanding, and consider that I could as easily have had thine head in my hand as the skirt of thy robe; and here see an instance and proof of the integrity and sincerity of my heart, and cordial affections to thee, and an evidence against all the charges and accusations of my enemies, and that I have no ill design upon thy person and life, and am far from seeking thy hurt, as they say:

for in that I cut off the skirt of thy robe, and killed thee not; not only did that to show that he was in his power, but did not cut off his head, as he could:

know thou, and see, that [there is] neither evil nor transgression in mine hand; this might be a full conviction to him that he had no ill, neither in his heart nor hand, to do unto him:

and I have not sinned against thee; done nothing to offend him, never acted against his will, nor disobeyed any of his commands, or had been guilty of one overt act of treason or rebellion, but all the reverse:

yet thou huntest my soul to take it; pursued him from place to place, hunted him in the wildernesses of Ziph and Maon, and upon the rocks of Engedi, as a partridge on the mountains, (^{<0923>}1 Samuel 26:20); and lay in wait for him to kill him, as the Targum: he may be thought to have penned the “seventh” psalm at this time, or on this occasion; at least there are some passages in it, which seem to refer to his present circumstances, (^{<1900>}Psalms 7:1-17).

Ver. 12. *The Lord judge between me and thee*, etc.] And make it appear who is in the right, and who in the wrong:

and the Lord avenge me of thee; if he continued thus to persecute him:

but mine hand shall not be upon thee; to kill thee, though it may be in my power again to do it, as it has been; but this I am determined upon, let me suffer what I will, I will not lay hands on thee to do thee any hurt, but leave thee with God to requite all the evil done to me by thee.

Ver. 13. *As saith the proverb of the ancients*, etc.] It is an old saying, has been long in use, and may be applied to the present case; or the “proverb of the ancient one”; of the oldest man, the first man Adam, and of all others after him, so Kimchi; or of the Ancient One of the world, the Ancient of days, the Lord himself; so in the Talmud^{f480}:

wickedness proceedeth from the wicked; as is a man, so are his actions; if he is a wicked man, he will do wicked things; a corrupt tree brings forth evil fruits, an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil things; and as if David should say, if I had been the wicked man as I am represented, I should have committed wickedness; I should have made no conscience of taking away thy life when it was in my power; but my heart would not suffer me to do it:

but, or “and”

my hand shall not be upon thee; as it has not been upon thee, because of the fear of God in me, so neither shall it be hereafter: or the sense of the proverb may be, the wickedness that comes from a wicked man, that will kill him, or be the cause of his ruin, or he will be slain by wicked men such as himself; and this may be thy case, O king, unless thou repentest: but be that as it may, which I leave with the righteous Judge, this I am determined on, “mine hand shall not be upon thee”; to take away thy life.

Ver. 14. *After whom is the king of Israel come out?* etc.] From his court and palace, with an army of men, and at the head of them:

after whom dost thou pursue? with such eagerness and fury:

after a dead dog; as David was in the opinion, and according to the representation of his enemies, a dog, vile, mean, worthless, of no account; a dead dog, whose name was made to stink through the calumnies cast upon him; and if a dead dog, then as he was an useless person, and could do no good, so neither could he do any hurt, not so much as bark, much less bite; and therefore it was unworthy of so great a prince, a lessening, a degrading of himself, as well as a vain and impertinent thing, to pursue after such an one, that was not worthy of his notice, and could do him neither good nor harm:

after a flea? a little contemptible animal, not easily caught, as it is observed by some, and when caught good for nothing. David, by this simile, fitly represents not only his weakness and impotence, his being worthless, and of no account, and beneath the notice of such a prince as Saul; but the circumstances he was in, being obliged to move from place to place, as a flea leaps from one place to another, and is not easily taken, and when it is, of no worth and value; signifying, that as it was not worth his pains to seek after him, so it would be to no purpose, he should not be able to take him.

Ver. 15. *The Lord therefore be Judge, and judge between me and thee,* etc.] Signifying he did not desire to be judge in his own cause, but leave it with God to determine it for him in his providence:

and see, and plead my cause; look with pity upon him, take his cause in his hand, plead it, and do him justice:

and deliver me out of thine hand: which was a prayer of faith, believing he would do it in due time, (see ^{<9076>}Psalm 7:6,8-11).

Ver. 16. *And it came to pass, when David had made an end of speaking these words unto Saul,* etc.] And wonderful it is that Saul, so full of wrath and fury, and so eager of David's life, should stand still and hear him out, and not fall upon him; this must be owing to the restraining providence of God, and to the surprise Saul was in at the sight of David coming out of the cave, whom he expected not; and especially what awed and quieted him was the sight of the skirt of his robe in his hand, which was a sure token he had his life in his hand, and spared it, which made him listen attentively to all he said:

that Saul said, [is] this thy voice, my son David? he changes his language; before, when he spoke of David, it was only the so of Jesse now my son David, as he was by marriage to his daughter, and as appeared by his filial affection to him; and though he was at such a distance from him, that he was not able to discern his countenance, yet he knew his voice, at least supposed it to be his, as his question implies, and which he might conclude from in the whole of his discourse:

and Saul lifted up his voice and wept; being affected with the kindness of David to him, and with his deliverance from the danger he was in, and yet without true repentance of his sins; for there may be many tears shed where there is no real repentance, as in the case of Esau.

Ver. 17. *And he said to David, thou [art] more righteous than I,* etc.] By which it appears he thought himself righteous, though David was more so; the righteousness of David was so glaring, that his enemy himself being judge acknowledges it, but will not confess his own wickedness, having no true sense of sin, nor real sorrow for it:

for thou hast rewarded me good; in times past, and now; heretofore in killing Goliath, fighting his battles for him against the Philistines, driving the evil spirit from him, by playing on the harp before him, and now by sparing his life, only cutting off the skirt of his garment, when he could with equal ease have cut off his head:

whereas I have rewarded thee evil: in seeking to take away his life at various times, by casting a javelin at him more than once, sending messengers to kill him, and hunting after him from place to place, to take him and slay him.

Ver. 18. *And thou hast showed this day how that thou hast dealt well with me,* etc.] The cutting off of the skirt of his robe only, when his life was in

his hand, was a clear proof and full demonstration of his dealing well with him, and might sufficiently convince him he had no ill design upon him:

forasmuch as when the Lord had delivered me into thine hand, thou killedst me not; this was a plain proof and evidence of his kindness to him, which he owns, and also the providence of God in this affair, which had delivered him into the hands of David; by which he might see the Lord was for David, and against him, and might have deterred him from seeking David's hurt hereafter; but it did not.

Ver. 19. *For if a man find his enemy, will he let him go well away?* etc.] Or "in a good way"^{f481}, in peace and safety, without doing him any hurt; this is not usual among men, and yet this was the present case; David had found his enemy Saul, which Saul tacitly owns, and yet had let him go well away from him, without hurting him:

wherefore the Lord reward thee good for that thou hast done unto me this day; he does not promise to reward him himself, but prays the Lord to reward him; and had he been sincere in it, he could not have done better for him. Some connect the former clause with this, after this manner, "if a man find his enemy, and let him go away, the Lord will reward him, the Lord reward thee", etc. so the Syriac and Arabic versions.

Ver. 20. *And now, behold, I know well that thou shalt surely be king*, etc.] Not merely by the common report, that he was anointed by Samuel, to which yet he might give credit; but by the providence of God prospering and preserving him, and by his princely spirit and behaviour, and by calling to mind what Samuel had said to him, that his kingdom should be given to a neighbour of his better than he, and so David was by his own confession, (^{<10247>}1 Samuel 24:17); and the cutting off the skirt of his garment might put him in remembrance of the rending of the skirt of Samuel's mantle, upon which he told Saul his kingdom should be rent from him; though some think that was Saul's skirt, and so now he knew thereby, when David cut off his skirt, that the kingdom would be his; and it is a tradition of the Jews^{f482}, that Samuel said to him at that time, that he that cut off the skirt of his garment should reign after him:

and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in thine hand; and not be rent from him; and yet notwithstanding after this he sought to destroy him.

Ver. 21. *Swear now therefore unto me by the Lord*, etc.] By the Word of the Lord, as the, Targum:

that thou wilt not cut off my seed after me; as was usually done in despotic governments in the eastern countries, and is at this day, when one is advanced to the throne of another, by whom issue is left, who may be rivals and competitors with him:

and that thou wilt not destroy my name out of my father's house; by cutting off his seed, the same thing in different words repeated, for the confirmation of it; children bear the names of their fathers, and by them their memory is perpetuated, and cutting off them is destroying the name of their parents.

Ver. 22. *And David sware unto Saul*, etc.] That he would not cut, off his posterity; which oath he religiously observed, in sparing Mephibosheth, (^{<1207>}2 Samuel 21:7), and in punishing the murderers of Ishbosheth, (^{<1042>}2 Samuel 4:12); and as for the seven sons of Saul, delivered up to the Gibeonites, (^{<1206>}2 Samuel 21:6), it may be questioned whether they were his genuine legitimate offspring; and if they were, it was by the appointment and command of God, and according to his will and pleasure they were executed, who is not bound by the oaths of men, and to whom they must be submitted, (^{<1201>}2 Samuel 21:1,14);

and Saul went home; to his palace in Gibeah:

but David and his men got them up unto the hold; in Engedi, (^{<1029>}1 Samuel 23:29); not trusting to Saul, whose inconstancy, perfidy, cruel hatred, and malice, David full well knew; and therefore thought it not safe to return to his own house, nor to dwell in the open country, but in the wilderness, and among the rocks, and in the caves there, such as were in the wilderness of Engedi; and here, and at this time, he penned the fifty seventh psalm, (see ^{<1571>}Psalm 57:1-11).

CHAPTER 25

INTRODUCTION TO FIRST SAMUEL 25

This chapter gives an account of the death of Samuel, and of the ill treatment David met with from Nabal; it begins with the death of Samuel, which was greatly lamented in Israel, (^{<0250>}1 Samuel 25:1); it draws the character of Nabal, and his wife, (^{<0252>}1 Samuel 25:2,3); records a message of David to him, by his young men, desiring he would send him some of his provisions made for his sheep shearers, (^{<0254>}1 Samuel 25:4-9); and Nabal's ill-natured answer to him reported by the young men, which provoked David to arm against him, (^{<0256>}1 Samuel 25:10-13,21,22); and this being told Abigail, the wife of Nabal, and a good character given of David and his men, and of the advantage Nabal's shepherds had received from them, and the danger his family was in through his ingratitude, (^{<0258>}1 Samuel 25:14-17); she prepared a present to pacify David, went with it herself, and addressed him in a very handsome, affectionate, and prudent manner, (^{<0258>}1 Samuel 25:18-31); and met with a kind reception, (^{<0252>}1 Samuel 25:32-35); and the chapter is closed with an account of the death of Nabal, and of the marriage of Abigail to David, (^{<0252>}1 Samuel 25:32-44).

Ver. 1. *And Samuel died*, etc.] In the interval, when Saul and David were parted, and before they saw each other again; according to the Jewish chronology ^{f483}, Samuel died four months before Saul; but other Jewish writers say ^{f484} he died seven months before; Abarbinel thinks it was a year or two before; which is most likely and indeed certain, since David was in the country of the Philistines after this a full year and four months, if the true sense of the phrase is expressed in (^{<0270>}1 Samuel 27:7); and Saul was not then dead; and so another Jewish chronologer ^{f485} says, that Saul died two years after Samuel, to which agrees Clemens of Alexandria ^{f486}; and according to the Jews ^{f487}, he died the twentieth of Ijar, for which a fast was kept on that day:

and all the Israelites were gathered together, and lamented him; his death being a public loss, not only to the college of the prophets, over which he presided, but to the whole nation; and they had reason to lament his death, when they called to mind, the many good offices he had done them from

his youth upwards; and when the government was in his hands, which was administered in the most prudent and faithful manner; and after that they had his wise counsel and advice, his good wishes and prayers for them; and the rather they had reason to lament him, since Saul their king proved so bad as he did, and at this time a difference was subsisting between David and him:

and buried him in his house at Ramah; where he lived and died; not that he was buried in his house, properly so called, or within the walls of that building wherein he dwelt; though the Greeks ^{f488} and Romans ^{f489} used to bury in their own dwelling houses; hence sprung the idolatrous worship of the Lares, or household gods; but not the Hebrews, which their laws about uncleanness by graves would not admit of, (see ⁻⁰⁴⁹⁵Numbers 19:15,18); but the meaning is, that they buried him in the place where his house was, as Ben Gersom interprets it, at Ramah, in some field or garden belonging to it. The author of the Cippi Hebraici says ^{f490}, that here his father Elkanah, and his mother Hannah, and her two sons, were buried in a vault shut up, with, monuments over it; and here, some say ^{f491}, Samuel's bones remained, until removed by Arcadius the emperor into Thrace; Benjamin of Tudela reports ^{f492}, that when the Christians took Ramlah, which is Ramah, from the Mahometans, they found the grave of Samuel at Ramah by a synagogue of the Jews, and they took him out of the grave, and carried him to Shiloh, and there built a large temple, which is called the Samuel of Shiloh to this day:

and David arose and went down to the wilderness of Paran; on hearing of the death of Samuel, there to indulge his mourning for him; or rather that he might be in greater safety from Saul, being further off, this wilderness lying on the south of the tribe of Judah, and inhabited by Arabs, and these called Kedarenes; and now it was that he dwelt in the tents of Kedar, (⁻⁴⁹⁰⁵Psalms 120:5).

Ver. 2. *And [there was] a man in Maon,* etc.] A city of the tribe of Judah, from whence the wilderness had its name before mentioned; of which place, (see ⁻⁰¹⁵⁵Joshua 15:55); though Ben Gersom takes it to signify a dwelling place; and that this is observed to show, that he did not dwell in a city, but had his habitation where his business lay, which was in Carmel, where his fields, gardens, and vineyards were: wherefore it follows,

whose possessions [were] in Carmel; not Carmel in the tribe of Issachar, but in the tribe of Judah, not far from Maon, and are mentioned together,

(see Gill on “~~of~~ Joshua 15:55”); his cattle were there, his sheep particularly, for they are afterwards said to be shorn there; or “his work”^{f493}; his agriculture, his farming, where he was employed, or employed others in sowing seed, and planting trees:

and the man [was] very great; in worldly substance, though not in natural wisdom and knowledge, and especially in true religion and piety:

and he had three thousand sheep, and a thousand goats; so the substance of men in those times was generally described by the cattle they had, whether of the herd or flock, in which it chiefly lay:

and he was shearing his sheep in Carmel; which was the custom in Judea and Syria, and was a very ancient one, as early as the times of Judah, yea, of Laban, (see ^{of}Genesis 31:19 38:12,13); though the old Romans used to pluck off the wool from the sheep’s backs; hence a fleece of wool was called “vellus [a] vellendo”, from the plucking it off; and Pliny says^{f494}, in his time, that sheep were not shorn everywhere, but in some places the custom of plucking off the wool continued; and who elsewhere observes^{f495}, that the time of shearing was in June or July, or thereabouts; at which times a feast was made, and it is for the sake of that this is observed.

Ver. 3. *Now the name of the man [was] Nabal*, etc.] Which signifies a “fool”; one would think his parents should not give him this name, though it is a name proper enough to men in common; and Kimchi thinks this was a nickname, which men gave him agreeably to his genius and conduct, and which is not improbable:

and the name of his wife Abigail; which signifies “my father’s joy”, he delighting in her for her wit and beauty, as follows:

and [she was] a woman of good understanding, and of a beautiful countenance; she was not only of a good understanding in things natural, civil, and domestic, but in things spiritual, as her speech to David shows, and which, with her external form, completed her character, and greatly recommended her; which is the character Aelianus^{f486} gives of Aspasia, wise and fair:

but the man [was] churlish and evil in his doings; morose and ill natured in the temper and disposition of his mind, and wicked in his conversation, and fraudulent and oppressive in his dealings with men:

and he [was] of the house of Caleb; or he was a Calebite ^{f497}, a descendant of that great and good man Caleb the son of Jephunneh; which was an aggravation of his wickedness, that he should be the degenerate plant of such a noble vine: some interpret it, he was as his heart, as his heart was bad, so was he; some men, their outside is better than their inside; but this man was no hypocrite, he was as bad outwardly as he was inwardly: the word “Caleb” sometimes signifies a dog; hence the Septuagint version renders it, a doggish man, a cynic; and to the same purpose are the Syriac and Arabic versions; and so some Jewish writers interpret it; but the Targum, Jarchi, and Kimchi, supply it as we do, that he was of the house or family of Caleb, and so of the tribe of Judah, as David was.

Ver. 4. *And David heard in the wilderness*, etc.] In the wilderness of Paran, where he was, and a wilderness it was to him, being in want of food, as the following relation shows:

that Nabal did shear his sheep; when there was generally good living, and so a proper person, and a proper time, for David to apply for the relief of his wants.

Ver. 5. *And David sent out ten young men*, etc.] Such persons, and such a number of them, he sent to show honour and reverence to Nabal:

and David said, unto the young men, get ye up to Carmel; which lay higher than the wilderness, in which he was:

and go to Nabal, and greet him in my name; ask him of his peace and welfare, as the Targum; wish all health and happiness in my name, present my service and best respects to him.

Ver. 6. *And thus shall ye say to him that liveth [in prosperity]*, etc.] That lives, while others, as David and his men, might be rather said to starve than live; they lived in great meanness, but he in great abundance, and therefore in a capacity to give to others, and particularly to relieve them: or the sense is, they should say to him, “thus” shall it be, or may it be “for life”: for the time of life, for the year to come; at this time next year, at next sheep shearing, mayest thou be in as great prosperity then as now, and even all the days of thy life:

peace [be] both to thee, and peace [be] to thine house, and peace [be] unto all that thou hast; that is, all prosperity to thy person in soul and body, to thy family, wife, children and servants, and let the same attend thy

estate, cattle, farms, fields, vineyards, and all that belong to thee; and wish for a blessing on him, and his, and all that were his, or he had; a more extensive one could not well be made.

Ver. 7. *And now I have heard that thou hast shearers*, etc.] Men employed in shearing his sheep, which was a time of feasting and gladness, and therefore David sent his young men to him at this time with his compliments upon it; and in order to obtain what he intended by this message to him, he observes the favours he and his men had done to his servants, and the advantages which they had received from them:

now thy shepherds which were with us; feeding their sheep near the wilderness of Paran, which was not far from Carmel and Maon:

we hurt them not; by taking any of their sheep and lambs from them, or by abusing, beating them, or giving them ill language; or “did not put them to shame”^{f498}, by denying them anything they asked of them, which was in their power to grant, nor mocked and scoffed at them, and jeered them on account of their occupation:

neither was there ought missing unto them; they did not steal a sheep or lamb from them, as was common for soldiers to do; nor did they suffer any of the Arabs, that dwelt in the wilderness of Paran, to rob them, who lived upon plunder, or any of the wild beasts to hurt them, as much as in them lay; so careful were they of them, and were a wall unto them by night and day, as Nabal’s servants owned, (~~02516~~-1 Samuel 25:16); and this was the case,

all the while they were in Carmel; or in the fields, (~~02515~~-1 Samuel 25:15); which were joining to the wilderness of Paran.

Ver. 8. *Ask thy young men, and they will show thee*, etc.] The shepherds before mentioned, who kept their flocks hard by them:

wherefore let the young men find favour in thine eyes; the ten young men David sent to Nabal:

for we are come in a good day; a day in which Nabal made a feast for his shearers, as was usual then, and still is, (see ~~01323~~-2 Samuel 13:23-28); and at such times as persons are generally cheerful and merry, so free and liberal, and as there were plenty of provisions, not only enough for the guests and shearers, but to spare, and there was no need for an increase of expense, it

might upon the whole be concluded it was a proper time for David to apply for accommodations for himself and his men:

give, I pray thee, whatsoever cometh to thine hand unto thy servants, and to thy son David; he did not request anything extraordinary of him, or to put him to any expense, but what was at hand, and he could spare, he prayed him to deliver to the young men he sent, for their use, and the use of other his servants, and particularly David, who stiled himself his son, being of the same tribe with Nabal, and Nabal his senior.

Ver. 9. *And when David's young men came,* etc.] To Carmel:

they spake to Nabal according to all those words in the name of David; they delivered their message punctually and exactly, in the very words, or however according to the purport of them, in David's name, as he enjoined them:

and ceased: from speaking, waiting for Nabal's answer; or "they rested"^{f499}, from the fatigues of their journey; which they did not until they had delivered their message to Nabal, and then they took the liberty to sit down and rest themselves; but the former sense seems best, and is preferred by Maimonides^{f500}.

Ver. 10. *And Nabal answered David's servants, and said,* etc.] In a very haughty manner, in great wrath, just as churlish covetous persons do, when they do not care to give what is asked of them:

who [is] David? and who [is] the son of Jesse; his two questions, which relate to the same person, do not well agree together, since by both he would suggest as if he knew not the person they came from, and whose name they made use of: had he stopped at the first question, it might have gone so, but his second question betrays him, and plainly shows he did know him, though he speaks with contempt of him, calling him "the son of Jesse", as Saul often did, (⁴⁹⁷1 Samuel 20:27,30,31 22:7,8,13). Abarbinel, of all interpreters, is of opinion only, that Nabal did not say this disrespectfully of David, and to his dishonour; he knew he was the Lord's anointed, and the king's son-in-law; but the sense, according to him, is, "who [is] David? and who [is] the son of Jesse?" are they not one man? but though he is the son of Jesse, and prides himself saying, I shall be king, I should not regard that, but would send him corn, and bread, and food, as much as is needful for his own use; but what can I do when there are so

many servants? for they are six hundred of them, and they are too many to relieve:

there be many servants nowadays that break away every man from his master; which words also the same writer thinks have no reference to David, only to his men; but they seem plainly to strike at David himself, and suggest that he had revolted from and rebelled against Saul his master, as well as received and protected fugitives and renegades, such as fled from their masters and from their creditors; (see ~~1~~1 Samuel 22:2).

Ver. 11. *Shall I then take my bread, and my water*, etc.] Which include all food and liquors, everything eatable and drinkable; and “water” may be particularly mentioned, because very scarce in the wilderness, and so precious; though the Septuagint version has “wine” instead of “water”:

and my flesh which I have killed for my shearers; whether oxen, or sheep, or lambs, as there might be of each sort, for an entertainment made on such an occasion:

and give [it] unto men whom I know not whence they [be]? which is another argument Abarbinel makes use of that he meant not David, but his men only, because he did not know who and from whence they were.

Ver. 12. *So David’s young men turned their way*, etc.] Their backs on him, without making any reply; and though they did not return railing for railing, they treated him with silent contempt; and though they did not offer to do any injury to his person, nor to take anything away by force, yet they were determined to report this usage to David, who they doubted not would avenge the affront put on him and them:

and went again; to the wilderness from whence they came:

and came and told him all these sayings; rude and reproachful ones, just as they were delivered.

Ver. 13. *And David said unto his men*, etc.] Provoked to the last degree to have such a rude churlish answer returned to such a civil and humble message as he had sent:

gird you on every man his sword; and prepare to march and chastise Nabal for his insolence:

and they girded on every man his sword; in obedience to David, and in vindication of his honour and their own:

and David also girded on his sword; in order to march at the head of them, fired with indignation at the affront given him:

and there went up after David about four hundred men; out of the six hundred he had with him, (⁴⁰²⁸³1 Samuel 23:13);

and two hundred abode by the stuff; the baggage in their camp; the Targum is, they

“were left to watch the vessels;”

the things necessary for their use, for the dressing of their food, their bedding, etc.

Ver. 14. *But one of the young men told Abigail, Nabal's wife*, etc.] Not one of David's young men, as what follows shows, but one of Nabal's young men or servants, one of those David directs him to for the truth of what he said, (⁴⁰²⁸³1 Samuel 25:8); this was one of those that had been employed in feeding sheep in the wilderness, where David was, and knew him, but was now at Carmel, and was present when David's messengers came to Nabal, and was privy to what passed:

saying, David sent messengers out of the wilderness to salute our master; in a very kind and handsome manner, to ask of his peace and welfare, and to wish him all happiness and prosperity; or “masters”^{f501} master and mistress, including both Nabal and Abigail:

and he railed on them; gave them very abusive language, represented David and his men as a parcel of scoundrels, fugitives, and runaway servants, (⁴⁰²⁵¹⁰1 Samuel 25:10,11); or “he flew at them”^{f502}; or “upon” them, in great wrath and fury, calling them hard names, bidding them begone about their business; the allusion is to a ravenous bird, which will fly at persons when it apprehends its young in any danger.

Ver. 15. *But the men [were] very good unto us*, etc.] Very kind and civil, yea, very useful and serviceable, even all the messengers David sent and Nabal railed on, yea, all David's men, and therefore deserved better treatment than they met with from Nabal:

and we were not hurt; neither by them nor others:

neither missed we anything: of our flocks, or anything belonging to us; they neither robbed us themselves, nor suffered others to rob us:

as long as we were conversant with them, when we were in the fields; feeding the sheep by them: thus he confirms everything that David said of himself and his men, (see Gill on “~~1~~ 1 Samuel 25:7”): and says even more of them to their commendation, as follows.

Ver. 16. *They were a wall unto us both by night and day*, etc.] Protecting and defending them against the Philistines, who, as they robbed the threshing floors of Keilah, would have plundered the flocks of Nabal; or it may be rather against the incursions of the Arabs in the wilderness of Paran, the posterity of Ishmael, who lived by plunder, and against the wild beasts of the desert, who otherwise would have carried off many of their sheep and lambs, by night or by day:

all the while we were with them keeping the sheep; all which showed how reasonable it was that Nabal should have used them well, and given them a portion of his entertainment at his sheep shearing; for had it not been for them, he would not have had so many sheep to shear as he had.

Ver. 17. *Now therefore know and consider what thou wilt do*, etc.] For the preservation of her family:

for evil is determined against our master, and against all his household; which he concluded, either from something that dropped from David’s messengers, as they turned away from Nabal; or from the martial spirit of David himself, who would never put up such an affront and indignity cast upon him; or from some intelligence he had of David’s arming his men, and marching to take vengeance:

for he [is such] a son of Belial, that [a man] cannot speak to him; meaning Nabal, who was such a worthless, passionate, and ill natured man, such a lawless and imperious one, that he would not suffer a man to speak to him about anything; and it was to no purpose to attempt it, which was a reason this servant did not choose to speak to him about this affair, but to Abigail; and suggests, that it would signify nothing for her to speak to him about it, but it would be most advisable for her to consider with herself what was to be done immediately, without consulting him: the words may be rendered, “for he is a son of Belial that speaks unto him”^{f503}; or when “he speaks unto him”, or it is told him; meaning not the servant that reported to David what Nabal said; for Abarbinel observes there were ten

of them, and therefore it could not be said of them, he is a son of Belial; but rather David himself, as he and Kimchi observe it may be interpreted of; that though he was so good and upright a man, yet when it should be told him how Nabal had treated him, he would be so provoked at it, that he would become and act like a son of Belial; storm and rage, and vow destruction to Nabal and his family, and come out with his whole army to destroy them; but the first sense is best.

Ver. 18. *Then Abigail made haste*, etc.] As the case required, her family being in imminent danger:

and took two hundred loaves; of bread; of what size or weight they were is not said; though it may be reasonably concluded they were pretty large, since they are not called cakes, but loaves, and since they were to be a present to David and his men, who were numerous:

and two bottles of wine; not such as ours are, which would have borne no proportion to the rest of the provision; but these were leathern bags which held a large quantity, in which they put and carried wine in those times and countries; the Septuagint version is, two vessels or casks of wine:

and five sheep ready dressed; killed and dressed by the butcher, or made ready by the cook, boiled or roasted; the word which the Targum uses, according to the interpretation of Jarchi, from one of their Rabbins, signifies such as were stuffed with small pieces of meat, and eggs in them, or, as it should seem, made into pastries:

and five measures of parched [corn]; or five seahs, a measure which held, according to Bishop Cumberland^{f504}, two wine gallons, four bottles, and a little more; of this parched corn, (see Gill on [“<small>1</small> Samuel 17:17”](#)); where mention is made of an ephah of it; and the Septuagint version has the same measure here, and calls them five ephahs of flour:

and an hundred clusters of raisins; or dried grapes, as the Targum; the Septuagint is, one omer of them, which was the tenth part of an ephah:

and two hundred cakes of figs; which were dried, and pressed, and made into lumps, and she took two hundred of these; or, as the Targum, two hundred pound weight of them:

and laid [them] on asses; one not being sufficient to carry all this provision.

Ver. 19. *And she said to her servants, go on before me,* etc.] With the present, the sight of which she wisely considered would in a great measure pacify David, and prepare him to hear patiently what she had to say to him:

behold, I come after you; signifying it would not be long before she came up to them, and overtook them:

but she told not her husband Nabal; neither the danger he and his family were in through his conduct, nor the preparations she had made to prevent it; knowing his perverse and obstinate disposition, that it would take up too much time to reason with him, and persuade him, and bring him into proper measures; and which may be observed to excuse the conduct of Abigail in doing what she did, and taking and disposing of her husband's goods, without his knowledge and leave; the case required haste, and it was done to preserve him and his family from imminent ruin; and besides, he might not be in a fit condition to be spoken to, being drunk with passion, or with wine, or both, (see ⁴⁹²³⁶1 Samuel 25:36); and no doubt she was directed by the Spirit of God to do what she did; and this being an extraordinary case, is not to be drawn into an example.

Ver. 20. *And it was [so, as] she rode on the ass,* etc.] After her servants:

that she came down, by the covert of the hill; by the side of it, which was covered with bushes, and she rode among them, in a way that led through them, and so was not seen by David and his men; or by the shadow of the hill, toward the bottom of it, where by reason of that, and the opposite hill, it was darkish, and they could not see each other:

and, behold, David and his men came down against her; came down a hill opposite to that she came down:

and she met them; in the valley between two hills.

Ver. 21. *Now David had said,* etc.] When the messengers returned and told him how they had been used by Nabal; or he "said" ^{f505}, or was saying within himself, or to his men, what follows, just as Abigail met him:

surely in vain have I kept all that this [fellow] hath in the wilderness; which shows that he was in a violent passion, and had Nabal in the utmost contempt and indignation, in that he mentions not his name, only says "this", this man or fellow; leaving a blank to be filled up with the most ignominious name and character that could be thought of; and repents that

he had taken so much care of his flocks when they were feeding by him in the wilderness:

so that nothing was missed of all that [pertained] unto him; and seems to have wished he had suffered his flocks to have been robbed by the Arabs, or worried by wild beasts, since he had been such an ungrateful wretch to him:

and he hath requited me evil for good; he had requited evil to him by denying to send him any of his provisions, and by abusing him and his men with opprobrious language; and this was done in return for the good deeds he had done in protecting his servants and his flocks in the wilderness, and for the good words and respectful message he had sent unto him.

Ver. 22. *So and more also do God unto the enemies of David,* etc.] Give them as much health and prosperity, as much wealth and riches, as Nabal has, and much more:

if I leave of all that [pertain] to him, by the morning light, any that pisseth against the wall; which is generally understood of a dog, that he, would not leave him so much as a dog; but it is better, with Ben Gersom, to interpret it of the males in his house, himself, his sons, and servants; and so the Targum paraphrases it of reasonable creatures, of such

“that know knowledge,”

or are knowing and understanding creatures; it seems to have been towards the evening; of the day when David was marching towards Nabal's house, designing to fall upon him and his, amidst their jollity that night, and cut them all off before morning. This must be imputed to the sudden and violent passion David was thrown into when off his guard, through the necessity he was in, the disappointment he met with, and the opprobrious language he was treated with; but in this his conduct was not as it used to be, and as it was towards Saul his enemy. Nor is his rage and passion to be vindicated, or the rash vow he made to destroy Nabal and his family; his crime, though great, yet not to be punished with death; his ingratitude and insolence deserved resentment, but were not capital crimes worthy of death, and especially of the destruction of his whole family; the Jews indeed make him to be guilty of treason, in that he knew that David was anointed king, and yet both abused him, and disobeyed his commands, and therefore being guilty of overt acts of treason, he and his were deserving of death; but David was not yet king.

Ver. 23. *And when Abigail saw David*, etc.] Whom she either knew personally, or rather supposed who he was by the number of men that followed him:

she hasted, and alighted off the ass; on which she rode:

and fell before David on her face, and bowed herself to the ground; in respect to, and reverence of, so great a person as David was.

Ver. 24. *And fell at his feet*, etc.] As an humble supplicant, having a favour to ask of him; it is very probable David was on foot:

and said, upon me, my lord, [upon] me [let] this iniquity [be]; which her husband had been guilty of; she desires it might be transferred from him to her, and be reckoned as if done by her; she would have it imputed to herself, and all the blame lie upon her, and the punishment for it be inflicted on her; for iniquity may be put for the punishment of iniquity: this was very artfully said, as well as expressed great affection for her husband, and care of his life; for she knew, if she could get the fault removed from him to her, she would be able to vindicate herself, and her innocence would soon appear; nor would this strong affection for her husband fail of answering some good purpose, as she full well knew:

and let thine handmaid, I pray thee, speak in thine audience and hear the words of thine handmaid: as it was but reasonable she should be heard, since she stood now as the criminal, taking all the blame of her husband's conduct on herself.

Ver. 25. *Let not my lord, I pray thee, regard this man of Belial, [even] Nabal*, etc.] He is a worthless man, it must be owned, a weak foolish man, rather to be despised than regarded by him; what either he says or does is unworthy of the notice of any, and much less of so great a person as David was:

for as his name [is], so [is] he; his natural disposition, genius, and conduct, agree with his name; when anyone knows his name, he may judge what is to be expected from him:

Nabal [is] his name: which signifies a fool:

and folly, in Hebrew, “Nebalah”,

[is] with him; attends all, his words and actions. This character of her husband, though no doubt a just one, yet it would not have been right in her to have given it, whose folly she should rather have concealed, but that it was his well known character; and she observes it not to reproach him with it, but to excuse his sin, his rudeness and ingratitude and preserve his life; and suggests that what he had done was not to be imputed to malice in his heart, but to his stupidity and folly, and so not to be regarded, and was not a peculiar single action of his, but what he was daily more or less guilty of; his folly was with him wherever he went and appeared in everything he said or did, and therefore to be overlooked and despised:

but I thine handmaid saw not the young men of my lord, whom thou didst send: as she had taken the blame upon herself, now she answers for herself, and pleads ignorance of his messengers, and their message; she had not so much as seen them with her eyes, and much less heard their message when reported; had she, she would have taken care, she intimates, that it should have been attended to; having so much interest in her husband, that she could have prevailed on him to have used them with civility, and granted their request.

Ver. 26. *Now therefore, my lord, [as] the Lord liveth, and [as] thy soul liveth,* etc.] Which is an oath, and respects either what goes before, that she never saw the young men that were sent to Nabal, or to what follows, the providence of God in preventing David from shedding blood, which she was sure of by an impulse on her own mind, and by observing a change in David's countenance:

seeing the Lord hath withholden thee from coming to [shed] blood, and from avenging thyself with thine own hand; she does not impute this to her prudence, and the provision she made to appease David, and prevent him from shedding the blood he intended, and taking the vengeance he had resolved on; but to the Lord, and the interposition of his providence, which she knew would have its weight on the mind of so good a man as David was; who upon reflection would be thankful that he had been prevented from shedding innocent blood, as the Targum calls it:

now let thine enemies, and they that seek evil to my lord, be as Nabal; meaning Saul and those with him, wishing they might be as inconsiderable as Nabal; as unable, as weak, and impotent as he to do him any hurt, and as short lived, and cut off by the hand God, as he would be; for, according to Jarchi, she prophesied under the direction of the Holy Spirit. It may be

observed that in (⁰²⁵⁴1 Samuel 25:24-31), she frequently gives David the title of “my lord”, in reverence of him, and to atone for the rudeness and insolence of her husband, in speaking of him as a runaway servant, (⁰²⁵⁰1 Samuel 25:10).

Ver. 27. *And now this blessing, which thine handmaid hath brought unto my lord*, etc.] The present, consisting of the things mentioned in (⁰²⁵⁸1 Samuel 25:18); which came as a blessing from God, and with good will from her:

let it even be given unto the young men that follow my lord; the servants of David: in the original it is, “that walk at the feet of my lord”: and which the Targum paraphrases, “who minister before my lord”; and so Abigail’s damsels are called “pedissequae”, or “that walked at her feet”, (⁰²⁵²1 Samuel 25:42); and with the Romans, in later times, servants were called a “pedibus” and “pedissequi”^{f506}. This also is very artfully said, as if the present was not good enough for David, and worthy of his acceptance; might be agreeable to his men, and of service to them.

Ver. 28. *I pray thee, forgive the trespass of thine handmaid*, etc.] The trespasses, as the Targum, either the sin of her husband, she had taken upon herself, or her boldness in troubling him with her petitions and solicitations, and even with the present she had brought:

for the Lord will certainly make my lord a sure house; or a firm kingdom, as the Targum; would raise him to the kingdom of Israel, and establish it in his posterity, that it should not be taken from him, as it would be from Saul:

because my lord fighteth the battles of the Lord; the battles of the people of the Lord, as the Targum, of the people of Israel against the Philistines; which he had often done with success, the Lord being with him, and prospering him and therefore would firmly settle him on the throne, and continue the kingdom in his posterity:

and evil hath not been found in thee [all] thy days; no unjust action had been committed by him against his king and country, however he had been reproached and calumniated; and she hoped that therefore none would be done by him now to stain so fair a character.

Ver. 29. *Yet a man is risen to pursue thee, and to seek thy soul*, etc.] His life, to take it away, meaning Saul, whom she chose not to name, because he was king:

but the soul of my lord shall be bound up in the bundle of life with the Lord thy God; should be dear unto the Lord, precious in his esteem, and be carefully preserved by him, among other his chosen ones, and should be safe with him, in his hands, and under his care and keeping; the Jews refer this to eternal life in the world to come, and the safety and security of his soul hereafter; so the Targum,

“the soul of my lord shall be treasured up in the treasury of eternal life, before the Lord thy God:”

hence they speak of the souls of the righteous being laid up under the throne of glory ^{f507}, in proof of which they produce this text; and so Maimonides ^{f508} understands it of what should be after death, (see ~~410B~~ Revelation 6:9 ~~508B~~ Colossians 3:3);

and the souls of thine enemies, them shall he sling out, [as out] of the middle of a sling; that is, remove them swiftly and suddenly, and with force, out of the world, as a stone is slung out of the middle of a sling; (see ~~240B~~ Jeremiah 10:18).

Ver. 30. *And it shall come to pass, when the Lord shall have done to my lord according to all the good that he hath spoken concerning thee*, etc.] Performed his promise, especially with respect to his kingdom, as follows:

and shall have appointed thee ruler over Israel; that is, actually raised him to be, and settled him as king upon the throne of Israel; for he was both appointed and anointed already; and this Abigail knew, and was now well known in Israel, and the common talk of the people.

Ver. 31. *This shall be no grief unto thee, nor offence of heart unto my lord*, etc.] It would give him no trouble, nor distress of mind, or sit uneasy on his conscience:

either that thou hast shed blood causeless, or that my lord hath avenged himself; which she suggests it might do, if he had shed the blood of Nabal's family, his children and servants, who were no ways concerned with him in his rudeness and ingratitude; or had avenged himself on him for the same, by taking away his life, which such crimes, however great and aggravated,

did not deserve; but, on the contrary, it would be a satisfaction and pleasure to him to reflect upon it, that he had passed over such an offence, and shed no blood on account of it:

but when the Lord shall have dealt well with my lord; by delivering him out of the hands of all his enemies, and have raised him to, and settled him on the throne of Israel, of which she made no doubt:

then remember thine handmaid; the advice she gave not to shed blood, and take vengeance, for which he would then be thankful, and gratefully remember: some, as Ben Gersom, think she said this under a spirit of prophecy, that Nabal should die quickly, and she should be David's wife; but rather her meaning is, that when he should be king, and she should apply to him on any account, to have justice done her, and to be assisted and relieved when oppressed, that he would then remember her, and show her favour.

Ver. 32. *And David said to Abigail*, etc.] Having heard her out, and being overcome with her rhetoric and powerful arguments:

blessed [be] the Lord God of Israel, which sent thee this day to meet me; who put it into her heart to come out and meet him, and endeavour to avert him from his bad design, which his heart was set upon; he saw plainly the hand of God in it, and in the first place acknowledges the goodness of divine Providence, in directing her to take the step she did.

Ver. 33. *And blessed [be] thy advice*, etc.] Thanks be to God, and to thee for it, being wise, good, and seasonable; or "thy taste"^{f509}, thy good sense, knowledge, as the Targum, discretion, prudence, and understanding:

and blessed [be] thou which hast kept me this day from coming to [shed] blood; he came out with a full resolution to shed the blood of Nabal, and of all the males in his house, but was stopped by Abigail; who by her arguments so prevailed upon him as to cause him to desist from his design, and thankful he was to God for it; for though he had vowed he would destroy Nabal and his family, yet being a rash sinful vow, he saw it was better to break it than to keep it:

and from avenging myself with mine own hand; which to do would have been sinful, vengeance only belonging to God; and now he leaves it to him, and is very thankful that he was prevented doing it himself.

Ver. 34. *For in very deed, [as] the Lord God of Israel liveth,* etc.] An oath for the confirmation of what he was about to say:

which hath kept me back from hurting thee: from doing any ill to her family, as he intended, though not to her person, his resolution being only to slay the males; but that would have been an hurt, an evil, an affliction to Abigail, from which the Lord in his providence restrained him, and that through her good advice:

except thou hadst hasted, and come to meet me: if she had not made quick dispatch in preparing her present, or had stayed to persuade her husband into her measures; if she had delayed a little longer, David would have been at Nabal's house, executing his vengeance on him and his:

surely there had not been left unto Nabal, by the morning light, any that pisseth against the wall: (see Gill on "^{<0252>}1 Samuel 25:22").

Ver. 35. *So David received of her hand [that] which she had brought him,* etc.] Her present, (^{<0258>}1 Samuel 25:18); and which he kindly took for his own use, as well as for his men; for it was a present for a prince:

and said to her, go up in peace to thine house; in peace of mind, having her request granted, and nothing to fear from David and his men, and so might return home with the greatest safety in her own person, with those that were with her, and be under no apprehensions of danger and destruction to Nabal and his family:

see, I have hearkened to thy voice; to her arguments and reasonings, which were powerful; to her petitions, which were granted; and to her good counsel and advice, which he took:

and have accepted thy person: done as she desired, forgave the offence, and so lifted her up, as the word signifies, and made her countenance cheerful; received her present kindly, and took well all she said and did; and promised to grant her, for the future, anything that lay in his power, whenever she should apply to him, (see ^{<1878>}Job 42:8,9).

Ver. 36. *And Abigail came to Nabal,* etc.] Having sped with David, and taken her leave of him, she returned home to her husband Nabal:

and, behold, he held a feast in his house like the feast of a king; both for the number of dishes on his table and of guests at it though only on the account of sheep shearing; but very probably there were others that were

invited to this entertainment besides the shearers; covetous men are generally very profuse when they make feasts:

and Nabal's heart [was] merry within him, for he [was] very drunken:

which was a very ill example for the master of the feast to set, and was one instance among others of his folly, and of his conduct answering to his name:

wherefore she told him nothing less or more until the morning light; where she had been, and what she had been about, the danger that he and the whole family were in through his rude and churlish behaviour towards David and his men, and how she had prevented it by a timely application to David, meeting him when in full march, and in a great passion, and with a firm resolution to destroy him and his; but finding Nabal in such a condition, bereaved of his reason, and incapable of attending to what she should say, said not one word about it till the next morning.

Ver. 37. *But it came to pass in the morning, when the wine was gone out of Nabal,* etc.] When he had slept, and was become sober, and so capable of attending to and understanding what might be related to him:

and his wife had told him these things; recorded in this chapter, before observed:

that his heart died within him, and he became [as] a stone; he swooned away, became as cold as a stone, and remained as senseless, spoke not a word, but lay in a stupor; the Jewish writers generally say this was occasioned by the distress and uneasiness the present his wife carried to David gave him; but it is more likely the sense of the danger that was impressed upon his mind, which he had been exposed to through his carriage to David and his men; who, he feared, notwithstanding all his wife said would return and take vengeance on him.

Ver. 38. *And it came to pass, about ten days [after],* etc.] After he had lain in this stupid and senseless manner for ten days:

that the Lord smote Nabal, that he died; with some disease or increased the grief of his heart, and the fears of his mind that he died therewith.

Ver. 39. *And when David heard that Nabal was dead,* etc.] As he soon might, Maon and Carmel not being far from the wilderness where David was:

he said, blessed [be] the Lord, that hath pleaded the cause of my reproach from the hand of Nabal; not that he rejoiced at the death of Nabal, simply considered, or from a private spirit of revenge; but because of the glory of divine justice, which he had shown to him in vindicating him from the reproach Nabal had cast upon him, and particularly was thankful for what follows;

and hath kept his servant from evil; from slaying Nabal with his own hand, and doing hurt to his family:

for the Lord hath returned the wickedness of Nabal upon his own head; and upon no other, none of his family suffered but himself, and which was another cause of thankfulness to David; had he been suffered to have done as he in his wrath determined, not only Nabal, but all the males in his house, had been cut off; but now, through the righteous judgment of God, only Nabal suffered, and not any of his family:

and David sent and communed with Abigail; by his messengers to her; or “concerning” her ^{f510}, about marrying her:

to take her to him to wife; for being both a beautiful and wise woman, he thought her a proper person to be his wife; which she might lawfully become, Nabal being dead, and Michal, David’s wife, being taken from him, and given to another man, with whom she lived in adultery; or as divorced by David, as the Jews say, David by the law of God was free from her. These messengers were sent by David at a convenient time, at a proper distance from the death of Nabal; and he chose rather to send messengers than to go himself, lest being denied he should be put to shame, she being a rich widow, and he a poor persecuted man, and that her answer might be entirely free and unawed by him, and that it might appear that she was not taken to him by force; and besides, such a method has been always reckoned most honourable with great personages.

Ver. 40. *And when the servants of David were come to Abigail to Carmel*, etc.] For though Nabal lived in Maon, yet having possessions in Camel, he had no doubt an house there also; and here Abigail was, and perhaps chose to be after his death, rather than at Maon:

they spake unto her; delivered the message to her they were sent with by David:

saying, David sent us unto thee, to take thee to him to wife; that is, to treat with her about his marriage to her, to propose it to her, and, if they could prevail upon her, to bring her with them, that David might espouse her.

Ver. 41. *And she arose, and bowed herself on [her] face to the earth*, etc.] As she did before David, (⁴⁰²⁷³1 Samuel 25:23); and did as she would have done had he been present, considering his messengers as representing him and therefore showed the same respect and reverence and did the same honour, as if he had been there in person:

and said; expressed herself in such language as if David had been before her:

behold, [let] thine handmaid [be] a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my lord; which she said through her great humility, this being one of the meanest services she could be put to; intimating, that she was so far from being worthy to be the wife of such a man that she was only fit and it would be honour enough to her to perform the meanest services to those that waited upon him; or her sense is that it would be enough for her to be the wife of one of David's servants, and not his; it being the business of a wife, as Ben Gersom observes to wash the feet of her husband.

Ver. 42. *And Abigail hasted and arose*, etc.] She had no objection nor hesitation in her mind about marrying David but at once consented, and immediately prepared for her journey, having as high an opinion, and as great an esteem of David, as he of her; and though she was rich and he peer this was no obstacle in the way, she knew and believed he would be king of Israel, (⁴⁰²³⁰1 Samuel 25:30,31); and though he could not support her, she had enough to support herself, and supply him, till he came to the throne: and

rode upon an ass, with five damsels of hers that went after her; whom she took with her, partly to wait upon her, and partly for her honour, and the honour of David, whom she was going to marry:

and she went after the messengers of David: not following them directly, but some time after they were gone; partly for the sake of decency, and partly that they going before might acquaint David with the success of their message, and he might prepare to receive Abigail when she came:

and became his wife; he espoused and married her according to the custom of the times.

Ver. 43. *And David also took Ahinoam of Jezreel, etc.*] A city in the tribe of Judah, (⁴⁶⁵⁵⁶Joshua 15:56); that is, he took her to wife, and as it seems before Abigail became his wife; (see ⁴⁰⁸²2 Samuel 3:2,3);

and they were also both of them his wives; polygamy, though not agreeably to the law of nature, nor the law of God, was a custom which prevailed in those times, which good men gave into, though not to be commended for it.

Ver. 44. *But Saul had given Michal his daughter, David's wife, to Phalti the son of Laish, etc.*] Or "for Saul", etc. ^{f511}; which is a reason for his marrying again, but no reason for marrying more wives than one. Michal was his first wife, and they lived lovingly together, until David was obliged to flee from Saul, and then he gave her to another; partly to vex David, and partly if he could to break the relation between him and David, that he might not be thought to be his son in law, and he to persecute one in such a relation to him; and that this might not give David any show of claim, or be the means of his rising to the throne. This Phalti, to whom he gave her, is called Phaltiel, (⁴⁰⁸⁵2 Samuel 3:15);

which [was] of Gallim; which very probably was a city in the tribe of Benjamin, since it is mentioned with several cities of that tribe, and as near Gibeah of Saul, (²³¹⁹Isaiah 10:29,30).

CHAPTER 26

INTRODUCTION TO FIRST SAMUEL 26

This chapter relates that Saul, upon the information of the Ziphites, went out again with an armed force to seek David, (~~0201~~1 Samuel 26:1-3); of which David having intelligence, and of the place where he pitched, came with one of his men and reconnoitred his camp, and finding Saul and his men asleep, took away his spear, and the cruse of water at his head, and departed, without taking away his life, though solicited to it by his servant, (~~0204~~1 Samuel 26:4-12); which spear and cruse of water he produced to the reproach of Abner, Saul's general, and as a testimony of his sincere regard to Saul, and that he had no design upon his life, (~~0203~~1 Samuel 26:13-20); of which Saul being convinced, blessed David, and returned home again, (~~0202~~1 Samuel 26:21-25).

Ver. 1. *And the Ziphites came unto Saul to Gibeah*, etc.] Of Benjamin, called sometimes Gibeah of Saul, because it was the place of his birth and residence; hither Saul had returned after his last interview with David; whether, notwithstanding what had passed between him and David, he had privately encouraged the Ziphites to watch David, and give him information of him where he was, and when it was a proper opportunity to seize him; or whether the Ziphites were so officious as of themselves to acquaint him with it, is not certain; the latter is probable, since having attempted to betray David, they might fear, that should he come to the throne, he would remember it, and therefore they might be desirous of having him cut off by the hand of Saul:

saying, doth not David hide himself in the hill of Hachilah, [which is] before Jeshimon? the same place where he was when the Ziphites before gave information of him, (~~0230~~1 Samuel 23:10); here he might choose to be, supposing that the Ziphites now would not meditate anything against him, since Saul had declared he would be king after him, and had made him swear that he would not cut off his posterity; and as he thought it his wisdom to provide against the worst, knowing the inconstancy of Saul, he might judge this the most proper place of safety, and from whence he could, on occasion, easily retreat into the wilderness; and it may be also,

because it was near to Abigail's estate and possessions, which were now a good resource for him.

Ver. 2. *Then Saul arose*, etc.] Immediately, glad of an opportunity to seize on David, having the same disposition towards him as ever; and perhaps had repented he had not laid hold on him when he followed him out of the cave:

and went down to the wilderness of Ziph: or towards it:

having three thousand chosen men of Israel; young men, so called, because usually chosen for business, and for war particularly, rather than old men; the same number he took with him when he sought him at Engedi, (^{424E}1 Samuel 24:2);

to seek David in the wilderness of Ziph; where or whereabouts he was informed by the Ziphites he was.

Ver. 3. *And Saul pitched in the hill of Hachilah, which [is] before Jeshimon, by the way*, etc.] To the wilderness; the very same place where the Ziphites suggested David was:

but David abode in the wilderness; not in the hill of Hachilah, but in the wilderness of Ziph itself:

and he saw that Saul came after him into the wilderness; he understood, by some information he had, that Saul had set out from Gibeah, and was coming to seek for him in the wilderness of Ziph; perhaps Jonathan had given him intelligence; however, he was not quite certain, as appears by what follows.

Ver. 4. *David therefore sent out spies*, etc.] To observe if he was coming or come, and where he was, that he might not be surprised by him; for though David knew the Lord was and would be his protection, he thought proper to be upon his guard, and to make use of means for his safety:

and understood that Saul was come in very deed; that he was most certainly come, and come to some certain place; which he himself went to reconnoitre, as in (^{424F}1 Samuel 26:5).

Ver. 5. *And David arose, and came to the place where Saul had pitched*, etc.] Came near it, within sight of it; so that he could take a view of it with his naked eye, and observe where and in what manner he was encamped:

and David beheld the place where Saul lay, and Abner the son of Ner, the captain of his host; where he and his general had their quarters in the camp:

and Saul lay in the trench; or circuit; not in the foss or ditch thrown up, in which an army sometimes lies entrenched; but this is to be understood either of the camp itself, so called, as Ben Gersom, Abarbinel, and Ben Melech think, because it lay in a circular form, that all comers to it on every side might be seen; or else a sort of fortress all around the camp, made of carriages joined together; and as the word signifies a carriage, cart or chariot, it may design the chariot in which Saul slept, as kings have been used to do when not in their houses; and to this the Septuagint agrees, which uses a word that Procopius Gazaeus says signifies one kind of a chariot, and is used of a chariot drawn by mules, in the Greek version of (^{236D}Isaiah 66:20); Grotius observes, kings used to sleep in chariots where there were no houses; (see Gill on "^{497D}1 Samuel 17:20"); though he rather seems to have slept, "sub die", in the open air:

and the people pitched round about him; both for the sake of honour, and for his greater security; this shows it could not be the loss he laid in, for then they could not pitch around him.

Ver. 6. *Then answered David*, etc.] Or addressed himself to the two following persons:

and said to Ahimelech the Hittite; who was either an Hittite by birth, but was become a proselyte, or he was an Israelite that had dwelt among the Hittites, and so had this name given him; the former seems most probable; some say ^{f512} this was Uriah the Hittite:

and to Abishai the son of Zeruiah, brother to Joab; Zeruiah was the sister of David, (^{412D}1 Chronicles 2:15,16); and these were two sons of hers, who very probably joined David at the cave of Adullam, (^{402D}1 Samuel 22:1);

saying, who will go down with me to Saul to the camp? that is, which of you two?

and Abishai said, I will go down with thee; the other being timorous, or Abishai being most forward spoke first.

Ver. 7. *So David and Abishai came to the people by night*, etc.] Josephus ^{f513} wrongly says, that he took with him both Abishai and Ahimelech; he

chose to have but one, for the greater secrecy. This was a bold enterprise, for two men to go into a camp of three thousand men, though it was in the night; when though they might suppose the greater part of them were asleep, yet they could not well suppose this of all, and especially of the guards or sentinels; but no doubt David was moved to this, not merely by the dint of his natural courage, but by the Spirit of God, by whom he might be assured of protection, and that Saul and the people were cast into a deep sleep by the Lord, as they were, (⁰²⁶²1 Samuel 26:12); and this the Lord moved him to, that he might have an opportunity a second time to convince Saul of his innocence, and that he had no design upon his life:

and, behold, Saul lay sleeping within the trench; (see Gill on “⁰²⁶⁵1 Samuel 26:5”);

and his spear stuck in the ground at his bolster; ready to take up and defend himself, should he be surprised; or this was his sceptre, which he always carried about with him, as an ensign of royalty, and by which very probably David knew which was Saul’s tent or couch, where he slept:

but Abner and the people lay round about him; as in (⁰²⁶⁵1 Samuel 26:5).

Ver. 8. *Then said Abishai to David,* etc.] Seeing Saul fast asleep, and a spear so near him:

God hath delivered thine enemy into thine hand this day: or at this time, properly it was night:

now therefore let me smite him, I pray thee, with the spear; with Saul’s own spear, which was stuck in the ground at his bolster. He remembered that David would not put forth his hand to stay him before, when he had an opportunity; and since now another offered, he did not move it to him to do it, but begged leave to do it himself; which he might think would be granted, since there was such a remarkable hand of Providence in it, which seemed to direct to such a step:

even to the earth at once, and I will not [smite] him the second time; signifying, that he would give such a home blow or thrust, that the spear should pierce through him, and fasten him to the ground, that there would be no need to repeat it.

Ver. 9. *And David said to Abishai, destroy him not,* etc.] He laid his commands upon him not to hurt him:

for who can stretch forth his hand against the Lord's anointed, and be guiltless? since Saul was king, and appointed to that office by the Lord, and was anointed by his order for it, and invested with it by him, his person was sacred, and not to be touched; nor could his life be taken away by any without being guilty of a very great crime indeed, which it might be justly expected the Lord would resent and punish.

Ver. 10. *And David said furthermore,* etc.] In order to make Abishai easy, and prevent his doing what he proposed:

[as] the Lord liveth; which was the form of an oath, made to assure Abishai of the truth of what follows, and therefore he need not be hasty to put Saul to death, since it would not be long before he should die, in one or other of the three following ways: either

the Lord shall smite him; suddenly, which the Jews call cutting off, or death by the hand of heaven, by the immediate hand of God:

or his day shall come to die; the time appointed for him to die a natural death, of some disease common to men:

or he shall descend into battle, and perish; which was commonly reckoned death, casual or accidental, and in which last way Saul did die, (^{<ORIB>1} Samuel 31:3,4).

Ver. 11. *The Lord forbid that I should stretch forth mine hand against the Lord's anointed,* etc.] Or suffer any about him to do it; he speaks of it with the utmost detestation and abhorrence:

but, I pray thee, take thou now the spear that [is] at his bolster; not to smite him with, as he desired, but to carry off, and was no other than his sceptre; (see Gill on "^{<ORIB>1} Samuel 20:33");

and the cruse of water; which stood in the same place, as appears by (^{<ORIS>1} Samuel 26:12). Some take this to be a pot to make water in; others an hourglass, to know the time of night, in which not sand, but water, flowed for that purpose: but rather this was for his refreshment should he be hot and thirsty in the night, or to purify him from any nocturnal pollution that might happen; for, according to Clemens of Alexandria ^{f514}, it was a custom of the Jews often to purify themselves in bed: though Fortunatus Scacchus ^{f515} thinks Saul had this pot or cup for a religious use; which he had with him, and with it gave thanks to God, the author of all good, whenever he

sat down to a meal; such as the golden cup Philip king of Macedon always had under his pillow when he slept^{f516}:

and let us go; and do nothing more; which would be sufficient to convince they had been there, and to show what was in their power to do, had they been so inclined.

Ver. 12. *So David took the spear, and the cruse of water, from Saul's bolster*, etc.] Abishai either refusing to take them, since he might not take away his life; or it may be rather David thought better of it, and took them himself, lest Abishai should be tempted, when so near to Saul, and his spear in his hand, and should thrust him with it; though David may be said to take them by the hands of Abishai:

and they gat them away; with the above things along with them:

and no man saw [it], nor knew [it]; saw them in the camp, or knew what they did:

neither awaked; at their talking together, at the motion of their feet, and taking away the spear and cruse:

for they [were] all asleep; which was very extraordinary, that among three thousand men none should be awake, not even the sentinels; which might seem impossible in a natural way, but it is accounted for by what follows:

because a deep sleep from the Lord was fallen upon them; or “a sleep of the Lord”^{f517}; a very great one, an uncommon one; so great trees, mountains, etc. are called trees and mountains of God; or, according to our supplement, it was from the Lord, he was the cause and author of it; he cast them into this sleep, or caused it to fall upon them, and locked them up in it, that they might not hear David and his servant when they came among them.

Ver. 13. *Then David went over to the other side*, etc.] To a hill on the other side, opposite to Hachilah, where Saul lay encamped; or “passed over the passage”^{f518}, the valley that lay between the two hills, and perhaps passed over a brook that ran in the valley, which is not unusual; so Josephus^{f519} says, that he went over a brook and came to the top of a mountain:

and stood on the top of an hill afar off; he chose the top of an hill, that his voice might be heard at a distance, as it might in a clear air, and still night;

and to be afar off, that he might the better make his escape, should an attempt be made to pursue him:

a great space [being] between them; a large valley lying between the two hills.

Ver. 14. *And David cried unto the people*, etc.] To the army of Saul with a loud voice, that he might be heard:

and to Abner the son of Ner; particularly to him, because he was general of the army:

saying, answerest thou not, Abner? it seems he had called to him more than once, and he had returned no answer; perhaps not being thoroughly awake, or not knowing whose voice it was, and from whence it came:

then Abner answered and said, who [art] thou [that] criest to the king? but it does not appear that David called to the king, only to the people, and to Abner their general, and therefore may be better rendered, “by the king” ^{f520}; that is, near him, or “before him” ^{f521}, in his presence. Kimchi and Ben Melech explain it, upon the king, or over him; and the Targum is, at the head of the king; the meaning is, how he could act such a part as to call so loud within the king’s hearing, as to disturb the king’s rest, and awake him out of his sleep.

Ver. 15. *And David said to Abner, [art] not thou a [valiant] man?* etc.] Or a man ^{f522}, a man of great fame for courage and valour, a man of great authority, who had the next post in the army under Saul, but had not behaved like a man, worthy of his character and office:

and who [is] like to thee in Israel? none that bare so great a name, or was in so high an office, who therefore should have been careful to have acted according to both:

wherefore then hast thou not kept thy lord the king? took care to have set a guard about his person while he slept; which perhaps was neglected through a contempt of David and his men, as being in no fear of them:

for there came one of the people in to destroy the king thy lord; that is, there had been one in the camp that night, who had entered there with that view to have destroyed him, had he an opportunity, and which did offer; this was true of Abishai, who no doubt went down with David into the camp with that intent, though David did not, and therefore he says, “one of

the people”, not more; for though two went in, only one with that view: David observes to them the danger the king was in, his carefulness of him to preserve his life, to whom only it was owing, and the negligence of Abner, and those under his command.

Ver. 16. *This thing [is] not good that thou hast done*, etc.] Yea, it was very bad, a great fault, and very blameworthy, if he had neglected to set a watch over the king, whose business it was as a general; the words are expressed in a figure called “meiosis”, in which less is said than was intended:

[as] the Lord liveth, ye [are] worthy to die, because ye have not kept your master, the Lord’s anointed; if a watch was set, and these had fallen asleep, and neglected their duty, or had deserted their post; which to do was a capital crime, and deserving of death; wherefore he does not say this of Abner, but of the watch:

and now see where the king’s spear [is], and the cruse of water that [was] at his bolster; which he then held up as proofs and evidences of the truth of what he said, that one had been in the camp and had carried off these, and who could as easily have destroyed the king as to have taken these away; and as he came hither with an intent to destroy him, would have done it, had he not been prevented by David; all which likewise plainly proved the negligence of Abner, in not setting a watch about his master, or the negligence of the watch that was set.

Ver. 17. *And Saul knew David’s voice*, etc.] Though Abner at first did not, as appears by his words, but Saul did, by being this time thoroughly awake through the discourse that passed between David and Abner:

and said, [is] this thy voice, my son David? the same question he put before, when he followed him out of the cave, (see Gill on “⁶⁻⁰²⁴⁶1 Samuel 24:16”):

and David said, [it is] my voice, my lord, O king; he not only owns him to be king, whom he sought not to depose, but his own liege lord and sovereign, whose commands he was ready to obey.

Ver. 18. *And he said, wherefore doth my lord thus pursue after his servant?* etc.] Suggesting that it was both below him to do it, and against his interest; for David was his servant, and he would gladly have continued in his service, and done his business, but he drove him from it, and pursued

him as a traitor, when he had not been guilty of any offence to his knowledge: and therefore puts the following questions:

for what have I done? or what evil [is] in mine hand? what crime had he committed, that he was pursued after this manner, and his life sought for? what had he done worthy of death? having a clear conscience, he could boldly ask these questions.

Ver. 19. *Now therefore, I pray thee, let my lord the king hear the words of his servant,* etc.] Whether David waited for an answer to his question is not certain; probably he did, and observing none returned, desired audience of what he had further to say:

if the Lord have stirred thee up against me; if he had put it into his heart to persecute him after this manner, for some sin he had committed against him, though not against Saul: did that appear to be the case,

let him accept an offering; my offering, as the Targum; or my prayer, as Jarchi; I would offer a sin offering according to the law, to make atonement for my offence, and might hope it would be accepted; or I would make my supplication to God, and entreat him to forgive mine iniquity, and so an issue be put to these troubles; or should it be a capital crime deserving of death he was guilty of, he was content to die, and satisfy for his fault in that way; or if both of them had sinned, in any respect, he proposed to join in an acceptable sacrifice to God, and so reconciliation be made, and matters adjusted in such a religious way; if it was the evil spirit from the Lord that had entered into Saul, or God had suffered a melancholy disorder to seize him, which had put him upon those measures, let an offering agreeable to the will of God be offered, or supplication made for the removal of it:

but if [they be] the children of men; that incited him to such violent methods, as Abner his general, or Doeg the Edomite, and others:

cursed [be] they before the Lord; an imprecation of the vengeance of God upon them:

for they have driven me out this day from abiding in the inheritance of the Lord; meaning not from his own house and fatally, nor from the palace of Saul, but from the land of Canaan the Lord had given to his people Israel for an inheritance, and from the worship of God in it, which made it dear and precious to him; he knew if Saul went on pursuing him in this manner,

he must be obliged to quit the land, and go into a foreign country, as he quickly did; so the Targum renders it the inheritance of the people of the Lord: by being driven out of the land which was their inheritance, he should be deprived of their company and conversation, and of all social worship; the consideration of which was cutting to him, and caused the above imprecation from him on those who were concerned in it, and who in effect by their actions were

saying, go, serve other gods; for by being forced to go into an idolatrous country, he would be in the way of temptation, and be liable to be corrupted by ill examples, and to be persuaded and enticed into idolatrous practices; and if he was kept from them it would be no thanks to them, they did all they could to lead him into them; and if he was preserved, it would be owing to the power and grace of God; the Targum is,

“go David among the people that worship idols;”

the Jews have a saying, that he that dwells without the land of Israel, it is as if he had no God and as if he served an idol ^{f523}.

Ver. 20. *Now therefore let not my blood fall to the earth before the face of the Lord*, etc.] For should it be spilled, God, who is omniscient, will see it, and take notice of it; and being righteous, and to whom vengeance belongs, he will avenge it: some render it, “my blood shall not fall to the earth before the face of the Lord” ^{f524}; I am continually under his eye and care, and he will protect and defend me; and in vain is it for thee to pursue after me; I shall never fall into thine hands, though I may be obliged to quit my country, and go into an idolatrous nation, against my will:

for the king of Israel is come out to seek a flea; which leaps from place to place and is not easily taken: or this may denote what a mean, poor, weak, insignificant person David was; and how much it was below Saul to come out with an army of chosen men in pursuit of him; so the Targum,

“the king of Israel is come out to seek one that is weak or feeble:”

as when one doth hunt a partridge in the mountains; as kings for their delight used to do, as Abarbinel observes; but this being a business of pleasure, and this a bird of worth, some other is thought to be here intended. Indeed the is represented as worth no more than an “obolus”, or five farthings, though fifty drachmas or drachms were ordered to be paid for one ^{f525}; the Septuagint renders the word an “owl”: the word is “kore”,

and from the etymology of it one would think it was the raven or crow. Jarchi on (^{<2471>}Jeremiah 17:11) takes it to be the cuckoo, though here the partridge as others; Bochart ^{f526} will have it to be the woodcock, snipe, or snite ^{f527}. Some choose to read the words,

“as the kore or partridge on the mountains hunts;”

which, it is said, hunts and seeks after the nests of other birds, and sits on their eggs ^{f528}; (see ^{<2471>}Jeremiah 17:11); so Saul hunted after David, though he could not take him; several naturalists ^{f529} observe, that the partridge is very difficult to be taken by the hunter.

Ver. 21. *Then said Saul, I have sinned*, etc.] Which is more than he acknowledged before, and yet, it is to be feared he had no true sense of his sin, and real repentance for it; but, like Pharaoh, his guilty conscience for the present forced this confession from him; (see ^{<1107>}Exodus 9:27);

return, my son David: meaning to his own house, or rather to his palace, since he had disposed of his wife to another man:

for I will no more do thee harm: or seek to do it by pursuing him from place to place, as he had done, which had given him a great deal of trouble and fatigue:

because my soul was precious in thine eyes this day; and therefore spared, when he could have taken it away; which showed that his life was dear to him, of great worth and value in his account; and therefore he would neither take it away himself, nor suffer another to do it:

behold, I have played the fool, and erred exceedingly: in seeking after his life, and pursuing him again, when he had such a convincing proof of his sincerity and faithfulness, and of his cordial affection for him, when he only cut off the skirts of his garment in the cave, and spared his life.

Ver. 22. *And David answered and said, behold the king's spear!* etc.] And which perhaps was his sceptre, and which David therefore would not keep, lest it should be thought or said that he had deprived him of an ensign of his royalty, and be interpreted as a token of his design to seize his crown and throne:

and let one of the young men come over and fetch it; for notwithstanding the acknowledgment Saul had made of his sin and folly, David did not choose to carry the spear to him; not caring to trust him, and put himself

into his hands, lest the evil spirit should return and come upon him suddenly, and alter his disposition and carriage; nor would he send any of his men with it, whose lives were dear to him, lest they should be seized as traitors, but desires one of Saul's men might be sent for it.

Ver. 23. *The Lord render to every man his righteousness, and his faithfulness*, etc.] Or recompense every man that deals justly and faithfully with others, as he had done with Saul; or the Lord, who is just and faithful to his promises, reward the men that act the good and upright part; and this was a prayer of faith; for David doubted not that, though Saul might fail, yet God could not;

for the Lord delivered thee into [my] hand this day; or, “into an hand”^{f530} into the hand of Abishai, who had it in his power to slay him, when he went and took the spear that was at his bolster, and would have done it, but David suffered him not:

but I would not stretch forth my hand against the Lord's anointed; nor suffer another to stretch forth his hand against him; so careful and tender was he of his life.

Ver. 24. *And, behold, as thy life was much set by this day in mine eyes*, etc.] Or “magnified”^{f531}; and made great account of, as being the life of the king of Israel, and the Lord's anointed, and so spared:

so let my life be much set by in the eyes of the Lord; he does not say in the eyes of Saul, as it should have been by way of retaliation, and as it might have been expected he would have said; but he had no dependence on Saul, nor expected justice to be done him by him; but he prays that his life might be precious in the sight of Lord, and taken care of, and protected by him, as he believed it would:

and let him deliver me out of all tribulation; for as yet he did not think himself quite out of it, notwithstanding all that Saul had said, but believed the Lord would deliver him in due time; from him alone he looked for it, and on him he depended.

Ver. 25. *Then Saul said to David, blessed [be] thou, my son David*, etc.] He desired God to bless him, and pronounced him blessed himself, believing he would be a happy and prosperous man:

thou shall both do great [things]; he had done great things already, in slaying Goliath, obtaining victories over the Philistines, and escaping the hands of Saul, and keeping out of them with so small a force; and he should do greater things yet:

and also shalt still prevail; against Saul and all his enemies; the Targum is,
 “even in reigning thou shalt reign, and even in prospering thou shalt prosper;”

he believed he would be king, so he had said before, (¹⁰²⁰1 Samuel 24:20);

so David went on his way: to the wilderness again very probably, putting no trust and confidence in Saul, knowing how fickle and unstable he was:

and Saul returned to his place; to Gibeah, where his palace was.

CHAPTER 27

INTRODUCTION TO FIRST SAMUEL 27

David, fearing he should perish by the hand of Saul at one time or another, went into the land of the Philistines, which Saul hearing of, sought no more after him, (^{<0270>}1 Samuel 27:1-4); and finding favour in the eyes of the king of Gath, desired a place in his country might be given him to reside in; and accordingly Ziklag was given him, (^{<0275>}1 Samuel 27:5-7); from whence he made excursions into the land of the Amalekites, and others, and utterly destroyed them; but imposed on the king of Gath, pretending he had made his road into the southern parts of Judah, (^{<0278>}1 Samuel 27:8-12).

Ver. 1. *And David said in his heart,* etc.] Within himself, and to himself; while he was pondering things in his own mind, and considering the circumstances in which he was, and things appearing, very gloomy to him, he falls into a fit of unbelief and thus addresses himself:

I shall now one day perish by the hand of Saul; for though he was returned to his place, he knew he was restless and uneasy, very inconstant and unstable, and not at all to be depended on; yea, he might conclude that Saul, observing that God was with him in protecting and defending him, and by delivering him into his hands once and again, he would be the more jealous of him, and envious at him, and seek all opportunities and advantages against him; and he feared that one time or another such would offer, and would be taken, and so he should perish by him: this was a strange fit of unbelief he was sunk into, and very unaccountable and unreasonable it was, had he but considered his being anointed king by the Lord, the promise of God to him, which could not fail, and the providence of God that watched over him from time to time:

[there is] nothing better for me than that I should speedily escape into the land of the Philistines; which may seem strange, when he was advised by the Prophet Gad to depart from the land of Moab, and go into the land of Judah, (^{<0225>}1 Samuel 22:5), and where he had been so wonderfully preserved; and when he was in so much danger, when in the land of the Philistines before, insomuch that he was obliged to feign himself mad,

(^{<0213>}1 Samuel 21:13); and seeing this also was the very thing he lately dreaded, and cursed the men that should be the cause of his going out of his own land into an idolatrous one:

and Saul shall despair of me, to seek me any more in any coast of Israel; hearing that he was gone into a foreign country, would seek for him no more in any part of the land of Israel, and so despair of ever getting him into his hands, would lay aside all thoughts about him for the future:

so shall I escape out of his hand; and be for ever safe: these were the carnal reasonings of his mind, under the prevalence of unbelief; and shows what poor weak creatures the best of men are, and how low their graces may sink as to exercise, when left to themselves.

Ver. 2. *And David arose,* etc.] From the place where he was:

and he passed over; the borders of land of Canaan:

with the six hundred men that [were] with him; having neither lost any, nor had any added to him, since he was at Keilah, (^{<0213>}1 Samuel 23:13);

unto Achish, the son of Maach, king of Gath; whether this was the same Achish David was with before, (^{<0210>}1 Samuel 21:10-13), is not certain; it seems as if he was not the same, since he is described as the son of Maach, as if it was to distinguish him from him; though it is not improbable that he was the same person. Some think ^{f532} that he is described not from his father, but from his mother, whose name was Maacha. The circumstances of David were now very much altered from what they were when he went to Gath before; then he went secretly, now openly; then as a person unknown, now as well known; then alone, now with six hundred men; then when discovered he was seized by the princes of Gath, and brought before the king, and was driven from his presence; but now he came either at the invitation of Achish, hearing how he had been treated by Saul, and thinking to attach him to his interest, and make him more and more the enemy of Saul, and so free himself from a very powerful one, and of whose wisdom and prudence, and military skill, and courage, and valour, he might hope to avail himself; or David sent an embassy to him, to treat with him about his coming into his country, and settlement in it, and terms to mutual satisfaction were agreed upon.

Ver. 3. *And David dwelt with Achish at Gath,* etc.] The metropolis of his kingdom, called, (^{<0215>}1 Samuel 27:5), the royal city:

he and his men, every man with his household; or family; which they brought with them, to secure them from the malice of Saul; who in their absence might have destroyed them, as being the families of traitors and fugitives, and might be the more readily received by Achish, as he might hope for some advantage from them; and besides were pledges of their fidelity to him, and of their design to continue with him:

[*even*] *David with his two wives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess and Abigail the Carmelitess, Nabal's wife*; who had been the wife of Nabal; of these (see Gill on "^{4025B}1 Samuel 25:43").

Ver. 4. *And it was told Saul that David was fled to Gath*, etc.] Who very probably had his spies out to watch his motions, and report to him where he was, and what he was doing:

and he sought no more again for him; by which it seems as if he would have sought after him again, had he continued in the land of Israel; but now being gone, and in an enemy's country, and having nothing to fear from him while there, he laid aside all thoughts of seeking after him.

Ver. 5. *And David said unto Achish*, etc.] After he had been some time with him:

if I have now found grace in thine eyes; or was in favour, as he thought himself to be, by various instances of respect shown him:

let them give me a place in some town in the country, that I may dwell there: he does not ask for a city or town, but a place in one of them, though one was given him; but of whom he asks it, it is not easy to say; though it is certain that Achish gave it him, (^{4027B}1 Samuel 27:6). Perhaps he might desire it might be given him by Achish, with the consent of his princes and nobles, or at least of his privy council; that so it might be to general satisfaction, and the grant more authentic; though it may be impersonally read, as in the Vulgate Latin version, "let there be given me", etc. David's view in this might be partly to prevent the envy of the courtiers of Achish, who might think that David was too near the king, and might have too great an interest in him, and receive too many of his favours, and become his chief confidant and prime minister; and partly to preserve himself and people from all temptations to idolatry, and corruptions in religion; as also that he might have an opportunity, without the knowledge of Achish, to fall upon the enemies of Israel; though the excuse he made was as follows:

for why should thy servant dwell in the royal city with thee? for so Gath was; and six hundred men and their families might seem to crowd the city; and this reasoning of his might suggest, that he and his men were a straitening of him, and a burden on him; and it might seem as if he was a rival with him in state and dignity, when he was no other than a servant of his.

Ver. 6. *Then Achish gave him Ziklag that day,* etc.] A city which in the division of the land was given to the tribe of Judah, and after that to the tribe of Simeon, (^{<0151>}Joshua 15:31 19:5); though it seems not to have been possessed by either of them, at least not long, but soon came into the hands of the Philistines, who kept it till this time, and now it returned to its right owners; according to Bunting^{f533} it was twelve miles from Gath:

wherefore Ziklag pertaineth unto the kings of Judah unto this day; not to the tribe of Judah, though it originally belonged to it, but to the kings of it, it, being granted to David, who quickly after this became king of Judah; and this was annexed to the crown lands, and ever after enjoyed by the kings, of the house of Judah; for this was not given for a temporary habitation, but for perpetual possession. This clause seems to be added by the continuator of this history, after the death of Samuel; who might be Gad or Nathan; some say Ezra, and Abarbinel that Jeremiah was the writer of it.

Ver. 7. *And the time that David dwelt in the country of the Philistines,* etc.] At Gath and Ziklag:

was a full year and four months; or “days and four months”; days being sometimes put for a year, (^{<0170>}Judges 17:10); though some interpret it not of a year, but of some few days out of the fifth month, besides the four months; so Jarchi and Kimchi; and Josephus^{f534} makes his abode to be four months and twenty days; but, according to the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions, it was only four months; and so it may be rendered, “days, that is, four months”; for according to the Jewish chronology^{f535} Samuel died four months before Saul, and this flight of David was after the death of Samuel, and when Saul died he left the land of the Philistines, and took the throne of Judah; (see Gill on “^{<0250>}1 Samuel 25:1”).

Ver. 8. *And David and his men went up,* etc.] From Ziklag, where they dwelt:

and invaded the Geshurites; some of the old inhabitants of the land of Canaan, the remains of the Amorites, whose land was given to the half tribe of Manasseh, but could never be expelled; and therefore David had a just right to invade them, and, if he could, either expel or destroy them; (see ^{<6834>}Deuteronomy 3:14 ^{<6825>}Joshua 12:5 13:11,13); these are the Geshurites which are joined with the Philistines, (^{<6832>}Joshua 13:2);

and the Gezrites; the inhabitants of Gezer, which place fell to the tribe of Ephraim; but that tribe could not drive out the inhabitants of it, and therefore David now fell upon them as the enemies of Israel, and seized on their country, as belonging to them, (^{<6848>}Joshua 16:3 ^{<6709>}Judges 1:29);

and the Amalekites; the sworn and implacable enemies of Israel, and whose memory they were laid under obligation to root out. These were such as had escaped the sword of Saul, and had fled to the more distant parts, against whom David now went; and perhaps these had fled to and mixed themselves with the people here mentioned:

for these [nations were] of old the inhabitants of the land; of the land of Canaan;

as thou goest to Shur, even unto the land of Egypt; (see ^{<6857>}1 Samuel 15:7).

Ver. 9. *And David smote the land*, etc.] In which the above mentioned people dwelt, that is, the inhabitants of it:

and left neither man nor woman alive; for these being the old Canaanites and Amalekites, according to the law of God were not to be spared, but utterly destroyed; which may be observed to remove the charge of cruelty that might be brought against David on this account, (^{<6870>}Deuteronomy 7:2 25:19); though this must be understood of such that came within his reach; for it is certain there were people of these several names after this; (see ^{<6881>}1 Samuel 30:1 ^{<6888>}2 Samuel 3:3 ^{<6895>}1 Kings 9:15);

and took away the sheep, and the oxen, and the asses, and the camels, and the apparel, and returned, and came to Achish; at Gath, to make a report of what he had been about and done; and what he brought was a good booty for the support of his men and their families.

Ver. 10. *And Achish said, whither have ye made a road today?* etc.] Or whither had they rushed in, or poured in and spread themselves? or where

had they made their excursion to fetch in the prey and booty they now brought?

and David said, against the south of Judah; he meant against some people that lay to the south of the land of Judah, without it; but expressed himself so, that Achish might think he meant the southern parts of Judah within the country; which, though not a downright lie, was an equivocation, and made with a design to deceive; and was by no means agreeably to the character of David, nor to be defended nor imitated:

and against the south of the Jerahmeelites; these were the descendants of Jerahmeel, the son of Hezron, the grandson of Judah, and so inhabited in the tribe of Judah, and very probably in the southern part of it, (^{430B}1 Chronicles 2:9,25,26),

and against the south of the Kenites; the posterity of Jethro; these, at least some of them, at the first seating of the children of Israel in the land of Canaan, went with the children of Judah into the wilderness of Judah, which lieth in the south of Arad, (^{400B}Judges 1:16).

Ver. 11. *And David saved neither man nor woman alive to bring [tidings] to Gath*, etc.] How David had fallen upon these people, and destroyed great numbers of them, and carried off their substance; which would have given great offence to Achish, and caused him to have driven him out of his country once more; though Abarbinel is of opinion that these Geshurites, etc. were haters and enemies of Achish, and therefore were smitten and spoiled by David; or otherwise it would have been such a piece of perfidy, rebellion, and ingratitude, as must have made the name of David to stink, since it could not but be known sooner or later; but being the enemies of Achish, no notice was taken of it afterwards, nor inquiry made about it, nor complaint made of it, by any of their neighbours: nor does he suppose they were all cut off, and much less that this was done that it might not be told in Gath what destruction he had made; but that the sense is, that he did not carry the captives to Gath, to be disposed of there; for they would have told from whence they came, and so have contradicted what David said, and what he would have Achish understand, as if he had been out against and smote some of the cities of Judah, that he might place the greater confidence in him; which end would not have been answered, if he had brought any of them to Gath; and so the words may be read without the supplement we make, “spared neither man nor woman alive to bring to Gath”: and so could tell no tales. Though Josephus expressly says ^{f536} that

David spared the men, and abstained from the slaughter of them, fearing lest they should declare to the king what he had done in plundering them:

saying, lest they should tell on us, saying, so did David: in such and such places, such numbers of people he destroyed, and such quantities of cattle and goods he carried off:

and so [will be] his manner all the while he dwelleth in the country of the Philistines: this is what may be expected will be done by him in one place or another, as long as he stays here; nothing will be heard of but desolation and destruction, in some part of the country of the Philistines or another; or among those that were tributaries to them; so that it was not safe that he should be allowed to abide in it.

Ver. 12. *And Achish believed David,* etc.] As he would have him understand his story; imposing upon him by ambiguous terms, insinuating he had been against the southern parts of Judah, when he had been against foreign nations that lay to the south of Judah:

saying, he hath made his people Israel utterly to abhor him; they shall never forgive him the destruction of their cities, and the inhabitants of them, and the plunder of their goods and cattle; his name will be had in the utmost detestation and abhorrence, and he must never return thither any more:

therefore he shall be my servant for ever: would be glad to continue with him as a servant, and be obliged to serve him faithfully and truly, since his own people, and even those of his own tribe, would never more receive him; it being, as he understood it, the south of Judah that he had been plundering.

CHAPTER 28

INTRODUCTION TO FIRST SAMUEL 28

The Philistines gathering together, to fight with Israel, Saul trembled at it, not being able to get any answer from the Lord about it in any way whatever, (^{<0280>}1 Samuel 28:1-6); upon which he applies to a woman that had a familiar spirit to bring him up Samuel, which she did, (^{<0287>}1 Samuel 28:7-14); and what passed between Saul and Samuel, or at least the apparition in his form, is recorded, (^{<0285>}1 Samuel 28:15-19); which so struck him, as to make him strengthless, and so melancholy, that he refused to eat until persuaded, or rather compelled, by the woman and his servants, (^{<0282>}1 Samuel 28:20-25).

Ver. 1. *And it came to pass in those days*, etc.] That David was in the country of the Philistines:

that the Philistines gathered their armies together: out of their five principalities or lordships:

for warfare to fight with Israel; with whom they were continually at war, and though sometimes there was a cessation of arms, yet never any settled peace; and the Philistines took every opportunity and advantage against them, as they now did; when David was among them, and so had nothing to fear from him, but rather expected his assistance; and Samuel was dead, and Saul in a frenzy:

and Achish said unto David: who seems to have been at the head of the combined armies of the Philistines:

know thou assuredly that thou shall go with me to battle, thou and thy men; against Israel; which was a trying thing to David, and whereby he was like to be drawn into a dilemma; either to fight against his country, which he could not do conscientiously; or be guilty of ingratitude to Achish, and incur his displeasure, and be liable to be turned out of his country, or treated in a worse manner, even he and his men, to be seized on and cut to pieces by the forces of the Philistines, should he refuse.

Ver. 2. *And David said to Achish, surely thou shalt know what thy servant can do*, etc.] By which he would have Achish understand, and so he did, that he would exert himself in favour of the Philistines, and against Israel, and do great and brave things, of which Achish would be, made sensible, through his heroic courage and valour; though he meant rather what he could and should do for Israel against the Philistines, if he had an opportunity: but it seems best of all to consider David as quite undetermined, and at a loss what to do, hoping that God in his providence would extricate him out of this difficulty, and direct him what he should do, which then Achish would know; and accordingly he was delivered out of it:

and Achish said to David: putting confidence in him on account of his answer, and believing he was hearty in engaging in the war with the Philistines against Israel:

therefore will I make thee keeper of mine head for ever; the captain of his bodyguard, which post he should hold for life; or he proposed to put him into this post, that he might be with him, near his person, and under his eye, that he might observe how he behaved himself; which may show some suspicion of him.

Ver. 3. *Now Samuel was dead*, etc.] Had been so for some time; which is mentioned before, (^{1020E}1 Samuel 25:1); and here repeated, partly to observe the reason of the Philistines renewing the war, and partly to account for the conduct of Saul, in seeking to a witch to raise Samuel, and for the sake of that story:

and all Israel lamented him; as they had great reason to do; (see Gill on ^{1020E}1 Samuel 25:1"); and buried him in Ramah, even his own city; there being two Ramahs, as Kimchi observes, it is added, "in his own city", to show that he was buried in that Ramah which was his native place, and where his constant residence was; though, as he says, it may mean that he was buried within the city, and not without it; but the Targum gives a different sense,

“and they buried him in Ramah, and mourned for him every man in his city:”

and Saul had put away those that had familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land: out of the land of Israel; had by an edict banished them, or had given orders that neither witches nor wizards should abide in the land; but

should be taken up, and prosecuted according to the law of God; which he had done either at the instigation of Samuel; or, as some think, from a conceit that the evil spirit he had been troubled with was owing to them; or to make some appearance of a zeal for religion, and the honour and glory of God: this is observed to show the inconstancy of Saul, and his folly in applying after this to a person of such a character, and to account for the fears of the woman when applied to, and afterwards when she was engaged, when she found it was by Saul; (see ^{<1327>}1 Samuel 28:7-12).

Ver. 4. *And the Philistines gathered themselves together*, etc.] From different parts, and formed a considerable army:

and came and pitched in Shunem; a city, in the borders of the tribe of Issachar, of which (see Gill on "^{<1328>}Joshua 19:18");

and Saul gathered all Israel together, and they pitched in Gilboa; a range of mountains, near Jezreel, and which Jerom ^{f537} calls the mountains of the Philistines, six miles from Scythopolis, where there is a large village called Gelbus.

Ver. 5. *And when Saul saw the host of the Philistines*, etc.] From the mountains of Gilboa, where he had pitched his camp:

he was afraid, and his heart greatly trembled; on sight of the numbers of them, and thinking perhaps of the death of Samuel, and of the loss of David; who was now among the Philistines, and might possibly fight against him, and for the Philistines, of which he might be informed; however, he was not with him, and his conscience might accuse him of various sins he had been guilty of, for which he might fear the Lord would now reckon with him.

Ver. 6. *And when Saul inquired of the Lord*, etc.] And this being not done truly and heartily, nor continued in, it was as if he had not inquired, and especially after he had inquired of one that had a familiar spirit, as Kimchi observes; for so it is said, (^{<1304>}1 Chronicles 10:14);

the Lord answered him not, neither by dreams; which he dreamed himself, from whence he could not conclude anything relating to the will of God; so the Targum,

“the Lord did not receive his prayer even by dreams;”

or by dreamers, diviners, who pretended to give answers by dreams:

nor by Urim; there being no priest to consult in this way, Abiathar having fled with the ephod, in which were the Urim and Thummim, to David, (^{<0231>}1 Samuel 23:9); though some think that he sent to Abiathar, who was with David, to inquire for him; and others that he made another ephod with Urim, and appointed another priest to consult by them; neither of which are probable:

nor by prophets; of which there was a school not far from him, even at Naioth in Ramah, of which Samuel in his lifetime was president; but neither by the one nor the other could Saul get an answer from God, who for his sins had departed from him.

Ver. 7. *Then said Saul unto his servants*, etc.] That waited upon him, to some of them, to such as he could place most confidence in to keep a secret; perhaps only the two after mentioned:

seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and inquire of her; that was mistress of the bottle, a ventriloquist, that spoke out of her belly, or seemed to do; who had the spirit of Python or divination, conversed with the devil, and by his assistance pretended to bring up a dead person, and thereby foretell things to come; (see Gill on ^{<0581>}Deuteronomy 18:11"); a woman is pitched upon, because such were most addicted to those wicked arts, and being of the weaker sex, were more easily imposed upon by Satan; and Saul showed himself to be as weak, to seek after such persons; but being left of God, he acted the part of a mad man, as well as of a bad man:

and his servants said to him, behold, [there is] a woman that hath a familiar spirit at Endor; a city in the tribe of Manasseh, of which (see ^{<0671>}Joshua 17:11); it was not far from Gilboa. Mr. Maundrell speaks ^{f538} of it as near Nain, at the foot of Mount Hermon; and turning, a little southward, he says, you have in view the high mountains of Gilboa. It is a tradition of the Jews ^{f539} that this woman was the mother of Abner, the wife of Zephaniah; some say her name was Zephaniah; but, as Abarbinel observes, if so she would have known Saul, and also Saul would have known her, and what she was, if, as they say, she was spared because of her relation to him; nor needed he to have inquired of his servants for such a woman.

Ver. 8. *And Saul disguised himself, and put on other raiment*, etc.] Stripped himself of his royal robes, or military apparel, as supreme

commander, and clothed himself in the habit of a peasant or a common soldier; and this not only that he might not be known by the woman, but that he might pass from his army incognito, and it might not be known that he was gone, and especially whither he was gone:

and he went, and two men with him: these, according to the tradition of the Jews ^{f540}, were Abner and Amasa; but it is not probable that Saul should leave his army destitute of their general at such a time as this:

and they came to the woman by night; not only that they might not be seen, but because it was a work of darkness they were going about, and it was only in the night season that such persons exercised their black art; though the Jews ^{f541} say it was day, only because of their distress it was like tonight with them; but the literal sense is best:

and he said, I pray thee divine unto me by the familiar spirit; exercise her art of divination, by the assistance of the familiar spirit she conversed with:

and bring me up whom I shall name unto thee: that is, from the dead; for necromancy was the kind of divination she professed; and such persons pretended to have a power to bring up a deceased person, and consult with him about secret and future things.

Ver. 9. *And the woman said unto him,* etc.] Not knowing who he was:

behold, thou knowest what Saul hath done; for by his speech and habit she perceived he was an Israelite, and so must be acquainted with what had passed in the nation, especially of a public nature, and which made a great noise, as doubtless this, lid:

how he both cut off those that have familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land; as many of them as he had knowledge of, or information about; and by this it appears that he did not merely expel them his dominions, but he put them to death, according to the law of God, (^{<0228>}Exodus 22:18 ^{<0317>}Leviticus 20:27); so the putting them out of the land, (^{<0318>}1 Samuel 28:3), was putting them to death, and the woman's after reasoning confirms this: one should think for Saul to be told this to his face must fill him with shame and confusion, and his conscience must accuse him of sin and folly to make this attempt; and he must stand self-convicted and self-condemned; and it was enough to have deterred him from pursuing his scheme, had not his heart been strangely hardened:

wherefore then layest thou a snare for my life, to cause me to die? she suspected that Saul and his men were persons that came to entrap her; that when they had prevailed upon her to exercise her art, would turn informers against her, to the taking away of her life, it being death to practise it.

Ver. 10. *And Saul sware to her by the Lord,* etc.] By the Word of the Lord, as the Targum: it is much that Saul, being about such a work of darkness and wickedness, could take the name of the Lord into his mouth, and swear by him in such a solemn manner; which must surely put him in mind of his omniscience, from whom this wicked action could not be hid:

saying, [as] the Lord liveth, there shall no punishment happen to thee for this thing; the tenor of the oath was, and so the woman understood it, that he would never make any discovery of what she did, and so she would be sat from punishment; though as he was the supreme governor, and a very arbitrary prince, had it been discovered, he could have screened her from justice, though contrary to the law of God; however, he could not secure her from eternal punishment.

Ver. 11. *Then said the woman, whom shall I bring up unto thee?* etc.] For such persons, according to their profession, pretended they were able to bring up any of the dead, that he who inquired of them should name:

and he said, bring me up Samuel; the prophet Samuel he meant, and no doubt the woman so understood him, whose name was well known; he had been an old acquaintance and friend of Saul's, his counsellor and adviser in many things and though he greatly neglected him in the latter part of his life, was very desirous of an interview with him now dead, that he might be advised by him how to get out of the straits and difficulties in which he was involved; but it argued extreme folly and madness in him to imagine, that the spirit of this great and good man was at the beck of a witch, and he to be called out of the state of the dead by her enchantments; or that God would permit him to appear to him, and by him give an answer, when he would not answer him by living prophets, nor any other way.

Ver. 12. *And when the woman saw Samuel,* etc.] The appearance of him whom she took for Samuel; no mention is made of the methods she used to raise him, to check the curiosity of such as might be desirous to know them, and to prevent the imitation of them; though some think that Samuel, or the apparition, was seen before she made use of any, which surprised

her; but this seems not so probable, and is only observed for the sake of an hypothesis; though it must be owned the word “when” is not in the text:

she cried with a loud voice; not so much frightened at what she saw, and the manner of his appearing, and as thinking the resurrection of the dead was come, as say the Jews^{f542}, as what she feared would be the consequence to her, even death by the hand of Saul; for though he had sworn no punishment should come upon her, she might begin to fear she was not safe, perceiving who he was:

and the woman spake to Saul, saying, why hast thou deceived me? for thou [art] Saul: how she knew this is a question; it could not be by the appearance of Samuel, for it was Samuel she was to bring up; unless with Ben Gersom it can be thought that she understood him of another man, whose name was Samuel, and not Samuel the prophet; and so when she saw him, concluded he was Saul, because of the intimacy between them in his lifetime; but this is not probable, nor does it appear that she as yet knew who it was, but rather she was told by her familiar spirit, or by the apparition, so Josephus^{f543}, that it was Saul that inquired of her; or she guessed at it by some gesture of the apparition to Saul, by way of homage and honour; and so Abarbinel thinks that the clause in (~~0284~~-1 Samuel 28:14) respects not Saul’s bowing to Samuel, but Samuel bowing to Saul; and so by this means the woman knew who he was.

Ver. 13. *And the king said unto her, be not afraid*, etc.] Meaning not of the apparition, but of him; since he had sworn no punishment should come upon her, and he should inviolably observe his oath: for what sawest thou? for as yet Saul himself saw not anything, the woman being between him and the apparition; or she might be in another room with her familiar spirit performing the operations when Samuel appeared:

and the woman said unto Saul, I saw gods ascending out of the earth; a great personage, one of a majestic form, like the gods, or judges and civil magistrates, sometimes so called, as Kimchi and R. Isaiah rightly interpret it; and so the Targum,

“I saw an angel of the Lord;”

a person that looked like one; for not many came up with him, and particularly Moses, as say some Jewish writers^{f544}.

Ver. 14. *And he said unto her, what form [is] he of?* etc.] Of what stature is he? or rather of what age does he seem to be? and what clothes has he on? as appears from the answer:

and she said, an old man cometh up, and he is covered with a mantle; such as either priests or judges wore, and Samuel did in his lifetime:

and Saul perceived that it [was] Samuel; by the description she gave of him, by his age and apparel; for as yet it is not certain that he himself saw him, though it should seem as if he did by what follows: it is in the original, “that it was Samuel himself”; which seems to make for those who think the real Samuel appeared, and no doubt Saul thought it was really he himself:

and he stooped with [his] face to the ground, and bowed himself: either in reverence to Samuel, and from whom he hoped relief, and therefore was all obeisance; or he put himself in this posture, that he might listen and hear what should be said; it being a general notion that such spirits gave their responses whispering and muttering, (^{238B}Isaiah 8:19); though Abarbinel, as before observed, is of opinion, that this is to be understood of Samuel, that he bowed to Saul in reverence of him as a king; which does not so well agree with the connection of the words. Some have thought that it was the true Samuel, or the soul of Samuel, that appeared; so Josephus^{f545}, and many other writers; but to this may be objected, that that would not have ascended out of the earth, but come down from heaven; and that it cannot reasonably be supposed that it was in the power of the witch, by the assistance of the devil, to fetch it from heaven; nor be thought that God would send it from thence on such an errand, to give Saul an answer, when he would not answer him by any prophet on earth, nor in any other way; and especially it seems quite incredible that he should send it at the motion of a witch, and through her enchantments, who, according to a law of his, ought not to live; whereas nothing could have given greater countenance to such a wicked profession than this: nor would the true Samuel have admitted such worship and homage to be paid him, as is expressed in this last clause, which angelic spirits have refused, (^{659D}Revelation 19:10 22:9,10); though perhaps no more than civil respect is intended: but rather this was a diabolical spectre, or apparition, or the devil, that appeared in the form and shape of Samuel, and mimicked him; and was one of those deceiving spirits Porphyry speaks^{f546} of, that appear in various shapes and forms, and pretend to be gods or demons, or the souls of the deceased. Some^{f547} think all this was the cunning and imposture of the woman alone,

or that she was assisted with a confederate, who acted the part of Samuel; but this is not probable.

Ver. 15. *And Samuel said to Saul, why hast thou disquieted me to bring me up?* etc.] This makes it a clear case that this was not the true Samuel; his soul was at rest in Abraham's bosom, in the state of bliss and happiness in heaven, and it was not in the power of men and devils to disquiet it; nor would he have talked of his being brought up, but rather of his coming down, had it been really he; much less would he have acknowledged that he was brought up by Saul, by means of a witch, and through the help of the devil:

and Saul answered, I am sore distressed; in mind, being in great straits and difficulties, pressed hard upon by men, and forsaken of God, as follows:

for the Philistines make war against me; so they had many times, and he had been victorious, and had no reason to be so much distressed, if that was all: but he adds,

and God is departed from me: and therefore he feared he should be left to fall into their hands; and that he had forsaken him he concluded from hence,

and answereth me no more, neither by prophets, nor by dreams: (see Gill on "⁰²⁸⁶1 Samuel 28:6"); he makes no mention of Urim, either because they were not with him to inquire by, being carried away by Abiathar when he fled to David, (⁰²⁹⁹1 Samuel 23:9); or, as the Jews say ^{f548}, through shame, he said nothing of the Urim before Samuel, as he took this appearance to be, because he had slain the priests at Nob, and because of this shame, they say, his sin was forgiven him:

therefore have I called thee, that thou mayest make known unto me what I shall do; which was downright madness and folly to imagine, that since God had forsaken him, and would give him no answer, that a prophet of his should take his part; or when he could get no answer from a prophet of God on earth, that he could expect an agreeable one from one fetched down from heaven: one would be tempted to think that he himself believed it was the devil he was talking to, and whom he had called for under the name of Samuel, and expected to see; for from whom else could he expect advice, when he was forsaken of God, and his prophets?

Ver. 16. *Then said Samuel, wherefore then dost thou, ask of me, etc.]*

Whom thou knowest to have been a prophet of the Lord, and therefore can say nothing more or less than what comes from him, and is according to his will, if anything at all; the “devil” representing Samuel, whom Saul had called for, and reasons in such language as might be thought to be his own, though sometimes he betrays himself:

seeing the Lord is departed from thee; as Saul himself owned: to which he adds,

and is become thine enemy; to make his case appear still more desperate; for his whole view is to lead him to despair, which shows what sort of spirit he was: though some understand this as spoken of David, and read the words, and “he is with thine enemy”^{f549}; is on his side, and favours his cause; so the Targum,

“and he is for the help of a man, whose enmity thou sharest in;”

or who is at enmity with thee, meaning David; but now the true Samuel would never have said this, or suggested it, that David was an enemy to Saul, for he was not.

Ver. 17. *And the Lord hath done to him, etc.]* To David, Saul’s enemy, as he insinuated he was:

as he spake by me; pretending to be the true Samuel, and wearing the guise of him, he speaks his very words, which he was well acquainted with, and could deliver exactly as he did:

for the Lord hath rent the kingdom out of thine hand, and given it to thy neighbour; which words are expressed by Samuel, (⁴⁹⁵⁸1 Samuel 15:28);

[even] unto David; which is added by the apparition, by way of explanation, interpreting the words of David; which he might safely venture to do, seeing such a train of circumstances had occurred since the delivery of these words, which plainly made it appear he was intended.

Ver. 18. *Because thou obeyedst not the voice of the Lord, etc.]* At Gilgal, as Abarbinel thinks; which is the first thing for which the kingdom was threatened to be taken from him, (⁴⁹⁵³1 Samuel 13:13,14);

nor executedst his fierce wrath upon Amalek: in sparing Agag, and the best of the cattle, (⁴⁹⁵⁹1 Samuel 15:9,28);

therefore hath the Lord done this thing unto thee this day; forsaken him, rent his kingdom from him, and would deliver him into the hands of the Philistines, as follows: had he been the true Samuel, he would have told him of some other sins of his, provoking to the Lord; as his slaughter of the priests at Nob, his cruel persecution of David, and especially of his asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit at this time, of which not a word is said, and yet was the very transgression for which Saul died, (~~1303~~-1 Chronicles 10:13,14).

Ver. 19. *Moreover, the Lord will also deliver Israel with thee into the hands of the Philistines*, etc.] Not a word of comfort does he speak unto him, it being the business of this foul spirit to drive him to despair by the permission of God; had he been the true Samuel, he would have directed him to have altered his course of life, and especially his behaviour toward David, and advised him in those difficulties to send for him, who might have been of singular use unto him; he would have exhorted him to repentance for his sins, and humiliation before God on account of them, and given him hope on this that God would appear for him, and work deliverance, as he had done; but instead of this tells him, that he and his army would be delivered into the hands of the Philistines, which he might make a shrewd guess at, and venture to say from the circumstances of things, and the situation Saul and his people were in; the armies of the Philistines were very numerous, and those of Israel comparatively weak; Saul was quite dispirited, and God had forsaken him:

and tomorrow [shalt] thou and thy sons be with me; which if understood in what sense it may, seems to be a lie of the devil, and at best an ambiguous expression, such as he has been wont to give in the Heathen oracles; if he meant this of himself as an evil spirit, it could not be true of Saul and all his sons, that they should be with him in hell, especially of Jonathan who appears throughout the whole of his life to have been a good man; if he would have it understood of him as representing Samuel, and of their being with him in heaven, it must be a great stretch of charity to believe it true of Saul, so wicked a man, and who died in the act of suicide; though the Jews ^{f550}, some of them, understand it in this sense, that his sins were pardoned, and he was saved; and if it is taken in the sense of being in the state of the dead, and in the earth, from whence he is said to ascend, and where the body of Samuel was, which seems to be the best sense that is put upon the phrase, “with me”; yet this was not true, if he meant it of all the sons of Saul, as the expression seems to suggest; for there were Ishbosheth, and

his two sons by Rizpah, which survived him; nor was it true of Saul and his sons that they were cut off, and that they died the next day; for the battle was not fought till several days after this, (see ^{<0823>}1 Samuel 28:23 ^{<020>}1 Samuel 29:1,10,11 30:1,17 31:8,9); if it should be said, that “tomorrow” signifies some future time, and not strictly the next day, this shows the ambiguity of the expression used, and the insignificance of it to the present purpose; for who knew not that Saul and his sons would die some time or another?

the Lord also shall deliver the host of Israel into the hand of the Philistines; which is only a repetition of what is said in the first clause.

Ver. 20. *Then Saul fell straightway all along on the earth*, etc.] Fell at his full length at once, as if he had been thunderstruck, or pierced through with a dart or sword:

and was sore afraid, because of the words of Samuel; as he supposed they were, whose words never failed:

and there was no strength in him: to rise up again, he was quite spirited and strengthless:

for he had eaten no bread all the day, nor all the night; which contributed the more to his weakness; not only his fears, but not eating any food, occasioned his weakness, and that through want of an appetite, by reason of the great concern of his mind in his present troubles.

Ver. 21. *And the woman came unto Saul*, etc.] Having left him and the apparition in a room by themselves to converse together, and perhaps on hearing him fall to the ground came in:

and saw that he was sore troubled: by his lying on the ground, and the agonies he seemed to be in, and the uneasiness that sat upon his countenance:

and said unto him, behold, thine handmaid hath obeyed thy voice; in divining by her familiar spirit for him, and in bringing up Samuel to him, as he desired:

and I have put my life in my hand; exposed it to the utmost danger, since a person of her profession, and token in the exercise of it, was punishable with death; and especially she was in the greater danger, as it was Saul

himself, who had by an edict expelled all such persons from his dominions, who now employed her, as she perceived:

and have hearkened unto thy words which thou spakest unto me: to the oath he had taken, that no hurt should come to her, which she confided in, and relied upon, and to what he bid her do, according to her art of divination.

Ver. 22. *Now therefore, I pray thee, hearken thou also unto the voice of thine handmaid,* etc.] She argues, that as she had hearkened unto him to the endangering of her life, it was but reasonable, and might be expected, that he would hearken to her in a case that would be to the preservation of his life:

and let me set a morsel of bread before thee, and eat, that thou mayest have strength, when thou goest on thy way; which she might urge, not merely out of respect to the king, but for her own sake, lest should he die in her house, she might be taken up, not only for a witch, but as being accessory to the death of the king; and therefore she moves, that he would take some food for refreshment of nature, that he might be able to depart her house, and go on his way to his army.

Ver. 23. *But he refused, and said, I will not eat,* etc.] Choosing rather to die with famine than by the sword of the Philistines; though perhaps his meaning is, he could not eat, his stomach loathed it, being overwhelmed with grief and trouble:

but his servants, together with the woman, compelled him; not by force, but by arguments; they reasoned with him, and prevailed upon him to try to eat:

and he hearkened unto their voice; and agreed to eat, if he could;

so he arose from the earth; on which he lay at his full length:

and sat upon the bed; or couch, it being now the custom to recline on couches at caring; though some deny that this custom obtained so early.

Ver. 24. *And the woman had a fat calf in the house,* etc.] This was reckoned a very dainty dish in those countries, and fit for any guests, (see ~~GENESIS~~ Genesis 18:7); Josephus says ^{f551}, she vouchsafed to feed and take care of it in her house, and it was very familiar with her; and he highly commends the liberality of the woman, and as worthy of imitation:

and she hastened and killed it; and dressed it in some way or another, and which in those times was done speedily:

and took flour and kneaded [it], and did bake unleavened bread therewith; which was soonest made, she not having time to leaven it.

Ver. 25. *And she brought [it] before Saul, and before his servants, and they did eat*, etc.] Of the fatted calf, and unleavened bread, which she set upon a table before them, in the best manner she could:

then they rose up, and went away that night; that it might not be seen in what house they had been, and that they might get to the camp without being discovered by the Philistines, or known by the Israelites that they had been out.

CHAPTER 29

INTRODUCTION TO FIRST SAMUEL 29

This chapter gives an account of David's going forth with the armies of the Philistines, (^{<0201>}1 Samuel 29:1,2); of his being objected to by the princes of the Philistines, who insisted upon his being sent back, (^{<0203>}1 Samuel 29:3-5); of the report Achish made of it to David, and the discourse that passed between them upon it, (^{<0206>}1 Samuel 29:6-10); whereby David had a way unexpectedly opened for him to be freed from this service, which he gladly embraced, (^{<0211>}1 Samuel 29:11).

Ver. 1. *Now the Philistines gathered together all their armies to Aphek,* etc.] Not the city in the tribe of Judah of that name, (^{<0153>}Joshua 15:53); where the Philistines had a camp in the time of Samuel, (^{<0101>}1 Samuel 4:1); but rather that in the tribe of Asher, (^{<0130>}Joshua 19:30); unless there was one of this name in the tribe of Issachar, not mentioned, since it seems to have been near Jezreel and Shunem, which were both in that tribe, (^{<0118>}Joshua 19:18);

and the Israelites pitched by a fountain which is in Jezreel; in the valley of Jezreel; of which (see Gill on "^{<0118>}Joshua 19:18") and (see Gill on "^{<0105>}Hosea 1:5").

Ver. 2. *And the lords of the Philistines passed on by hundreds, and by thousands,* etc.] Not that there were so many lords, for there were but five of them; but these marched, some at the head of hundreds with them, and others at the head of thousands:

but David and his men passed on in the rereward with Achish; who being the generalissimo brought up the rear, and David, whom he had appointed captain of his bodyguards, attended him with his men, which in point of gratitude he could not refuse; and yet was in the greatest strait and difficulty how to act, it being both against his conscience and his interest to fight against Israel, and was waiting and hoping for some appearance of Providence to deliver him out of this dilemma, and which was quickly seen; but Abarbinel thinks David had no other notion in going to the battle, but of being the bodyguard of Achish, and accompanying him, and that he

should not fight against Israel, nor for the Philistines: neither harm the one, nor help the other.

Ver. 3. *Then said the princes of the Philistines*, etc.] To Achish; not those of the court of Achish, who were his subjects, but the confederate princes with him in this war, the lords of the other principalities, as appears by the freedom they took with him, (¹⁰²⁰1 Samuel 29:4);

what [do] these Hebrews [here]? or Jews, as the Targum; what hast thou to do with them, or they to be with thee? men of another nation and religion, and known enemies to the Philistines:

and Achish said unto the princes of the Philistines; in order to soften them, and reconcile them to these men, and their being with him:

[is] not this David the servant of Saul the king of Israel; between whom there had been a quarrel, and the former had fled from the latter to him:

which hath been with me these days, or these years; had been with him many days, and he might say years, as he had been with him one whole year, and part of another, (see ¹⁰²¹1 Samuel 27:7); and he might have known him longer, if he was the same Achish David first fled to; Kimchi interprets it, that he knew him as well as if he had been with him as many years as days:

and I have found no fault in him since he fell [unto me] unto this day? the affair of David's going against the Geshurites, etc. not being yet known by him, or, if it was, he approved of it, they being enemies of his; this shows that David behaved with a great deal of prudence to have such a character as this from a king of the Philistines.

Ver. 4. *And the princes of the Philistines were wroth with him*, etc.] With Achish, for giving such a character of David, and taking his part, in order to detain him, if possible:

and the princes of the Philistines said unto him, make this fellow return; they speak of him with contempt, and insist on it that Achish order him to turn back, and go no further with them:

that he may go again to his place which thou hast appointed him; to Ziklag, the place that Achish had given him for his residence, (¹⁰²²1 Samuel 27:6); they did not desire to have him sent to his own country, and to Saul,

since should a reconciliation be made between them, he would be of great service to Saul against them:

and let him not go down with us to battle; into the valley of Jezreel, where the Israelites had pitched:

lest in the battle he be an adversary to us: and fall upon them behind, being in the rear, while they were engaging in the front with Israel:

for wherewith should he reconcile himself unto his master? to Saul he had offended, and fled from:

[should it] not [be] with the heads of these men? the Philistines; or unless by the heads of these men^{f552}; he had no other way of making his peace with his master but by cutting off the heads of the Philistines; and therefore he was a dangerous man to take with them into the battle.

Ver. 5. *[Is] not this David, of whom they sang one to another in dances,* etc.] Long ago:

saying, Saul slew his thousands, and David his ten thousands; so that he is an old sworn enemy of ours; and the more valiant and victorious he has been, the less is he to be trusted, (see ^{<0987>}1 Samuel 18:7 21:11).

Ver. 6. *Then Achish called David,* etc.] Being so near him, that he could call unto him himself, or he sent some person to him, to require his presence with him:

and said unto him, surely, [as] the Lord liveth; or “Jehovah liveth”; an oath by the true God, of whom Achish might have some knowledge, as he also had of angels, from his conversation with David; though the Heathens had a notion of a supreme Being, and yet worshipped other gods, and whom they called Jove, from this name of Jehovah. Kimchi observes, that all confess a first cause; and therefore when he swore to David, he swore by him in whom David believed, perhaps out of complaisance to him, or that David might pay the greater regard to his oath:

thou hast been upright; sincere, honest, faithful, and just in all his deportment; yet not so sincere as he thought him to be, witness the road he pretended he had taken against the south of Judah, (^{<0920>}1 Samuel 27:1-12);

and thy going out and thy coming in with me in the host [is] good in sight; his behaviour in the army, attending him as the keeper of his head, or

captain of his bodyguard, was exceeding agreeable to him, and he could wish to have him continued:

for I have not found evil in thee, since the day of thy coming unto me unto this day; whatever he had done before to the Philistines, having greatly afflicted and distressed them in his wars with them, of which this seems to be an exception:

nevertheless, the lords favour thee not; or thou art not acceptable to them, yea, very offensive and disagreeable.

Ver. 7. *Wherefore now return,* etc.] To Ziklag:

and go in peace; not only in a peaceable manner, easy and satisfied, as David was at his very heart to hear this, but all prosperity and happiness attend thee; the Jews ^{f553} distinguish between wishing persons to go in peace, and to go to peace; the former they observe has not issued happily, when the other has, and they instance in the wish of Jethro to Moses, and of David to Absalom;

that thou displease not the lords of the Philistines: and what would be the consequence of that he could not say, but suggests it would be most for his peace and safety to depart.

Ver. 8. *And David said unto Achish, what have I done?* etc.] This question is anticipated by the speech of Achish, who had declared he had found no evil in him; but David must say something to put on an appearance of concern for being dismissed, when he was heartily glad of it:

and what hast thou found in thy servant, so long as I have been with thee unto this day, that I may not go fight against the enemies of my lord the king? which cannot be excused of great dissimulation, since nothing was more foreign from his heart, and against his will, than fighting against the Israelites, and which he determined to avoid if possible; and glad at heart he was to be thus excused, and freed from the straits and difficulties he was involved in; but that the Philistines might have no cause of suspicion of him, and that he was warmly attached to their interest among whom he was still to continue, he put on these airs. Abarbinel is of opinion that the lords of the Philistines were only afraid of David, but not of his men, and therefore were not solicitous about their going, but his, which gave David a concern; and since he was particularly singled out, he desired to know what special evil had been found in him; but when he understood, by the

following answer of Achish, that his servants were to go with him, he was content, and said no more; but the princes asked, “what do these Hebrews here?” (~~QMB~~ 1 Samuel 29:3).

Ver. 9. *And Achish answered and said unto David*, etc.] In reply to the questions:

I know that thou [art] good in my sight as an angel of God: for his great wisdom, and graceful behaviour, and inoffensive carriage:

notwithstanding the princes of the Philistines have said, he shall not go up with us to the battle; though Achish had so good an opinion of him, and had declared it in council, yet an order had passed there that he should not go to battle with them; there were but five of them, and Achish was one of the five, so that there were four to one for the dismissing him; and Achish, though a king, was obliged to submit.

Ver. 10. *Wherefore now rise up early with thy master’s servants that are come with thee*, etc.] Meaning his six hundred men, who were considered as the servants and subjects of Saul, though with David: and which tacitly carried in it the objection of the Philistine lords unto them, that since they were the servants and subjects of Saul, they were not to be trusted in a battle with him; lest finding an opportunity, they should seize it, and thereby ingratiate themselves into his favour again:

and as soon as ye be up early in the morning, and have light, depart; he advises them to get away as soon as they could, lest the Philistines should fall upon them, and force them, and he could not say what mischief might befall them; wherefore for their safety it was best to depart as soon as they could see their way.

Ver. 11. *So David and his men rose up early to depart in the morning*, etc.] Being as willing and ready to go as the Philistines were desirous they should:

to return into the land of the Philistines; for now they were in the land of Israel, at Aphek, near Jezreel, from whence they went back to Ziklag, which was within the principality of Gath; and, according to Bunting^{f554}, was eighty eight miles from the place where the army of the Philistines was; but it seems not very likely that it should be so far off:

and the Philistines went up to Jezreel; where the army of the Israelites lay encamped, in order to fight them. By the dismissal of David from the army of the Philistines, he was not only delivered from a sad plight he was in, either of acting an ungrateful part to Achish, or an unnatural one to Israel; but also, by the pressing charge of Achish to get away as early as possible in the morning, he came time enough to rescue the prey the Amalekites had taken at Ziklag his city, as in the following chapter; and the providence of God in this affair is further observable, as by some represented, since if David had stayed in the camp of the Philistines, it would not have been so easy for him, on the death of Saul, to have got from them, and succeed in the kingdom, as he could and did from Ziklag.

CHAPTER 30

INTRODUCTION TO FIRST SAMUEL 30

This chapter relates the condition Ziklag was in when David and his men came to it, the city burnt, and their families carried captive by the Amalekites, which occasioned not only a general lamentation, but mutiny and murmuring in David's men, (^{<OR1>}1 Samuel 30:1-6); the inquiry David made of the Lord what he should do, who is bid to pursue the enemy; and being directed by a lad where they were, fell upon them, and routed them, and brought back the captives with a great spoil, (^{<OR2>}1 Samuel 30:7-20); the distribution of the spoil, both to those that went with him, and to those who through faintness were left behind, (^{<OR3>}1 Samuel 30:21-25); and the presents of it he sent to several places in the tribe of Judah, who had been kind to him when he dwelt among them, (^{<OR4>}1 Samuel 30:26-31).

Ver. 1. *And it came to pass, when David and his men were come to Ziklag, on the third day,* etc.] Either from their departure from thence, when they went out with Achish, or rather from the time of their leaving Achish, and the camp of the Philistines; so long they were upon their march homewards, (see ^{<OR5>}2 Samuel 1:1,2); and no wonder, if it was the distance of eighty eight miles, (see Gill on "^{<OR6>}1 Samuel 29:11");

that the Amalekites had invaded the south, and Ziklag; the southern parts of the land of the Philistines, and of Judah, as appears from (^{<OR7>}1 Samuel 30:14); taking the opportunity of the Philistines being gone into the land of Israel, and particularly of David's absence from Ziklag, to whom they bore a grudge for his invasion, destruction, and spoil of them not long ago, (see ^{<OR8>}1 Samuel 27:8);

and smitten Ziklag, and burnt it with fire; not that they smote the inhabitants of it, there were no men in it, and the women and children they carried captive; but they demolished the buildings in it, pulled down the houses after they had rifled them, and burnt them with fire, that David and his men might dwell there no more.

Ver. 2. *And had taken the women captives, that [were] therein,* etc.] There being no other to take, the men were gone with David:

they slew not any, either great or small; that is, of the women, whether married or unmarried, old, or maidens, or children; which was very much, since David destroyed all that came within his reach, men and women, when he invaded them, (¹⁰⁷⁰1 Samuel 27:9); but perhaps this was not owing to their humanity, but to their covetousness, designing to make an advantage of them by selling them for slaves; no doubt they were restrained by the providence of God:

but carried [them] away, and went on their way; homewards with their captives.

Ver. 3. *So David and his men came to the city*, etc.] Or however to the place where it had stood, and where it now lay in ruins:

and, behold, [it was] burnt with fire; the whole city was laid in ashes:

and their wives, and their sons, and their daughters, were taken captives; as it appeared afterwards; for upon their first coming they knew not but they were all destroyed; and which they might reasonably suppose from their former treatment of them, unless there were any left upon the spot which could inform them how things were, which does not appear, and which must make their distress the greater.

Ver. 4. *Then David and the people that [were] with him lifted up their voice*, etc.] In doleful shrieks, and loud lamentations:

and wept, until they had no more power to weep; till nature was quite exhausted, and no moisture left; so the Vulgate Latin version, “till tears failed in them”; they could shed no more.

Ver. 5. *And David's two wives were taken captives*, etc.] Which is observed as one cause of his particular distress, and another follows in (¹⁰⁸⁰1 Samuel 30:6):

Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite: that is, who had been his wife; for he was now dead, (¹⁰⁵⁰1 Samuel 25:39), and was so before she was married to David; both these came with him to Gath, and were left at Ziklag when he went with Achish, and here they were taken; (see ¹⁰⁵⁰1 Samuel 25:42,43 27:3).

Ver. 6. *And David was greatly distressed*, etc.] Partly for the loss of his two wives, and partly because of the mutiny and murmuring of his men:

for the people spake of stoning him; as the Israelites did of Moses and Aaron, (^{<0440>}Numbers 14:10); the reason of this was, because, as they judged, it was owing to David that they went along with Achish, and left the city defenceless, and because he had provoked the Amalekites by his inroad upon them, who took this opportunity of avenging themselves. Abarbinel is of opinion that it was his excess of sorrow for his two wives, and his remissness and backwardness to take vengeance on their enemies, that provoked them, and put them on talking after this manner:

because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and for his daughters; as well as David; and they were very desirous of recovering them if possible, and of taking vengeance on those who had carried them captive:

but David encouraged himself in the Lord his God; took all patiently, and exercised faith on his God; he encouraged himself in the power and providence of God; in the promises of God, and his faithfulness in keeping them; in a view of his covenant relation to God; in remembrance of the grace, mercy, and goodness of God, and his former experiences of it; hoping and believing that God would appear for him in some way or another, and work salvation for him. The Targum is,

“he strengthened himself in the Word of the Lord his God;”

in Christ the Word of God, and in the power of his might, and in the grace that is in him, (^{<0160>}Ephesians 6:10 ^{<0511>}2 Timothy 2:1).

Ver. 7. *And David said to Abiathar the priest, Ahimelech's son*, etc.] The son of Ahimelech, who was slain at Nob by the order of Saul, (^{<0229>}1 Samuel 22:19); and Abiathar his son, who fled to David with the ephod, on the death of his father, (^{<0220>}1 Samuel 22:20), was now high priest in his room; and who it seems was with David when he went with Achish, and returned with him; for had he been left at Ziklag, he and his ephod, in all probability, had been carried off by the Amalekites, unless we can suppose him under the protection of a special providence: it is much David had not inquired of the Lord by him about his going with Achish; perhaps the present disaster brought to mind that neglect, and made him the more diligent now:

I pray thee, bring me hither the ephod; not to put it on himself, but that the high priest might put it on, and inquire by it before him of the Lord:

and Abiathar brought thither the ephod to David; for the sake of David, that inquiry might be made before him of the Lord by Urim and Thummim.

Ver. 8. *And David inquired of the Lord*, etc.] That is, by Abiathar, who reported his questions to the Lord in his name:

saying, shall I pursue after this troop? the large company of the Amalekites, as it appears by what follows they were:

shall I overtake them? two questions are here put together, and answers returned to them, contrary to a notion of the Jews; (see Gill on “^{<0231>}1 Samuel 23:11”);

and he answered him, pursue; which respects the first question:

for thou shalt surely overtake [them]; which is an answer to the second question, and a full one, giving full assurance of overtaking; to which is added more than what was inquired about;

and without fail recover [all]; their wives, sons, and daughters, and the spoil that was taken; or “in delivering thou shall deliver”^{f555}, out of the hands of the Amalekites, whatsoever they had taken.

Ver. 9. *So David went, he and the six hundred men that [were] with him*, etc.] Encouraged by the oracle of the Lord:

and came to the brook Besor; which Adrichomius^{f556} places in the tribe of Simeon; it is thought to be near Gaza. Aristaeus^{f557} speaks of brooks that flowed by Gaza and Ashdod, places that belonged to the Philistines; some take it to be the river of the wilderness in Amos, (see Gill on “^{<3034>}Amos 6:14”):

where those that were left behind stayed: or a part of them were left, as the Targum; all the six hundred came to this brook, but two hundred of them were left here, (^{<0310>}1 Samuel 30:10) shows, and stayed here till the rest returned; for this is not to be understood of any that were left behind at Ziklag, for all came from thence to this brook.

Ver. 10. *But David pursued, he and four hundred men*, etc.] Not discouraged with being obliged to leave a third part of his little army behind; though it was doubtless a trial of his faith, with these to pursue an enemy, whose numbers he knew not, which must greatly exceed his; for

after the rout and slaughter of them, as many escaped on camels as David had with him, (^{
}1 Samuel 30:17);

for two hundred abode behind, which were so faint; through their grief and sorrow for the loss of their wives and children, and through their march from the camp of the Philistines to Ziklag, and from thence hither, that they looked like a corpse, as the word signifies; Procopius Gazaeus has it only seventy men:

so that they could not go over the brook Besor: being so weak and feeble; for this was not owing to fear of their enemies, and faint heartedness on that account, then it would rather have been said, “they would not go over”; the Targum renders the word “faint” by “restrained” or prohibited, as if they were forbid by David to go over, but were ordered to tarry here by the stuff, while the rest pursued; and, according to the Syriac and Arabic versions, they were placed there, that none might go over the brook; and it seems, by (^{
}1 Samuel 30:22), that they had a good will to go over, but were made to abide there; or as all Gideon’s army, but three hundred, were sent back, and not suffered to go with him, being too many, (^{
}Judges 7:2-8).

Ver. 11. *And they found an Egyptian in the field*, etc.] As they passed along, lying there, having been sick, and was half starved, almost dead:

and brought him to David; to know what was to be done with him; being in the habit of a soldier, they concluded he might be one of the company they were in pursuit of; but whether they should kill him, or make use of him for intelligence and as a guide, could they bring him to himself, they knew not, and therefore brought him to David:

and gave him bread, and he did eat, and they made him drink water; both which they had with them for their own use; had he been an Amalekite, and not an Egyptian, they might not have relieved or spared him, but must have destroyed him at once; (see ^{
}Deuteronomy 25:19).

Ver. 12. *And they gave him a piece of cake of figs*, etc.] That were dried and pressed together, and made into cakes:

and two clusters of raisins; or dried grapes, as the Targum:

and when he had eaten, his spirit came again to him; he seemed to be quite dispirited, almost lifeless, but upon eating some food he was refreshed, and his spirits revived, and he was capable of conversing:

for he had eaten no bread, nor drank [any] water, three days and three nights; that is, one whole day, and part of two days, as appears from (^{<0813>}1 Samuel 30:13).

Ver. 13. *And David said unto him, to whom [belongest] thou?* etc.] To what country or people? and to whom among them?

and whence [art] thou? of what nation? where wast thou born? what countryman art thou? for his being called an Egyptian before seems to be by anticipation, unless it was guessed at by his habit; for until he had eaten and drank he could not speak, and so could not be known by his speech:

for he said, I [am] a young man of Egypt; that was the country he belonged to, and came from; he was an Egyptian by birth:

servant to an Amalekite; one of those that had invaded the country, and burnt Ziklag, as it follows:

and my master left me, because three days ago I fell sick; which was very barbarous and cruel to leave him at all, when they had camels with them, (^{<0817>}1 Samuel 30:17); and no doubt carriages for their arms, provision, and spoil, and men; and more so to leave him without anybody with him to take care of him, and without any food, when he capable of eating any; but so it was ordered by the providence of God, that should be left to be the instrument of the just ruin of his master, and of the whole troop.

Ver. 14. *We made an invasion [upon] the south of the Cherethites*, etc.] The Philistines so called, or at least one nation of them, such that dwelt to the south of the land, (^{<0816>}1 Samuel 30:16); (see Gill on "^{<3015>}Zephaniah 2:5");

and upon [the coast] which [belongeth] to Judah; the south of Judah, where David pretended he had been, and had spoiled, and which was now actually done by the Amalekites, (^{<0270>}1 Samuel 27:10);

and upon the south of Caleb; that part of the tribe of Judah which belonged to Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and his posterity, and which was the southern part of it, (^{<0659>}Joshua 15:19);

and we burnt Ziklag with fire; and then departed.

Ver. 15. *And David said unto him, canst thou me down to this company?* etc.] That is, show him, or direct him where they were:

and he said, swear unto me by God; the Targum is, by the Word of the Lord; but it is highly probable this man had no notion of Jehovah, and his Word, or of the true God; only that there was a God, and that an oath taken by him was solemn, sacred, and inviolable, and might be trusted to and depended on:

that thou wilt neither kill me; for he found now he was in the hands of those whose city he had been concerned in plundering and burning, and so might fear his life was in danger:

nor deliver me into the hands of my master; who had been a cruel one to him, and therefore would gladly be clear of him; and if he had nothing else against him, his late usage of him was sufficient to raise his resentment of him:

and I will bring thee down to this company; or show him where they were, having heard them say where they would stop, and make merry, and divide their spoil; and perhaps his master might tell him they would be at such a place at such a time, where, if he was better, he might come to them; the Vulgate Latin version adds, “and David swore to him”: which, though not expressed in the original text, was no doubt done by him; and the Syriac and Arabic versions begin (¹1 Samuel 30:16) thus, “when David had sworn to him”.

Ver. 16. *And when he had brought him down*, etc.] To the place where the company of the Amalekites were, or near it:

behold, [they were] spread abroad upon all the earth; they were not in any regular order, and much less in any military form, but lay about in the fields, scattered here and there, were in detached parties:

some eating and drinking; in one place:

and dancing; others, in another place, expressing their joy, and perhaps their thankfulness to their idols

because of the great spoil they had taken out of the land of the Philistines, and out of the land of Judah; from Ziklag, and from the south of the

Cherethites, and the south of Judah, they had invaded, (^{Q114}1 Samuel 30:14); and here they were in the greatest security; knowing: that the armies of the Philistines were gone into the land of Israel, and were about to engage in battle with the Israelites, and David they supposed was with the Philistines, so that they had nothing to fear from any quarter; and thus it is often, that when men cry peace, peace, sudden destruction comes upon them.

Ver. 17. *And David smote them from the twilight even unto the evening of the next day*, etc.] As there are two twilights, the twilight of the morning, and the twilight of the evening; this is differently understood some take it for the twilight of the morning, and that it was night when David came to them, and let them alone till they were drunk and asleep, and then early in the morning fell upon them, and smote them until the evening; so Josephus ^{f558} relates it; but others take it to be the twilight of the evening, and that he fell upon them that night, and continued the slaughter of them to the evening of the next day, with which agrees the Targum; nay, some take the next day, or the morrow, to be that which followed after the two evenings; so that this slaughter was carried on to the third day:

and there escaped not a man of them, save four hundred young men that rode upon camels, and fled; that sort of camels called dromedaries, according to Josephus ^{f559}, and which were very swift, and much used by the Arabians, near whom these people dwelt, (see ^{Q116}Isaiah 60:6 ^{Q123}Jeremiah 2:23).

Ver. 18. *And David recovered all that the Amalekites had carried away*, etc.] The wives and children of the Israelites, and their goods, excepting the provisions they had eaten:

and David rescued his two wives; which is particularly observed, because a special concern of his.

Ver. 19. *And there was nothing lacking to them, neither small nor great, neither sons nor daughters*, etc.] Not any of the least or youngest, nor any of them that were grown up; for as these were not slain but carried captive, so they were brought back, and not one missing, (see ^{Q114}1 Samuel 30:2);

neither spoil, nor any [thing] they had taken to them: except the food they had eaten and the liquor they had drank, as before observed; and perhaps what they had ate and drank were none of theirs, but the Philistines: so that

David recovered all; taken in the utmost extent.

Ver. 20. *And David took all the flocks, and the herds*, etc.] Which they had taken from the land of the Philistines, or which belonged to the Amalekites properly:

[which] they drove before those [other] cattle; which had been carried from Ziklag; first went the spoil taken from other places, and then those taken from David and his men, or what was found at Ziklag. Abarbinel supposes the meaning to be this, that the herds were driven before the flocks, that the oxen were led out first, and then the sheep followed, as being the weaker sort, and more easily to be driven, and carried off; but the former sense seems best:

and said, this [is] David's spoil; either the whole of it, it being owing to him that it was got or brought back; or this may respect some peculiar part of it made a present of to him; or it may design what the Amalekites had taken from others, which was at the disposal of David, as distinguished from what was taken from Ziklag, and was restored, or to be restored to the proper owners: it may be taken in the first and more general sense, as being the song, or the burden of the song, sung by David's men as they returned with the spoil, giving him all the honour of it, of whom, but a little before, they talked of stoning.

Ver. 21. *And David came to the two hundred men*, etc.] Left at the brook Besor:

who were so faint that they could not follow David; or, as the Targum, were restrained from going over after him; either through faintness of spirits, and weakness of body, or through the order of David that they should not follow him; and which seems to receive some countenance from what follows:

whom they had made also to abide at the brook Besor; to guard the passage there, and to tarry by and keep the stuff:

and they went forth to meet David, and to meet the people that [were] with him; to congratulate them upon the victory they had obtained, and to see and receive their wives and children, and what portion of the spoil might be divided to them:

and when David came near to the people, he saluted them; asked them of their welfare, whether they were in better health, and recovered of their faintness and weakness, as it should seem they were, by their coming forth to meet him.

Ver. 22. *Then answered all the wicked men, and [men] of Belial, of those that went with David*, etc.] Who were ill natured men, and of covetous dispositions, as what is called their answer shows; and it seems by that as if the two hundred men had moved that they might have their share in the spoil, or that David had given some intimation that they should:

and said, because they went not with us, we will not give, them [ought] of the spoil that we have recovered: which was very unreasonable not to let them have what was before their own which was recovered; and indeed it was but right they should have their share in the spoil that was taken which was of others, as will appear hereafter: but they were of opinion and were come to a resolution, they should have no more,

save to every man his wife and his children; which was very unkind and ungenerous:

that they may lead [them] away, and depart; but whither? Ziklag was burnt, the land of Israel they would not return unto, where they must fall a sacrifice to Saul; these men cared not where they went, so that they were rid of them, that they might not have any share with them in the spoil.

Ver. 23. *Then said David, ye shall not do so, my brethren*, etc.] Though he saw through their wickedness, and disapproved of the bad sentiments they had embraced, yet he deals gently with them, calling them brethren, being of the same nation and religion, and his fellow soldiers; yet at the same time keeps up and maintains his dignity and authority as a general, and declares it should not be as they willed, and gives his reasons for it, that it was not fit they should do as they pleased:

with that which the Lord hath given us; what they had was given them, and therefore, as they had freely received, they should freely give; and what was given them, was not given to them only, but to the whole body, by the Lord:

who hath preserved us, and delivered the company that came against us into our hand; it was not by their own power and might that they got the victory over the enemy, and the spoil into their hands, but it was through

the Lord only; and therefore, as they should not assume the honour of the victory to themselves, so neither should they claim the spoil as wholly belonging to them.

Ver. 24. *For who will hearken unto you in fit is matter?*, etc.] No wise and just man will take on your side of the question, and join with you in excluding your brethren from a share in the spoil:

but as his part [is] that goeth down to the battle, so [shall] his part [be] that tarrieth by the stuff; as these two hundred men did; they were placed to abide by and watch the carriages, the bag and baggage the rest had left there, that they might be the lighter, and make their pursuit more swiftly: besides, they guarded the pass here, and were also exposed to danger; for if the four hundred had been cut off, and the enemy had returned, they must all have perished; and therefore as they had their post assigned them, and were liable to danger, it was but just and reasonable they should have the share in the spoil; especially since it was not want of will in them they did not go with them, but weakness of body:

they shall part alike; this was David's determination and decision, and it was an equitable one: something similar to this was directed by the Lord in the war of Midian, (^{<08125>}Numbers 31:25), etc. and was practised in the times of Abraham, (^{<01424>}Genesis 14:24); and is agreeable to the light of nature, and what has been practised by the Heathens, particularly the Romans, as Polybius ^{f560} relates; who tells us, that every man brought booty into the camp, when the tribunes divided it equally to them all; not only to those which remained in battle, but to those that guarded the tents and the baggage, to the sick, and to those that were appointed to any service, (see ^{<08812>}Psalms 68:12); and so the Turkish historian says ^{f561}, that the Pisidians, who lived on spoil, gave a part not contemptible to those that abode at home with their wives.

Ver. 25. *And it was [so] from that day forward*, etc.] Or "upwards" ^{f562}, of old, formerly; and so may refer either to what was done at the war with Midian, (^{<08127>}Numbers 31:27); or in the times of Abraham, (^{<01423>}Genesis 14:23,24); and so Jarchi observes, it is not said, "henceforward", but "upwards", it being a statute and custom in the days of Abraham; the same he notes on (^{<01424>}Genesis 14:24); where he, David, learnt this from thence; though Josephus ^{f563} is express for it, that this law obtained from the time of David; and such was his authority, though as yet not king, but a wise and just commander:

that he made it a statute and an ordinance for Israel unto this day; it appeared so reasonable and equitable, that it was always regarded and attended to.

Ver. 26. *And when David came to Ziklag*, etc.] Perhaps with an intention to rebuild it, and make it still the place of his residence; and it is possible there might be some houses that escaped flames, and if not, tents might be pitched until the city was rebuilt, and it appears that he continued there some time:

he sent of the spoil to the elders of Judah: of that part of it which belonged to himself as a general:

[even] to his friends; such as had been kind to him when he sojourned among them; so that this was a piece of gratitude, as well as of policy in him, to make his way to the throne the easier, he perceiving the time drawing on for the expiration of the kingdom in the family of Saul; and besides, some in those parts he sent of the spoil to might have been sufferers by the Amalekites, so that it was but a point of justice to restore to them what had been taken from them; for they had invaded the south of Judea, and took spoils from thence, (^{
}1 Samuel 30:14-16); it was to his friends in those parts he sent, not to the inhabitants of Ziph and Keilah, which were places in the tribe of Judah; but these having attempted to betray him, were not entitled to his favours, though they were not the objects of his vengeance:

saying, behold, a present for you, of the spoil of the Lord's enemies; or a "blessing"^{f564}, which he sent them with a good will, wishing health and happiness to them; which they might without hesitation receive, seeing it was not the spoil of private enemies, or of what was taken from them in a way of private revenge, but the spoil of the enemies of the Lord, his and their common enemies; nor need they scruple eating and enjoying it, though the spoil of those that cursed the Lord, Abarbinel observes, since this they had with the blessing of the Lord.

Ver. 27. *To [them] which [were] in Bethel*, etc.] One part of the spoil was sent to them; not to those in Bethel, in the tribe of Benjamin, but in Kirjathjearim, called Bethel, or the house of God, because the ark was there, (see ^{
}1 Samuel 7:1 10:3); moreover, this place was also called Baalah, which some think is referred to here, (see ^{
}Joshua 15:9);

and to [them] which [were] in south Ramoth; a city of the tribe of Simeon, which lay within the lot of Judah; of which (see ^{<1698>}Joshua 19:8);

and to [them] which [were] in Jattir; a city of the tribe of Judah, (see Gill on ^{<1658>}Joshua 15:48”).

Ver. 28. *And to [them] which [were] in Aroer*, etc.] Not Aroer in the tribe of Gad beyond Jordan, where David is never said to be, but some city of this name in the tribe of Judah; the Greek version of (^{<1652>}Joshua 15:22), instead of Adadah, has Arouel:

and to [them] which [were] in Siphmoth; which very probably was in the tribe of Judah, though nowhere else mentioned:

and to [them] which [were] in Eshtemoa; a Levitical city given to the Levites by the children of Judah, (^{<1614>}Joshua 21:14).

Ver. 29. *And to [them] which [were] in Rachal*, etc.] Another city of the tribe of Judah, but nowhere else spoken of:

and to [them] which [were] in the cities of the Jerahmeelites: which lay to the south of Judah, (^{<1670>}1 Samuel 27:10);

and to [them] which [were] in the cities of the Kenites; who dwelt in the wilderness of Judah, in the south of Arad, (^{<1616>}Judges 1:16).

Ver. 30. *And to [them] which [were] in Hormah*, etc.] This was a city also in the tribe of Judah; of which (see ^{<1650>}Joshua 15:30);

and to [them] which [were] in Chorashan; or the lake of Ashan, which was in the same tribe, (see ^{<1650>}Joshua 15:42);

and to [them] which [were] in Athach; nowhere else mentioned; the Greek version has Nombe instead of it, which some take to be the same with Nob; but that was in the tribe of Benjamin.

Ver. 31. *And to [them] which [were] in Hebron*, etc.] A noted city in the tribe of Judah, in the mountainous part of it, and a city of refuge, and where David was afterwards anointed, first king over Judah, and then over Israel, (^{<1613>}2 Samuel 2:4 5:3);

and to all the places where David himself and his men were wont to haunt; where they had their walks, and went to and fro when persecuted by Saul; all such places, and the inhabitants of them, David had a grateful

remembrance of, who sheltered and relieved him in the times of his distress.

CHAPTER 31

INTRODUCTION TO FIRST SAMUEL 31

This chapter gives an account of the battle between the Philistines and the Israelites, which had been preparing for, and the issue of it; in which Saul, his three sons, and his servants, were slain, upon which his army fled, and several of his cities were taken, (^{<ORIG>}1 Samuel 31:1-7); what the Philistines did with his body and his armour, (^{<ORIG>}1 Samuel 31:8-10); the former of which, together with the bodies of his sons, the men of Jabeshgilead rescued, and burnt them, and buried their bones under a tree at Jabesh, expressing great sorrow and concern, (^{<ORIG>}1 Samuel 31:11-13).

Ver. 1. *Now the Philistines fought against Israel*, etc.] Being come to Jezreel where Israel pitched, (^{<ORIG>}1 Samuel 29:1,11); they fell upon them, began the battle:

and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines; at the first onset, as it should seem:

and fell down slain in Mount Gilboa; which was near, and whither fleeing they were pursued and slain, at least great numbers of them.

Ver. 2. *And the Philistines followed hard upon Saul*, etc.] Stuck to him, pushed him close, bore hard upon him in that part of the army where he was having a design upon his person:

and upon his sons; who were with him:

and the Philistines slew Jonathan; who is mentioned first, being the eldest son, and perhaps first slain; and this was so ordered by the providence of God, that David's way to the throne might be more clear and easy; for though Jonathan would not have opposed him himself, yet the people, fond of him, would, at least many of them, been for setting him on the throne; and though he would have refused it, knowing David was the Lord's anointed, and have made interest for him, this would have looked as if he had made him king, and not the Lord:

and Abinadab and Malchishua, Saul's sons; these also were slain; former of these is called Ishui, (^{<0944>}1 Samuel 14:49); Ishbosheth either was not in the battle, being left at home, as unfit for war, or to take care of the kingdom; or else he fled with Abner, and others, and escaped, and who was to be a trial to David.

Ver. 3. *And the battle went sore against Saul*, etc.] Pressed heavy upon him; he was the butt of the Philistines, they aimed at his person and life:

and the archers hit him; or “found him”^{f565}; the place where was, and directed their arrows at him:

and he was sore wounded of the archers; or rather “he was afraid” of them, as the Targum, for as yet he was not wounded; and so the Syriac and Arabic versions render it, and is the sense Kimchi and Ben Melech give of the word: he was not afraid of death, as Abarbinel observes, he chose to die; but he was afraid he should be hit by the archers in such a way that he should not die immediately, and should be taken alive and ill used; the Philistines, especially the Cherethites, were famous for archery; (see Gill on “^{<3005>}Zephaniah 2:5”).

Ver. 4. *Then said Saul unto his armourbearer*, etc.] Who, the Jews^{f566} say, was Doeg the Edomite, promoted to this office for slaying the priests:

draw thy sword, and thrust me through therewith; for if he was wounded, yet not mortally, and it is certain he did not so apprehend it. It is much the sword of the armourbearer should be sheathed in a battle; but perhaps he was preparing for flight, and so had put it up in its scabbard:

lest these uncircumcised come and thrust me through, and abuse me; lest they should not dispatch him at once, but put him to a lingering and torturing death, and insult him, and mock at him, as they did Samson:

but his armourbearer would not, for he was sore afraid; to lay his hand on the king the Lord's anointed, to take away his life, being more scrupulous of doing that, if this was Doeg, than of slaying the priests of the Lord; or he might be afraid of doing this, since should he survive this action, he would be called to an account by the Israelites, and be put to death for killing the king:

therefore Saul took a sword, and fell upon it; or rather “the sword”, the sword of his armourbearer, and so was a suicide: the Jews endeavour to

excuse this fact of Saul, because he knew he should die in battle from the words of Samuel; and being pressed sore by the archers, he saw it was impossible to escape out of their hands and therefore judged it better to kill himself than to fall by the hands of the uncircumcised; but these excuses will not do. Josephus^{f567} denies he killed himself; that though he attempted it, his sword would not pierce through him, and that he was killed by the Amalekite, and that that was a true account he gave to David in the following chapter; though it seems rather to be a lie, to curry favour with David, and that Saul did destroy himself.

Ver. 5. *And when his armourbearer saw that Saul was dead*, etc.] By his own hands, and not by the hands of the Amalekite, which the armour bearer would scarcely have suffered:

he fell likewise upon his sword, and died with him; some think that Saul, and his armourbearer, died by the same sword, which was the armourbearer's; and if he was Doeg, they fell probably by the same sword with which the priests of the Lord were murdered at Nob, (~~1~~1 Samuel 22:18); and it is observed by an historian^{f568}, that the murderers of Julius Caesar slew themselves with the same dagger they destroyed him.

Ver. 6. *So Saul died, and his three sons, and his armourbearer*, etc.] Only with this difference, his three sons died honourably in the field of battle, but he and his armourbearer destroyed themselves. Josephus says^{f569} he reigned eighteen years in the life of Samuel, and after his death twenty two years, which make the forty years the apostle ascribes to him, (~~4~~Acts 13:21); Eupolemus^{f570}, an Heathen writer, makes him to reign twenty one years; but of the years of his reign, both before and after the death of Samuel, chronologers are not agreed, (see ~~1~~1 Samuel 25:1); and (see Gill on "~~4~~Acts 13:21");

and all his men that same day together; not all the soldiers in his army; for many of them fled and escaped, and even Abner the general of the army, but his household servants, or those that were near his person, his bodyguards.

Ver. 7. *And which the men of Israel that [were] on the other side of the valley*, etc.] The valley of Jezreel; of which (see Gill on "~~2~~Hosea 1:5");

and [they] that [were] on the other side Jordan; or rather "on that side"; for the phrase will bear to be rendered either way, and so may mean that side of Jordan on which the battle was fought; for as for the other side, or

that beyond it, the Israelites there could not be in such fear of the Philistines, nor do we ever read of their inhabiting any cities there; though as the phrase is used of the valley, as well as of the river, it may be rendered “about the valley, [and] about Jordan”^{f571}, and so describes such that dwelt near to each of them:

saw that the men of Israel fled, and that Saul and his sons were dead; that is, had information and intelligence of those facts, for it is not to be supposed they saw them with their eyes:

they forsook, the cities, and fled; fearing they should be put to the sword, or carried captive:

and the Philistines came and dwelt them; having nothing more to do than to come and take possession.

Ver. 8. *And it came to pass on the morrow*, etc.] The day after the battle, which perhaps was fought till night came on:

when the Philistines came to strip the slain; of their clothes, and take from them whatever was valuable, as their booty:

that they found Saul and his sons fallen in Mount Gilboa; to which they had betaken themselves, when the battle went against them in the valley; of which (see ^{<2804>}1 Samuel 28:4).

Ver. 9. *And they cut off his head*, etc.] And fastened it in the temple of Dagon, (^{<3000>}1 Chronicles 10:10); perhaps that which was at Ashdod, one of the principalities of the Philistines, (^{<0900>}1 Samuel 5:1,2);

and stripped off his armour; or vessels^{f572}, his clothes as well as his armour, and what he had about him; as for his crown on his head, and the bracelet on his arm, the Amalekite took them before the Philistines came, (^{<4000>}2 Samuel 1:10);

and sent into the land of the Philistines round about: not his head and his armour, for they were placed in the temple of their idols; unless we can suppose these were first carried about for show, and as proofs of the victory: but rather messengers, who were sent express with the news,

to publish [it in] the house of their idols, and among the people; that so they might be glad and rejoice, and give praise to their idols, to whom they ascribed the success they had.

Ver. 10. *And they put his armour in the house of Ashtaroth,* etc.] A temple dedicated to their deities, called by this name; of which (see Gill on “¹⁰⁰³Judges 2:13”); Nothing was more common with the Gentiles than to place in their temples the arms they took from their enemies, as is strongly expressed by Homer ^{f573} and Virgil ^{f574}; and indeed the Jews did the same, as appears by the sword of Goliath being laid up in the tabernacle, (¹⁰⁰⁹1 Samuel 21:9). Here also the Heathens ^{f575} hung up their own arms when the war was ended:

and they fastened his body to the wall of Bethshan; which Josephus ^{f576} says is the same which in his time was called Scythopolis, from the Scythians that possessed it, before called Nysa, according to Pliny ^{f577}: it was given to the tribe of Manasseh, but they could not drive out the inhabitants of it, so that it was always in the possession of others, (¹⁰⁷¹Joshua 17:11 ¹⁰⁰²Judges 1:27); where it is called Bethshean; to the wall of the city they fastened the body of Saul with nails, as it is commonly understood; but it is more likely they hung it on a gibbet without, and near the walls of the city; so the Targum, they hung his body; or, as Josephus ^{f578}, they crucified it there; and so they did also the bodies of his sons, as appears from (¹⁰¹²1 Samuel 31:12).

Ver. 11. *And the inhabitants of Jabeshgilead,* etc.] Who lived on the other side Jordan, about eight miles from Bethshan, according to Fuller ^{f579}:

heard of that which the Philistines had done to Saul; not only that they had got the victory over him, and routed his army, but had abused his body, and hung it up by way of reproach and ignominy; which they could not bear to hear of, remembering with gratitude the kindness he had shown to them, in delivering them out of the hands of Nahash the Ammonite, (¹⁰¹⁰1 Samuel 11:1-13).

Ver. 12. *All the valiant men arose,* etc.] Of the city of Jabeshgilead, fired with indignation at the Philistines’ ill usage of Saul and the bodies of his sons:

and went all night; not only for secrecy, but for haste:

and took the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons from the wall of Bethshan, and came to Jabesh; brought them with them thither, the Philistines either having no knowledge of it, or not daring to oppose them:

and burnt them there: that is, the flesh of them, for the bones they buried, as in (^{<081B>}1 Samuel 31:13); and this they did, contrary to the common usage of the country, which was not to burn; but this they did, that if the Philistines should come to recover them, they would not be able to do it: though the Targum is,

“they burnt over them, as they burn over their kings there;”

they made a burning for them of spices over them; or of their beds, and other household goods, as Kimchi and Ben Melech observe, though they prefer the other sense; (see ^{<4164>}2 Chronicles 16:14 21:19) perhaps the true reason might be, because they were putrid and infectious.

Ver. 13. *And they took their bones, and buried [them] under a tree at Jabesh*, etc.] For though they burned the bodies, yet so as to preserve the bones; and these, together with the ashes of the parts burnt, they gathered up, and buried under a tree near this city; this tree is said to be an oak, (^{<1302>}1 Chronicles 10:12); so Deborah, the nurse of Rebekah, was buried under an oak, (^{<0138>}Genesis 35:8). The Jews generally interred their dead under some oak, as aforementioned writer observes ^{f580}; pleased perchance with the parallel, as he expresses it, that as these plants, seemingly dead in winter, have every spring an annual resurrection, so men’s dry bones shall have new sap put into them at the day of judgment:

and fasted seven days; not that they ate and drank nothing all that time, but they fasted every day till evening, as the Jews used to do; so long it seems a man may live without eating, but not longer; (see Gill on “^{<0248>}Exodus 24:18”) and *see Gill* “^{<1198>}1 Kings 19:8”; this they did, as Kimchi thinks, in memory of the seven days Nahash the Ammonite gave them for their relief, in which time Saul came and saved them, (^{<0113>}1 Samuel 11:3).

FOOTNOTES

- ft1 -- T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 14. 2.
- ft2 -- Demonstrat. Evangel. Prop. 4. p. 199.
- ft3 -- Apud Joseph. Antiqu. l. 7. c. 5. sect. 2.
- ft4 -- Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 30.
- ft5 -- De loc. Heb. fol. 88. K.
- ft6 -- Palestin. Illustrat. tom. 2. p. 581.
- ft7 -- Theatrum Terrae Sanct. p. 30. So Sandys's Travels, l. 3. p. 157.
- ft8 -- Travels of the Patriarchs, etc. p. 122.
- ft9 -- Valer. Maxim. l. 1. c. 3. Vid. D. Herbert de Cherbury de Relig. Gent. c. 3. p. 22.
- ft10 -- Diodor. Sicul. Bibliothec. l. 3. p. 212. Harpocraton in voce **σαβοι**, Lucian. Concil. deor. sect. 4. Cicero de legibus. l. 2. Aristophan vespae, v. 9, 10. Aves, 582. & Scholia in ib. Lysistrate, p. 860. & Scholia in ib.
- ft11 -- Antiqu. l. 5. c. 11. sect. 5.
- ft12 -- Apud Kimchium in loc.
- ft13 -- Trad. Heb. in lib. Reg. fol. 74. H.
- ft14 -- **μυπα tj a hnm** "unam portionem duarum facicrum", Sanctius Belgae.
- ft15 -- Sic Stockins, p. 79.
- ft16 -- **hwwhyw** "quanquam Jehovah", Piscator.
- ft17 -- **hm[rh rwb[b** "propterea quod intonabat contra eam", Piscator.
- ft18 -- Laert. in Vit. Socrat. p. 112.
- ft19 -- Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Yoma, c. 7. sect. 1.

- ft20 -- Shoched Tob apud Yalkut, par. 2. fol. 12. 4.
- ft21 -- Seder Olam Rabba, c. 13. p. 37.
- ft22 -- Misn. Sotah. c. 3. sect. 8.
- ft23 -- T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 31. 2.
- ft24 -- $\mu\gamma\zeta\eta\alpha$ [rz “semen virorum”, Montanus.
- ft25 -- Misn. Nazir, c. 9. sect. 5.
- ft26 -- T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 31. 1.
- ft27 -- Misn. Yoma, c. 1. sect. 3, 5, 7.
- ft28 -- T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 31. 2. Jarchi in loc.
- ft29 -- $j\ w\ r\ t\zeta\eta$ “dura spiritu”, Pagninus, Montanus.
- ft30 -- Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 14. c. 13.
- ft31 -- $\mu\gamma\mu\eta\eta\ t\omega\pi\eta\tau\iota$ “in revolutionibus dierum”, Montanus; so Piscator.
- ft32 -- Onomastic. Sacr. p. 418, 419, 487.
- ft33 -- Apud Weemse’s Observ. Nat. c. 18. p. 76.
- ft34 -- “Quamdiu” $l\ \omega\alpha\zeta$, h. e. “expetitus aut requisitur”, Peter Martyr; “quoties a Jehova postulatur”, Piscator.
- ft35 -- Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.
- ft36 -- Observat. Nat. c. 18. p. 77.
- ft37 -- T. Megillah, fol. 14. 1.
- ft38 -- $q\tau$ [“durum”, Vatablus, Drusius, Piscator; so R. Isaiah.
- ft39 -- “Vetera”, V. L. “vetus”, Pagninus, Montanus.
- ft40 -- $t\omega[d\ l\ a$ “Deus scientiarum”, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Drusius.
- ft41 -- $w\ n\ k\ t\eta\ n\ a\ l\ w$ “ipsi directa sunt”, Pagninus.

- ft42 -- “Non disponuntur”, Junius & Tremellius; “non numerantur”, so some in Vatablus; “non perficiuntur”, so some in Munster.
- ft43 -- Vid. Hieron, Trad. Heb. in. lib. Reg. fol. 34. K.
- ft44 -- Zohar in Gen. fol. 58. 4. Midrash Echa Rabbati, fol. 53. 3. R. Saadiah Gaon, Comment. in Dan. vii. 13.
- ft45 -- T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 25. 1.
- ft46 -- **wmwqml** “in locum suum”, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Drusius, etc.
- ft47 -- Antiqu. 1. 5. c. 10. sect. 3.
- ft48 -- T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 55. 2. Ben Gersom & Abarbinel in loc.
- ft49 -- Moreh Nevochim, par. 1. c. 21.
- ft50 -- Vid. T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 55. 2. & praefat. Ben Chayim. ad Bib. Heb. Bomberg. & Buxtorf.
- ft51 -- T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 87. 1.
- ft52 -- **yk** “ideo”, Noldius, p. 395. No. 1342. “idcirco vel quapropter”, Quistorp, so Patrick.
- ft53 -- **bwj w l dgw Æl h** “ambulans, et grandescens et bonus”, Montanus; so Vatablus & Drusius.
- ft54 -- Judaei apud Hieron. Trad. Heb. in lib. Reg. fol. 75. A.
- ft55 -- Seder Olam Rabba, c. 20. p. 53.
- ft56 -- T. Bab. Megillah, fol. 14. 1.
- ft57 -- See Weemse’s Christ. Synagog. 1. 2. c. 3. p. 250.
- ft58 -- Jarchi & Ben Gersom in loc.
- ft59 -- Midrash Samuel, apud Jarch. & Kimch. in loc.
- ft60 -- **μyab** “venientes”, Montanus.
- ft61 -- T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 14. 1.
- ft62 -- **^w[m r x ψλιθιν κατοικησεως** Symmachus; “angustiam tabernaculi”, Junius & Tremellius. Piscator.

- ft63 -- **μϋϗna wtwmv** “morientur viri”, Montanus, Tigurine version; “morientur virile aetate”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; so V. L.
- ft64 -- T. Bab. Roshhashanah, fol. 18. 1. & Yebamot, fol. 105. 1.
- ft65 -- Procopius Gazaeus in loc.
- ft66 -- Antiqu. 1. 5. c. 10. sect. 4.
- ft67 -- **δpη** “perrupta”, Piscator; “fracta vel rupta”, Drusius.
- ft68 -- Middot, c. 1. sect. 8.
- ft69 -- Geograph. 1. 16. p. 523.
- ft70 -- Vid. Virgil. Aeneid. 7. “huc dona Sacerdos”, etc. ver. 86-95.
- ft71 -- Moreh Nevochim, par. 2. c. 44.
- ft72 -- **μhb hj k al w** “et non contraxit frontem”, Osiander; “non contraxit rugas”, Belg. De Dieu.
- ft73 -- Antiqu. 1. 5. c. 10. sect. 4.
- ft74 -- **awh hwby κυριος αυτος**, Sept. “Dominus ipse”, Montanus.
- ft75 -- **χαμαιπετες επος**, Pindar. Pythia, Ode 6.
- ft76 -- Vid. Homer. Iliad. 17. ver. 633.
- ft77 -- **man** “fidelis”, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version.
- ft78 -- **tarql** “in occursum”, Pagninus, Montanus.
- ft79 -- **hmj l mh ϗj tw** “et diffusum est praelium”, Pagninus, Montanus, Drusius.
- ft80 -- Misn. Sotah, c. 8. sect. 6.
- ft81 -- Travels of the Patriarchs, etc. p. 123.
- ft82 -- Antiqu. 1. 5. c. 11. sect. 2.
- ft83 -- Antiqu. 1. 5. c. 11. sect. 3.
- ft84 -- Shalshalet Hakabala. fol. 8. 1. Jarchi in loc.

- ft85 -- Travels of the Patriarchs, etc. p. 123.
- ft86 -- Midrash Schemuel apud Abarbanel in loc.
- ft87 -- Vid. David de Pomis, Lexic. fol. 47. 1.
- ft88 -- Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 5. c. 11. sect. 3.)
- ft89 -- **hmq** “stetit”, Montanus; “stabant”, Tigurine version.
- ft90 -- Schulchan Aruch, par. 1. c. 580. sect. 2.
- ft91 -- **hl k** “absolvere, consummare, perficere”, Buxtorf.
- ft92 -- Ut supra, (Antiqu. l. 5. c. 3.) sect. 4.
- ft93 -- **tl l** “ad ululandum”, Montanus; so some in Munster; “ad ejulandum”, as some in Vatablus.
- ft94 -- Ludolph. Hist. Aethiop. l. 1. c. 14.
- ft95 -- **wkphn** “versae erant”, Pagninus, Montanus.
- ft96 -- “Quoniam inversi sunt super eam eardines ejus”, Munster; so Jarchi; Vid. T. Bab. Becorot, fol. 45. 1.
- ft97 -- Travels of the Patriarchs, etc. p. 122.
- ft98 -- Cli Yaker, fol. 162. 4.
- ft99 -- Comment. in Jos. xv. 47.
- ft100 -- De Dis. Syr. Syntagu. l. 2. c. 3. p. 267.
- ft101 -- Antiqu. l. 6. c. 1. sect. 1.
- ft102 -- Herodot. Clio, sive, l. 1. c. 105.
- ft103 -- Comment. in Hierem. c. 25. fol. 151. B.
- ft104 -- Travels of the Patriarchs, etc. p. 123.
- ft105 -- **μyl p[μhl wrtçyw** “et absconditi erant”, Montanus; so Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius.
- ft106 -- Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 6. c. 1. sect. 1.)
- ft107 -- Clio, sive, l. 1. c. 105.

- ft108 -- **hdçb εν αγρω**, Sept. “in agro”, Pagninus, Montanus.
- ft109 -- Antiqu. l. 6. c. 1. sect. 4.
- ft110 -- “Munera crede mihi”, etc. Ovid. de arte amandi, l. 3.
- ft111 -- Moreh Nevochim, par. 1. c. 1.
- ft112 -- Travels, p. 92.
- ft113 -- Scholia in Aristoph. Acharnen. Act ii. Scen. 1. p. 383, 384. Edit. Genev. 1607.
- ft114 -- Magini Geograph. par. 2. fol. 241.
- ft115 -- Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 1. c. 13.
- ft116 -- Hist. Animal. l. 6. c. 37. “---saepe exiguus mus”, etc. Virgil, Georg. l. 1. v. 181, 182.
- ft117 -- Nat. Hist. l. 10. c. 65.
- ft118 -- De Animal. l. 17. c. 41.
- ft119 -- Justin. l. 15. c. 2.
- ft120 -- **bhzh yl k** “vasa aurea”, Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, etc.
- ft121 -- Antiqu. l. 6. c. 1. sect. 2.
- ft122 -- Antiqu. l. 6. c. 1. sect. 2.
- ft123 -- **tybb** “in domo”, Pagninus, Montanus, etc.
- ft124 -- **tj a hl smb** “in via elata una”, Montanus; “eadem semita”, Tigurine version; so Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.
- ft125 -- Travels of the Patriarchs, etc. p. 123.
- ft126 -- Hieron. Trad. Heb. in lib. Reg. fol. 75. D.
- ft127 -- **wdyrwh** “deposuerant”, Meudoza; so Pool.
- ft128 -- Trad. Heb. ut supra. (Hieron. Trad. Heb. in lib. Reg. fol. 75. D.)
- ft129 -- Antiqu. l. 6. c. 1. sect. 4.
- ft130 -- Antiqu. l. 6. c. 1. sect. 3.

- ft131 -- Antiqu. l. 6. c. 1. sect. 3.
- ft132 -- T. Bab. Sotah, fol. 35. 2. T. Hieros. Sanhedrin, fol. 20. 2. Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 5. fol. 186. 2.
- ft133 -- Hierozoic. par. 1. l. 2. c. 36. col. 370.
- ft134 -- So Noldius, No. 779.
- ft135 -- Pausan. Achaica, sive, l. 7. p. 435.
- ft136 -- Antiqu. l. 6. c. 1. sect. 4.
- ft137 -- Ibid
- ft138 -- Works, vol. 1. p. 54.
- ft139 -- Trad. Heb. in lib. Reg. fol. 75. F.
- ft140 -- L'Empereur, annot. in Misn. Middot, c. 2. sect. 5. No. 7.
- ft141 -- Midrash Schemuel apud Abarbinel in loc.
- ft142 -- Antiqu. l. 6. c. 2. sect. 2.
- ft143 -- Antiqu. l. 6. c. 2. sect. 2.
- ft144 -- Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 6. c. 2. sect. 2.)
- ft145 -- Seder Olam Rabba, c. 13. p. 35. Midrash Tillim apud Abarbinel in loc. Kimchi in loc.
- ft146 -- **hnçb hnç ydm** “ex anno in anno”.
- ft147 -- Antiqu. l. 6. c. 3. sect. 1.
- ft148 -- Seder Olam Rabba, ut supra. (c. 13. p. 35.)
- ft149 -- Pirke Abot, c. 5. sect. 21.
- ft150 -- Ut supra, (Antiqu. l. 6. c. 3.) sect. 2.
- ft151 -- De Legibus, l. 3.
- ft152 -- Ut supra, (Antiqu. l. 6. c. 3.) sect. 3.
- ft153 -- **Æl mh j pçm** “jus regis”, V. L. Tigurine version, Munster; “judicium regis”, Vatablus, Drusius.

- ft154 -- In Politicis, l. 3. c. 16.
- ft155 -- Nat. Hist. l. 7. c. 2.
- ft156 -- Ibid. c. 20.
- ft157 -- So V. L. and Tigurine.
- ft158 -- Vid. Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 5.
- ft159 -- Satyr. 2. ver. 141. Vid. Turnebi Adversar. l. 15. c. 17.
- ft160 -- Oeconomic. l. 2. p. 283.
- ft161 -- Bibliothec. l. 5. p. 317.
- ft162 -- Antiqu. l. 6. c. 4. sect. 1.
- ft163 -- Onomastic. Sacr. p. 405.
- ft164 -- Thalia, sive, l. 3. c. 20.
- ft165 -- Polymnia, sive, l. 7. c. 187.
- ft166 -- Homer. Odyss. 8. ver. 20, 21.
- ft167 -- Justin. e Trogo, l. 13. c. 1.
- ft168 -- Sueton. Vit. Caesar. c. 45. Domitian. c. 18.
- ft169 -- Aeneid. l. 7. ver. 783, 784. & 9. ver. 29.
- ft170 -- Ib. l. 8. ver. 162.
- ft171 -- Panegy. c. 4, 22.
- ft172 -- "Tamen altior illis ipsa dea est". Ovid. Metam. l. 3. fab. 2. ver. 180, 181.
- ft173 -- Antiqu. l. 8. c. 7. sect. 3.
- ft174 -- Hieron. Trad. Heb. in Paralip, fol. 83. A.
- ft175 -- De loc. Heb. fol. 89. K.
- ft176 -- Travels of the Patriarchs, etc. p. 129.
- ft177 -- De loc. Heb. fol. 94. L.
- ft178 -- Travels of the Patriarchs, etc. p. 126.

- ft179 -- A. Gell. Noct. Attic. l. 20. c. 1.
- ft180 -- Maundrell's Journey from Aleppo, etc. p. 26, 27.
- ft181 -- **Ærbd bwj** "bonum verbum tuum", Pagninus, Montanus.
- ft182 -- In Pirke Eliezer, c. 36. fol. 39. 1. 2.
- ft183 -- Midrash Schemuel & Pesikta apud Abarbinel in loc.
- ft184 -- **ab** "venit", Pagninus, Montanus.
- ft185 -- **μwyhk** "invenietis cum tam certo quam certum est hunc diem esse", Drusius; so Jarchi.
- ft186 -- **μtarql** "in occursum eorum", Pagninus, Montanus; "eis obviam", V. L. Tigurine version.
- ft187 -- **rx[y** "cohibebit", Montanus; "continebit", Tigurine version; "retinebit", Drusius; i.e. "coercebit", Piscator.
- ft188 -- Hieron. Trad. Heb. in lib. Reg. fol. 75. G.
- ft189 -- Antiqu. l. 6. c. 4. sect. 1.
- ft190 -- Antiqu. l. 6. c. 4. sect. 1.
- ft191 -- R. Eliezer in T. Bab. Avodah Zara, fol. 25. 1.
- ft192 -- Vid. Diodor. Sicul. l. 5. p. 306.
- ft193 -- Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 6. c. 4. sect. 1.)
- ft194 -- **rj çh twl [k** "circa ascendere auroram", Montanus; "quum ascenderet aurora", Junius & Tremellius.
- ft195 -- T. Bab. Horayot, fol. 11. 2. & 12. 1.
- ft196 -- Bereshit Rabba, sect. 82. fol. 71. 4. R. Isaiah, Jarchi, Kimchi, Abarbinel, & Abendana in loc.
- ft197 -- Chinat. 3. par. 5.
- ft198 -- Itinerar. p. 47.
- ft199 -- Antiqu. l. 6. c. 4. sect. 2.

ft200 -- Ibid.

ft201 -- Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 6. c. 4. sect. 2.)

ft202 -- Hieron. Trad. Heb. fol. 75. H.

ft203 -- Ut supra, (Antiqu. l. 6. c. 4.) sect. 3.

ft204 -- **dygh dgh** “indicando indicavit”, Pagninus, Montanus, etc.

ft205 -- Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 6. c. 4. scet. 3.)

ft206 -- Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 30. p. 447.

ft207 -- **Æl mh yj y** “vivat rex”, Pagninus, Montanus, etc.

ft208 -- Antiqu. l. 6. c. 4. sect. 6.

ft209 -- Ibid.

ft210 -- **çyrj mk yhyw** “et fuit veluti surdus”, Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus; “fuit quasi obmutescens”, Drusius; “veluti tacens [aut] silens”, so some in Vatablus; so the Targum.

ft211 -- Antiqu. l. 6. c. 5. sect. 1.

ft212 -- Ibid.

ft213 -- Antiqu. l. 6. c. 5. sect. 1.

ft214 -- Ut supra, (Antiqu. l. 6. c. 5.) sect. 2.

ft215 -- Flor. Hist. Roman. l. 1. c. 11. Aurel. Victor. de Vir. Illustr. c. 20.
Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 3. c. 11.

ft216 -- **dj a çyak** “tanquam vir unus”, Pagninus, Montanus, etc.

ft217 -- Vid. T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 22. 2. & Gloss. in ib.

ft218 -- Suidas in voce **βιζακιων**

ft219 -- Vid. Sheringham. in Misn. Yoma, c. 2. sect. 1. p. 14.

ft220 -- Ut supra, (Antiqu. l. 6. c. 5.) sect. 3.

ft221 -- Ut supra, (Antiqu. l. 6. c. 5.) sect. 3.

ft222 -- **μyçar** “capita”, Pagninus, Montanus, etc.

- ft223 -- Travels of the Patriarchs, etc. p. 126.
- ft224 -- Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 6. c. 5. sect. 3.)
- ft225 -- Ut supra. (Travels of the Patriarchs, etc. p. 126.)
- ft226 -- Ut supra, (Antiqu. l. 6. c. 5.) sect. 4.
- ft227 -- **μkl byça** “respondebo vobis”, Munster.
- ft228 -- **rmayw** “et dixit”, Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus; Drusius.
- ft229 -- Heb. Trad. in lib. Reg. fol. 75. K.
- ft230 -- So in T. Bab. Roshhashanah, fol. 25. 1.
- ft231 -- **wartw** “videntes autem”, V. L. “sed”, Tigurine version; “et tamen”, Vatablus, Piscator.
- ft232 -- **hwby rj aṣtyyh** “eritis post Dominum”, Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Piscator.
- ft233 -- **μkytbabw** “et contra patres vestros”, Pagninus, Tigurine version.
- ft234 -- T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 63. 2.
- ft235 -- Comment. in Amos iv. 7.
- ft236 -- Antiqu. l. 6. c. 5. sect. 6.
- ft237 -- Stromat. l. 6. p. 630.
- ft238 -- Vid. Schmid. in Pindar. Nemea, Ode 5. p. 110.
- ft239 -- **wkl mb l waç hnç ʿb** “filius anni Saul in regnando ipsum”, Montanus.
- ft240 -- Seder Olam Rabba, c. 13. p. 35. Juchasin, fol. 11. 1.
- ft241 -- Antiqu. l. 6. c. 14. sect. 9.
- ft242 -- Works, vol. 1. p. 55.
- ft243 -- Travels of the Patriarchs, etc. p. 126.
- ft244 -- De loc Heb. fol. 93. F.
- ft245 -- Thestrum Terrae S. p. 28.

- ft246 -- Journey from Aleppo, p. 64.
- ft247 -- Menachot, c. 8. sect. 1.
- ft248 -- Ut supra, (De loc Heb.) fol. 89. G.
- ft249 -- Ut supra, (Travels of the Patriarchs, etc.) p. 127.
- ft250 -- Curtius, l. 4. c. 9.
- ft251 -- Antiqu, l. 6. c. 6. sect. 1.
- ft252 -- **wkrbl** “ad benedicendum ei”, Montanus.
- ft253 -- Travels of the Patriarchs, etc. p. 133.
- ft254 -- Tzemach David, fol. 13. 2. & 153. 1.
- ft255 -- **αιολον οφιν**, Homer. Iliad. 12. ver. 208. “notis maculosus grandibus”, Virgil. Georgic. l. 3. v. 427.
- ft256 -- Ut supra. (Travels of the Patriarchs, etc. p. 133.)
- ft257 -- Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 34. c. 14.
- ft258 -- **μυρ ηρυχρη ητυηω** “retusae itaque erant acies vomerum”, V. L. “quandoquidem acies cultrorum aratri”, etc. “obtusae erant”, Tigurine version.
- ft259 -- Antiqu. l. 6. c. 6. sect. 2.
- ft260 -- **[l sh ^ç** “dens petrae”, Pagninus, Montanus; “scopulus”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.
- ft261 -- Onomastic. Sacr. p. 73, 82.
- ft262 -- Ibid. p. 43.
- ft263 -- Terpsichore, sive, l. 5. c. 1.
- ft264 -- Vid. David. de Pomis Lexic. fol. 129. 1.
- ft265 -- Aurel. Victor. de vir. illustr. c. 14. Liv. Hist. l. 2. c. 10.
- ft266 -- Nat. Hist. l. 18. c. 3. Vid. Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 2. c. 20.
- ft267 -- Vid. Scheuchzer. Physic. Sacr. p. 487.

- ft268 -- See Dr. Kennicett's Dissertat. 1. p. 453.
- ft269 -- **pyhl a tdrj l** "in trepidationem Dei", Montanus, Drusius, Vatablus.
- ft270 -- Vajikra Rabba & Midrash Tillim apud Abarbinel in loc.
- ft271 -- Antiqu. 1. 6. c. 6. sect. 3.
- ft272 -- **wa tyb ta hrb[** "transiit Bethaven", Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "vel, beliatores transierunt Bethaven", Pagninus, Vatablus, Drusius.
- ft273 -- Hist. Animal. 1. 5. c. 22.
- ft274 -- Bibliothec. 1. 19. p. 731.
- ft275 -- Bibliothec. 1. 17. p. 548.
- ft276 -- Hesiod, Theogon. ver. 230. Vid. Diodor. Sic. ut supra. (Bibliothec. 1. 17. p. 548.)
- ft277 -- **çbd Æl h** "ambulatio mellis", Montanus; "itio mellis", Drusius; so in Ovid. Metamorph. 1. 1. fab. 3. "----jam flumina nectaris ibant".
- ft278 -- "Progeniem nidosque fovent----", Virgil. Georgic. 1. 4. ver. 56.
- ft279 -- T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 42. 1, 2. Yoma, fol. 18, 2. & 83. 1. Maimon. Hilch. Maacolot Asurot, c. 14. sect. 16.
- ft280 -- Travels of the Patriarchs, etc. p. 127.
- ft281 -- See Jarchi in loc.
- ft282 -- T. Bab. Zebachim, fol. 120. 1.
- ft283 -- See Kimchi in loc.
- ft284 -- Ebr. Concord. Part. p. 15. No. 92.
- ft285 -- Antiqu. 1. 6. c. 6. sect. 4.
- ft286 -- **μ[h twnp** "anguli populi", Pagninus, Montanus, etc.
- ft287 -- Antiqu. 1. 6. c. 6. sect. 4.
- ft288 -- Ibid.

- ft289 -- Antiqu. l. 6. c. 6. sect. 4.
- ft290 -- **wdpy** “redemerunt”, Pagninus, Montanus, etc.
- ft291 -- Ut supra, (Antiqu. l. 6. c. 6.) sect. 5.
- ft292 -- Antiqu. l. 6. c. 6. sect. 5.
- ft293 -- Itinerar. p. 59.
- ft294 -- Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 6. c. 6. sect. 5.)
- ft295 -- Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 6. c. 6. sect. 5.)
- ft296 -- **[mçyw** “audire fecit”, Vatablus, Drusius.
- ft297 -- Antiqu. l. 6. c. 7. sect. 2.
- ft298 -- T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 22. 2. Jarchi in loc.
- ft299 -- Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 6. c. 7. sect. 2.)
- ft300 -- **bryw** “et certavit Pagninus”; “ut contenderet cum eo”, Junius & Tremellius.
- ft301 -- Ut supra, (Antiqu. l. 6. c. 7.) sect. 3.
- ft302 -- Ut supra, (Antiqu. l. 6. c. 7.) sect. 2.
- ft303 -- Bidentes, Virgil. Aeneid. l. 6. ver. 39. Vid. Servium in ib.
- ft304 -- Heb. Trad. in lib. Reg. fol. 76. B.
- ft305 -- Vid. Alex. ab. Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 1. c. 22.
- ft306 -- **Prh** “permitte”, Pagninus, Montanus; “sine me”, V. L. so Abarbinel.
- ft307 -- **µta µtwl k d[** “donec consumant ipsi eos”, Pagninus; so Vatablus.
- ft308 -- **µsq taj j** “peccatum divinationis”, Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus; “ariolandi”, V. L. “magiae”, Munster, Tigurine version.
- ft309 -- Midrash Schemuel, sect. 18. apud Jarchi, Kimchi & Abarbinel in loc.

- ft310 -- **l arçy j xn** “victoria Israel”, Montanus, Vatablus, Piscator;
“victor Israelis”, Tigurine version.
- ft311 -- “Aeternitas Israelis”, Junius & Tremellius.
- ft312 -- **hl kç** “orbavit”, Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, etc.
- ft313 -- Flori Hist. l. 3. c. 21.
- ft314 -- Sueton. in Vita ejus, c. 27.
- ft315 -- De Bello Jud. l. 5. c. 2. sect. 1.
- ft316 -- **twarl Psy al w** “et non addidit ad videndum”, Montanus.
- ft317 -- Travels of the Patriarchs, etc. p. 125.
- ft318 -- Vid. Hieron. de loc. Heb. fol. 89. F. & 94. B.
- ft319 -- **µyny[l** “ad oculos”, Montanus.
- ft320 -- Vid. Schotti Thaumaturg. Physic. par. 4. l. 7. c. 8.
- ft321 -- **ˆj qt** “parvulus”, V. L.
- ft322 -- Seder Olam Rabba, c. 13. p. 36.
- ft323 -- **µyny[hpy µ[** “simul pulcher oculis”, Montanus; “cum pulchritudine oculorum”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.
- ft324 -- Politic. l. 4. c. 4.
- ft325 -- Homer. Iliad. 3. v. 166.
- ft326 -- So Pool, Patrick, etc.
- ft327 -- Antiqu. l. 6. c. 8. sect. 2.
- ft328 -- A. Gell. Noct. Attic. l. 4. c. 13. Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 2. c. 17. Vid. Philostrat. Vit. Apollon. Tyan. l. 5. c. 7.
- ft329 -- Seneca de Ira, l. 3. c. 9.
- ft330 -- T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 93. 2. So in Hieron. Trad. Hebrews in lib. Reg. fol. 76. C.
- ft331 -- De Vita Mosis, l. 1. p. 610.

- ft332 -- “Pasebatque suas”, etc. Ovid. Fast. l. 1.
- ft333 -- Coluthi Raptus Helenae, v. 71, 101.
- ft334 -- **μϣλ κ αϑη ωλ ϣηϣω** “et fuit ei ferens vasa”, Montanus; “ferens instrumenta”, Piscator.
- ft335 -- Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 6. c. 8. sect. 2.)
- ft336 -- Antiqu. l. 6. c. 9. sect. 1.
- ft337 -- Midrash Ruth, fol. 48. 2. Kimchi in loc.
- ft338 -- Deloc. Heb. fol. 91. F.
- ft339 -- Travels, p. 157. ed. 5.
- ft340 -- Egmont and Heyman’s Travels, vol. 1. p. 305.
- ft341 -- **μϣνϣβη ϑϣα** “vir intermedius”, Montanus; “inter duo”, Vatablus; “vir medietatum”, Noldius, p. 194. No. 283.
- ft342 -- “Quidam duellator”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.
- ft343 -- Of Scripture Weights and Measures, c. 2. p. 57.
- ft344 -- Herodot. Clio, sive, l. 1. c. 68. Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 7. c. 16.
- ft345 -- Antiqu. l. 18. c. 5. sect. 5.
- ft346 -- Nat. Hist. ib.
- ft347 -- Ibid. l. 6. 30.
- ft348 -- Antiqu. l. 6. c. 9. sect. 1.
- ft349 -- Vid. Lydium “de re militari”: l. 3. c. 5. p. 63.
- ft350 -- “----Rutilum thoraca indutus a%onis Horrebat squamis----” Virgil. Aeneid. l. 11.
- ft351 -- Hist. l. 1. c. 22.
- ft352 -- Pausan. Messenica, l. 3. p. 163. So Homer frequently describes the Grecians with a coat of mail of brass.
- ft353 -- Hesiod. Scutum Herc. ver. 122.

- ft354 -- Vid. Hostii Monomach. David & Goliath, c. 5.
- ft355 -- Iliad. 18.
- ft356 -- Hostius, ut supra.
- ft357 -- Nat. Hist. 1. 7. c. 20.
- ft358 -- Opera & Dies, l. 1. ver. 147, 148.
- ft359 -- “De rerum natura”. l. 5. & “prior aeris erat”, etc.
- ft360 -- Homer. Iliad. 5. ver. 704, 859, 864. Pindar. Olymp. Ode 10.
- ft361 -- **ytprj** “exprobravo”. V. L. Pagninus, Montanus; “probro affeci”, Tigurine version; “probro affecero”, Junius & Tremellius.
- ft362 -- T. Bab. Beracot: fol. 58. 1.
- ft363 -- Antiqu. 1. 6. c. 8. sect. 2.
- ft364 -- T. Bab. Sotah, fol. 42. 2.
- ft365 -- Vid. Bochart. Hierozoic. par. 2. l. 1. c. 7. col. 47.
- ft366 -- Travels, etc. p. 135.
- ft367 -- Hieron. Trad. Heb. in lib. Reg. fol. 76. D.
- ft368 -- Vid. Valtrimum de re militar. Roman. l. 5. c. 3. p. 314, 315. & A. Gell. Noct. Attic. 1. 1. c. 11.
- ft369 -- Homer. Iliad. 3. ver. 1, 2, 3.
- ft370 -- Vid. Lydium de re militari, l. 4. c. 3. p. 158, 159.
- ft371 -- Curt. Hist. 1. 3. c. 10. Vid. Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 4. c. 7.
- ft372 -- See Dr. Kennicott’s Dissert. 2. p. 418, etc.
- ft373 -- **bwdh taw yrah** “leo vel ursus”, V. L. “leo aut ursus”, Junius & Tremellius, Bochart. Noldius, p. 271.
- ft374 -- Iliad. 17. ver. 109. & Iliad. 18. ver. 318.
- ft375 -- See Halicot Olam, p. 177.
- ft376 -- Homer. Iliad. 19. ver. 384, 385. so Theocrit. Idyll. 10. ver. 61.

- ft377 -- Apud Ludolf. Lexic. Ethiop. p. 84.
- ft378 -- T. Bab. Sotah, fol. 42. 2.
- ft379 -- Bibliothec. l. 5. p. 298.
- ft380 -- Antiqu. l. 6. c. 9. sect. 5.
- ft381 -- Ibid.
- ft382 -- Travels of the Patriarchs, etc. p. 128.
- ft383 -- Hieron. Trad. Heb. in lib. Reg. fol. 76. E.
- ft384 -- Ethic. l. 9. c. 4, 9. So Porphy. de Vita Pythagor.
- ft385 -- Apud Patrick in loc.
- ft386 -- Vid. Pignorium de Servis, p. 166, 174.
- ft387 -- **lykçm** “prospere admodum res gerebat”, Vatablus;
 “secundabatur”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; so the Targum and Jarchi.
- ft388 -- T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 19. 2.
- ft389 -- De Moribus German. c. 18.
- ft390 -- Geograph. l. 15. p. 500. Vid. Alex. ab Alex. Genial. l. 1. c. 24.
- ft391 -- Antiqu. l. 6. c. 10. sect. 3.
- ft392 -- Alcamus apud Bochart. Hierozoic. par. 2. l. 1. c. 19. col. 130.
- ft393 -- Midrash Schemuel apud Abarbinel. in loc.
- ft394 -- **rqyyw** “et in pretio esset [vel] erat”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.
- ft395 -- Antiqu. l. 6. c. 11. sect. 4.
- ft396 -- Vid. Stockium, p. 509.
- ft397 -- Apud Kimchium & Abarbinel. in loc.
- ft398 -- Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 6. c. 11. sect. 4.)
- ft399 -- Vid. Hudson. not. in ib.
- ft400 -- T. Bab. Sabbat, c. 1. fol. 17. 2. Avodah Zarah, c. 2. fol. 36. 1.

- ft401 -- Aruch in voce **twwn**, fol. 98. 4. Juchasin, fol. 74. 2.
- ft402 -- Adrichom, Theatrum T. S. fol. 28. 2.
- ft403 -- **aryw** “et vidit”, Montanus, Vatablus, Tigurine version; “et vidit quisque [vel] unusquisque illorum”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.
- ft404 -- Vid. Hieron. Trad. Heb. in lib. Reg. fol. 76. G.
- ft405 -- **l pyw** “et cecidit”, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, “et corruit”, Vatablus.
- ft406 -- Aelian. Var. Hist. l. 6. c. 11.
- ft407 -- Aurel. Victor. de Vir. Illustr. c. 20.
- ft408 -- Weemse’s Expos. Ceremon. Law, c. 22. p. 100, 101.
- ft409 -- Macrob. Saturnal. l. 1. c. 15. Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 3. c. 18. in fine.
- ft410 -- **Æyl a j l ç a za al w** “an non tunc mitterem?” Junius & Tremellius; “nonne tunc mittam ad te?” so some in Vatablus.
- ft411 -- **Psyw** “et addidit”, Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus; so the Tigurine version.
- ft412 -- **wçpn tbha** “secundum dilectionem animae suae”, Pagninus; “amore sui ipsius”, Junius & Tremellius.
- ft413 -- **hç[mh µwyb** “in die operis”, Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus; “die profesto”, Tigurine version.
- ft414 -- **dam drt tçl ç** “tertiabis, descendes valde”, Montanus; “descendes ter, [vel] terciabis descendere”, Castalio; so Patrick.
- ft415 -- De loc. Heb. fol. 91. C.
- ft416 -- Apud Adrichem. Theatrum T. S. p. 17.
- ft417 -- **µj l h l [** “ad [vel] juxta panem”, Pagninus, Montanus.
- ft418 -- Antiqu. l. 6. c. 11. sect. 9.

- ft419 -- “----- mediamque locavit”. Aeneid. 1. prope finem. Vid. Servium in ib.
- ft420 -- Comment. in Exod. xii.
- ft421 -- **twdrmh tw[n ^b** “fili perversae rebellionis”, Pagninus, Montanus.
- ft422 -- **twm ^b** “filius mortis”, V. L. Montanus, Vatablus, Piscator; “reus mortis”, Junius & Tremellius.
- ft423 -- E Trogo, l. 43. c. 3.
- ft424 -- Pausanias in Boeoticis, sive, l. 9. p. 606. Vid. Barthii Animadv. ad Claudian in nupt. Honor ver. 119.
- ft425 -- Concord. Ebr. Part. p. 265. No. 1141.
- ft426 -- **wyl k ta** “vasa sua”, Montanus; “instrumenta sua”, Piscator; “arma sua”, V. L. Tigurine version.
- ft427 -- Cyropaedia, l. 8. c. 23.
- ft428 -- Hieron. Trad. Heb. in lib. Reg. fol. 76. H.
- ft429 -- Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Zebachim, c. 14. sect. 7.
- ft430 -- Travels, etc. p. 136.
- ft431 -- Comment. in Isa. x. 32.
- ft432 -- Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 8. 1.
- ft433 -- Epitaphium Paulae, fol. 59. A.
- ft434 -- **axmnh** “quicquid inveneris”, V. L., “inventum”, Montanus; “quicquid inventum fuerit”, Tigurine version.
- ft435 -- T. Bab. Menachot, fol. 95. 2.
- ft436 -- T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 2l. 1. Menachot, fol. 96. 2.
- ft437 -- Vid. Pignorium de servis, p. 539.
- ft438 -- Senecae Oedipus, Act. 4. v. 815, 816, 839.
- ft439 -- Odyss. 20. ver. 21.

- ft440 -- Aurel. Victor. orig. Gent. Roman.
- ft441 -- Antiqu. l. 6. c. 12. sect. 1.
- ft442 -- Travels, etc. p. 136.
- ft443 -- **Ḥah Aĕl m** “rex hujus regionis”, Vatablus.
- ft444 -- Vid. Jarchium & Jesaiam in loc.
- ft445 -- **wm[j]** “sensus suum”, Montanus, Vatablus; “sermonem suum”, Pagninus.
- ft446 -- Liv. Hist. l. 1. c. 56. Aurel. Victor. de Vir. Illustr. c. 13.
- ft447 -- Justin e Trogo, l. 2. c. 7.
- ft448 -- Midrash Tillim apud Abarbinel. in loc.
- ft449 -- **çpn rm** “amarus animo”, Pagninus, Montanus.
- ft450 -- T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 91. 1.
- ft451 -- Bemnidbar Rabba, sect. 14. fol. 212. 1. Tanchuma apud Jarchium in loc.
- ft452 -- De loc. Heb. fol. 88. L.
- ft453 -- T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 5. 2.
- ft454 -- Apud Ben Melech in loc.
- ft455 -- Antiqu. l. 6. c. 12. sect. 1, 4.
- ft456 -- Misn. Yoma, c. 7. sect. 5.
- ft457 -- **µyxrī** “cursoribus”, Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.
- ft458 -- Midrash Tillim apud Abarbinel. in loc.
- ft459 -- Antiqu. l. 6. c. 12. sect. 6.
- ft460 -- Antiqu. l. 6. c. 12. sect. 6.

- ft461 -- **wdyb dry dwpa** “ephod descendit in manu sua”, Pagninus, Montanus; “ephod descendebat in manu sua”, Munsterus; so Tigurine version and Piscator.
- ft462 -- Kimchi & Ben Melech.
- ft463 -- [**mcy** “fecit audire”, Montanus, Piscator.
- ft464 -- T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 73. 1, 2.
- ft465 -- Travels, etc. p. 334. (text not clear could be 834 or some other number)
- ft466 -- Trad. Heb. in lib. Reg. fol. 76. K.
- ft467 -- De loc. Heb. fol. 91. C.
- ft468 -- De Bello Jud. l. 7. c. 8. sect. 3. Vid. Adrichom. Theatrum T. S. p. 38. 2. & 39. 1.
- ft469 -- **wl gr** “pes ejus”, Pagninus, Montanus.
- ft470 -- Midrash apud Yalkut in loc.
- ft471 -- Midrash apud Yalkut in loc.
- ft472 -- Works, vol. 1. p. 58.
- ft473 -- Adrichom Theatrum Terrae Sanct. p. 47. & Brocard. in ib.
- ft474 -- Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 53.
- ft475 -- Hierozoic. par. 1. l. 2. c. 45. col. 467, 468.
- ft476 -- Antiqu. l. 6. c. 13. sect. 4.
- ft477 -- Relation of a Voyage, p. 227.
- ft478 -- Geograph. l. 16. p. 520.
- ft479 -- Leviticus Bruyn’s Voyage to the Levant, ch. 51. p. 199.
- ft480 -- T. Bab. Maccot, fol. 10. 2.
- ft481 -- **hbwj Ærdb** “in via bona”, Pagninus, Montanus.
- ft482 -- Midrash Tillim apud Abarbinel. in loc.

- ft483 -- Seder Olam Rabba, c. 13. p. 37.
- ft484 -- In Kimchi & Abarbanel in loc.
- ft485 -- Juchasin, fol. 11. 1.
- ft486 -- Stromat. l. 1. p. 325.
- ft487 -- Schulchan Aruch, par. 1. c. 580. sect. 2.
- ft488 -- Plato in Mino%o.
- ft489 -- Servius in Virgil. Aeneid. l. 6. p. mihi, (?) 1011.
- ft490 -- P. 30.
- ft491 -- Heldman apud Hottinger in ib.
- ft492 -- Itinerar. p. 52.
- ft493 -- **whç [m** “opus ejus”, Montanus, Vatablus; “eujus opus”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.
- ft494 -- Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 48.
- ft495 -- Ibid. l. 18. c. 27.
- ft496 -- Var. Hist. l. 12. c. 1.
- ft497 -- **wbl k** “keri” **ybl k** “Calibita”, Pagninus, Montanus; “Calebitea” Tigurine version, Junius & Tremcilius, Piscator.
- ft498 -- **µwnml kh al** “non affecimus verccundia eos”, Montanus; so some in Vatablus.
- ft499 -- **wj wnyw** “et quieverunt”, Pagninus, Montanus, Munster.
- ft500 -- Moreh Nevochim par. 1. c. 67.
- ft501 -- **wnynda** “dominus nostros”, Malvenda.
- ft502 -- **µhb j [yw** “et involavit in eos”, Coccei Lex. col. 607.
- ft503 -- **wyl a rbdm** “loquens ad cum”.
- ft504 -- Of Scripture Weights and Measures, ch. 3. p. 86.

- ft505 -- rma “ait”, V. L. “dixit”, Pagninus, Montanus; “dicebat”, Vatablus.
- ft506 -- Vid. Pignorium de Servis, p. 140, 248, 293.
- ft507 -- T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 152. 2.
- ft508 -- Moreh Nevochim, par. 1. c. 41.
- ft509 -- Æm[j “sapor tuus”, Piscator; “discretio tua”, Montanus.
- ft510 -- I ygybab περι αβιγαίας, Sept. “de Abigail”, Vatabulus.
- ft511 -- I waçw “Saul enim”, Tigurine version; “nam Saul”, Junius & Tremcellius, Piscator; so Pool and Patrick.
- ft512 -- Hieron. Trad. Heb. in lib. Reg. fol. 76. M.
- ft513 -- Antiqu. 1. 6. c. 13. sect. 9.
- ft514 -- Stromat. 1. 4. p. 531.
- ft515 -- Elaeochrism. Myrothec. 1. I. c. 44. col. 224.
- ft516 -- Plin. Nat. Hist. 1. 33. c. 3.
- ft517 -- hwhy tmdrt, “sopor Domini”, V. L. Montanus, Munsterus “altus sopor Jehovæ”, Junias & Tremellius, Piscator.
- ft518 -- rb[h rb[yw “et transivit transitum”, Montanus.
- ft519 -- Antiqu. 1. 6. c. 13. sect. 9.
- ft520 -- Æl mh l a “juxta regem”, Vatablus
- ft521 -- Ceram rege, Nodlus, p. 58. No. 284.
- ft522 -- çya “vir”, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Piscator.
- ft523 -- T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 110. 2.
- ft524 -- wmd l py l a “non effundetur”, Martyr. and to this sense are Syr. Ar. vers.
- ft525 -- Laert. 1. 2. in Vita Aristippi.
- ft526 -- Hierozoic. par. 2. 1. 1. c. 12. col. 81.

- ft527 -- (A snite is like a snipe, yet a different species of lark-like bird. Oxford English Dictionary. Editor)
- ft528 -- T. Bab. Cholin, fol. 140. 2. Jarchi & Abarbinel in loc.
- ft529 -- Aristot. Hist. Animal. l. 9. c. 8. Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 10. c. 33. Aelian. Hist. Animal. l. 3. c. 16.
- ft530 -- **dyb** “in manum”, Pagninus, Montanus.
- ft531 -- **hl dg** “magnificata est”, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus.
- ft532 -- Hieron. Trad. Heb, in 2 Reg. fol. 78. E.
- ft533 -- Travels, etc. p. 136.
- ft534 -- Antiqu. l. 6. c. 13. sect. 10.
- ft535 -- Sepher Olam Rabba c. 13. p. 37.
- ft536 -- Antiqu. l. 6. c. 13. sect. 10.
- ft537 -- De loc. Hebrews fol. 92. D.
- ft538 -- Journey from Aleppo, p. 115.
- ft539 -- Pirke Eliezer, c. 33. foi. 35. 2. Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 8. 1. Hieron. Trad. Heb. in lib. Reg. fol. 77. B.
- ft540 -- Vajikra Rabba, sect. 26. fol. 167. 1. Shalshalet ib.
- ft541 -- Tanchuma apud Jarchiura in loc.
- ft542 -- Pirke Eliezer, c. 33.
- ft543 -- Antiqu. l. 6. c. 14. sect. 2.
- ft544 -- T. Bab. Chagigah, fol. 4. 8. Pirke Eliezer, c. 33.
- ft545 -- Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 6. c. 14. sect. 2.)
- ft546 -- De Abstinencia, l. 2. apud Grotium in loc.
- ft547 -- See Webster’s Displaying of supposed Witchcraft, etc. ch. 8. p. 166, etc.
- ft548 -- T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 12. 2.

- ft549 -- **Ær [yhyw** “et est cum inimico tuo”, Pagninus, Vatablus; so V. L.
- ft550 -- T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 12. 2.
- ft551 -- Antiqu. 1. 6. c. 14. sect. 3. 4.
- ft552 -- **yçarb al h** “nisi per capita”, Noldius, p. 257. No. 1147.
- ft553 -- T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 64. 1. Sepher Alphes, par. 1. fol. 421. 2.
- ft554 -- Travels, etc. p. 137.
- ft555 -- **l yxt l xh** “eruido erues”, Pagninus, Montanus; “eripiendo erepturus es”, Piscator.
- ft556 -- Theatrum Terrae Sanct. p. 133.
- ft557 -- Hist. 72. Interpret. p. 41.
- ft558 -- Antiqu. 1. 6. c. 4. sect. 6.
- ft559 -- Ibid.
- ft560 -- Hist. 1. 10. p. 365.
- ft561 -- Chalcocondyl. de reb. Turc. 1. 5. p. 161.
- ft562 -- **hl [mw** “et supra”, Pagninus, Montanus; “et jam olim”, Tigurine version.
- ft563 -- Antiqu. 1. 6. c. 14. sect. 6.
- ft564 -- **hkrb** “benedictio”, Pagninus, Montanus.
- ft565 -- **whaxmyw** “et invaserust cum”, Pagninus, Montanus.
- ft566 -- Hieron. Trad. Heb. in lib. Reg. fol. 77. B.
- ft567 -- Antiqu. 1. 6. c. 14. sect. 7.
- ft568 -- Sucton. Vit. Caesar. c. 89.
- ft569 -- Antiqu. 1. 6. c. 14. sect. 9.
- ft570 -- Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. 1. 9. c. 3. p. 447.

- ft571 -- $\hat{d}ryh\ rb[\ b\epsilon m[\ h\ rb[\ b$ “circa convellem illiam--circa Jordanem”, Junius & Tremellius, Picator; so Noldius, p. 295. No. 936.
- ft572 -- $wyl\ k\ ta$ “vasa ejus”, Munster, Montanus.
- ft573 -- $\tau\epsilon\upsilon\chi\epsilon\alpha\ \sigma\upsilon\lambda\eta\sigma\alpha\varsigma$, Iliad. 7. ver. 83.
- ft574 -- “Multaque praeterea sacris in postibus arma”, etc. Aeneid. 7. ver. 183. So Persius, Satyr. 6. ver. 45.
- ft575 -- Messal. Corvin. de August. Progen.
- ft576 -- Ut supra, (Antiqu. l. 6. c. 14.) l. 8.
- ft577 -- Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 18. Vid. Solin. Polyhistor. c. 49.
- ft578 -- Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 6. c. 14. l. 8.)
- ft579 -- Pisgah-Sight of Palestine, b. 2. ch. 2. p. 82.
- ft580 -- Pisgah-Sight of Palestine b. 2. ch. 2. p. 82.