

JUDGES

INTRODUCTION TO JUDGES

The title of this book in the Hebrew copies is Sepher Shophetim, the Book of Judges; but the Syriac and Arabic interpreters call it,

“the Book of the Judges of the Children of Israel;”

and the Septuagint only Judges; so called, not because it was written by them, though some think it was compiled out of annals and diaries kept by them; but it seems to be the work of one person only: the true reason of its name is, because it treats of the judges of Israel, gives an account of their lives and actions, and especially such as concerned their office; which office was different from that of kings, and seems only to have been occasional, and chiefly lay in delivering the people out of the hands of their enemies, when oppressed, distressed, or carried captive by them; in protecting them in the enjoyment of their country, rights, and liberties; in leading out their armies against their enemies when needful; and in settling differences, judging law suits, and administering justice. The government of the nation, during their time, was a theocracy. It is not certain who was the penman of this book; some ascribe it to King Hezekiah, others to Ezra; but the Jewish writers ^{f1} are generally of opinion that it was written by Samuel, which is most likely, who was the last of the judges; and it seems plainly to be written before the times of David, us appears from a speech of Joab, (~~1012~~ 2 Samuel 11:21); and from some passages in (~~1988~~ Psalm 68:8,9) (~~1975~~ Psalm 97:5), which seem to refer or allude to (~~0074~~ Judges 5:4,5); and from Jerusalem being called Jebus, which shows it to be inhabited by the Jebusites in the time of the writer of this book, whereas it was taken out of their hands by David; besides, Samuel himself refers to the annals of this book; (~~0919~~ 1 Samuel 12:9-11); and from whose testimonies, as well as from others in the New Testament, there is no doubt to be made of its being genuine and authentic, and written by divine inspiration; as is evident from the use the Apostle Paul, and the author of the epistle to the Hebrews, have made of it, (~~4133~~ Acts 13:20 ~~58132~~ Hebrews 11:32); it is useful as an history, and without which the history of the people of Israel would not be complete; it containing an account of all their judges, excepting the two

last, Eli and Samuel, of whom an account is given in the following books, and of some facts incidental to those times, related in an appendix at the end of it, concerning the idol of Micah, and the war of Benjamin; and furnishes out many useful moral observations concerning God's displeasure at sin in his own people Israel, and his corrections for it; and about his providential care of them in raising up for them deliverers in their time of need, as well as points at various virtues and excellencies in great and good men, worthy of imitation. It contains, according to Piscator, Dr. Lightfoot, and others, an history of two hundred ninety and nine years.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO JUDGES 1

The children of Israel, after Joshua's death, inquiring of the Lord which tribes should first go up against the remaining Canaanites, Judah is ordered to go up, who with Simeon did, (^{<0001>}Judges 1:1-3); and had success against the Canaanites under Adonibezek, whom they brought to Jerusalem (^{<0004>}Judges 1:4-8); and against the Canaanites in Hebron, Debir, Zephath, Hormah, Gaza, Ashkelon, and Ekron, (^{<0009>}Judges 1:9-20); the Benjamites had not such good success as Judah against the Jebusites in Jerusalem, (^{<0021>}Judges 1:21); nor as the house of Joseph had against Bethel, (^{<0022>}Judges 1:22-26); nor could the tribes of Manasseh, Ephraim, Zebulun, Asher, and Naphtali, drive out the Canaanites from several places which belonged unto them, though many of them became their tributaries, (^{<0027>}Judges 1:27-33); and as for the Amorites, they were too powerful for the tribe of Dan, though some of them became tributaries to the house of Joseph, (^{<0034>}Judges 1:34-36).

Ver. 1. *Now after the death of Joshua*, etc.] With the account of which the preceding book is concluded, and therefore this very properly follows after that; though Epiphanius ^{f2} places the book of Job between them:

it came to pass that the children of Israel asked the Lord; that is, the heads of them who gathered together at Shiloh, where the tabernacle was; and standing before the high priest, either Eleazar, or rather Phinehas his son, Eleazar being in all probability dead, inquired by Urim and Thummim:

saying, who shall go up for us against the Canaanites first, to fight against them? for they had no commander in chief, Joshua leaving no successor, though the Samaritan Chronicle ^{f3} pretends he did; one Abel, a son of Caleb's brother, of the tribe of Judah, on whom the lot fell, out of twelve of the nine tribes and a half, to whom Joshua delivered the government of the nation, and crowned him: but this inquiry was not for any man to go before them all as their generalissimo, but to know what tribe should first go up, and they were desirous of having the mind of God in it, when they might expect to succeed; which to do, at their first setting

out, would not only be a great encouragement to them to go on, but strike dread and terror into their enemies; and this is to be understood of the Canaanites who remained unsubdued, that dwelt among them, and in cities, which though divided to them by lot, they were not in the possession of; and these being troublesome neighbours to them, and besides the Israelites daily increasing, needed more room and more cities to occupy, and more land to cultivate.

Ver. 2. *And the Lord said,* etc.] By an articulate voice, which it is probable was the usual way of answering by Urim and Thummim:

Judah shall go up; not Judah in person, who was long ago dead, but the tribe of Judah; it was the will of the Lord that that tribe should engage first with the Canaanites, being the principal one, and the most numerous, powerful, and valiant, and perhaps had the greatest number of Canaanites among them; and who succeeding, would inspire the other tribes with courage, and fill their enemies with a panic:

behold, I have delivered the land into his hands; that part of it which belonged to that tribe as yet unsubdued, the conquest of which they are assured of for their encouragement.

Ver. 3. *And Judah said unto Simeon his brother,* etc.] The men of the tribe of Judah said to those of the tribe of Simeon, they being not only brethren by father's and mother's side, which was not the case of all the sons of Jacob, but their possessions and inheritances lay near together; and indeed those of Simeon were within the inheritance of the tribe of Judah, (^{<1690>}Joshua 19:1); so that as they lived in great nearness and familiarity with each other, their interests were closely united together:

come up with me into my lot, that we may fight against the Canaanites; conjunctly: the meaning is, that the tribe of Simeon, as many of their warlike men as could, would come and join their forces with those of the tribe of Judah, in order to reduce such cities, in the lot of that tribe, the Canaanites as yet were in the possession of:

and I likewise will go with thee into thy lot: the cities being conquered which were in the lot, of the tribe of Judah, that tribe proposed to bring their united forces into the lot of the tribe of Simeon, and reduce such cities as were in that lot:

so Simeon went with him: the tribe of Simeon agreed to the proposal, and went along with the tribe of Judah against their common enemy.

Ver. 4. *And Judah went up*, etc.] Simeon being along with him, from the southern parts of the land, where they dwelt, and went more northward towards Jerusalem, and which therefore is called a going up:

and the Lord delivered the Canaanites and Perizzites into their hands: into the hands of Judah and Simeon: the Canaanites here is not the common name of the seven nations, but the name of one of those nations, distinguished from the rest, as here from the Perizzites, who otherwise were also Canaanites; and both these, at least many of them, dwelt in those parts, and were subdued by the united forces of Judah and Simeon, whereby the Lord's promise was fulfilled, (^{<0700>}Judges 1:2);

and they slew of them in Bezek ten thousand men: that is, in and about Bezek, first and last, in the course of this war, as after related. Jerom says ^{f4} there were two villages of this name in his time near one another, seven miles from Neapolis, as you go to Scythopolis; and our countryman Mr. Sandys ^{f5} says, that when they departed from Bethlehem, bending their course from the mountains of Judea lying west from it, near to which, on the side of the opposite hill, they passed a little village called Bezek, as he took it, two miles from Bethsur, (see ^{<0108>}1 Samuel 11:8).

Ver. 5. *And they found Adonibezek in Bezek*, etc.] Who was king of, the place, and whose name signifies lord of Bezek; not that they took him there, for he is afterwards said to make his escape from thence, but here he was when they came against that city, and into which they rushed upon him, and fell upon him as follows:

and they fought against him; entering the city with their forces:

and they slew the Canaanites and the Perizzites: that were in it, or about it, even to the number of ten thousand, as before related, (^{<0704>}Judges 1:4).

Ver. 6. *But Adonibezek fled, and they pursued after him, and caught him*, etc.] It is very probable his view was to get to Jebus or Jerusalem, a strong and fortified city and he made his way thither as fast as he could, but was pursued and overtaken by some of the forces of Judah and Simeon; and the rather it may seem he took this course, since when he was taken by them, they brought him thither, as follows:

and cut off his thumbs and his great toes; whereby he was disabled both for fighting and for fleeing. So the Athenians cut off the thumbs of the right hand of the Aeginetae, the inhabitants of the island of Aegina, to disable them from holding a spear, as various writers^{f6} relate. Whether the Israelites did this, as knowing this king had used others in like manner, and so, according to their law of retaliation, “eye for eye”, etc. (⁴⁰²²³Exodus 21:23-25), required it; or whether, ignorant of it, were so moved and directed by the providence of God to do this, that the same measure might be measured to him which he had measured to others, is not certain; the latter seems most probable, since the Israelites did not usually inflict such sort of punishments; and besides, according to the command of God, they should have put him to death, as they were to do to all Canaanites.

Ver. 7. *And Adonibezek said*, etc.] To the men of Judah, after his thumbs and toes were cut off, his conscience accusing him for what he had done to others, and being obliged to acknowledge he was righteously dealt with:

threescore and ten kings, having their thumbs and their great toes cut off; that is, by him, or by his orders, whom he had conquered and made captives; according to Josephus^{f7}, they were seventy two; the number may be accounted for by observing, that in those times, as appears by the preceding book, every city had a king over it; and besides, these seventy kings might not be such who had had the government of so many cities, but many of them such who had reigned successively in the same city, and had fallen into the hands of this cruel and tyrannical king, one after another, and their sons also with them might be so called: and these he says

gathered [their meat] under my table: were glad to eat of the crumbs and scraps which fell from thence, and might in their turns be put there at times for his sport and pleasure, and there be fed with the offal of his meat, as Bajazet the Turk was served by Tamerlane, who put him into an iron cage, and carried him about in it, and used him as his footstool to mount his horse, and at times fed him like a dog with crumbs from his table^{f8}:

as I have done, so God hath requited me; whether he had any knowledge of the true God, and of his justice in dealing with him according to his deserts, and had a real sense of his sin, and true repentance for it, is not certain; since the word for God is in the plural number, and sometimes used of Heathen deities, as it may be here by him; however, the righteous judgment of God clearly appears in this instance:

and they brought him to Jerusalem; to that part of Jerusalem which belonged to the tribe of Judah; (see ^{<0658>}Joshua 15:8,63); here they brought him alive, and dying, buried him, as Josephus ^{f9} says; which might be their view in carrying him thither, perceiving he was a dying man; or they had him thither to expose him as a trophy of victory, and as an example of divine justice:

and there he died: whether through grief and vexation, or of the wounds he had received, or by the immediate hand of God, or by the hands of the Israelites, is not said; neither are improbable.

Ver. 8. *Now the children of Judah had fought against Jerusalem, and had taken it*, etc.] Which accounted for their carrying Adonibezek thither. This they had done in the times of Joshua; for when the king of that place was taken and slain by Joshua, it seems that he and Israel went and fought against the city, and took that in which the tribe of Judah had a principal concern; so Kimchi and Ben Gersom interpret it; but Jarchi and Abarbinel are of opinion, that now from Bezek they went up to Jerusalem, and fought against it, and took it; and so others think, because only the children of Judah are mentioned, and not all Israel, who fought together in Joshua's time; nor is there any mention made of its being taken in his time, and yet it seems plain that it was inhabited in part by the children of Judah, (^{<0658>}Joshua 15:63); some therefore have thought that it was twice taken; that after Joshua had taken it, he and the children of Israel being employed in making conquests in other parts of the land, the Jebusites repossessed it, from whence they were now again in part driven, not wholly; and Josephus says ^{f10}, the lower part was taken, and all the inhabitants killed, but the upper part was hard to be taken, because of the strength of the walls, and the nature of the place:

and smitten it with the edge of the sword; the "inhabitants of it", so far as they got possession of it:

and set the city on fire; some part of it only, for in some part of it dwelt the children of Judah, and in another part the Jebusites.

Ver. 9. *And afterwards the children of Judah*, etc.] After the taking of Bezek, and the king of it, having him to Jerusalem, where he died: they

went down; from Jerusalem; which was on high ground:

to fight against the Canaanites that dwelt in the mountain, and in the south, and in the valley; into which several parts the lot of the tribe of Judah was divided; in each of which they had cities, and some, as it seems, yet unsubdued, and in the hands of the Canaanites; of these several parts, and the cities in them, (see ^{<6152>}Joshua 15:21,33,48).

Ver. 10. *And Judah went against the Canaanites that dwelt in Hebron,* etc.] Hebron was first taken by Joshua, and the inhabitants of it put to the sword, (^{<6105>}Joshua 10:36,37); but while Joshua was employed in making other conquests, the Canaanites found ways and means of getting into the possession of it again; wherefore, when a grant of it was made to Caleb, he, with the assistance of the tribe of Judah, of which he was prince, regained it, (^{<6152>}Joshua 15:12,14); wherefore what is recorded here is only a repetition of what was then done; unless it can be thought that this fact was there inserted by anticipation, or that there were two expeditions of the children of Judah against this place:

now the name of Hebron, before [was] Kirjatharba: (see ^{<6145>}Joshua 14:15); in the first of which Caleb, with the assistance of this tribe, drove out the three giants only, who afterwards got possession again, and in this put them to death, as follows:

and they slew Sheshai, and Ahiman, and Talmi; (see ^{<0132>}Numbers 13:22) (^{<6154>}Joshua 15:14); but what follows concerning their going from hence to Debir, and the offer of Caleb to give his daughter in marriage to whomsoever should take it, does not seem so well to agree with times after the death of Joshua; since it is highly probable that Caleb, who was contemporary with him and Eleazar, was now dead, and at least cannot well be thought to have a young daughter at this time undisposed of in marriage; wherefore these facts are only repeated upon observing Judah's having taken Jerusalem, to show what exploits were performed by men of that tribe; wherefore for what is after said, (^{<0011>}Judges 1:11-15), as is said in (^{<6155>}Joshua 15:15-19), where the same things are related in express words as here, containing the request of Caleb's daughter: such an one, as made to Domitian, is related by Martial ^{f11}.

Ver. 11. *And from thence he went against the inhabitants of Debir: and the name of Debir before [was] Kirjathsepher.*] (See Gill on "^{<6155>}Joshua 15:15").

Ver. 12. *And Caleb said, He that smiteth Kirjathsepher, and taketh it, to him will I give Achsah my daughter to wife.]* (See Gill on “^{<6156>}Joshua 15:16”).

Ver. 13. *And Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb’s younger brother, took it: and he gave him Achsah his daughter to wife.]* (See Gill on “^{<6157>}Joshua 15:17”).

Ver. 14. *And it came to pass, when she came [to him], that she moved him to ask of her father a field: and she lighted from off [her] ass; and Caleb said unto her, What wilt thou?] (See Gill on “^{<6158>}Joshua 15:18”).*

Ver. 15. *And she said unto him, Give me a blessing: for thou hast given me a south land; give me also springs of water. And Caleb gave her the upper springs and the nether springs.]* (See Gill on “^{<6159>}Joshua 15:19”).

Ver. 16. *And the children of the Kenite, Moses’ father in law, etc.]* The posterity of Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses; for though Jethro returned to his own country, after he had paid a visit to Moses in the wilderness, yet Hobab his son, at the persuasion of Moses, travelled with him and Israel through the wilderness, and went with them into Canaan, at least some of his descendants, and settled there, some in one part of the land, and some in another, of whom we read in several places of Scripture; they continued to the days of Jeremiah, and then went by the name of Rechabites, so called from Rechab, a descendant of Jethro: these

went up out of the city of palm trees; from the city of Jericho, as the Targum, so called from the great number of palm trees which grew near it, (see ^{<6143>}Deuteronomy 34:3). This is to be understood not of the city itself, that was utterly destroyed by Joshua, and the rebuilding of it was forbidden under a curse, but the country adjacent, the valley in which it stood, which was set with palm trees; here was a grove of palm trees ^{f12}, and the garden of balsam, which grew nowhere else, as Strabo ^{f13} says; and who also observes, that here was a royal palace in his time; this belonged to Herod king of Judea in the times of Augustus Caesar, to whose palm tree groves there Horace ^{f14} refers. Here the Kenites first settled when they came first over Jordan with Joshua, being a most pleasant and delightful place, and suitable to such persons who dwelt in tents, as they did, and answered to the promise of Moses to Hobab, (^{<6102>}Numbers 10:29); and here it seems they had remained to this time: and now they left it, and came

with the children of Judah into the wilderness of Judah; which was also a convenient place for the habitation of such persons, who loved a solitary life. Perhaps the Canaanites about Jericho might be troublesome to them, and therefore chose to stay no longer, there; or, having a peculiar affection for the tribe of Judah, they chose to be within their lot; and the rather, as they were a warlike and valiant tribe, they might expect the greater safety and protection among them:

which [lieth], in the south of Arad; that is, which wilderness of Judah lay there, of which name there was a country or city, (see ^{<0201>}Numbers 21:1) (^{<0124>}Joshua 12:14); and here some of them dwelt to the times of Saul, the Amalekites then having got possession of the southern parts, which they infested and were troublesome to, (see ^{<0156>}1 Samuel 15:6 30:1);

and they went and dwelt among the people; of the tribe of Judah, near some of the cities which were in the wilderness; of which (see ^{<0156>}Joshua 15:63).

Ver. 17. *And Judah went with Simeon his brother*, etc.] Having subtitled his Canaanites which were in his own lot, according to his promise, he went with his brother Simeon, or the tribe of Simeon, into their lot to reduce those that were in that:

and they slew the Canaanites that inhabited Zephath, and utterly destroyed it: where and what this city was is not certain; there was a place of this name in upper Galilee, mentioned in Jewish writings ^{f15}, which cannot be meant here; and we read of the valley of Zephathah, (^{<1410>}2 Chronicles 14:10); which might have its name from hence, and if so it was near Mareshah:

and the name of the city was called Hormah; from the destruction made of it, and of the country about it; for now what had been vowed by Israel in the wilderness, when near Arad, was fulfilled, (^{<0201>}Numbers 21:1-3).

Ver. 18. *Also Judah took Gaza, with the coast thereof*, etc.] Which by lot fell to that tribe, (^{<0157>}Joshua 15:47); it was not till now subdued:

and Ashkelon with the coast thereof; which, according to our countryman Sandys ^{f16}, was ten miles from Gaza:

and Ekron with the coast thereof; this also is the lot that fell to Judah, but was afterwards given to the tribe of Dan, (^{<0155>}Joshua 15:45 19:43); for

whom Judah now fought and took it; but in a short time all these places were retaken, and possessed by the Philistines, and were three of their five principalities which they ever after retained, (see ^{<00B>}Judges 3:3 ^{<006>}1 Samuel 6:16).

Ver. 19. *And the Lord was with Judah*, etc.] Encouraging, strengthening, succeeding, and giving the tribe victory over the Canaanites; the Targum is,

“the Word of the Lord was for the help of the house of Judah:”

and he drove out [the inhabitants of] the mountains; the mountainous part of Judea, such as was about Jerusalem, and where Hebron stood, and other cities, (see ^{<015>}Joshua 15:48), etc. which though fortified both by nature and man, yet God being with them, they were easily subdued:

but could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley; God forsaking them, because they were afraid of them, for a reason after mentioned, or through slothfulness, and being weary of fighting, or because they fell into some sins, which occasioned the divine displeasure; so the Targum,

“after they had sinned, they could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley:”

because they had chariots of iron; but this was no reason why they could not drive them out, if God was with them, who could as easily have delivered these into their hands, as the inhabitants of the mountains; but is the reason why they were afraid to fight with them, and to attempt to drive them out, and which they themselves gave why they did not.

Ver. 20. *And they gave Hebron unto Caleb, as Moses said*, etc.] Which was done in the times of Joshua, both by him and all the people, according to the order of Moses. This is to be understood not of the city which was given to the Levites, but of the fields and parts adjacent, (^{<014>}Joshua 14:13 21:11,12);

and he expelled thence the three sons of Anak: whose names are given (^{<010>}Judges 1:10); this shows that this refers to the same expedition as in (^{<015>}Joshua 15:14); and is expressed in the same manner.

Ver. 21. *And the children of Benjamin did not drive out the Jebusites that inhabited Jerusalem*, etc.] That is, that part of it which belonged to them, for it lay between Judah and Benjamin; and neither of them separately, nor both conjunctly, could drive out the Jebusites from it, particularly the

strong hold on the top of Mount Sion, which they held to the times of David. Abarbinel is of opinion, that Jerusalem in those times was not a city enclosed about, but was a large province, part of which belonged to the tribe of Judah, and another to the tribe of Benjamin, and another was possessed by the Jebusites; and so Jarchi says it was a province, the name of which was Jebusi:

but the Jebusites dwelt with the children of Benjamin unto this day; when this book was written, which was done by Samuel, as Kimchi and Ben Gersom; and it is certain from hence it must have been written before the reign of David, who dispossessed the Jebusites, (^{<4086>}2 Samuel 5:6-9).

Ver. 22. *And the house of Joseph, they also went up against Bethel*, etc.] Which lay upon the borders of the sons of Joseph, Ephraim and Manasseh, (^{<4086>}Joshua 16:1,2); and though it seems to have been taken when Ai was, (^{<4087>}Joshua 8:17); yet it appears that it was now in the possession of the Canaanites; wherefore the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh being desirous of enlarging their borders after the example of Judah, went against this place in order to take it:

and the Lord [was] with them; the Word of the Lord, as the Targum, directing, assisting, and succeeding them in their attempt.

Ver. 23. *And the house of Joseph sent to descry Bethel*, etc.] To reconnoitre the place, to observe its passes and avenues, which were most accessible, and to examine the walls of it, where they were weakest and least defended:

now the name of the city before [was] Luz; which signifies a “nut”; perhaps it was so called from large numbers of nut trees which grew near it; the Jews suggest as if it was like a nut, no entrance into it but through a cave or some subterraneous passage, (see ^{<4089>}Genesis 28:19).

Ver. 24. *And the spies saw a man come forth out of the city*, etc.] Or “the keepers”^{f17}; those that were sent to watch, and observe, and get what intelligence they could of the city, and the way into it:

and they said unto him, show us, we pray, thee, the entrance into the city; not the gate or gates of it, which no doubt were visible enough, but some private way into it; the Jews, as before observed, think the entrance was by the way of a cave, or some hidden passage, of which Jarchi and Kimchi make mention:

and we will show thee mercy; give him a reward for it, or spare him and his family when the city came into their hands.

Ver. 25. *And when he showed them the entrance, into the city,* etc.] Pointing to it with his fingers, as the same writers observe:

they smote the city with the edge of the sword; they gave notice of what intelligence they had got to the body of the army, who came up, entered the city, took it, and put the inhabitants of it to the sword, as they were ordered to do with all the Canaanites:

but they let go the man and all his family; who had returned to it, encouraged by the promise made him, and for the sake of saving of his family; which though not expressed, he might have asked the favour of sparing them, which might be promised, as was in the case of Rahab; provided he would either renounce Heathenism, and embrace the true religion, or depart to another country, the latter of which he chose.

Ver. 26. *And the man went into the land of the Hittites,* etc.] With his family; Kimchi says this was not one of the seven nations of Canaan; and it is very clear from this narrative, that the land this man went to was not in the land of Canaan; though it is certain a people of this name formerly dwelt there, (⁽¹¹⁵⁰⁾Genesis 15:20 23:3 26:34); and the land of Canaan is called the land of the Hittites, (⁽¹¹⁰⁹⁾Joshua 1:4); these either might flee to another country upon Joshua's entry into the land of Canaan, or a colony of them from thence might settle elsewhere, to which this man chose to go, who might be originally of them:

and built a city; his family was numerous, and he a man of wealth, and was allowed to carry all his substance with him:

and called the name of it Luz; in memory of the place he left, and had long lived in. There is a city called Loussa, among the cities which Josephus says ^{f18} were taken by the Jews from the Arabians; and which is very probably the Lysa of Ptolemy ^{f19}, which he places in Arabia Petraea, and might be the same with this Luz; and, if so, this shows the land this man went into was in Edom, which is not unlikely; there is another Luza, which Jerom ^{f20} says fell to the lot of the sons of Joseph, near Sichem, three miles from Neapolis:

which [is] the name thereof unto this day: the time of the writing of this book; (see Gill on "⁽¹⁰¹²⁾Judges 1:21").

Ver. 27. *Neither did Manasseh*, etc.] One of the sons of Joseph before mentioned; and it respects that half tribe of Manasseh, which had its portion on this side Jordan in the land of Canaan: these did not

drive out the inhabitants of Bethshean and her towns, nor Taanach and her towns, nor the inhabitants of Dor and her towns, nor the inhabitants of Ibleam and her towns, nor the inhabitants of Megiddo and her towns: all which were places the half tribe had assigned them in Issachar and Asher; of which (see Gill on “^{4671b}Joshua 17:11”). This tribe seems to have been sluggish, and not to have exerted itself at all, or made any attempts to drive out these people:

but the Canaanites would dwell in that land; not only desired it, but were determined on it, and rather chose to submit to a tribute than be expelled, at least would not depart unless they were forced.

Ver. 28. *And it came to pass, when Israel was strong*, etc.] All the tribes of Israel were become numerous, and able to drive the Canaanites out of the land everywhere, and particularly were able to assist Manasseh in expelling the Canaanites out of the above places, yet they did not; but all they did was,

that they put the Canaanites to tribute, and did not utterly drive them out; which flowed from covetousness, and a love of ease; they did not care to be at the trouble of expelling them, as they found it turned more to their account and present advantage to make them tributaries; and this was true of the Israelites in general, and of the half tribe of Manasseh in particular; which, as Abarbinel thinks, is here respected.

Ver. 29. *Neither did Ephraim drive out the Canaanites that dwelt in Gezer*, etc.] Not so much as made them tributaries, but made a covenant with them, it is probable, contrary to the express will of God:

but the Canaanites dwelt in Gezer among them; the Ephraimites agreeing to it, and here they dwelt to the times of Solomon; (see Gill on “⁴⁶⁶⁰Joshua 16:10”); where indeed they are said to be under tribute; but that seems to respect some later time, and not when they were first admitted to dwell among them, since no mention is made of it here.

Ver. 30. *Neither did Zebulun drive out the inhabitants of Kitron, nor the inhabitants of Nahalol*, etc.] The first of these seems to be the same with Kattah or Kartah, and the latter with Nahalal, both cities given to the

Levites, (⁽⁶⁹¹⁵⁾Joshua 19:15 21:34,35); which perhaps was the reason of their sloth in driving them out; though it aggravated their sin not to take care to rid those cities of the Canaanites, which were given to religious persons:

but the Canaanites dwelt among them, and became tributaries; which is observed so far in their favour, that they exerted themselves to make them tributaries, which was more than was done by some others.

Ver. 31. *Neither did Asher drive out the inhabitants of Accho*, etc.] The same with Ptolemais, (see Gill on “⁽⁴²⁰⁷⁾Acts 21:7”); so called from the first Ptolemy king of Egypt, who enlarged it; but it has since recovered its ancient name pretty nearly, and is now called Acca or Acra.

“On its north and east sides (Mr. Maundrell says ^{f21}) it is encompassed with a spacious and fertile plain; on the west it is washed by the Mediterranean sea; and on the south by a large bay, extending from the city as far as Mount Carmel:”

nor the inhabitants of Zidon; a well known city in Phoenicia, belonging to this tribe, (see ⁽⁶⁹²⁸⁾Joshua 19:28);

nor of Ahlab, nor of Achzib, nor Helbah, nor Aphik, nor of Rehob; two of these places, Ahlab and Helbah, are not mentioned among the cities of the tribe of Asher, (⁽⁶⁹²⁴⁾Joshua 19:24-31); unless Helbah is the same with Helkath, (⁽⁷⁰²⁵⁾Judges 1:25); of the rest, Achzib, (see Gill on “⁽⁶⁹²⁹⁾Joshua 19:29”), Aphik, and Rehob, (see Gill on “⁽⁶⁹³⁰⁾Joshua 19:30”).

Ver. 32. *But the Asherites dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land*, etc.] They were in a worse condition than those before mentioned; for the Canaanites were possessed of their country, especially of the above cities, and were masters of them; and the Asherites only dwelt among them upon sufferance:

for they did not drive them out; either they did not attempt it, or they could not do it, and contented themselves with having leave to dwell among them.

Ver. 33. *Neither did Naphtali drive out the inhabitants of Bethshemesh, nor the inhabitants of Bethanath*, etc.] Of which places (see Gill on “⁽⁶⁹³⁸⁾Joshua 19:38”);

but he dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land; in the same disgraceful manner as Asher did, owing to cowardice or sloth:

nevertheless, the inhabitants of Bethshemesh, and of Bethanath, became tributaries unto them; these two cities did at length exert themselves, and got the mastery over the Canaanites, as to make them pay tribute to them; though they ought to have expelled them, and even destroyed them, according to the command of God, but avarice prevailed over them.

Ver. 34. *And the Amorites forced the children of Dan into the mountain,* etc.] Into the mountainous part of the tribe of Dan; the most noted mountains in it were Sear and Baalah, which lay on the border of Judah, (⁽¹⁶⁵⁰⁾Joshua 15:10,11); Joppa in this tribe was built on an high rock, and so Gibbethon, as its name seems to import, perhaps was built on a hill or mountain, as were the cities after mentioned:

for they would not suffer them to come down to the valley; which lay between Joppa and Caesarea, the plain of Sharon, in which were Lydda, Jamnia, etc. which belonged to their tribe, and they afterwards enjoyed; (see Gill on "⁽¹⁶⁹⁸⁾Joshua 19:48").

Ver. 35. *But the Amorites would dwell in Mount Heres in Aijalon, and in Shaalbim,* etc.] And they would not suffer the Danites to dwell in the valley, a fruitful and delightful part of their country, terrifying them with their iron chariots, which in the vale they could make use of to great advantage; so neither would they let them dwell alone in the mountainous part of their tribe, but would dwell with them, particularly in three places mentioned: where Mount Heres was is not certain; it signifies the "sun"; very probably it had its name from the worship of the sun on it, or from the sun standing still near it; for Aijalon, where that miracle was wrought, is next mentioned. Perhaps it might be near to Timnathheres, which was in Mount Ephraim, (⁽¹⁷⁰⁰⁾Judges 2:9); since Ephraim assisted in making these places tributaries; of the two cities, Aijalon and Shaalbim, (see ⁽¹⁶⁹⁹⁾Joshua 19:42);

yet the hand of the house of Joseph prevailed, so that they became tributaries; or "the hand of [it] became heavy"^{f22}; by which it does not clearly appear whether the hand of Joseph was made heavy, and to hang down, by the Amorites; or whether it was heavy upon them, and so prevailed over them, as our version; but the Septuagint puts it out of doubt, reading the words,

"and the hand of the house of Joseph was heavy upon the Amorites;"

the Ephraimites being near to the tribe of Dan, and observing how they were pressed by the Amorites, took up arms in their favour, and obliged the Canaanites of the above places to become tributaries to the Danites.

Ver. 36. *And the coast of the Amorites [was] from the going up to Akrabbim*, etc.] Of which (see Gill on “⁶⁹⁴⁰Numbers 34:4”) and (see Gill on “⁶⁹⁵⁰Joshua 15:3”):

from the rock, and upwards; even from the city Petra in Idumea, and beyond that; and there was a country near Idumea, called Acrabatane, from this mountain Akrabbim, “Then Judas fought against the children of Esau in Idumea at Arabattine, because they besieged Gael: and he gave them a great overthrow, and abated their courage, and took their spoils.” (1 Maccabees 5:3) such was the extent of these people, that their coast reached from the places, mentioned to the mountains where the above cities of Dan were; they were the most powerful people among the Canaanites, and lay on both sides of Jordan, and were very troublesome to Israel, yet were at length destroyed, (“³⁰⁹⁹Amos 2:9).

CHAPTER 2

INTRODUCTION TO JUDGES 2

This chapter gives an account of an angel of the Lord appearing and rebuking the children of Israel for their present misconduct, (^{<ORII>}Judges 2:1-5); of their good behaviour under Joshua, and the elders that outlived him, (^{<ORII>}Judges 2:6-10); and of their idolatries they fell into afterwards, which greatly provoked the Lord to anger, (^{<ORII>}Judges 2:11-15); and of the goodness of God to them nevertheless, in raising up judges to deliver them out of the hands of their enemies, of which there are many instances in the following chapter, (^{<ORII>}Judges 2:16-18); and yet that how, upon the demise of such persons, they relapsed into idolatry which caused the anger of God to be hot against them, and to determine not to drive out the Canaanites utterly from them, but to leave them among them to try them, (^{<ORII>}Judges 2:19-23).

Ver. 1. *And an angel of the Lord came up from Gilgal to Bochim*, etc.] The Targum calls him a prophet ^{f23}; and the Jewish commentators in general interpret it of Phinehas ^{f24}; and that a man is meant is given into by others, because he is said to come from a certain place in Canaan, and not from heaven, and spoke in a public congregation, and is not said to disappear; but neither a man nor a created angel is meant, or otherwise he would have spoken in the name of the Lord, and have said, “thus saith the Lord”, and not in his own name; ascribing to himself the bringing of the children of Israel out of Egypt, and swearing to them, and making a covenant with them, and threatening what he would do to them because of their sin; wherefore the uncreated Angel, the Angel of the covenant, is meant, who brought Israel out of Egypt, was with them in the wilderness, and introduced them into the land of Canaan, and appeared to Joshua as the Captain of the Lord’s host at or near Gilgal, (^{<ORII>}Joshua 5:13,14); and because he had not appeared since, therefore he is said to come from thence to a place afterwards called Bochim, from what happened at this time:

and said, I made you to go out of Egypt; that is, obliged Pharaoh king of Egypt to let them go, by inflicting plagues upon him and his people, which made them urgent upon them to depart:

and I have brought you unto the land which I sware unto your fathers; into the land of Canaan, now for the most part conquered, and divided among them, and in which they were settled:

and I said, I will never break my covenant with you; if the covenant between them was broken, it should not begin with him, it would be their own fault; all which is mentioned, as so many instances of divine goodness to them, and as so many aggravations of their sins against God.

Ver. 2. *And ye shall make no league with the inhabitants of this land,* etc.] This the Lord charged them not to do, when he covenanted with them, and assured them of bringing them into the land; and yet they had done it, as some instances in the preceding chapter show, which were the occasion of the angel's coming to them to rebuke them, (see ~~Exod~~ Deuteronomy 7:2);

you shall throw down their altars; this they ought to have done as soon as they were come into the land, and possessed of the places where they were erected, to show their detestation of idolatry, and to prevent the use of them to idolatrous purposes, (see ~~Exod~~ Deuteronomy 7:5 12:3);

but ye have not obeyed my voice; the command of God, but on the contrary had made leagues and covenants with several inhabitants of the land, allowing them to dwell among them on paying a certain tax or tribute to them; and had suffered their altars to continue, and them to sacrifice upon them to their idols, according to their former customs:

why have ye done this? transgressed the commandment of God in the instances mentioned. It showed the wickedness of their hearts, their ingratitude to God, who had done such great things for them, and their proneness to idolatry, and liking of it.

Ver. 3. *Wherefore I also said,* etc.] Supposing, or on condition of their being guilty of the above things, which was foreseen they would:

I will not drive them out from before you; the seven nations of the Canaanites entirely, and which accounts for the various instances related in the preceding chapter; where it is observed, that they could not, or did not, drive the old inhabitants out of such and such places, because they sinned

against the Lord, and he forsook them, and would not assist them in their enterprises, or them to their sloth and indolence:

but they shall be [as thorns] in your sides: very troublesome and afflicting, (see ⁴⁰³⁵Numbers 33:55); or for straits, as the Septuagint, or be such as would bring them into tribulation, and distress them, as the Targum; so they often did:

and their gods shall be a snare unto you; which they suffered to continue, and did not destroy them, as they ought to have done; they would be, as they proved, ensnaring to them, and whereby they were drawn to forsake the worship of the true God, and bow down to them, as we read in some following verses.

Ver. 4. *And it came to pass, when the angel of the Lord spake these words unto all the children of Israel*, etc.] This being either one of the three solemn feasts, when all the males appeared at the tabernacle of the Lord; or else here was now a solemn convention of all the tribes to inquire of the Lord the reason why they were not able to drive out the Canaanites in some places, and why they prevailed over them in many:

that the people lift up their voice, and wept; being affected with what the angel said, and convicted in their consciences of their sins, and so fearing the bad consequences thereof, they wept because of the sins they had been guilty of, and because of the evils that were like to befall them on account of them.

Ver. 5. *And they called the name of that place Bochim*, etc.] Which signifies “weepers”, from the general lamentation of the people, which before had another name; very probably it was Shiloh itself since all Israel was gathered together, the tabernacle being now at Shiloh, and also because sacrifices were offered up, as follows:

and they sacrificed there unto the Lord; to atone for the sins they had committed; and if they did this in the faith of the great sacrifice of the Messiah, they did well; however, so far there was an acknowledgment of their guilt, and a compliance with the appointments of God directed to in such cases.

Ver. 6. *And when Joshua had let the people go*, etc.] This is not to be connected with what goes before, as if that was done in Joshua’s lifetime; for during that, as is after testified, the people of Israel served the Lord;

whereas the angel, in the speech to them before related, charges them with disobeying the voice of the Lord, making leagues with the inhabitants of the land, and not demolishing their altars, all which was after the death of Joshua; but this refers to a meeting of them with him before his death, and his dismissal of them, which was either when he had divided the land by lot unto them, or when he had given them his last charge before his death, (see ^{<124>}Joshua 24:28); and this, and what follows, are repeated and introduced here, to connect the history of Israel, and to show them how they fell into idolatry, and so under the divine displeasure, which brought them into distress, from which they were delivered at various times by judges of his own raising up, which is the subject matter of this book:

the children of Israel went every man unto his inheritance to possess the land; as it was divided to the several tribes and their families; which seems to confirm the first sense given, that this refers to the dismissal of the people upon the division of the land among them.

Ver. 7. *And the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the Lord that he did for Israel.*] In Egypt, at the Red sea, in the wilderness, at the river Jordan, and in the land of Canaan; (see Gill on ^{<124>}Joshua 24:31”). The Jews ^{f25} say, the elders died on the fifth of Shebet, which answers to part of January and part of February, on which account a fast was kept on that day.

Ver. 8. *And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died, [being] an hundred and ten years old.* (See Gill on ^{<124>}Joshua 24:29”).

Ver. 9. *And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnathheres,* etc.] In (^{<124>}Joshua 24:30); it is called Timnathserah, the letters of “serah” being here inverted, make “heres”, which sometimes is used for the sun, (^{<124>}Job 9:7); and therefore some observe, that the whole name signifies the figure of the sun, which the Jews say was put on his monument, in commemoration of the miracle of the sun standing still at his request, and had this inscription on it,

“this is he that caused the sun to stand still;”

but this is not very probable, since it might have had a tendency to idolatry, the sun being what was the first object of idolatrous worship among the Heathens, and had the greatest show of reason for it:

in the mount of Ephraim, on the north side of the hill Gaash; (see Gill on “⁽⁴²⁴⁾Joshua 24:30”).

Ver. 10. *And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers,* etc.] Were dead and buried, that is, the greatest part of those that were contemporaries with the elders that outlived Joshua; for they might not be all dead, at least not all that came out of Egypt, and still less all that came into the land of Canaan; for, according to the computation of Ben Gersom, the time of Joshua and the elders were but twenty seven years; and there were no more than sixty seven years from their coming out of Egypt to this time; and no doubt there were men living of eighty years of age and more, but these might be but few:

and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord; so as to love, fear, serve, and worship him; did not own him to be the one only living and true God, otherwise they must know him nationally, being educated in the true religion:

nor yet the works which he had done for Israel; some of them, as before observed, might have seen the works and wonders of the Lord for Israel, at their first coming out of Egypt; though not being wise, as the above writer observes, it had no effect upon them, to keep them from doing evil in the sight of God; and they all of them had been informed of them, and many had seen, and must have had personal knowledge of what was done for them at their coming into the land of Canaan; but not a practical knowledge, or such as had any influence upon them, to preserve them from idolatry.

Ver. 11. *And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord,* etc.] Openly and publicly, boldly and impudently, in the very face of God, and amidst all the good things they received from him, which were aggravating circumstances of their sins; what the evil was they did is next observed:

and served Baalim; the idol Baal, as the Arabic version, of which there were many, and therefore a plural word is used; to which the apostle refers (⁽⁴²⁵⁾1 Corinthians 8:5); for the word signifies “lords”, and there were Baalpeor, Baalzebub, Baalberith, etc. and who seem to have their name from Bal, Bel, or Belus, a king of Babylon after Nimrod, and who was the first monarch that was deified, the Jupiter of the Heathens. Theophilus of Antioch ^{f26} says, that, according to the history of Thallus, Belus the king of the Assyrians, whom they worshipped, was older than the Trojan war three

hundred twenty two years; and that some call Cronus or Saturn Bel and Bal; by the Assyrians called Bel, and in the Punic or Phoenician language Bal^{f27}.

Ver. 12. *And they forsook the Lord God of their fathers*, etc.] The covenant God of their fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and of their more immediate ancestors; his worship they forsook, neglected his tabernacle, and the service of it:

which brought them out of the land of Egypt; out of wretched misery and bondage there, with an high hand, and outstretched arm; and led them through the wilderness, and provided for them there, and brought them into the land of Canaan, a land flowing with milk and honey; but all these mercies were forgotten by them:

and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that [were] round about them: the gods of the Canaanites and Phoenicians, of the Egyptians, and of the Moabites, Amorites, and Edomites, that were round about them, on the borders of them; instead of one God they worshipped many, even all in or about the land of Canaan; so much given were they to idolatry:

and bowed themselves unto them; giving them all religious worship and honour they were capable of:

and provoked the Lord to anger; nothing is more provoking to him than idolatry; he being a jealous God, and will not bear any rival in worship, nor his glory to be given to another, to a strange god.

Ver. 13. *And they forsook the Lord*, etc.] The worship of the Lord, as the Targum; this is repeated to observe the heinous sin they were guilty of, and how displeasing it was to God:

and served Baal and Ashtaroth; two images, as the Arabic version adds; Baal, from whence Baalim, may signify the he deities of the Gentiles, as Jupiter, Hercules, etc. and Ashtaroth their female deities, as Juno, Venus, Diana, etc. the word is plural, and used for flocks of sheep, so called because they make the owners of them rich; and Kimchi and Ben Melech say these were images in the form of female sheep. Perhaps, as Baal may signify the sun, so Ashtaroth the moon, and the stars like flocks of sheep about her. Ashtaroth was the goddess of the Zidonians, (¹¹¹¹⁶1 Kings 11:5,33); the same with Astarte, the wife of Cronus or Ham, said to be the Phoenician or Syrian Venus. So Lucian says^{f28} there was a temple in

Phoenicia, belonging to the Sidonians, which they say is the temple of Astarte; and, says he, I think that Astarte is the moon; and Astarte is both by the Phoenicians ^{f29} and Grecians ^{f30} said to be Venus, and was worshipped by the Syrians also, as Minutius Felix ^{f31} and Tertullian ^{f32} affirm; the same with Eostre, or Aestar, the Saxon goddess; hence to this day we call the passover Easter ^{f33}, being in Easter-month; and with Andraste, a goddess of the ancient Britains ^{f34}. There were four of them, and therefore the Septuagint here uses the plural number Astartes; so called either from Asher, being reckoned “blessed” ones, or from Asheroth, the groves they were worshipped in; or from אַשׁ, “Ash”, and רַוַּת, “Tor”, the constellation Taurus or the bull; so Astarte by Sanchoniatho is said to put upon her head the head of a bull, as the token of her sovereignty; (see Gill on “~~0146~~Genesis 14:5”).

Ver. 14. *And the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel*, etc.] For the idolatries they were guilty of; it burned within him, it broke forth, and was poured out like fire on them, and consumed them; (see Na 1:6);

and he delivered them into the hands of spoilers that spoiled them; that rifled their houses, and plundered them of their goods and substance:

and he sold them into the hands of their enemies round about; the is, delivered them into their hands, who carried them captive, where they were as men sold for slaves; (see ~~0412~~Psalm 44:12); and this was in just retaliation, that as they had said themselves to work wickedness, the Lord sold them into the hands of their enemies for their wickedness; and, as they had followed the gods of the people round about them, so he delivered them up, into the hands of their enemies round about them, as the Mesopotamians, Moabites, Midianites, Philistines, and Ammonites:

so that they could not any longer stand before their enemies; but turned their backs on them, and fled whenever engaged in war with them.

Ver. 15. *Whithersoever they went out, the hand of the Lord was against them for evil*, etc.] They prospered not in any business they undertook, or put their hands unto; or in any expedition they went upon, or when they went out to war, as Kimchi, Ben Melech, and Abarbinel explain the phrase: the battle went against them, because God was against them; his hand was against them, and there was no resisting and turning that back; and this sense seems to agree with what goes before and follows after; though in some Jewish writings ^{f35} it is explained of those that went out of the land to

escape the calamities of it, and particularly of Elimelech and his two sons, Mahlon and Chilion, (^{<OR00>}Ruth 1:1,2);

as the Lord had said, and as the Lord had sworn unto them; having ratified and confirmed his threatening with an oath, that if they served other gods, he would surely bring upon them all the curses of the law; (see ^{<OR12>}Deuteronomy 29:12-20);

and they were greatly distressed; by the Canaanites they suffered to dwell among them, who were pricks in their eyes, and thorns in their sides, as had been threatened them; and by the nations round about them, who came in upon them, and plundered them, and carried them captive.

Ver. 16. *Nevertheless, the Lord raised up judges*, etc.] Who are particularly mentioned by name, and their exploits recorded, in some following chapters, and from whom the book in general has its name: these were men that God raised up in an extraordinary manner, and spirited and qualified for the work he had to do by them; which was to deliver the people of Israel out of the hands of their oppressors, and restore them to their privileges and liberties, and protect them in them, and administer justice to them; which was a wonderful instance of the goodness of God to them, notwithstanding their many provoking sins and transgressions:

which delivered them out of the hands of those that spoiled them; who took away their goods and cattle from them, and carried their persons captive: these were the instruments of recovering both again, just as Abraham brought again Lot and all his goods.

Ver. 17. *And yet they would not hearken unto their judges*, etc.] Afterwards, or not always; but when they admonished them of their sins, and advised them to walk in the good ways of God, and serve him only; they turned a deaf ear to them, and went on in their own ways, which is a sad aggravation of their iniquities:

but they went a whoring after their gods, and bowed themselves unto them; committing spiritual adultery, for such idolatry is, and is often so represented in Scripture; for by it they broke the covenant God made with them, which had the nature of a matrimonial contract, and in which God was an husband to them; and therefore serving other gods was rejecting him as such, and committing whoredom with others; than which nothing was more provoking to God, jealous of his honour and glory:

they turned quickly out of the way which their fathers walked in; as soon as ever Joshua and the elders were dead, they departed from the God of their fathers, and the way in which they worshipped him; and so likewise quickly after they had been delivered by the judges, or however as soon as they were dead:

obeying the commandments of the Lord; serving him at his tabernacle, according to the laws, commands, and ordinances he gave to Moses, which is to be understood of their fathers:

[but] they did not so; did not walk in the same way, nor serve the Lord, and obey his commands, as their fathers did; but all the reverse.

Ver. 18. *And when the Lord raised them up judges, then the Lord was with the judge*, etc.] Every one of them that he raised up; as he stirred up their spirits for such service, to judge his people, and qualified them for it, he assisted and strengthened them, and abode by them, and succeeded them in whatsoever they engaged for the welfare of the people; the Targum is,

“the Word of the Lord was for the help of the judge:”

and delivered them out of the hands of their enemies all the days of the judge; so long as a judge lived, or continued to be their judge, they were protected by him, and preserved from falling into the hands of their enemies:

for it repented the Lord because of their groanings, by reason of them that oppressed them and vexed them; the Lord being merciful had compassion upon them, when they groaned under their oppressions, and cried unto him, then he received their prayer, as the Targum, and sent them a deliverer; and so did what men do when they repent of a thing, change their conduct; thus the Lord changed the outward dispensation of his providence towards them, according to his unchangeable will; for otherwise repentance, properly speaking, does not belong unto God: the Targum is,

“he turned from the word he spake;”

the threatening he had denounced.

Ver. 19. *And it came to pass, when the judge was dead*, etc.] Any one of them, the first and so all succeeding ones:

[that] they returned; to their evil ways and idolatrous practices, from which they reformed, and for which they showed outward repentance during the life of the judge; but he dying, they returned again to them:

and corrupted [themselves] more than their fathers; in Egypt and in the wilderness; or rather than their fathers that lived in the generation after the death of Joshua; and so in every generation that lived before a judge was raised up to deliver them out of the evils brought upon them; the children of those in every age successively grew worse than their fathers:

in following other gods to serve them, and to bow down unto them; not content with the idols their fathers served, they sought after and found out others, and were more constant and frequent in their worship and service of them, and increased their sacrifices and acts of devotion to them:

they ceased not from their own doings; or, “did not let them fall”^{f36}; but retained them, and continued in the practice of them, being what they were naturally inclined unto and delighted in:

nor from their stubborn way; which they were bent upon, and determined to continue in: or “their hard way”^{f37}; which their hard hearts had chosen, and they obstinately persisted in, being obdurate and stiffnecked; and which, in the issue, they would find hard, troublesome, and distressing to them, though at present soft and agreeable, and in which they went on smoothly; but in time would find it rough and rugged, offensive, stumbling, and ruinous; or it may signify a hard beaten path, a broad road which multitudes trod in, as is the way of sin.

Ver. 20. *And the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel*, etc.] As at first, so whenever they fell into idolatry; (see ^{<0014>}Judges 2:14);

and he said, because this people have transgressed my covenant which I commanded their fathers; made at Sinai, in which they were enjoined to have no other gods before him:

and have not hearkened to my voice; in his commands, and particularly what related to his worship and against idolatry.

Ver. 21. *I also henceforth will not drive out and from before them*, etc.] At least not as yet, not very soon nor hastily, as in (^{<0023>}Judges 2:23);

of the nations which Joshua left when he died; that is, unsubdued; which was owing either to the infirmities of old age coming upon him, which

made him incapable of engaging further in war with the Canaanites; or to the sloth and indolence of the people, being weary of war, and not caring to prosecute it; or to want of men to cultivate any more land, and people other cities, than what they were possessed of; and chiefly this was owing to the providence of God, who had an end to answer hereby, as follows.

Ver. 22. *That through them I may prove Israel*, etc.] Afflict them by them, and so prove or try them, their faith and patience, which are tried by afflictions; and such were the Canaanites to them, as afflictions and temptations are to the spiritual Israel of God; or rather, whether they would keep in the ways of God, or walk in those the Canaanites did, as follows:

whether they will keep the way of the Lord, as their fathers did keep [it], or not; whether they would worship the true God their fathers did, or the gods of the Canaanites; not that the Lord was ignorant of what they would do, and so made the experiment; but that the sincerity and faithfulness, or insincerity and unfaithfulness of their hearts, might appear to themselves and others.

Ver. 23. *Therefore the Lord left these nations, without driving them out hastily*, etc.] Left them unsubdued, or suffered them to continue among the Israelites, and did not drive them out as he could have done; which was permitted, either that it might be seen and known whether Israel would give into the idolatry of these nations or not, (⁽¹⁰²²⁾Judges 2:22); of which there could have been no trial, if they and their idols had been utterly destroyed; or because the children of Israel had transgressed the covenant of the Lord, therefore he would drive no more of them out, but leave them to afflict and distress them, and thereby prove and try them, (⁽¹⁰²¹⁾Judges 2:20,21); both senses may very well stand, but the former seems rather to agree with what follows:

neither delivered he them into the hand of Joshua; having an end to be answered by them, before suggested, namely, to prove and try Israel; and, for a like reason, the indwelling sin and corruptions of God's people are suffered to remain in them, for the trial of their graces, and that the power of God in the support and deliverance of them might appear the more manifest.

CHAPTER 3

INTRODUCTION TO JUDGES 3

This chapter gives an account of the nations left in Canaan to prove Israel, and who became a snare unto them, (^{<ORR>}Judges 3:1-7); and of the servitude of Israel under the king of Mesopotamia for their sins, from which they were delivered by Othniel, (^{<ORR>}Judges 3:8-11); and of their subjection to the Moabites, from which they were freed by Ehud, who privately assassinated the king of Moab, and then made his escape, (^{<ORR>}Judges 3:12-30); and of the destruction of a large number of Philistines by Shamgar, with an ox goad, (^{<ORR>}Judges 3:31).

Ver. 1. *Now these [are] the nations which the Lord left to prove Israel by them,* etc.] Which are later mentioned, (^{<ORR>}Judges 3:3,5);

[even] as many [of Israel] as had not known all the wars of Canaan; those that Joshua, and the people of Israel under him, had with the Canaanites, when they first entered the land and subdued it; being then not born, or so young as not to have knowledge of them, at least not able to bear arms at that time.

Ver. 2. *Only that the generations of the children of Israel might know and teach them war,* etc.] That is, the following nations were left in the land, that the young generations of Israel might by their wars and conflicts with them learn the art of war, and be inured to martial discipline; which, if none had been left to engage with, they had been ignorant of: besides, their fathers in Joshua's time, as Jarchi and Kimchi observe, had no need to learn the art of war, for God fought for them; they did not get possession of the land by their own arm, and by their sword, but by the power of God in a miraculous way; but now this was not to be expected, and the Canaanites were left among them to expel, that they might be trained up in the knowledge of warlike affairs, and so be also capable of teaching their children the military art; which they should make use of in obeying the command of God, by driving out the remains of the Canaanites, and not give themselves up to sloth and indolence; though some think that the meaning is, that God left these nations among them, that they might know

what war was, and the sad effects of it; and the difference of fighting with their enemies alone, as other men, and the Lord fighting along with them, and for them, as he did for their fathers:

at least such as before knew nothing thereof; being either unborn, or at an age incapable of bearing arms, or learning the art of war.

Ver. 3. [*Namely*], *five lords of the Philistines*, etc.] The places they were lords of were Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Gath, and Ekron; (see ^{<063B>}Joshua 13:3); three of these, Gaza, Ashkelon, and Ekron, had been taken from them by Judah, since the death of Joshua, (^{<071B>}Judges 1:18); but they soon recovered them again, perhaps by the help of the other two. The Philistines were a people originally of Egypt, but came from thence and settled in these parts, and were here as early as in the times of Abraham, and were very troublesome neighbours to the Israelites in later times; (see ^{<1014>}Genesis 10:14 21:32,33);

and all the Canaanites; these were a particular tribe or nation in the land so called, which inhabited by the sea, and by the coast of Jordan, (^{<0439>}Numbers 13:29); otherwise this is the general name for the seven nations:

and the Sidonians; the inhabitants of the famous city of Sidon, which had its name from the firstborn of Canaan, (^{<0115>}Genesis 10:15);

and the Hivites that dwelt in Mount Lebanon; on the north of the land of Canaan:

from Mount Baalhermon; the eastern part of Lebanon, the same with Baalgad, where Baal was worshipped:

unto the entering in of Hamath; the boundary of the northern part of the land, which entrance led into the valley between Libanus and Antilibanus; (see ^{<064B>}Numbers 34:8 ^{<061B>}Joshua 11:3 13:5).

Ver. 4. *And they were to prove Israel by them*, etc.] They were left in the land, as to inure them to war, and try their courage, so to prove their faithfulness to God:

to know whether they would hearken to the commandments, of the Lord, which he commanded their fathers by the hand of Moses; even all the commandments of the Lord delivered to them by Moses, moral, civil, and

ceremonial, and particularly those that concerned the destruction of the Canaanites, their altars, and their idols, (^{<R00>}Deuteronomy 7:1,5).

Ver. 5. *And the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites*, etc.] As if they had been only sojourners with them, and not conquerors of them; and dwelt by sufferance, and not as proprietors and owners; such were their sloth and indolence, and such the advantage the inhabitants of the land got over them through it, and through their compliances with them; and this was the case not only of one sort of them, the Canaanites, but of the rest:

the Hittites, and Amorites, and Perizzites, and Hivites, and Jebusites; who all had cities in the several parts of the land, with whom the children of Israel were mixed, and with whom they were permitted to dwell.

Ver. 6. *And they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their daughters to their sons*, etc.] The Israelites intermarried with the inhabitants of the land, contrary to the express command of God, (^{<R03>}Deuteronomy 7:3); whereby they confounded their families, debased their blood, and were ensnared into idolatry, as follows: perhaps to these unlawful marriages, in their first settlement in the land of Canaan, reference is had in (^{<R04>}Ezekiel 16:3), “thy father [was] an Amorite and thy mother an Hittite”; an Amorite marrying a daughter of Israel, and an Israelitish man an Hittite woman:

and served their gods; this was the natural consequence of their intermarriages, which the Lord foresaw, and therefore cautioned them against them, (^{<R05>}Exodus 34:15,16 ^{<R06>}Deuteronomy 7:3,4).

Ver. 7. *And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord*, etc.] Both by marrying with Heathens, and worshipping their gods:

and forgot the Lord their God; as if they had never heard of him, or known him, their Maker and Preserver, who had done so many great and good things for them:

and served Baalim, and the groves; of Baalim, (see ^{<R07>}Judges 2:11); the groves mean either idols worshipped in groves, as Jupiter was worshipped in a grove of oaks, hence the oak of Dodona; and Apollo in a grove of laurels in Daphne: there were usually groves where idol temples were built; and so in Phoenicia, or Canaan, Dido the Sidonian queen built a temple for Juno in the midst of the city, where was a grove of an agreeable shade ^{f38}: so Barthius ^{f39} observes, that most of the ancient gods of the Heathens used

to be worshipped in groves. And groves and trees themselves were worshipped; so Tacitus says ^{f40} of the Germans, that they consecrated groves and forests, and called them by the names of gods. Groves are here put in the place of Ashtaroth, (^{<0013>}Judges 2:13); perhaps the goddesses of that name were worshipped in groves; and if Diana is meant by Astarte, Servius ^{f41} says that every oak is sacred to Jupiter and every grove to Diana; and Ovid ^{f42} speaks of a temple of Diana in a grove. But as they are joined with Baalim, the original of which were deified kings and heroes, the groves may be such as were consecrated to them; for, as the same writer observes ^{f43}, the souls of heroes were supposed to have their abode in groves; (see Gill on "^{<0343>}Exodus 34:13") and (see Gill on "^{<0375>}Deuteronomy 7:5"). It was in this time of defection that the idolatry of Micah, and of the Danites, and the war of Benjamin about the Levite's concubine, happened, though related at the end of the book; so Josephus ^{f44} places the account here.

Ver. 8. *Therefore the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel,* etc.] Because of their idolatry; (see ^{<0014>}Judges 2:14,20);

and he sold them into the hand of Chushanrishathaim, king of Mesopotamia; or Aramnaharaim; that is, Syria, between the two rivers, which were Tigris and Euphrates; hence the Greek name of this place is as here called Mesopotamia. Josephus ^{f45} calls him king of Assyria, and gives him the name of Chusarthus; and indeed Chushanrishathaim seems to be his whole name, though the Targum makes Rishathaim to be an epithet, and calls him Cushan, the wicked king of Syria; the word is of the dual number, and signifies two wickednesses; which, according to the mystical exposition of the Jews ^{f46}, refers to two wicked things Syria did to Israel, one by Balaam the Syrian, and the other by this Cushan. Mr. Bedford ^{f47} thinks it may be rendered,

“Cushan, king of the two wicked kingdoms;”

the Assyrian monarchy being at this time like two kingdoms, Babylon being the metropolis of the one, and Nineveh of the other; but it is question whether the monarchy was as yet in being. Hillerus ^{f48} makes Cushan to be an Arab Scenite, from (^{<0370>}Habakkuk 3:7); and Rishathaim to denote disquietudes; and it represents him as a man very turbulent, never quiet and easy, and so it seems he was; for not content with his kingdom on the other side Euphrates, he passed over that, and came into Canaan, to subject that to him, and add it to his dominions. Kimchi says that Rishathaim may be

the name of a place, and some conjecture it to be the same with the Rhisina of Ptolemy^{f49}; but it seems rather a part of this king's name, who came and fought against Israel, and the Lord delivered them into his hands:

and the children of Israel served Chushanrishathaim eight years; became tributaries to him during that space of time, but when that began is not easy to say. Bishop Usher^{f50} places it in A. M. 2591, and before Christ 1413.

Ver. 9. *And when the children of Israel cried unto the Lord*, etc.] Towards the close of the eight years' bondage, as it may be supposed, groaning under the oppressive taxes laid upon them, and the bondage they were brought into: and

the Lord raised up a deliverer to the children of Israel; he heard their cry, and sent them a saviour, whose spirit he stirred up, and whom he qualified for this service:

who delivered them; out of the hands of the king of Mesopotamia, and freed them from his oppressions:

[*even*] *Othniel, the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother*; the same that took Debir, and married Achsah, the daughter of Caleb, (<0012>Judges 1:12,13); who now very probably was a man in years.

Ver. 10. *And the Spirit of the Lord came upon him*, etc.] Moved him to engage in this work of delivering Israel, inspired him with courage, and filled him with every needful gift, qualifying him for it; the Targum interprets it the spirit of prophecy; it seems rather to be the spirit of counsel and courage, of strength and fortitude of body and mind:

and he judged Israel; took upon him the office of a judge over them, and executed it; very probably the first work he set about was to reprove them for their sins, and convince them of them, and reform them from their idolatry, and restore among them the pure worship of God; and this he did first before he took up arms for them:

and he went out to war; raised an army, and went out at the head of them, to fight with their oppressor:

and the Lord delivered Chushanrishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand; and his hand prevailed against Chushanrishathaim; gave him the victory over him and his army, so that he fell into his hands, became his captive, and perhaps was slain by him.

Ver. 11. *And the land had rest forty years,* etc.] As it should seem from the time of this deliverance; though, according to Ben Gersom and Abarbinel, the eight years' servitude are to be included in them; and Bishop Usher^{f51} reckons these forty years from the rest first settled in the land by Joshua; but the former sense seems best:

and Othniel the son of Kenaz died: not at the end of the forty years; it is not likely he should live so long, but when he died is not certain; Eusebius^{f52} says he judged Israel fifty years.

Ver. 12. *And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord,* etc.] Fell into idolatry again, which was a great evil in the sight of God, and what they were prone to fall into:

and the Lord strengthened Eglon the king of Moab against Israel; put it into his heart to invade them, and encouraged him to it, and gave him success; what kings reigned over Moab between Balak and this king we know not: it is a commonly received notion of the Jews, that Ruth was the daughter of Eglon; (see ^{<BOOK>}Ruth 1:4); and it was about this time that Elimelech with his two sons went into Moab, and when many of those things recorded in the book of Ruth were transacted:

because they had done evil in the sight of the Lord; which had greatly provoked him to anger, and was the cause of stirring up the king of Moab against them.

Ver. 13. *And he gathered unto him the children of Ammon and Amalek,* etc.] Either the Lord gathered them to Eglon, inclined them to enter into a confederacy with him, to assist in the war against Israel; or the king of Moab got them to join with him in it, they being his neighbours, and enemies to Israel, and especially Amalek:

and went and smote Israel; first the two tribes and a half, which lay on that side Jordan Moab did, whom it is reasonable to suppose he would attack first; and having defeated them, he came over Jordan:

and possessed the city of the palm trees; Jericho, as the Targum, which was set with palm trees; (see ^{<OSMB>}Deuteronomy 34:3 ^{<OTOLG>}Judges 1:16); not the city itself, for that was destroyed by Joshua, and not rebuilt until the time of Ahab; but the country, about it, or, as Abarbinel thinks, a city that was near it; here Josephus says^{f53} he had his royal palace; it is probable he built a fort or garrison here, to secure the fords of Jordan, and his own

retreat; as well as to keep up a communication with his own people, and prevent the tribes of the other side giving any assistance to their brethren, if able and disposed to do it.

Ver. 14. *So the children of Israel served Eglon king of Moab eighteen years.*] Ten years longer than they served the king of Mesopotamia, (~~Q18B~~Judges 3:8), as a severer correction of them for their relapse into idolatry.

Ver. 15. *But when the children of Israel cried unto the Lord,* etc.] After being long oppressed, and groaning under their burdens, and brought to a sense of their sins, and humiliation for them, they asked forgiveness of God, and deliverance from their bondage; for it is very probable they were until towards the close of those years stupid and hardened, and did not consider what was the reason of their being thus dealt with:

the Lord raised them up a deliverer; another saviour, one that he made use of as an instrument of their deliverance:

Ehud the son of Gera, a Benjamite, a man lefthanded; who is described by his parentage, a son of Gera, but who his father was is not known; by his tribe a Benjamite, in which Jericho was, Eglon possessed, and so might be more oppressed than any other part; and therefore the Lord stirred up one of that tribe to be the deliverer; and by his being a lefthanded man, as several of that tribe were, (~~Q18G~~Judges 20:16); though a Benjamite signifies a son of the right hand; and he perhaps was one of those lefthanded Benjamites that fled to the rock Rimmon, as Dr. Lightfoot ^{f54} conjectures, (~~Q18H~~Judges 20:47); for that affair, though there related, was before this: the Septuagint calls him an “ambidexter”, one that could use both hands equally alike; but the Hebrew phrase signifies one that is “shut up in his right hand” ^{f55}; who has not the true use of it, cannot exercise it as his other hand, being weak and impotent, or contracted through disuse, or some disease; or, as Josephus ^{f56} expresses it, who could use his left hand best, and who also calls him a young man of a courageous mind and strong of body, and says he dwelt at Jericho, and was very familiar with Eglon, and who by his gifts and presents had endeared himself to all about the king:

and by him the children of Israel sent a present unto Eglon the king of Moab; either their yearly tribute, or rather a gift unto him, to soften him, and reconcile him to them, and make their bondage easier; or to give him

access to him with more confidence and safety, though it does not seem that they knew anything of Ehud's design.

Ver. 16. *But Ehud made him a dagger, which had two edges, of a cubit length*, etc.] A little sword, as Josephus calls it ^{f57}, with two edges, that it might cut both ways, and do the execution he designed by it, and was about half a yard long; which he could the more easily conceal, and use for his purpose:

and he did gird it under his raiment; that it might not be seen, and give occasion of suspicion; this was a military garment, the "sagum", as the Vulgate Latin version, which was coarse, and made of wool, and reached to the ankle, and was buttoned upon the shoulder, and put over the coat ^{f58}; the Septuagint makes use of a word Suidas ^{f59} interprets a coat of mail:

upon his right thigh; whereas a sword is more commonly gird upon the left; though some observe, from various writers, that the eastern people used to gird their swords on their right thigh; or this was done that it might be the less discernible and suspected, and chiefly as being most convenient for him, a lefthanded man, to draw it out upon occasion.

Ver. 17. *And he brought a present unto Eglon king of Moab*, etc.] Accompanied by two servants, as Josephus says ^{f60}, and who doubtless bore the presents; for that there were such with him that did is clear from (~~QUBIS~~ Judges 3:18); nor can it be thought that so great a personage as a judge in Israel should go alone and carry a present in his own hands; though it is possible, when come to the king of Moab, he might take it from his servants, and deliver it to him with his own hands:

and Eglon [was] a very fat man: and so the less active, and unable to decline and avoid the stroke, he might see, when about to be given him.

Ver. 18. *And when he had made an end to offer the present*, etc.] Had delivered the several things contained in it, and very probably made a speech to the king in the name of the people of Israel from whom he brought it:

he sent away the people that bare the present; not the servants of Eglon that introduced him, as if they assisted in bringing in the present to the king; for over them he could not have so much power as to dismiss them at pleasure; but the children of Israel that came along with him, and carried the present for him: these he dismissed, not in the presence of the king of

Moab, but after he had taken his leave of him, and when he had gone on some way in his return home; and this he did for the greater secrecy of his design, and that he might when he had finished it the more easily escape alone, and be without any concern for or care of the safety of others.

Ver. 19. *But he himself turned again from the quarries that [were] by Gilgal*, etc.], For so far he accompanied the men that came with him. These quarries were places where they dug stones and hewed them, according to the Targum, and most Jewish writers; but some render the word “engravings”, and understand them of inscriptions engraved on pillars here, which remained from the times of Seth the son of Adam; of which see more on (⁽¹⁰⁸⁵⁾Judges 3:26); but according to the Vulgate Latin, and other versions, graven images or idols are meant, which the king of Moab set up here in contempt of the Israelites, it being a place where the ark remained some time, and circumcision had been performed, (⁽¹⁰⁸⁵⁾Joshua 5:3); or in order to draw them into idolatry, those idols perhaps being made of the twelve stones they had set up there, (⁽¹⁰⁸⁵⁾Joshua 4:20); or rather in honour of his gods, to invoke their assistance when he first entered into the land, or by way of gratitude and thankfulness for the subduing of it: and this it is thought by some stirred up the spirit of Ehud, and caused him to turn back, resolving to avenge this profaneness:

and said; when he came to the palace of the king of Moab, and into his presence:

I have a secret errand unto thee, O king; which he had forgot when with him before, as he might pretend; or something new had occurred unto him to acquaint him of, and which required privacy:

who said, keep silence; that is, the king of Moab said so either to Ehud, to be silent until he had sent out his servants that were about him, that they might not hear the secret; or to a person or persons that were speaking to him, whom he bid to desist and depart, it being his pleasure to hear Ehud before them; so Ben Gersom; but the former sense rather seems best:

and all that stood by him went out from him; his servants, his courtiers that were waiting upon him, or such as were admitted into his presence, to have audience of him, and deliver their messages, or make their petitions to him.

Ver. 20. *And Ehud came unto him*, etc.] Somewhat nearer him than he was before; it seems probable that Eglon retired from the presence chamber, where he received company, into his summer parlour; which was smaller

and more private, and in which he had used to be alone, as follows, and whither Ehud went in unto him, as he directed him:

and he was sitting in a summer parlour, which he had for himself alone: into which he was wont to go and sit alone, for the sake of coolness and refreshment in the hot season of the year, which it seems it now was; a room this was, in which, as Kimchi and others observe, were many windows to let in air to cool and refresh; or it was in such a part of the palace that was cool, and sheltered from the heat of the sun; (see ^{<ORIS>}Amos 3:15);

and Ehud said, I have a message from God unto thee; which was to kill him; and undoubtedly he was sent of God on this errand to him: whether it be rendered a “word” or “thing” from God, as it signifies both, it was true, and no lie; for it was the Lord that spoke to him by an impulse on his spirit, and the thing was from the Lord he was to do, for nothing less could have justified him in such an action; and therefore this instance can be no warrant for the assassination of princes; as Ehud did not this of himself, but of the Lord, so neither did he do it as a private man, but as a judge of Israel. Josephus ^{f61} says, he told him that he had a dream at the order of God to declare unto him; but for this there is no warrant; however it seems pretty plain that his view in making mention of the name of God, and of Elohim, a name given to false gods as well as the true, rather than Jehovah, was to strike his mind with awe and reverence, and cause him to rise from his seat, that he might the better thrust him with his dagger; and it had the desired effect:

and he arose out of [his] seat; in reverence of God, from whom he expected to receive a message; this he did, though in his mind a blind ignorant idolater; in his body fat, corpulent, and unwieldy; and in his office a king, and a proud and tyrannical man. The above writer says, that, for joy at the dream he was to hear, he rose from his throne.

Ver. 21. *And Ehud put forth his left hand, and took the dagger from his right thigh,* etc.] Being, as before observed, a lefthanded man; (^{<ORIS>}Judges 3:15), and this he could the better do, without being taken notice of by the king, who, if he saw him move his left hand, would have no suspicion of his going to draw a dagger with it, and which also was hidden under his raiment, (^{<ORIS>}Judges 3:16);

and thrust it into his belly; Josephus ^{f62} says into his heart; it is certain the wound was mortal, and must have been in a part on which, life depended.

Ver. 22. *And the haft went in, after the blade*, etc.] The handle of the dagger, as well as the blade; so strong and violent was the thrust, he determining to do his business effectually;

and the fat closed upon the blade; being an excessive fat man, the wound made by the dagger closed up at once upon it, through the fat:

so that he could not draw the dagger out of his belly; being not able to take hold of the haft or handle, that having slipped in through the fat after the blade, so that he was obliged to leave it in him:

and the dirt came out; the margin of our Bibles is, “it came out at the fundament”; that is, the dagger did, the thrust being so strong and vehement; but that is not so likely, the dagger being so short, and Eglon a very fat man. The Targum is,

“his food went out;”

which was in his bowels; but as the wound was closed up through fat, and the dagger stuck fast in it, it could not come out that way: rather therefore this is to be understood of his excrements, and of their coming out at the usual place, it being common for persons that die a violent death, and indeed others, to purge upon it; some, as Kimchi observes, interpret it of the place where the guards were, the guard room, through which Ehud went out, but that is expressed in another word in (^{<OR2>}Judges 3:23); the Syriac and Arabic versions read, “he went out in haste”, that is, Ehud.

Ver. 23. *Then Ehud went forth through the porch*, etc.] Which the Targum interprets by “exedra”, a place, as Kimchi, where there were many seats, either for the people to sit in while waiting to have admittance into the presence of the king, or where the guards sat, and may be called the guard room; through this Ehud passed with all serenity and composure of mind imaginable, without the least show of distress and uneasiness in his countenance, being fully satisfied that what he had done was right, and according to the will of God:

and shut the doors of the parlour upon him, and locked them; joined the doors of the parlour, as the Targum, the two folds of the door, shut them close together upon Eglon within the parlour, and bolted them within, or

drew the bolt on the inside, which he was able to do with a key for that purpose; of which see more on (^{<00B>}Judges 3:25); and which it is probable he took away along with him; this must be understood as done before he went through the porch, and therefore should be rendered, “when” or “after he had shut the doors”, etc. ^{f63}; wherefore in the Vulgate Latin version this clause is put first.

Ver. 24. *When he was gone out, his servants came*, etc.] When Ehud was gone through the porch, and out of the palace, the servants of Eglon, who had been put out, came to the parlour door to reassume their former place, and finish their business with the king, or in order to wait upon him as usual:

and when they saw that behold the doors of the parlour [were] locked; which they supposed were done by the king himself with inside, having no suspicion of Ehud:

they said, surely, or “perhaps”, as Noldius ^{f64} renders it,

he covereth his feet in his summer chamber; that is, was easing nature; and, as the eastern people wore long and loose garments, when they sat down on such an occasion, their feet were covered with them; or they purposely gathered them about their feet to cover them, and so this became a modest expression for this work of nature, (see ^{<00B>}1 Samuel 24:3); though some think that in that place, and also in this, is meant lying down to sleep; and that Eglon’s servants supposed that he had laid himself down on his couch in his summer chamber to take sleep, when it was usual to cover the feet with long garments, to hide those parts of nature which otherwise might be exposed; and it must be owned that this seems more agreeable to a summer parlour than the former, and better accounts for the servants waiting so long as they did; and Josephus ^{f65} is express for it, that his servants thought he had fallen asleep. Indeed, the Jews in later times used the phrase in the first sense ^{f66}, which seems to be taken from hence.

Ver. 25. *And they tarried until they were ashamed*, etc.] And knew not what to think of it, or what methods to take to be satisfied of the truth of the matter, and what should be the meaning of the doors being kept locked so long:

and, behold, he opened not the doors of the parlour; this was what surprised them, and threw them into this confusion of mind, that they knew

not what course to take for fear of incurring the king's displeasure, and yet wondered the doors were not opened for so long a time:

therefore they took a key and opened [them]; this is the first time we read of a key, which only signifies something to open with; and the keys of the ancients were different from those of ours; they were somewhat like a crooked sickle ^{f67}, which they put in through a hole in the door, and with it could draw on or draw back a bolt, and so could lock or unlock with inside, (see ^{<2184>}Song of Solomon 5:4,5); and at this day the keys in the eastern countries are unlike ours. Chardin ^{f68} says, that a lock among the eastern people is like a little harrow, which enters half way into a wooden staple, and the key is a wooden handle with points at the end of it, which are pushed into the staple, and so raise this little harrow:

and, behold, their lord [was] fallen dead on the earth; lay prostrate on the floor of the parlour, dead.

Ver. 26. *And Ehud escaped while they tarried*, etc.] While the servants of the king of Moab tarried waiting for the opening of the doors of the parlour, this gave him time enough to make his escape, so as to be out of the reach of pursuers; or else the sense is, that even when they had opened the doors, and found the king dead, while they were in confusion at it, not knowing what to ascribe it to, the dagger being enclosed in the wound, and perhaps but little blood, if any, issued out, being closed up with fat, and so had no suspicion of his being killed by Ehud; but rather supposing it to be an accidental fall from his seat, and might call in the physicians to examine him, and use their skill, if there were any hopes of recovery; all which prolonged time, and facilitated the escape of Ehud:

and passed beyond the quarries, and escaped to Seirath; he got beyond the quarries, which were by Gilgal, which shows that it could not be at Jericho where the king of Moab was, as Josephus thinks, but either in his own country beyond Jordan, though no mention is made of Ehud's crossing Jordan, or however some place nearer the fords of Jordan; since Gilgal, from whence he returned, and whither he came again after he had killed the king of Moab, lay on that side of Jericho which was towards Jordan; and this Seirath he escaped to was in or near the mountain of Ephraim, as appears from (^{<0027>}Judges 3:27); but of it we have no account elsewhere; but it is thought by some learned men ^{f69} to be the place where Seth's pillars stood, and they to be the engravings here spoken of, which we translate "quarries": the words of Josephus ^{f70} are, that the posterity of

Seth, who very much studied astronomy, having heard that Adam foretold the destruction of the universe at one time by fire, and at another by water, erected two pillars, one of stone, and the other of brick, on which they inscribed their inventions (in astronomy), that they might be preserved, and which remain to this day in the land of Siriad; but this account of Josephus seems to be taken from a fabulous relation of Manetho, the Egyptian, and is abundantly confuted by Dr. Stillingfleet^{f71}. Jarchi interprets this of Seirath, a thick wood or forest, the trees of which grew as thick as the hair on a man's head, and so a proper place to escape to, and hide in: it may be it was the woody part of the mount Ephraim, (see ~~417B~~ Joshua 17:18).

Ver. 27. *And it came to pass, when he was come,* That is, to Seirath, (~~403B~~ Judges 3:26), in the tribe of Ephraim:

that he blew a trumpet in the mountain of Ephraim; which being an high mountain, the sound of the trumpet was heard afar off; and if Ehud's design was known to the Israelites, what he intended to do, this might be the token agreed on, should he succeed, to call them together, (see ~~281B~~ Jeremiah 31:6);

and the children of Israel went down with him from the mount, and he before them; being there assembled together, and which might be the place before appointed for their rendezvous, and where and when he took the command of them, and went before them as their general.

Ver. 28. *And he said unto them, follow after me,* etc.] This he said to encourage them, putting himself at the head of them showing himself ready to expose his own life, if there was any danger:

for the Lord hath delivered your enemies the Moabites into your hands; which he concluded from the success he had had in cutting off the king of Moab which had thrown the Moabites into great confusion and distress, and from an impulse on his mind from the Lord, assuring him of this deliverance:

and they went down after him: from the mountain of Ephraim:

and took the fords of Jordan towards Moab; where the river was fordable, and there was a passage into the country of Moab, which lay on the other side Jordan; this they did to prevent the Moabites, which were in the land of Israel, going into their own land upon this alarm, and those in the land of Moab from going over to help them:

and suffered not a man to pass over; neither out of Israel into Moab, nor out of Moab into Israel.

Ver. 29. *And they slew of Moab at that time about ten thousand men*, etc.] Who had been sent into the land of Israel to keep it in subjection, or had settled themselves there for their better convenience, profit, and pleasure; it is very probable there were some of both sorts:

all lusty, and all men of valour; the word for “lusty” signifies “fat”, living in ease for a long time, and in a plentiful country were grown fat; and, according to Ben Gersom, it signifies rich men, such as had acquired wealth by living in the land of Canaan; or who came over Jordan thither and settled about Jericho, because of the delightfulness of the place, and others were stout and valiant soldiers, whom the king of Moab had placed there to keep the land in subjection he had subdued, and to subdue what remained of it; but they were all destroyed:

and there escaped not a man; for there being no other way of getting into the land of Moab but at the fords of Jordan they fell into the hands of the Israelites possessed of them, as they made up unto them.

Ver. 30. *So Moab was subdued that day under the hand of Israel*, etc.] Or the Moabites were broken, as the Targum, that is, their forces in the land of Israel; for the land of Moab itself was not subdued and brought into subjection to the Israelites; but they were so weakened by this stroke upon them, that they could not detain the Israelites under their power any longer:

and the land had rest fourscore years; eighty years, which, according to Ben Gersom, are to be reckoned from the beginning of their servitude, and that the rest properly was but sixty two years, and so both rest and servitude were eighty years, as R. Isaiah; and, according to Abarbinel, the rest was from the death of Othniel; and our Bishop Usher^{f72} reckons this eightieth year from the former rest restored to it by Othniel; but others^{f73} are of opinion that there were several judges at a time in several parts of the land, and that the land was at rest in one part when there was war in another; and so that at this time it was only the eastern part of the land that had rest, while the western parts were distressed by the Philistines, and the northern parts by Jabin king of Canaan, as in (^{<ORBS>}Judges 3:31 4:1).

Ver. 31. *And after him was Shamgar the son of Anath*, etc.] That is, after the death of Ehud, when the people of Israel were in distress again from

another quarter, this man was raised up of God to be a judge and deliverer of them; but who he was, and who his father, and of what tribe, we nowhere else read:

which slew of the Philistines six hundred men; who invaded the land, and came in an hostile manner into it; or rather, as it seems from (^{<0706>}Judges 5:6); they entered as a banditti of thieves and robbers, who posted themselves in the highways, and robbed travellers as they passed, so that they were obliged to leave off travelling, or go through bypaths, and not in the public road; and this man, who seems to have been called from the plough to be a judge of Israel, as some among the Romans were called from thence to be dictators and deliverers of them from the Gauls:

with an ox goad; which he had used to push on his oxen with at ploughing, cleared the country of them, and with no other weapon than this slew six hundred of them, either at certain times, or in a body together; which is no ways incredible, being strengthened and succeeded by the Lord, any more than Samson's slaying a thousand men with the jawbone of an ass, (^{<0715>}Judges 15:15). So Lycurgus is said to put to flight the forces of Bacchus with an ox goad ^{f74} which is said to be done near Carmel, a mountain in Judea, which makes it probable that this is hammered out of the sacred history; or that Shamgar and Lycurgus are the same, as Bochart conjectures ^{f75}. The ox goad, as now used in those parts, is an instrument fit to do great execution with it, as Mr. Maundrell ^{f76}, who saw many of them, describes it; on measuring them, he found them to be eight feet long, at the bigger end six inches in circumference, at the lesser end was a sharp prickle for driving the oxen, and at the other end a small spade, or paddle of iron, for cleansing the plough from the clay:

and he also delivered Israel, from those robbers and plunderers, and prevented their doing any further mischief in the land, and subjecting it to their power, and so may very properly be reckoned among the judges of Israel; but how long he judged is not said, perhaps his time is to be reckoned into the eighty years of rest before mentioned; or, as Abarbinel thinks, into the forty years of Deborah, the next judge; and who also observes, that their Rabbins say, Shamgar judged but one year.

CHAPTER 4

INTRODUCTION TO JUDGES 4

This chapter shows how that Israel sinning was delivered into the hands of Jabin king of Canaan, by whom they were oppressed twenty years, (~~OR01E~~Judges 4:1-3); and that Deborah and Barak consulted together about their deliverance, (~~OR04E~~Judges 4:4-9); and that Barak, encouraged by Deborah, gathered some forces and fought Sisera the captain of Jabin's army, whom he met, and obtained a victory over, (~~OR010~~Judges 4:10-15); who fleeing on foot to the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber, was received into it, and slain by her while asleep in it, (~~OR016~~Judges 4:16-22); which issued in a complete deliverance of the children of Israel, (~~OR023~~Judges 4:23,24).

Ver. 1. *And the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the Lord,* etc.] Which was the fruit and effect of the long rest and peace they enjoyed; and which is often the case of a people favoured with peace, plenty, and prosperity, who are apt to abuse their mercies, and forget God, the author and giver of them; and the principal evil, though not expressed, was idolatry, worshipping Baalim, the gods of the nations about them; though it is highly probable they were guilty of other sins, which they indulged in the times of their peace and prosperity:

when Ehud was dead; Shamgar is not mentioned, because his time of judging Israel was short, and the people were not reformed in his time, but fell into sin as soon as Ehud was dead, and continued. Some choose to render the words, "for Ehud was dead"^{f77}, who had been, the instrument of reforming them, and of preserving them from idolatry, but he being dead, they fell into it again; and the particle "vau" is often to be taken in this sense, of which Noldius^{f78} gives many instances.

Ver. 2. *And the Lord sold them,* etc.] Delivered them into a state of bondage and slavery, where they were like men sold for slaves, (see ~~OR018~~Judges 3:8);

into the hand of Jabin king of Canaan, that reigned in Hazor; there was a city of this name, and a king of it of the same name, as here, in the times of Joshua, which city was taken and burnt by him, and its king slain,

(~~6100~~Joshua 11:1,10,11); and either the country about it is here meant, as Jericho in the preceding chapter is put for the country adjacent to it; or this city had been rebuilt, over which reigned one of the posterity of the ancient kings of it, and of the same name; or Jabin was a name common to the kings of Canaan, as Pharaoh to the Egyptian kings; and by Canaan is meant, not the land of Canaan in general, but a particular part of it inhabited by that, or some of that nation or tribe, which was peculiarly so called:

the captain of whose host [was] Sisera; Jabin maintained a standing army to keep the people of Israel in subjection, the general of which was Sisera, of whom many things are after said:

which dwelt in Harosheth of the Gentiles; not Jabin, as many understand it, for he had his royal seat and residence in Hazor; but Sisera his general, and where the army under his command was. This place had its name either because it was built by some of various nations, or inhabited by workmen of different countries; or rather it was a wood originally, as the name signifies, to which many of the seven nations of the Canaanites fled from before Joshua, and hid and sheltered themselves, and in process of time built strong towers and fortresses in it, and became numerous and powerful; and so the Targum paraphrases the words,

“and he dwelt in the strength of the towers of the people;”

and in other times, as Strabo relates ^{f79}, the northern parts of the land of Canaan, as those were where Hazor and Harosheth were, were inhabited by a mixed people, Egyptians, Arabians, and Phoenicians; such were they, he says, that held Galilee, Jericho, Philadelphia, and Samaria.

Ver. 3. *And the children of Israel cried unto the Lord*, etc.] Because of their hard bondage, and begged deliverance from it, being brought to a sense of their sins, and humbled for them:

for he had nine hundred chariots of iron; the same with the *αρματα το δρεπανηφορα*, chariots which carried scythes at the side of them, fastened to the orbs of the wheels ^{f80}, and were on both sides; and in some stood out ten cubits ^{f81} which running furiously among the infantry, cut them to pieces in a terrible manner; of which Cyrus had in his army at first but an hundred, afterwards increased to three hundred ^{f82}; and yet here a petty prince of Canaan had nine hundred of them; and which Josephus ^{f83} has increased, beyond all belief, to the number of three thousand; which struck great

terror into the Israelites, and who therefore durst not attempt to shake off his yoke, but cried to the Lord for help:

and twenty years he mightily oppressed the children of Israel; as they increased their sins, and repeated their revolts, the Lord increased their oppressions, and continued them the longer; the first was only eight years, the next eighteen, and this twenty, and which was a very heavy one; the other being foreign princes that oppressed them, but this a Canaanitish king, an implacable enemy, and who doubtless used them the more severely for what they had done to his ancestors, killed his father or grandfather, burnt the city of Hazor, and destroyed the inhabitants of it in Joshua's time; and the servitude was the harder, and the more intolerable to the Israelites, that they were under a people whose land had been given them to possess, and whom they had expelled, and now were become subject to them.

Ver. 4. *And Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth*, etc.] Deborah was a name common to women with the eastern people, (see ^{GEN}Genesis 35:8); as Melissa, which is of the same signification with the Greeks, and both signify a "bee"; and to which Deborah answered in her industry, sagacity, and sweetness of temper to her friends, and sharpness to her enemies: she was a "prophetess", and foretold things to come, as the drawing of Sisera and his army to a certain place named by her, the victory that should be gained over him, and the delivery of him into the hands of a woman. Who Lapidoth was, or what is meant by the name, is not certain; most take it to be the name of her husband, which seems best, but who he was is not known; the Jews will have him to be the same with Barak, there being, as they think, some agreement in the names, Barak signifying lightning, and Lapidoth, lamps; but the whole context shows the contrary, that he was not her husband. Some render the words, "a woman of Lapidoth", taking it for the name of her native place or habitation; but where there was a place of this name no account can be given: some say she was so called from her employment before she was a prophetess and judge, making wicks for the lamps in the sanctuary, as Jarchi relates; and others take it to be expressive of her excellencies and virtues, which shone in her as lamps; the first sense is best:

she judged Israel at that time; toward the close of the twenty years' oppression under Jabin, being raised up of God as other judges were, and eminently endowed with gifts and grace; she endeavoured to convince the people of their sins, exhorted them to repentance, and was a means of

reforming them, and administering justice and judgment in all cases brought before her; and which Jabin might admit of, connive at, or take no notice of, she being a woman, of whose growing power and interest he had no jealousy.

Ver. 5. *And she dwelt under the palm tree of Deborah*, etc.] Her dwelling house was under a palm tree, or rather she sat under one, in the open air, when the people came to her with their cases, and it was called from hence after her name; though some, as Abarbinel observes, think it was so called, because Deborah, the nurse of Rebekah, was buried here, and which was near Bethel, one of the places next mentioned, (see ^{<ORIS>}Genesis 35:8),

between Ramah and Bethel in Mount Ephraim; which places were in the tribe of Benjamin in the borders of Ephraim, (see ^{<ORIS>}Joshua 16:2 18:22,25). The Jews conclude, from the situation of her, that she was a very opulent woman; the Targum is,

“she was dwelling in a city in Ataroth, Deborah was supported of her own; she had palm trees in Jericho, orchards in Ramah, olives producing oil in the valley, a place of watering in Bethel, and white dust in the kings mountain:”

and the children of Israel came up to her; from all parts of the land to the mount of Ephraim:

for judgment: to have her advice and counsel in matters of difficulty, and to have causes between contending parties heard and decided by her, so that she might be truly reckoned among the judges.

Ver. 6. *And she sent and called Barak the son of Abinoam out of Kedeshnaphtali*, etc.] So called to distinguish it from other places of the same name, this being in the tribe of Naphtali, and a city of refuge, (^{<ORIS>}Joshua 20:7); of which tribe and place Barak was, but who he and his father Abinoam were we have no other account; it seems clear from hence that he was not the husband of Deborah, as the Jews say, or they would have lived together; though, according to Ben Gersom, she lived separate from him, because of the spirit of prophecy that was upon her; however, in this mission and message to Barak she acted not as a private person, but as a judge in Israel, and as having and exercising public power and authority:

and said unto him; when come to her upon her summons:

hath not the Lord God of Israel commanded: can any doubt be made of it? can Barak in the least question it, as if she should say? the interrogation carries in it a strong affirmation, that the Lord had commanded, and that he had commanded by her mouth:

[saying], go and draw toward Mount Tabor; a mountain on the border of Zebulun, and between the tribes of Issachar and Naphtali, and so lay very convenient for the inhabitants of these tribes to meet here; of which (see Gill on “^{<OR2>}Joshua 19:22”); here Balak is directed to steer his course, and betake himself, and draw others with him by persuasive motives and arguments, urging the command of God by Deborah the prophetess, and the assurance given from the Lord by her of victory over their enemies, and deliverance from them; for otherwise the children of Israel were in great fear of Jabin, because of his large army, and iron chariots:

and take with thee ten thousand men of the children of Naphtali, and of the children of Zebulun? which were near at hand, and were the tribes which perhaps were most oppressed, and therefore more easily to be persuaded to engage in this expedition; and the number of them is fixed, as being sufficient for this service, and whose hearts the Lord would engage in it, so that Barak would have little to do but to move it to them, and enforce it with proper arguments; and as they would willingly offer themselves, as it appears afterwards they did, he was at once to take them with him to Mount Tabor, on the top of which was a plain of twenty six furlongs or about three miles, as Josephus ^{f84} says, surrounded by a wall; though modern travellers make it much less, on which, however, he might draw up his army of ten thousand men, and muster and exercise them.

Ver. 7. *And I will draw unto thee,* etc.] Which are the words of the Lord by Deborah, as are the preceding, signifying, that by the secret and powerful influence of his providence he would so order things, and the circumstances of them; and so powerfully operate on the mind and heart of the Canaanitish general as to engage him to come

to the river Kishon, Sisera the captain of Jabin’s army, with his chariots, and his multitude; called the ancient river, the river Kishon, (^{<OR2>}Judges 5:21). According to Mr. Maundrell ^{f85}, the fountain of it was near the valley, at the bottom of Mount Tabor, where Barak was to have his army in readiness to attack Sisera; and which river, according to the same traveller ^{f86} cuts his way down the middle of the plain of and then continuing his course close by the side of Mount Carmel, falls into the sea

at a place called with which agrees the account of Mr. Sandys^{f87}, says it flows from the mountains of Tabor and Hermon, and, gliding by the north skirts of Carmel, discharges itself into the sea. This river is supposed to be the Chorsaeus of Ptolemy^{f88}: hither the Lord in his providence would incline the mind of Sisera to come with his large army and chariots, and give Barak an opportunity to fall upon him:

and I will deliver him into thine hand; not his person only, but his numerous hosts, and his nine hundred chariots.

Ver. 8. *And Barak said unto her*, etc.] To Deborah, after she had delivered the words of the Lord unto him:

if thou wilt go with me, then I will go; which showed faith in the word of the Lord, for which he is commended, and a readiness to do the will of God, and courage to engage in such a work with a powerful adversary, and is therefore reckoned among the heroes for faith, (³¹¹²Hebrews 11:32);

but if thou wilt not go with me, [then] I will not go; which though it might discover some weakness in him, yet showed the high opinion he had of Deborah as a judge of Israel, and prophetess of the Lord; being desirous that he might have her with him to pray to God for him, to give him advice and counsel on any emergency, she being as the oracle God; and whereby he testified his regard to the Lord, and to his presence, which he concluded he should have, the prophetess being with him; and more especially his reason for insisting on her going with him might be to prevail upon the inhabitants of Naphtali and Zebulun to go with him, who he might fear would not believe him, or pay any regard to his words, and be in dread of engaging with the enemy, unless she was present; which he supposed would satisfy them as to the mind of God in it, and animate them, and give them heart and spirit.

Ver. 9. *And she said, I will surely go with thee*, She made no hesitation about it, but agreed at once to go with him for his encouragement; perceiving some degree of weakness in him, and yet an hearty and sincere inclination to engage in the work proposed, and that this might be no hinderance, she readily assents to it: adding,

notwithstanding the journey thou takest; the way or course he steered, the methods he took in insisting on it that she should go with him:

shall not be for thine honour; as a general of an army, who is commonly solicitous to have the whole glory of an action:

for the Lord shall sell Sisera into the hand of a woman; meaning either herself, for she being judge of Israel, and going along with him, would have the glory of the victory ascribed to her, as usually is to the principal person in the army; and so it would be said in future time, that the Lord delivered Sisera and his army, not into the hand of Barak, but into the hand of Deborah, whereby he would not have all the honour which otherwise he would have, if she went not with him; or else Jael, Heber's wife, is meant, into whose hands Sisera did fall, and by whom he was slain; but this seems to have no connection with Deborah's going or not going with him, it did not depend upon that one way or another; unless it can be thought that thus it was ordered in Providence as a rebuke of his diffidence and weakness, that because he would not go without a woman, Sisera should fall not into his hands, but into the hands of a woman; and if so, this is a clear instance of Deborah's having a spirit of prophecy, and of a prediction of a future contingent event:

and Deborah arose, and went with Barak to Kedesh; that is, they went together from the palm tree between Ramah and Bethel in Mount Ephraim, to Kedesh in Mount Naphtali, in order to raise the ten thousand men that were to fight with Sisera.

Ver. 10. *And Barak called Zebulun and Naphtali to Kedesh*, etc.] This he did either by the sound of a trumpet, as Ehud did, or by sending messengers to them to collect ten thousand men from among them, which they accordingly did, and came to him in Kedesh:

and he went up with ten thousand men at his feet; they following him up to Mount Tabor cheerfully and readily, being all footmen; for the Israelites had no cavalry, and yet got the victory over Sisera's army, which, according to Josephus^{f89}, had ten thousand horses in it:

and Deborah went up with him; and his ten thousand footmen, to the top of Mount Tabor, to encourage him and them with her presence, and give her best advice when to descend and engage the enemy.

Ver. 11. *Now Heber the Kenite*, etc.] A descendant of Kain, a principal man among the Midianites; the Targum calls him the Salmaean:

[which was] of the children of Hobab the father in law of Moses; who came along with the children of Israel through the wilderness into the land of Canaan, and first settled about Jericho, and then removed into the wilderness of Judah, (^{<0016>}Judges 1:16);

had severed himself from the Kenites; which dwelt in the said wilderness; to whom he belonged when this separation was made, and on what account is not certain. Abarbinel thinks that it was done now, and with a design to help Israel, that hearing Barak was gone up to Mount Tabor, and seeing Sisera prepared to fight with him, he made as if he was disgusted with his own people, and separated from them, that Jabin, with whom he was at peace, might the more confide in him; when it was out of love to Israel, and with a view to assist them, as occasion should offer, that he removed; but this is not very likely, as these Kenites were a people that kept themselves from meddling with military affairs as much as possible:

and pitched his tent unto the plain of Zaanaim, which [is] by Kedesh: for these people dwelt in tents as the Midianites did, from whence they sprung, and as the Scenite Arabs; and yet near to cities, as here, and in places fit for the pasturage of their cattle, in which they were chiefly employed, and here pitched upon a plain where were fields and meadows: the Targum calls it a plain of pools, where were pools of water for the watering of their flocks; or rather it might be rendered the oak or grove of oaks of Zaanaim, the same with Alonzaananim, (see Gill on "^{<0033>}Joshua 19:33"). This place lay between Harosheth of the Gentiles, from whence Sisera came, and Mount Tabor, where Barak was. This little piece of history is inserted here, partly to account for it that there should be any Kenites here, when we are told before they settled in the wilderness of Judah, and partly on account of the following narrative of Sisera being slain by this man's wife.

Ver. 12. *And they showed Sisera*, etc.] Either some of the Canaanites that dwelt near Tabor, or some spies that Sisera had out; though some think the Kenites told him, who were at peace with Jabin, (^{<0017>}Judges 4:17); yet whether out of good will or ill will cannot be said: however, so it was ordered by the providence of God, that by some means or another Sisera should be informed

that Barak the son of Abinoam was gone up to Mount Tabor; and no doubt at the same time he was told the number of men that went with him; from whence he might well conclude, that such a warlike man, with such a force collected together, and having posted himself in an high and strong

mountain, must have some design to cause a revolt of Israel from Jabin his prince.

Ver. 13. *And Sisera gathered together all his chariots*, etc.] Or “therefore” he gathered them together, which might lie some in one place, and some in another, for the better quartering of the men that belonged to them:

[even] nine hundred chariots of iron; and which, as before observed, are magnified by Josephus, and made to be three thousand;

and all the people that [were] with him; his soldiers, Jabin’s army, of which he was captain, and are called a multitude, (^{<0047>}Judges 4:7); and which, the above writer says ^{f90}, consisted of three hundred thousand foot, and ten thousand horse, besides the iron chariots: these he collected together, and brought with him,

from Harosheth of the Gentiles; the place where he resided with his army, (^{<0042>}Judges 4:2);

unto the river of Kishon; which was near Mount Tabor, the rendezvous of Barak and his men, (see ^{<0046>}Judges 4:6,7).

Ver. 14. *And Deborah said unto Barak, up*, etc.] Not go up higher for they were upon the top of a mountain; but rise, bestir thyself, prepare for battle, put the army in rank and file, and march and meet the enemy without delay:

for this [is] the day in which the Lord hath delivered Sisera into thine hand; by a spirit of prophecy she knew this was the precise day, the exact time in which it was the will of God this deliverance should be wrought; and she speaks of it as if it was past, because of the certainty of it, and the full assurance she had of it, and Barak might have; nor is what she says any contradiction to what she had said before, that Sisera should be sold or delivered into the hands of a woman, (^{<0049>}Judges 4:9); for both were true, Sisera first fell into the hands of Jael, a woman, and then into the hands of Barak, and into the hands of both on the same day:

is not the Lord gone out before thee? it was manifest he was, at least to Deborah, who was fully assured of it, and therefore it became Barak and his men, and great encouragement they had, to follow, since as the Lord went before them as their Generalissimo, they might be sure of victory:

perhaps there might be some visible appearance, some shining lustre and splendour of the Shekinah, or divine Majesty; the Targum is,

“is not the angel of the Lord gone out before thee, to prosper thee?”

so Barak went from Mount Tabor, and ten thousand men after him; no mention is made of Deborah’s coming down with them, perhaps she stayed on the mountain till the battle was over: nor might Barak be urgent upon her now to go with him, being confident of success, and having all the ends answered by her presence he could wish for.

Ver. 15. *And the Lord discomfited Sisera and all [his] chariots, and all [his] host*, etc.] Frightened them, as the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions, or disturbed them with a noise and tumult, as the word signifies; with a noise in the heavens, which were in their ears, as Abarbinel observes, like the noise of a large army, as was the case of the Syrians, (^{<12076>}2 Kings 7:6); and they saw, he says, horses and chariots of fire, and the like, which terrified them; and all this he supposes was done before Barak descended from the mountain, so that he had nothing to do when he came but to pursue and kill, whereby it plainly appeared it was the Lord’s doing. Josephus^{f91} says there was a great tempest of rain and hail, and the wind blew the rain in their faces, which so blinded their eyes, that their slings and arrows were of no use to them; and they that bore armour were so benumbed, that they could not hold their swords. Something of this kind is intimated by Deborah in her song, (^{<0751>}Judges 5:20); and this was accompanied or followed by a slaughter

with the edge of the sword before Barak; the fright and dread they were put into was increased by the appearance of Barak, who fell upon them in their confusion, and cut them to pieces:

so that Sisera lighted down off [his] chariot, and fled away on his feet; being very probably swift of foot; and besides thought it safest to quit his chariot, which in the confusion was in danger of being run against by others; as also he might judge he should not be so easily discerned who he was when on foot, as a common soldier, as in his splendid chariot; and this he might do in his fright, not considering his horses were swifter than he: thus Homer represents a Trojan warrior leaping out of his chariot to escape Diomedes, and another as doing the same to get clear of Achilles^{f92}.

Ver. 16. *But Barak pursued after the chariots, and after the host, unto Harosheth of the Gentiles, etc.*] The place from whence they came, and to which they endeavoured to escape: but he followed them, so close all that way, and made such havoc of them, that

all the host of Sisera fell upon the edge of the sword, [and] there was not a man left; no, not one, excepting Sisera, as in (^{<00417>}Judges 4:17); or “even to one”¹⁹³, as in the original text; not one escaped to Hazor to acquaint Jabin of the loss of his army. Philo Byblius says, that nine hundred and ninety seven thousand of Sisera’s army were slain.

Ver. 17. *Howbeit, Sisera fled away on his feet, etc.*] Got off, and made his escape

to the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite; before spoken of, (^{<00411>}Judges 4:11); and he made to that, because he might think himself safer in a tent than in a town; and especially in the tent of a woman, where he might imagine no search would be made; for women of note, in those times, had separate tents, (see ^{<01245>}Genesis 24:67); and the rather he made his escape hither for a reason that follows:

for [there was] peace between Jabin the king of Hazor and the house of Heber the Kenite; which Jabin might the more readily come into, because these were not Israelites, nor did they make any claim to the country, and lived only in tents, and attended their flocks, and were a quiet people, and not at all disposed to war; and it might be so ordered by the providence of God, as a rebuke to the Israelites for their sins, when those who were only proselytes kept close to the worship of God, and so enjoyed liberty, peace, and prosperity.

Ver. 18. *And Jael went out to meet Sisera, etc.*] Seeing him coming, and knowing him full well, she stepped forward towards him, to invite him into her tent: some think she was looking out, that if she saw Israelite in distress to take him in; and very probably had been some time at her tent door, to inquire the battle went, and which, no doubt, living so near Kedesh, she knew was expected:

and said unto him, turn in, my lord; that is, into her tent: and she addresses him with the title of “lord”, for the sake of honour, having been general of a large army; and not because her husband was a servant, and in subjection to him, as Abarbinel suggests:

turn in to me, fear not; she repeats the invitation, to show she was hearty and sincere, and that he had nothing to fear from her, nor in her house; and it may be at first she had no thought of doing what she afterwards did to him, it put into her heart after this:

and when he had turned in unto her in the tent; and laid himself down upon the ground, being weary:

she covered him with a mantle; either to hide him, should any search be made for him, or it may be to keep him from catching cold, being in a sweat through his flight, and being also perhaps inclined to sleep through weariness. The word for a mantle, according to Kimchi, signifies such a garment which has locks of wool on both sides of it, a sort of rug, and so very fit to cover with, and keep warm. So David de Pomis^{f94} describes it, as having locks and threads hanging down here and there.

Ver. 19. *And he said unto her, give me, I pray thee, a little water to drink, for I am thirsty*, etc.] Which might be occasioned by the heat of the battle, and by the heat of the day, and by heat in running; he asks for a little water, that being very desirable by persons athirst. Some think he did not ask for wine, because he knew the Kenites did not drink any, and so of course kept none in their tents; but though this was the custom of the Rechabites, who were the same with the Kenites, (^{248B}Jeremiah 35:8); yet it is very probable this custom had not yet obtained among them, since it was enjoined by Jonadab their father, who lived in the times of Jehu, (²⁰⁵2 Kings 10:15);

and she opened a bottle of milk, and gave him to drink; which she did either out of courtesy, being a better liquor, or with design to throw him into a sleep, which milk inclines to, making heavy, as all the Jewish commentators observe; though Josephus^{f95} has no authority to say, as he does? that the milk she gave him was bad and corrupt:

and covered him: again, after he had taken a draught of milk, which it seems she poured into a dish with the cream on it, (see ⁴⁸⁵Judges 5:25).

Ver. 20. *And he said unto her, stand in the door of the tent*, etc.] This he said, not in an imperious way, as some think, but by entreaty:

and it shall be, when any man shall come and inquire of thee; seeing her at the door, and where he desired she would stand to prevent their coming into the tent:

and say, is there any man here? any besides what belongs to the family? or any of Sisera's army?

that thou shalt say, no; there is no man; but to this she made no answer that is recorded.

Ver. 21. *Then Jael, Heber's wife, took a nail of the tent,* etc.] When she perceived he was fast asleep, and it being now put into her heart to kill him, having an impulse upon her spirit, which she was persuaded, by the effect it had upon her, that it was of God; not filling her with malice and revenge, but a concern for the glory of God, the interest of religion, and the good of Israel, she took this method to effect the death of this enemy of God, and his people; having no arms in the house, for the Kenites used none, she took up an iron pin, with which her tent was fastened to the ground:

and took a hammer in her hand; which perhaps she knew full well how to handle, being used to drive the pins of the tents into the ground with it:

and went softly unto him; lest she should awake him

and smote the nail into his temples: as he lay on one side, these being the tenderest part of the head, from whence they have their name in the Hebrew language, and into which therefore a nail, or iron pin, might be more easily driven:

and fastened it into the ground; she smote the nail with such force and violence, that she drove it through both his temples into the ground on which he lay; and then, as it seems, from (^{<OR>}Judges 5:26); cut off his head, to make sure work of it:

for he was fast asleep and weary; and so heard not; when she came to him:

so he died; not in the field of battle, but in a tent; not by the sword, but by a nail; not by the hand of a man, but of a woman, as Deborah foretold, (^{<OR>}Judges 4:9).

Ver. 22. *And, behold, as Barak pursued Sisera,* etc.] Knowing the way he took, at least as he supposed:

Jael came out to meet him; as she did Sisera, but with greater pleasure:

and said unto him, come, and I will show thee the man whom thou seekest; for she full well knew whom he was in pursuit of:

and when he came into her [tent]; at her invitation:

behold, Sisera lay dead, and the nail [was] in his temples: which she did not attempt to draw out, but left it there, that it might be seen in what way she had dispatched him.

Ver. 23. *So God subdued on that day Jabin king of Canaan before the children, of Israel.*] Freed Israel from subjection to him and delivered him into the hands of the Israelites; for Josephus¹⁹⁶ says, that as Barak went towards Hazor, he met Jabin, and slew him; who perhaps having heard of the defeat of his army under Sisera, came forth with another against Israel, which being overcome by them, he was slain, and the city utterly destroyed, as the same writer says; but by what follows it seems rather that the total conquest of him was afterwards and gradually accomplished.

Ver. 24. *And the hand of the children of Israel, prospered and prevailed against Jabin, the king of Canaan,* etc.] They continued their wars with him, in which they were successful:

until they had destroyed Jabin, king of Canaan; took him, and put him to death, and took his cities, and destroyed the inhabitants of them, and so acted more agreeably to the declared will of God, that they should not spare the Canaanites, but destroy them.

CHAPTER 5

INTRODUCTION TO JUDGES 5

This chapter contains a song of praise on account of the victories obtained over Jabin, and his kingdom; after an exhortation to praise is given, and kings excited to attend to it, the majestic appearance of God at Seir, on Sinai, is observed, to raise in the mind a divine veneration of him, (~~QRB~~Judges 5:1-5); then the miserable state and condition Israel was in before these victories, and therefore had the more reason to be thankful, (~~QRB~~Judges 5:6-8); the governors, and judges, and the people that were delivered, together with Deborah and Barak, are stirred up to rehearse the righteous acts of the Lord, and bless his name, (~~QRB~~Judges 5:9-13); and those who willingly engaged in the war are praised, and such who were negligent reprov'd, and some even curs'd, (~~QRB~~Judges 5:14-23); but Jael, Heber's wife, is particularly commended for her exploit in slaying Sisera, (~~QRB~~Judges 5:24-27); and the mother of Sisera, and her ladies, are represented as wondering at his long delay, and as assured of his having got the victory, (~~QRB~~Judges 5:28-30); and the song is concluded with a prayer for the destruction, of the enemies of the Lord, and for the happiness and glory of them that love him, (~~QRB~~Judges 5:31).

Ver. 1. *Then sang Deborah and Barak the son of Abinoam*, etc.] Deborah is first mentioned, because she was, as Kimchi says, the root or foundation of the work, the chief person in it, both in the direction of the war, and in the composition of this song; and indeed, as Ben Gersom observes, she alone composed it, (see ~~QRB~~Judges 5:7); and the verb is singular: "then sang Deborah"; and after her, and in her words, sung also Barak; he joined with her, not in making the song, but in singing it; and so likewise the people of Israel joined with her in singing it, as they did with Moses at the Red sea; and this song was sung

on that day; not on the precise day on which the victory was obtained over Sisera and his army, but on occasion of that memorable day, and what followed upon it:

saying; the following divine hymn or song, penned by Deborah, under divine inspiration, as the sublimity of the style, the fine and noble thoughts and sentiments that are in it, the beautiful and elegant phrases in which they are expressed, abundantly show; no Sappho, or any Grecian poetess, nor indeed any poet whatever, uninspired, being equal to the writer of this poem.

Ver. 2. *Praise ye the Lord for the avenging of Israel*, etc.] The injuries done to Israel by any of their enemies, and particularly what wrongs had been done them by Jabin, king of Canaan, for twenty years past; though some understand it of the vengeance God took on Israel for their sins; and though praise is not given directly for that, yet inasmuch as, when that was the case, there were some whose spirits were stirred up to engage voluntarily in the deliverance of them from the oppression of their enemies, it was matter of praise:

when the people willingly offered themselves: to go and fight for Israel against their enemies, particularly those of the tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali, (^{<OT518>}Judges 5:18); though not excluding others that joined, who could not have been forced to it, had they not freely offered themselves; and which was owing to the secret influence of divine Providence on their hearts, moving and drawing them to this service; and therefore praise was due to the Lord on this account, who works in the hearts of men both to will and to do, as in things spiritual and religious, so in things natural and civil.

Ver. 3. *Hear, O ye kings; give ear, O ye princes*, etc.] Not only the neighbouring ones, but all the kings and princes of the earth, far and near, then and in succeeding ages; Deborah desires and wishes that all potentates might hear of the wonderful works of God done for his people, that they might learn to know there is one that is higher than they, to whom all the amazing things done in the world are to be ascribed; and be cautious how they oppressed the people of God, since sooner or later he would avenge them on them. The Targum restrains this to the kings that came with Sisera and the governors with Jabin; but if there were any such, as it is not improbable there were, (see ^{<OT519>}Judges 5:19); yet it is most likely that they were slain with them: there are some, as Kimchi observes, who think this respects the people of Israel, who were all the sons of kings; but the first sense is best:

I, [even] I, will sing unto the Lord, I will sing [praise] to the Lord God of Israel: which are the words of Deborah particularly, and the repetitions serve to express how cordial, earnest, and vehement she was in her praise and thankfulness to God; thereby setting an example to others, encouraging them to the same practice, and directing persons of every rank and quality to give praise only to Jehovah, the self-existing, everlasting, and unchangeable Being; to him who is the Lord and God of Israel in a peculiar manner, and not to any of the gods of the Gentiles.

Ver. 4. *Lord, when thou wentest out of Seir, when thou marchedst out of the fields of Edom,* etc.] Here properly begins the song, what goes before being but a preface to it; and it begins with an apostrophe to the Lord, taking notice of some ancient appearances of God for his people, which were always matter of praise and thankfulness; and the rather are they taken notice of here, because of some likeness between them and what God had now wrought; and this passage refers either to the giving of the law on Sinai, as the Targum and Jarchi; (see ^{<0631>}Deuteronomy 33:2); or rather, as Aben Ezra, Kimchi, and others, to the Lord's going before Israel, after they had encompassed the land of Edom, and marched from thence towards the land of Canaan, when they fought with Sihon and Og, kings of the Amorites, and conquered them; which struck terror into all the nations round about them, and the prophecies of Moses in his song began to be fulfilled, (^{<0254>}Exodus 15:14,15); and which dread and terror are expressed in the following figurative phrases:

the earth trembled; and the like figure Homer ^{f97} uses at the approach of Neptune, whom he calls the shaker of the earth, perhaps borrowed from hence; it may design the inhabitants of it, the Amorites, Moabites, Edomites, Philistines, Canaanites, and others:

and the heavens dropped, the clouds also dropped water; which, as it may literally refer to the storm and tempest of rain that might be then as now, (see ^{<0045>}Judges 4:15), so may figuratively express the panic great personages, comparable to the heavens and the clouds in them were thrown into, when their hearts melted like water, or were like clouds dissolved into it.

Ver. 5. *The mountains melted from before the Lord,* etc.] The inhabitants of them, through fear, the Lord going before Israel in a pillar of cloud and fire, and delivering mighty kings and their kingdoms into their hand:

[even] that Sinai from before the Lord God of Israel; or, “as that Sinai”, the note of similitude being wanting; and the sense is, the mountains melted, just as the famous mountain Sinai in a literal sense did, when it trembled and quaked at the presence of God on it; the tokens of it, the fire and smoke, thunders, lightnings, and tempests there seen and heard; and which being observed, would call to mind the benefit Israel then received, which required praise and thankfulness, as well as would serve to express the awe and reverence of God due unto him.

Ver. 6. *In the days of Shamgar, the son of Anath*, etc.] Of whom (see ^{<ORBI>}Judges 3:31); who succeeded Ehud as a judge, but lived not long, and did not much; at least wrought not a perfect deliverance of the children of Israel; but during his time till now, quite through the twenty years of Jabin’s oppression, things were as they are after described:

in the days of Jael; the wife of Heber the Kenite, spoken of in the preceding chapter, (^{<ORHI>}Judges 4:17-22), who appears to be a woman of masculine spirit, and endeavoured to do what good she could to Israel, though not a judge among them, as Jarchi suggests; and who before this affair of Sisera had signalized herself by some deeds of hers in favour of Israel, and against their enemies; yet far from putting a stop to the outrages committed; for in the times of both these persons,

the highways were unoccupied, and the travellers walked through byways; the public roads were so infested with thieves and robbers, who stopped all they met with, and robbed them of what they had, that travellers and merchants with their carriages were obliged either to quit their employments, and not travel at all; or, if they did, were obliged to go in private roads, and roundabout ways, to keep clear of those rapparees the highways and public roads abounded with.

Ver. 7. *The inhabitants of the villages ceased*, etc.] Not only did those Canaanitish robbers go upon the highway, and robbed all they met with, which made travelling difficult and dangerous; but entered into the villages and unwallied towns, and broke into houses and plundered them; so that the inhabitants of them were obliged to quit their dwellings, and go into the fortified cities for security; by which means the villages were left empty, and in time fell to ruin, and ceased:

they ceased in Israel: for they were the villages which belonged to the Israelites that were plundered, and not those that belonged to any of the Canaanites; and these were the unhappy circumstances Israel were under

until that I Deborah arose, that I arose a mother in Israel; until it pleased God to raise her up, and endow her in a very wonderful and extraordinary manner with gifts qualifying her to be a nursing mother to Israel, to teach and instruct them in the mind and will of God, to administer judgement and justice to them, to protect and defend them, and in all which she discovered a maternal affection for them; and as a good judge and ruler of a people may be called the father of them, so she, being a woman, is with propriety called a mother in Israel, having an affectionate concern for them as her children: now, till she arose, there was no perfect salvation and deliverance wrought for them, since the death of Ehud, even throughout the days of Shamgar and Jael; which is observed to excite praise and thankfulness on the present occasion, which hereby became the more illustrious.

Ver. 8. *They chose new gods,* etc.] That is, Israel, as most of the Jewish commentators interpret it; for the verb is singular, and Israel agrees well with it: this they did after the death of Joshua; it refers to their first idolatry, begun by Micah, (^{<0770E>}Judges 17:1) they chose other gods than the true God; Baalim and Ashtaroth they are said to serve, (^{<0721E>}Judges 2:11,13 3:7), and besides the gods of the Canaanites and Phoenicians, they sought after and introduced new ones from other places, or the same may be meant; since all besides the true God, the eternal Jehovah, the Ancient of days, and everlasting King, are new gods that lately sprung up: the Arabic and Syriac versions are,

“God chose a new king;”

so Ben Gersom; to perfect this wonder; for not only Sisera and his army were drawn to the gates of Israel to a proper place to fall in, but the victory was not obtained by Israel by their own force and strength; for they had no weapons of war, not a shield nor a spear, but for a very few men, but it was the Lord that fought for them in a new way; the former sense seems best, and agrees with what follows:

then was war in the gates; when they fell into idolatry, then God suffered the judgment of war to come upon them, even into the gates of their fortified cities, which were the security of them, and where were their courts of judicature, but by war disturbed and made to cease:

was there a shield or spear seen among forty thousand in Israel? though the number of the Israelites were several hundred thousands, yet there were not to be seen among them shields and spears sufficient for 40,000; or not one among 40,000 was armed; which was owing either to their negligence and sloth in not providing themselves with arms, or not taking care of them in a time of peace; so that when war came into their gates, they had nothing to defend themselves with, or annoy their enemies; or to their cowardice, not daring to take up a shield or spear in their own defence; or to the enemy, Jabin king of Canaan, having disarmed them, that they might not be able to make a revolt, from him, and recover their liberties. Ben Gersom refers it to the times of Joshua, when there was no need of a shield and spear among the 40,000 of the children of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh, that came over Jordan with them, since God fought for them; and the Targum seems to understand it of Sisera's army, that came against Israel with shields, spears, and swords; and makes the number of them to be in all 300,000, which is just the number of foot soldiers Josephus makes his army to consist of; and yet, though so numerous and so well armed, could not stand before Barak with 10,000 men only; (see Gill on "^{<OR47>}Judges 4:17"), the words rather refer to the civil war of the Benjamites with the Israelites, when 40,000 of the latter were killed, which was before the times of Deborah, (^{<OR21>}Judges 20:21,25).

Ver. 9. *My heart is towards the governors of Israel*, etc.] Most of the Jewish commentators interpret this of their wise men and Scribes, who were willing to teach the people the law and the commandments, even in times of trouble, and did not cease from doing it on that account, and therefore Deborah praises them for it; so the Targum; but Kimchi and Ben Melech understand by them the great men of the nation, their nobles and rulers, who enacted good laws and statutes; or at least took care to see that the good laws they had were put in execution; and these had a share in the affections and good wishes of Deborah, and that chiefly for the following reason:

that offered themselves willingly among the people; to go along with them, and march at the head of them, to fight Sisera and his army; thereby setting a good example, and animating the people to battle, and inspiring them with courage and intrepidity; when they saw their chiefs and the heads of them exposing their lives with them in defence of their country, and the rights of it:

bless ye the Lord; for giving them such spirits, to engage so willingly in this service, and for giving them success in it.

Ver. 10. *Speak, ye that ride on white asses*, etc.] Though in some countries, as in ours, it is reckoned disgraceful to ride on asses; so Leo Africanus^{f98} makes mention of a preacher in Africa, who was called the ass rider; because he was continually, sitting on an ass; yet in Judea, where there were no horses, or very few, it was accounted honourable; so it was in the time of our Lord; for his riding on an ass to Jerusalem was not mean and disgraceful, but honourable and glorious: and so it certainly was in those early times of the judges; for we read of the sons of two of them, which were very numerous, that rode on asses' colts, (~~f100~~Judges 10:4 ~~f124~~Judges 12:14), and it seems that white asses were the most valuable, and chiefly used by great personages. The ass in the Hebrew language has its name from redness, that being the usual colour of them in those parts; and hence they were hateful to the Egyptians, because that their Typhon was of that colour^{f99}; but there were some that were white, as there are wild ones now of that colour. A traveller^{f100} in those parts in the beginning of the last century tells us, that on the banks of the Euphrates they beheld every day great droves of wild beasts, as wild asses "all white", etc. The word we translate "white" is "zechorot", and perhaps may describe the same animal the Ethiopians call "zecora", and some "zebra"; said to excel in beauty all four footed creatures in the whole world. It is an animal of the size of a mule, found in the woods beyond Abyssinia, is easily tamed, and is the frequent and chief present of the kings of that country; about its loins is a circle of a black colour, in the form of a girdle, which is followed with more on each side, according to the part of the body, some broader, others narrower, both black and white, or of an ash colour, so neat that they seem to exceed the art of the most eminent painter; its only deformity are its ears, which are long; hence it is called by the Portuguese the wild ass, though wrongly; of what value and esteem it was appears from the large price it has been sold for; one, that was the gift of a king to a Turkish governor, was sold to an Indian for 2,000 pieces of Venetian money, to make a present of to the great Mogor, king of the Indians^{f101}, which was the value of nine hundred pounds. Those that rode on these creatures were the princes and nobles of Israel; though they are generally interpreted by the Jewish commentators of merchants that rode from place to place about business; and these are called upon to speak of the wonderful things God had done for Israel, in freeing them from the bondage of the Canaanites, so

that these nobles or merchants might ride about the country without any fear; and to discourse of them to others, and in their meditations give praise to God on account of them:

ye that sit in judgment; which seems to describe judges upon the bench, sitting to hear and try causes, and pass righteous judgment; these are also exhorted to give thanks to the Lord, that they were now restored to their seats of judgment, from which they were driven; or where they could not peaceably exercise their office, which they now might and did: Cocceius renders the word “on measures”, as if these were persons that presided over measures, and took care that they were just and right. Though Kimchi and Ben Melech say, that Middin, which we render “in judgment”, is either the name of a city in the book of Joshua, (see Gill on “~~15:61~~ Joshua 15:61”), or the name of a way ^{f102} well known, in which they were afraid to go because of the enemy, but now went in it with safety, and therefore had reason to speak well of God, and praise his name; but this is rather intended in the next clause:

and walk by the way; the common people that travelled from place to place on business, who before were obliged to leave the public roads, and go in byways, (~~10:6~~ Judges 5:6) but now could travel in the common road without fear, and therefore ought to be thankful.

Ver. 11. *They that are delivered from the noise of archers in the place of drawing water*, etc.] Meaning either the army of the Israelites, delivered from the archers of Sisera’s host at the river Kishon; or such persons, as maidens and others, that went out of the cities to fountains and wells of water, to fetch water from thence for their necessities, but were frightened by the noise of archers that shot at them; or shepherds who led their flocks to water them there, but were repulsed or slain by archers that lay in wait in woods or lurking places thereabout; but now the country being cleared of them, they could without fear have recourse to these places of drawing water for their flocks or other uses, which laid them under obligation to do as directed in the next clause. The words are by some rendered,

“because of the voice of those that number (sheep and other cattle) at the places of drawing water ^{f103} :”

which now they could do, being a time of peace; and for which the persons before described ought to be thankful:

there shall they rehearse the righteous acts of the Lord ; coming to those places again, it would put them in mind to what hazards and dangers they had been exposed formerly by the enemy, but now were freed from; and this would lead them to discourse of and repeat the righteous dealings of God in taking vengeance on their enemies and delivering them from them:

even the righteous acts towards the inhabitants of his villages in Israel ; they being now in no danger of having their houses broke open, and their substance plundered as before, <0007>Judges 5:7 then shall the people of the Lord go down to the gates; either of their enemies, pursuing them unto them, as they did, <0016>Judges 4:16 or rather to the gates of their own cities, where they had now free egress and regress; and those that were in the fortified cities, who had fled thither from the villages because of the rapine of the enemy, now would go down to the gates, and pass through them, and return to their villages again; or else the meaning is, that the people would now frequent as formerly the courts of judicature held in the gates of their cities, to have justice done them, and be in no fear of being disturbed by the enemy, as before.

Ver. 12. *Awake, awake, Deborah, awake, awake, utter a song* , etc.] Either perceiving some languor and remissness in her spirits, while she was delivering this song, and therefore arouses herself to attend to this service with more ardour and zeal; or rather finding herself more impressed with a sense of the great and good things the Lord had done for Israel, calls upon her soul to exert all its powers in celebrating the praises of the Lord, and therefore repeats the word awake so often as she does:

arise, Barak, and lead thy captivity captive, thou son of Abinoam ; for though the whole army of Sisera was destroyed, that not a man was left, <0016>Judges 4:16 yet as Barak pursued to Harosheth of the Gentiles, many there and in other places which fell into his hands, that belonged to Jabin, might be taken captive by him; and though the Canaanites were to be slain, yet they might first be led captive in triumph; and besides, there might be some of other nations that were taken by him in this war; see <0018>Psalm 68:18 .

Ver. 13. *Then he made him that remaineth* , etc.] The people of Israel that remained, who had been under the yoke of Jabin king of Canaan, under which many of the Israelites very probably died; but now the few mean and miserable that remained were raised to an high estate, and made to

have dominion over the nobles among the people ; that is, over the Canaanitish nobility, that were among the people under Jabin; but he being conquered by the Israelites, his people and even his nobles became subject to them; and this was the Lord's doing, as the following words show:

the Lord made me have dominion over the mighty ; that is, Deborah, to whom God gave dominion either over the mighty ones of Israel, being raised up to be their judge; or over the mighty Canaanites, she having a concern in the conquest of them and triumph over them, through her direction, advice, command, and presence, though a woman.

Ver. 14. *Out of Ephraim was there a root of them against Amalek* , etc.] In this and some following verses, Deborah makes mention of the tribes that were siding and assisting in this war, and of those that were not; and begins with Ephraim, where she herself dwelt, ^{<0045>}Judges 4:5 who was the root, foundation, and source of this expedition, that under a divine influence directed, animated, and encouraged to it; and by whom, and from whence, a detachment was sent against the Amalekites, who upon all occasions were ready to assist the Canaanites, and now were about to do it; and to prevent their junction, a party was sent from Ephraim, and by the Ephraimites; though the Targum, and the Jewish commentators in general, refer this to a past action, which Deborah here commemorates and celebrates; and understand by "root", Joshua, who was of that tribe, and who discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword, ^{<0273>}Exodus 17:13

after thee, Benjamin, among thy people ; which the same Targum and the same writers interpret of a future fact, and as spoken of by way of prophecy; and suppose that Saul of the tribe of Benjamin is meant, and the people of Benjamin, the two hundred thousand footmen he took with him, and fought against Amalek, and destroyed them, ^{<0950>}1 Samuel 15:1-9 but it is rather to be understood of the tribe of Benjamin in general, which at this time went out against Amalek, to prevent their giving any assistance to Jabin king of Canaan, and who were followed in it by a party of the Ephraimites; so that Benjamin has the greatest honour given it, partly as it was first in this affair, and partly as it was general, the whole tribe engaged, whereas only a few in Ephraim, and those stimulated by the example of Benjamin:

out of Machir came down governors ; Machir was the only son of Manasseh, and therefore this must respect that tribe, half of which was

settled on the other side Jordan, and to which Jarchi and other Jewish writers ascribe this, and suppose it refers to the princes and great men of it, who subdued the Amorites, and took the sixty cities of Argob in the time of Moses; though Kimchi and Ben Gersom understand it of some of them that came from thence to assist in this war; but it is clearly suggested in ^{<0157>}Judges 5:17 that they abode beyond Jordan, and gave no assistance at all; it therefore must be understood of the half tribe of Manasseh, within Jordan, from whence came great personages, with a number of men no doubt along with them, to lend an helping hand against the Canaanites, or to be employed as assistants under Barak in this expedition:

and out of Zebulun they that handle the pen of the writer ; which being a maritime tribe, and employed in trade and navigation, had many clerks famous for their readiness in handling the pen; but these through a zeal for the common cause dropped their pens, and took to the sword, in vindication of the rights and liberties of themselves and their brethren; for which they are justly commended.

Ver. 15. *And the princes of Issachar were with Deborah* , etc.] On Mount Tabor, whither they came to offer themselves to join in the war against Jabin; or to assist with their counsels, the men of this tribe being understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do, ^{<3123>}1 Chronicles 12:32

even Issachar : not the princes only, but the whole tribe also; so the Targum paraphrases it,

“the rest of the tribe of Issachar:”

and also Barak, he was sent on foot into the valley ; which was at the bottom of Mount Tabor, from whence he was sent down by Deborah, when Sisera’s army was come thither; and where he went cheerfully on foot at the head of his 10,000 men, to engage Sisera with his horse and chariots; and which latter were capable of doing great execution in the valley, by running among the foot, and cutting them in pieces with the scythes at the side of them; but Barak, fearless of danger, readily obeyed the command of the judge and prophetess, believing it was of God: or the words may be rendered, as by Noldius ^{f104}

as Issachar, so Barak; he was sent , etc. the one as the other, with equal readiness and cheerfulness, courage and intrepidity, descended the

mountain, at the order of Deborah, and took the field in the open plain, to engage with Sisera and his numerous host:

for the division of Reuben [there were] great thoughts of heart ; either for their divisions among themselves in their own councils, some being for going over Jordan to assist their brethren the Israelites against Jabin, and free them from his yoke, pitying their distressed state and condition; and others were for keeping at home, and taking care of their flocks, and not intermeddle in the quarrel; judging it to be most for their worldly peace and profit to observe a neutrality: by reason of which divisions no assistance was given. Or for their divisions and separations from their brethren the Israelites, from whom they were not only separated by the river Jordan, but in their affections to them, and regards for them; keeping at a distance from them, when their help was required: and this conduct of theirs caused many thoughts of heart in Deborah and Barak, in the princes and people of Israel, who could not well understand the reason of it; and which caused much grief and uneasiness of mind, that so powerful a tribe, and who had been assisting to them in the conquest of the land, and lay convenient to help them, yet should be so very indifferent to them.

Ver. 16. *Why abodest thou among the sheepfolds, to hear the bleatings of the flocks* ? etc.] This tribe abounded with flocks and herds, and therefore chose the country on the other side Jordan, as suitable for them; and now, at this critical juncture, they judged it wisest, and their best policy, to abide by them, and the care of them; lest by intermeddling, should Jabin prevail, he might be provoked to fall upon them, and take them from them; wherefore the bleatings of their flocks, and the whistlings of the shepherds that kept them, sounded louder in their ears, and more engrossed their attention, than the groans and cries of Israel under oppression; or than the soundings of the trumpet, the alarm of war, or the loud calls of Deborah and Barak; being under the influence of a carnal worldly spirit, and wanting affection and sympathy towards their brethren, about which Deborah here expostulates with them:

for the divisions of Reuben [there were] great searchings of heart; this is repeated to show how much the prophetess, the general of the army, the princes and people, were affected with this conduct of the tribe of Reuben; it gave them much pain and uneasiness, occasioned many inquiries, caused much discourse and conversation, and put them upon thinking, and greatly exercised their minds, what should be the meaning of their behaving after

this manner. Cocceius takes these words to be spoken ironically, and renders them,

“at the rivers of Reuben were great men in searchings of heart;”

there were wisdom, prudence, counsel, searching, and discerning of spirits, preferring their flocks to the people of God.

Ver. 17. *Gilead abode beyond Jordan*, etc.] A country which lay on the other side Jordan, and was given by Moses, half of it to the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the other half to the half tribe of Manasseh, ^{<RB12>}Deuteronomy 3:12,13 and being here distinguished from Reuben, it seems that not only that tribe, but also the tribe of Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh, on that side Jordan, came not to the help of Israel; but abode where they were, attending their flocks and herds, and preferring their own private profit to the public good; yet as Gilead was given to Machir, ^{<RB15>}Deuteronomy 3:15 and some are said to come out from thence to serve in this expedition, ^{<OS14>}Judges 5:14 some read the words, as Kimchi observes, with an interrogation, “did Gilead abide beyond Jordan?” no, he did not; though his situation was beyond it, as well as Reuben’s, yet he did not continue there, but came over to help his brethren; and so this is introduced to upbraid Reuben, and leave him without excuse, since he could as well have left his flocks as Gilead did, and come over to the help of his brethren as well as he:

and why did Dan remain in ships ? the Danites inhabiting Joppa, and other places bordering on the Mediterranean sea, attended their navigation and merchandise; and which they chose rather to do, than to appear in the field of battle in the behalf of their brethren; judging this to be a sufficient excuse, though the question put implies the contrary; according to the Targum, they were meditating a flight, and put their goods into ships to flee with them, should Sisera get the day:

Asher continued on the sea shore ; on the shore of the Mediterranean sea, attending traffic and business, and did not concern themselves at all in this war:

and abode in his trenches ; in his towns and cities, the walls of which had been broken down by the Canaanites, and remained unrepaired, nor were they suffered to repair them; and therefore excused themselves on this account from engaging in the war, being obliged to stay at home to keep and defend their cities; which were in such a ruinous and weak condition,

that the enemy might enter at any time: some render it, “in their creeks” ^{f105} bays and havens where they had much shipping, and which required their attendance.

Ver. 18. *Zebulun and Naphtali were a people*, etc.] These two tribes were chiefly concerned in this war; out of them were the 10,000 men that followed Barak, who willingly offered themselves, and were the most active and vigorous:

[that] jeoparded themselves unto the death; exposed them to the utmost danger, fearless of death itself: or reproached ^{f106} their lives; were careless of them, valued them not; they were not dear to them, but were ready to part with them freely, in the cause of liberty in which they were engaged:

in the high places of the field; on the top of Mount Tabor, where they were mustered, and from whence they beheld the vast host of Sisera surrounding them; and yet, with an undaunted bravery and courage, descended the hill to fight with them. The Vulgate Latin version reads, “in the country of Merome”; in the plains and fields of it, near which were the waters of Merom, where Joshua fought Jabin, a former king of Canaan, and supposed by some to be the same with Kishon here, ^{<6105>}Joshua 11:5 ^{<6819>}Psalm 83:9.

Ver. 19. *The kings came*, etc.] Who were with Sisera, as the Targum adds; unless Deborah can be thought to refer to the battle, supposed to be fought about the same place, between Joshua and the kings in confederacy with Jabin, ^{<6101>}Joshua 10:1,7

then fought the kings of Canaan in Taanach by the waters of Megiddo; the other kings of Canaan, which came into the assistance of Jabin, either in the times of Joshua; or rather which now joined Sisera’s army, in those places, which both belonged to Manasseh, but were in the tribe of Issachar, of which (see Gill on ^{<6171>}Joshua 17:11”) and were at some distance from each other, as appears by the villages and country around, and belonging to each; and such was the largeness of Sisera’s army, reinforced by those kings, that according to the Targum it reached from Taanach to Megiddo; the same is observed by the Jewish commentators; the waters of Megiddo are the same with the river Kishon, which ran near the city:

they took no gain of money; that is, either of Jabin king of Canaan, whom they came to serve; but freely engaged with him, and maintained their own troops, which they brought into the field, and had raised at their own

expense; but according to Kimchi the sense is, they took no money of the Israelites that fell into their hands, but slew them, would not save their lives, though they offered them money, being like the merciless Medes, ²³¹⁷Isaiah 13:17,18 but rather the meaning is, that whereas they came big with expectation of a large booty among the Israelites, they were disappointed, and obliged to flee without any.

Ver. 20. *They fought from heaven*, etc.] Either the angels of heaven, afterwards called stars; or the heavens, the elements, fought for Israel, and against Sisera; a violent storm of rain and hail falling at this time, which discomfited Sisera's army; (see Gill on "⁴⁰⁴⁵Judges 4:15") , or this victory was obtained in such a manner as plainly showed it was not of man, but of God from heaven; so the Targum,

“from heaven war was made with them;”

with the kings before mentioned; God fought against them, and no wonder they were conquered:

the stars in their courses fought against Sisera it seems as if it was in the night that this battle was fought, at least that the pursuit lasted till night, when the stars by their brightness and clear shining favoured the Israelites, and were greatly to the disadvantage of the Canaanites; unless it can be thought, as is by some, that the stars had an influence to cause a tempest of rain, hail, thunder, and lightnings, by which the army of Sisera was discomfited in the daytime, as before observed.

Ver. 21. *The river of Kishon swept them away*, etc.] To which Sisera's army was drawn, and where it was discomfited; and very probably many of them, in their confusion, endeavoured to make their escape by fording or swimming over the river, by which they were swept away and drowned, the waters of it at this time swelling in a miraculous manner, as Ben Gersom thinks; or were increased by the large showers of rain that fell, as some note from Josephus, though I find it not in him; however it is not improbable it might be the case; for our countryman Mr. Maundrell ^{f107} thus observed when he was at it;

“in the condition we saw it, its waters were low and inconsiderable; but passing along the side of the plain, we discovered the track of many lesser torrents falling down into it from the mountains, which must needs make it swell exceedingly upon sudden rains, as

doubtless it actually did at the destruction of Sisera's host,
 Judges Judges 5:21”

that ancient river, the river Kishon ; called ancient, either because it was from the beginning of the creation, and not cut by the art of men, as some rivers are; or because it was spoken of by poets and historians in ancient times; or because of famous exploits done here of old; so the Targum,

“the river where signs and mighty works were done for Israel of old.”

Some take the word Kedumim to be another name of the river, so called from its windings and turnings, and, as it were, meeting itself. So some travellers tell us ^{f108} the river Kedumim, the same with Kishon, is so called, because it meets itself, being by its meanders formed like a sling or noose, as Kishon signifies; it rises at Mount Tabor, and discharges itself into the Mediterranean sea, at the foot of Mount Carmel; so Hillerus ^{f109} says, Kishon signifies bending in manner of a snare, or net, or meander, and takes it to be the same with the Pagida of Pliny ^{f110}, which in the Greek tongue signifies the same:

O my soul, thou hast trodden down strength ; a strong and mighty army, through her prayers and supplication, advice and direction; or thou hast trodden with strength, that is, the river Kishon, as some Jewish interpreters understand it, who suppose that another miracle was wrought; that as the waters of the river swelled when the Canaanites attempted to escape over it, so it sunk and became fordable for Deborah and the Israelites; a miracle, as they suppose, somewhat similar to that at the Red sea.

Ver. 22. *Then were the horse hoofs broken by means of the pransings* , etc.] Either through the force of the waters of the river, where they pranced and plunged, and could have no standing; or through the swift haste they made to run away, striking the earth so quick, and with such force and vehemence, that their hoofs were broken thereby, especially on stony ground, and so their speed retarded:

the pransings of the mighty ones ; either their riders, princes, and great personages, who made them prance, leap, and run with great speed and force; or horses strong and mighty, being such as were selected for this purpose, and trained to war.

Ver. 23. *Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the Lord*, etc.] Not Barak, as the Targum and Jarchi, but Deborah herself said this under a spirit of prophecy, not from her own spirit in a revengeful way, but from the Spirit of God; or this was suggested to her by an angel, not a created, but the uncreated one, the Angel of the covenant, by whom she was inspired, and an impulse made by him on her to denounce a curse on Meroz; which some say was a star, Sisera's star; others the name of a mighty man ^{f111}, so Jarchi; but rather it is some name of a city or place near where the battle was fought, so Kimchi, Ben Gersom, and Ben Melech: some take Meroz to be the same with Merom, at the waters of which Joshua fought with Jabin, ^{<6105>}Joshua 11:5 and supposed to be the same with the waters of Megiddo, and the river Kishon, where this battle was fought; and Jerom ^{f112}, under the word Merom, observes, that there was in his time a village called Merrus, twelve miles from the city Sebaste near Dothaim, and that Meroz here is the name of a place is clear from what follows:

curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; or “curse cursing” ^{f113}; repeat it, give them curse upon curse, curse them most vehemently: the reason of which follows:

because they came not to the help of the Lord; that is, of the people of the Lord, whose cause was the Lord's; for though he stood in no need of their help, yet their negligence and neutrality were highly resented by him, and therefore repeated:

to the help of the Lord against the mighty; the mighty Canaanites, and their mighty kings, and mighty hosts; or “with the mighty” ^{f114}, Barak and his 10,000: now though others, who did not come into their assistance, are only discommended, being at a distance, yet those are cursed, being very near, and saw the peril their brethren were in, and yet would not lend an helping hand.

Ver. 24. *Blessed above women shall Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite be*, etc.] Under the same influence that Meroz was cursed, Jael is blessed, the one for not helping Israel in a public way, the other for doing it in a private manner; this blessing is pronounced, either in a way of prayer that it might be, or in a way of prophecy that it should be, and indeed in both:

blessed shall she be above the women in the tent; above all women that dwell in tents: this being a proper description of a woman, whose character it is to abide in her tent, dwell at home, and mind the business of her

family; and may have respect to the manly action she performed in her tent, equal, if not superior, to what was done in the field.

Ver. 25. *He asked water, and she gave him milk*, etc.] That is, Sisera asked it of her, as the Targum expresses it, when he turned into her tent:

she brought him fresh butter in a lordly dish; which signifies either the same, the milk with cream on it, for that is meant by butter; or having first taken off the cream, she gave him milk to drink, and then brought the cream in a dish for him to eat, and thereby the more incline him to sleep; and this she brought in a dish fit for any lord or nobleman to eat out of; in such a polite and courteous manner did she use him, so that he could have no suspicion of her having any ill design against him. R. Jonah, as Kimchi notes, interprets this of a dish of the mighty or lordly ones, of the shepherds, the principal of the flock, as they are called in ~~25:34~~ Jeremiah 25:34,35, out of which they had used to drink their milk, or eat their cream, and such an one was likely enough to be Jael's tent; from this Hebrew word "sepel", here used, seems to come the Latin word "simpucium" or "simpulum", used in things sacred, and which, according to Pliny^{f15}, was an earthen vessel; and so some of the Rabbins, as Kimchi observes, say, this was a new earthen vial; it is very probable it was a broad platter or dish fit for such an use.

Ver. 26. *She put her hand to the nail*, etc.] Her left hand, as the Septuagint, Arabic, and Vulgate Latin versions express it, and as appears by what follows; she having taken up a pin from her tent, with which it was fastened to the ground, she clapped it to the temples of Sisera:

and her right hand to the workman's hammer; in her right hand she took a hammer, such as carpenters, and such like workmen, make use of, and workman like went about her business she had devised, and was determined upon, being under a divine impulse, and so had no fear or dread upon her:

and with the hammer she smote Sisera; not that with the hammer she struck him on the head, and stunned him, but smote the nail she had put to his temples and drove it into them:

she smote off his head; after she had driven the nail through his temples, she took his sword perhaps and cut off his head, as David cut off Goliath's, after he had slung a stone into his forehead; though as this seems needless, nor is there any hint of it in the history of this affair, the meaning may only

be, that she struck the nail through his head, as the Septuagint, or broke his head, as the Targum:

when she had pierced and stricken through his temples ; that being the softest and tenderest part of the head, she drove the nail quite through them to the ground, ~~(002)~~Judges 4:21 .

Ver. 27 *At her feet he bowed, he fell, he lay down* , etc.] Perhaps at her first approach to him, and attempt to drive the nail, or at the blow she gave, he rose up, but she had done the business so effectually at the first stroke, that he dropped at once, and laid down his head again:

at her feet he bowed, he fell ; when she redoubled her blow:

where he bowed, there he fell down dead; and struggled and stirred no more; thus ingloriously did this general of a vast army die. This action is not otherwise to be justified, but by its being done through an impulse of the Spirit of God upon her, to take away the life of an implacable enemy of God's people; otherwise it might seem to be a breach of hospitality towards her guest she had invited in, and of the peace which subsisted between this general's prince and her husband; and therefore is not to be drawn into an example where there is no appearance of a divine warrant.

Ver. 28. *The mother of Sisera looked out at a window* , etc.] Which perhaps looked towards the high road, in which she expected Sisera to return in his chariot with his victorious army; and she was looking out for him, not through fear of any ill that had befallen him, or suspicion of misfortune, but through impatience to see him in triumph return, wreathed with laurels:

and cried through the lattice ; which is but another word for a window, which was not of glass, that being of a later invention, but made in lattice form, in a sort of network, full of little holes to let in air and light, and look out at; here she stood and cried with a very loud uneasy tone; the word signifies a sort of a groaning howling noise, discovering impatience and uneasiness; and so the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions render it, "she howled"; saying in a whining way,

why is his chariot so long in coming ? she did not doubt at all of victory, and concluded it would soon be obtained, and there would be very little trouble and difficulty in getting it, and therefore wondered his chariot was not in sight:

why tarry the wheels of his chariots ? the nine hundred he took with him, of the return of which she made no doubt, only was uneasy until they appeared, that she might be delighted with the glory of the triumph; the Targum is,

“why are the runners hindered, who should bring me a letter of the victories?”

Ver. 29. *Her wise ladies answered her* , etc.] Every one in their turn endeavouring to comfort her and make her easy. The Vulgate Latin version is,

“one that was wiser than the rest of his wives;”

but they seem rather to be her maids of honour, or ladies of her acquaintance, who were come to pay her a visit, and share in the pleasing sight they expected to have of Sisera:

yea, she returned answer to herself ; before they could well give theirs, she soon recollected herself what might be, and must be, the occasion of this delay; and this, according to the Targum, she made in her wisdom, what her great wisdom quickly suggested to her was certainly the case, and with which she comforted and quieted herself.

Ver. 30. *Have they not sped* ? etc.] Or “found” ^{f116} the enemy, Barak and his army, or the spoil of them? no doubt they have:

have they not divided the prey ? doubtless they have, which being large, and the captives many, has taken up much of their time to look over, and make an equal and proper division of, and that most certainly is the cause of the delay:

to every man a damsel or two ? or “a womb or two” ^{f117}, using both unchaste and contemptuous language ^{f118}, and pleasing themselves with the virgins of Israel being abused by the common soldiers, which was too frequently the case with the Heathens at gaining a victory:

to Sisera a prey of divers colours, a prey of divers colours of needlework, of divers colours of needlework on both sides ; suits of clothes of different colours, such as were the works of the women of Sidon ^{f119}, and those curiously interwoven or wrought with a needle, and that on both sides of the silk or material of which they were made; and so such as were of great worth and esteem, and such it was expected, and with confidence and

assurance of it, Sisera would bring with him, and make presents of to his mother and her ladies, or which he would have for his own wear and use, or both:

meet for the necks of them that take the spoil ? the general of the army, and the chief men to whom the spoil was brought, and then divided suitably to the rank and quality of every soldier. Pliny ^{f120} says, the Phrygians first invented the art of needlework; hence the garments wrought, and those that made them, were called after their name; but it is certain it was known by the ancient Hebrews and Canaanites, see ^{<1276>}Exodus 26:36 .

Ver. 31. *So let all thine enemies perish, O Lord !* etc.] As Sisera and his army did, and be disappointed as his mother and her ladies were; which is not only a wish or prayer that it might be, but a prophecy that so it would be:

but let them that love him ; that love the Lord superlatively and sincerely, with all their heart and soul, and from love serve and fear him:

[be] as the sun when he goeth forth in his might ; in the middle of the day, when its heat and light are the greatest, and in the summer solstice, in the month of June, when the sun is in Cancer, as Ben Gersom and Abarbinel observe, and it is hottest: the sense is, let the true friends of God be as bright and as glorious, and increase in light, lustre, and splendour, as that glorious luminary in midday, and be no more liable to be resisted and stopped by their enemies, and as much out of the reach of them as that is:

and the land had rest forty years ; these are not the words of Deborah, whose song ends with the last clause, but of the writer of this book; which years, according to most, are to be reckoned from the death of Ehud, including the twenty years' bondage under Jabin, as Ben Gersom and Abarbinel; so that strictly speaking the rest was but twenty years; one would think they should be reckoned from the victory obtained over Jabin king of Canaan.

CHAPTER 6

INTRODUCTION TO JUDGES 6

In this chapter we have an account of the distressed condition Israel was in through the Midianites, ^{<0061>}Judges 6:1-6 , of a prophet being sent unto them to relieve them for their sins, ^{<0067>}Judges 6:7-10 of an angel appearing to Gideon, with an order to him to go and save Israel out of the hands of the Midianites, ^{<0061>}Judges 6:11-16 and of a sign given him by the angel, whereby he knew this order was of God, ^{<0067>}Judges 6:17-24 , and of the reformation from idolatry in his father's family he made upon this, throwing down the altar of Baal, and building one for the Lord, ^{<0065>}Judges 6:25-32 , and of the preparation he made to fight the Midianites and others, ^{<0063>}Judges 6:33-35 , but first desired a sign of the Lord, that Israel would be saved by his hand, which was granted and repeated, ^{<0065>}Judges 6:36-40 .

Ver. 1. *And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord* , etc.] After the death of Deborah and Barak, during whose life they kept to the pure worship of God, and who, perhaps, lived pretty near the close of the forty years' rest, or of the twenty years from their victory over Jabin; but they dying, the children of Israel fell into idolatry, for that that was the evil they did appears from ^{<0060>}Judges 6:10 , even worshipping the gods of the Amorites:

and the Lord delivered them into the hand of Midian seven years : this was not the Midian where Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, lived, which lay more southward, but that which joined to Moab, and was more eastward. This people had been destroyed by the Israelites in the times of Moses, in their way to the land of Canaan, ^{<0601>}Numbers 31:1 wherefore they might bear them a grudge, and now took the opportunity to revenge themselves on them, God permitting them so to do for their sins; and though the destruction of this people by Israel was very general, yet as some of them might make their escape, and afterwards return to their own land, and this being about two hundred years ago, might, with others joining them, repeople their country by this time, and become strong and powerful.

Ver. 2. *And the hand of Midian prevailed against Israel* , etc.] They were too strong for them, and overcame them, and brought them into subjection to them, and no wonder, when the Lord delivered them into their hand:

and because of the Midianites ; because of their usage of them, their manner of coming upon them yearly, and pillaging and plundering their substance, as after related:

the children of Israel made them dens which are in the mountains ; the word for “dens” has the signification of light in it, and are so called either by an antiphrasis, because they were dark, or, as Kimchi thinks, because they had a window at the top of them, which let in the light ^{f121} but Ben Gersom conjectures they were torches, which gave a great light, and when they that held them saw from the mountains the Midianites, by these torches they made a signal to the Israelites to take care and hide themselves and their substance:

and caves, and strong holds ; the caves were for the poorer sort, and the strong holds for the richer to retire to with their goods; though, according to Jarchi, the latter were no other than fences they made in woods, by cutting down trees, and setting them round about them, perhaps much the same as the thickets, ⁴⁹³⁶1 Samuel 13:6 .

Ver. 3. *And so it was, when Israel had sown* , etc.] Their land, and it was grown up, and near being ripe, or quite; for the Midianites gave them no disturbance in the winter, and during seedtime, when they came out of their lurking holes, and manured their land, and sowed it:

that the Midianites came up ; into the land of Canaan, from the other side Jordan, where their country lay, and which it seems lay lower than the land of Israel:

and the Amalekites, and the children of the east : the former were implacable enemies of Israel, and on every occasion would join other nations in oppressing them; and the children of the east were Arabians, as Josephus ^{f122} expressly affirms:

even they came up against them ; all these three sorts of people in a confederacy.

Ver. 4. *And they encamped against them*, etc.] Formed a camp, from whence they sent out parties to plunder the people; or

“they were fixing their tents among them,”

as the Vulgate Latin version; and so the Targum,

“they dwelt by them,”

or fixed their habitations by them; for they seem not to have come as a regular army, but as a sort of banditti to pillage, and plunder, and destroy the fruits of the earth; and the Midianites and Arabians dwelt in tents chiefly:

and destroyed the increase of the earth; the corn and grass before they were well ripe, and fit to cut down; this they did, and gave it to their cattle, and the rest they carried off:

till thou come unto Gaza; a principality of the Philistines, which lay in the western part of Canaan, on the shore of the Mediterranean sea; so that as these people came out of the east, and entered the eastern part, they went through the whole land from east to west, cutting down all the fruits of the earth for forage for their cattle:

and left no sustenance for Israel; nothing to support life with, cutting down their corn and their grass, their vines and olives, so that they had nothing to live upon:

neither sheep, nor ox, nor ass; not anything for those creatures to live upon, nor did not leave any of them, but carried them all away.

Ver. 5. *For they came up with their cattle, and their tents*, etc.] Brought their flocks and their herds with them, to eat up the increase of the earth, and their tents, which they pitched and removed from place to place, for the convenience of feeding their cattle, and while they cut down the fruit of the earth everywhere, which serves to confirm the sense of the Targum and Vulgate Latin version of (^{<0065>}Judges 6:5)

and they came as grasshoppers for multitude; or “as locusts”^{f123}, they were like them for their number, and for devouring all they came to:

and their camels were without number; which they brought with them, to load and carry off their plunder they could not eat. Midian was a place famous for camels and dromedaries, (^{<2306>}Isaiah 60:6) and so Arabia, the people of which joined the Midianites in this expedition; of whom Leo Africanus says^{f124}, that they reckon of their riches and possessions by their

camels; wherefore if anyone speaks of the riches of such a prince or nobleman, he says that he is possessed of so many camels, and not of so many thousands of pieces of gold, (see ~~BOOK~~ Job 1:3)

and they entered into the city to destroy it; this was their sole view. In suchlike manner as this did Alyattes king of the Lydians make war with the Milesinns, as Herodotus^{f125} relates; which passage Grotius has quoted at large.

Ver. 6. *And Israel was greatly impoverished, because of the Midianites,* etc.] Were reduced very low, brought into famishing circumstances through the Midianites thus destroying the fruits of the earth year after year:

and the children of Israel cried unto the Lord; which they should have done at first, instead of going into dens and caves; however, better late than not at all; they cried, not to the idols they had served, being sensible they could not help them, though so as to worship them; but to Jehovah the God of the whole earth, and who was in a special sense their God, though they had forsaken him.

Ver. 7. *And it came to pass, when the children of Israel cried unto the Lord, because of the Midianites.*] Because of their oppressions and ill usage of them, and not because of their sins, which had brought those evils on them, of which, at present, they seemed not to be sensible; and yet such was the goodness and compassion of God to them, that having a mind to deliver them, he immediately, on their crying to him, sends them a messenger to bring them to a sense of their sins, and prepare them for the deliverance he designed to work for them, as follows.

Ver. 8. *And the Lord sent a prophet unto the children of Israel,* etc.] “A man, a prophet”^{f126}, as in the Hebrew text, not an angel, but a man; and this not Phinehas, as say some Jewish writers^{f127}; for it is not probable he should live so long as more than two hundred years; and had he been living, it is very much he should not have been heard of in the times of the preceding judges, and that he was not made use of before now to reprove the people for their sins; but who the prophet was we have no account now nor hereafter, here or elsewhere. Abarbinel supposes he was raised up for a short time:

which said unto them, thus saith the Lord God of Israel; he came in the name of the Lord, and using the form and manner of speech the prophets

of Israel did, putting them in mind of the true God they had forgot, and who yet was their Lord and God:

I brought you up from Egypt, and brought you forth out of the house of bondage; reminding them of the benefits they received from God, and the obligations they lay under to serve him, who, when they were bond slaves in Egypt, he appeared for them, and brought them out of their miserable condition.

Ver. 9. *And I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians,* etc.] Even after they were brought out of Egypt, when the Egyptians pursued after them, and overtook them at the Red sea; where they were in the utmost distress, and the Lord wrought salvation for them, gave them a passage through it, and destroyed the Egyptians in it:

and out of the hand of all that oppressed you: the Amalekites who made war with them at Rephidim, Sihon, and Og, kings of the Amorites, who came out to fight with them, and oppose their passage through their land into Canaan, and the kings of the Canaanites also, who combined against them:

and drave them out from before you, and gave you their land: not only the land of Sihon and Og, but the whole land of Canaan, out of which more properly the inhabitants of it may be said to be driven.

Ver. 10. *And I said unto you, I am the Lord your God,* etc.] The covenant God of them and their fathers, and they ought not to have owned and acknowledged any other besides him:

fear not the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell; meaning not a fear of being hurt by them, but such a fear and reverence of them as to worship them, which was only to be given to the Lord. The Amorites are here put for all the Canaanites, they being a principal people among them:

but ye have not obeyed my voice; to cleave to him, fear and worship him; they had been guilty of idolatry, and this is the sin the prophet was sent to reprove them for, and bring them to a sense of.

Ver. 11. *And there came an angel of the Lord,* etc.] This was not the prophet before mentioned, as Ben Gersom thinks, but an angel of God, as expressed, and not a created one, but the Angel of Jehovah's presence, the

Word and Son of God, and who is expressly called Jehovah himself, (~~<0614>~~Judges 6:14,23,24)

and sat under an oak; or stayed there a while, as Kimchi interprets it, seeing, according to his observation, angels are not said to sit, but stand:

which was in Ophrah, that pertaineth to Joash the Abiezrite; which shows that this Ophrah is different from a city of this name in the tribe of Benjamin, (~~<0682>~~Joshua 18:23) for the oak that was in it, under which the angel sat, belonged to Joash an Abiezrite, a descendant of Abiezer, son of the sister of Gilead, who was the son of Machir the son of Manasseh, (~~<0670>~~Joshua 17:2 ~~<0307>~~1 Chronicles 7:17,18,14), it is called by Josephus^{f128} Ephra, and by Jerom^{f129} Ephrata:

and his son Gideon threshed wheat by the winepress, to hide it from the Midianites; lest they should take it away, and bereave his father's family of their sustenance, as they were wont to do, wherever they could find it; and all circumstances attending this affair were on this account; he threshed it himself, this he chose to do, and not trust his servants, lest it should be discovered; and he beat the wheat out with a staff, that it might be more silently done, and not with oxen, which was the usual way of treading out corn, who, bellowing^{f130}, would discover it; and this was done not on a threshing floor, but where a winepress stood, where there could be no suspicion of such work being doing.

Ver. 12. *And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him*, etc.] He stayed some time under the oak, and Gideon being busy in threshing, took no notice of him wherefore he came and stood before him, in his sight:

and said unto him, the Lord is with thee; the gracious presence of God was with Gideon while he was threshing, who very probably was sending up ejaculations to heaven, on account of the distressed case of Israel, and was deep in meditation about the affairs of the people of God, and contriving how to deliver them; or the angel might mean himself, who was no other than Jehovah, the eternal Word of God, who was present with him, and spake unto him; and so the Targum,

“my Word is thy help:”

thou mighty man of valour; who very probably was a stout man in body, and of a courageous mind naturally, and might at this instant have an increase both of bodily strength and greatness of soul; or, however, this

was said to animate and encourage him to do what he was about to be sent to do.

Ver. 13. *And Gideon said to him, oh my Lord,* etc.] Taking him not to be an angel, but some illustrious and eminent person:

if the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us? all these troubles and calamities through the oppression of the Midianites; for he understood what was said to him in the salutation, respecting not himself personally and privately, but the people of Israel; and he could not tell how to reconcile the Lord's being with them, and yet suffering such sad things to befall them they groaned under:

where be all his miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, did not the Lord bring us up from Egypt? when God was with his people, and brought them out of Egypt, he wrought miracles for them, whereby they were delivered out of their bondage; of this their fathers had assured them, but nothing of this kind was wrought for them now, and therefore there was no appearance of the Lord being with them, but all the contrary, as follows:

but now the Lord has forsaken us, and delivered us into the hand of the Midianites; and there was good reason for it, because they had forsaken the Lord, and worshipped the gods of the Amorites.

Ver. 14. *And the Lord looked upon him,* etc.] The same before called the angel of the Lord, and who was no other than Jehovah himself; who looked upon him with great earnestness, and with great delight and pleasure smiled upon him, and thereby showing he had a kindness for him, and meant well to him: and

said unto him, go in this thy might; both of body and mind, which had been before given unto him, and was now increased, and which no doubt Gideon was sensible of:

and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites; as he did, and therefore justly reckoned among the saviours and judges of Israel:

have not I sent thee? to do this great work, save the people of Israel, from whence Gideon might perceive who it was that talked with him, and having a command and commission from God, had authority enough to go about this service.

Ver. 15. *And he said unto him, oh my Lord,* etc.] Whether he had yet suspected who he was, or took him still for some eminent person, is not certain; it is very probable he began to think he was some extraordinary person sent of God, and speaking in his name, and therefore expostulates with him about the work he put him upon:

wherewith shall I save Israel? in what way is it possible for me to do it, who had neither men nor money sufficient for such an undertaking?

behold, my family is poor in Manasseh; of which tribe he was, and the “thousand” in it, as the word^{f131} here used signifies, was the meanest of all the thousands in that tribe; some render it, “my father”^{f132}:

and I am the least in my father’s house; perhaps the youngest son; though some take him, and others his father, to be the Chiliarch, or head of the thousand; but by these words of his it does not seem as if either was true; not but that he was of some wealth and substance, power and authority, by having such a number of servants as to take “ten” of them with him, (~~AND~~ Judges 6:27) however, this he says in great humility and modesty, having no high thoughts of himself and family, nor any dependence on his own strength, and on an arm of flesh.

Ver. 16. *And the Lord said unto him, surely I will be with thee,* etc.] The Targum is,

“my Word shall be thy help,”

which was sufficient to answer all objections taken from his meanness, unworthiness, and weakness:

and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man; all together, and as easily as if thou hadst but one man to deal with, and the destruction be so entire and general that none shall be left.

Ver. 17. *And he said unto him, if now I have found grace in thy sight,* etc. Or seeing he had, as appeared by his salutation of him as a man of might, by the work he gave him a commission to do, and by the promise of assistance and success:

then show me a sign that thou talkest with me; in the name of God, as a messenger sent by him, whether an angel or a man; for who he was as yet Gideon was not clear in it, and that what he had said was truth, and would be certainly fulfilled; and which Gideon might desire, not so much, or at

least not only for his own sake, and the confirmation of his faith, for which he is renowned, as that he might be able to satisfy others that he had a commission from God, by a messenger of his, to attempt the deliverance of Israel.

Ver. 18 *Depart not hence, I pray thee, until I come unto thee*, etc.]

Intending to go to his own, or his father's house, to fetch some food to entertain him with, and therefore entreats he would not quit the place where he was until he returned:

and bring forth my present, and set it before thee; to treat him with, as a stranger and a messenger of God; and perhaps he thought, by this means, the better to discover who he was, whether an angel or a man: the word for the "present" is "minchah", often used for a meat offering, therefore some have thought of a sacrifice; but it appears by what follows that it was not of the nature of a sacrifice; and, besides, Gideon was no priest, nor was this a place for sacrifice, nor was there here any altar; and, besides, as Gideon did not yet know that it was the Lord himself, he could never think of offering a sacrifice to him:

and he said, I will tarry until thou come again; which was a wonderful instance of divine condescension, it being some time he waited ere Gideon could prepare what he brought, as follows.

Ver. 19. *And Gideon went in*, etc.] Into his own house, or his father's:

and made ready a kid; boiled it, as appears by the broth he brought, at least part of it was so dressed; and perhaps it was only some part of one that he brought, since a whole one was too much to be set before one person, and if even he himself intended to eat with him:

and unleavened cakes of an ephah of flour; that is, probably those were made out of an ephah of flour; not that the whole ephah was made into cakes; since an omer, the tenth part of an ephah, was sufficient for one man a whole day; and, according to the computation of Waserus^{f133} an ephah was enough for forty five men for a whole day; unless it can be thought that this was done to show his great hospitality to a stranger, and the great respect he had for him as a messenger of God: the rather unleavened cakes were brought, because of dispatch, being soon made. Jarchi says, from hence it may be learned that it was now the time of the passover, and of waving the sheaf; but this is no sufficient proof of it; besides, if this was new wheat Gideon had been threshing, it shows it to be about the wheat

harvest, which was not till Pentecost; it was the barley harvest that began at the passover:

the flesh he put in a basket; the flesh of the kid which was boiled, or if any part of it was dressed another way, it was put by itself in a basket for more easy and commodious carriage:

and he put the broth in a pot; a brazen pot, as Kimchi interprets it, in which the kid was boiled; and this, as he says, was the water it was boiled in:

and brought it out unto him under the oak; where he appeared, and was now waiting the return of Gideon there:

and presented it; set it before him, perhaps upon a table, which might be brought by his servants, or on a seat, which was placed under the oak to sit upon under its shade for pleasure.

Ver. 20. *And the angel of God said unto him*, etc.] Instead of sitting down and partaking of the entertainment made for him, he bid him do as follows:

take the flesh, and the unleavened cakes, and lay them upon this rock; not as a table to eat it from, but as an altar to offer it upon; and which rock and altar might be typical of Christ, who sanctities every gift, present, and offering of his people: this rock was undoubtedly in sight, and very probably the oak, under which they were, grew upon it, or at the bottom of it, where it was no unusual thing for oaks to grow, (^{<OR38>}Genesis 35:8), but it was upon the top of the rock that these were to be laid, where afterwards an altar was built, (^{<OR35>}Judges 6:26)

and pour out the broth; upon the flesh and cakes, and upon the rock also, which by bringing from his house must have been cool and it became cooler by being poured out, and cooler still by being poured upon a cold rock:

and he did so; he readily obeyed his orders; though he had reason to wonder he should have so ordered the food he brought for his entertainment to be thus made use of; perhaps he might expect that he intended to give him a sign, as he desired, and therefore the more readily, without any objection, complied with his order.

Ver. 21. *Then the angel of the Lord put forth the end of the staff that was in his hand*, etc.] With which he walked, appearing as a traveller, and

which was one reason of Gideon's providing for his refreshment, before he proceeded on in his journey:

and touched the flesh and the unleavened cakes; did not strike the rock with it, as Moses did with his rod, to fetch out water for the Israelites, but touched the provisions brought him; not using it instead of a knife to separate any part of them, but for the working of a miracle, as follows:

and there rose up fire out of the rock; had he struck the rock with his staff, the miracle would not have appeared so great, because it might be thought there was an iron ferrule at the end of it, which striking on a flinty rock might cause fire; but it was the flesh and cakes only that were touched, and these also as having broth poured on them, and the rock likewise:

and consumed the flesh, and the unleavened cakes; though they had the broth poured on them, and were sodden with it; so that the miracle was similar to that wrought by Elijah on Mount Carmel, (¹⁸⁸³1 Kings 18:33-38), and those who think that this angel was the man, the prophet before mentioned, and he Phinehas, and Phinehas Elijah, are confirmed in their opinion by this likeness; though there is no sufficient ground for it:

then the angel of the Lord departed out of his sight: not went on his journey, as he might seem, but vanished immediately; which circumstance plainly showed, and fully convinced Gideon, that he was not a man, but an angelic spirit, as well as the miracle wrought proved him to be more than a man; and so Gideon had what he desired, a sign that he might know who talked with him, and that what he talked of would certainly come to pass.

Ver. 22. *And when Gideon perceived he was an angel of the Lord,* etc.] By the miracle wrought, and the manner of his departure:

Gideon said, alas! O Lord God; woe to me, what will become of me, or befall me, I shall surely die:

for because I have seen an angel of the Lord face to face; and whom he had reason to believe was the Lord himself, a divine Person, by the miracle wrought; and it was a commonly received notion even among good men, in those times, that the Lord was not to be seen by them and live, as appears from Jacob, Manoah, and others; at least the appearance of a divine Person, and even of any messenger from heaven, was startling, surprising, and frightful to them; which arose from a sense they had of the divine Being, and of their own sinfulness and frailty.

Ver. 23. *And the Lord said unto him,* etc.] Either by a secret impulse upon his spirit, or by a voice from heaven; and even, as Kimchi observes, the angel, after he ascended, might cause this voice to be heard, seeing him in great fear, because he knew he was an angel; and which is another proof of this angel being Jehovah himself, the eternal Word:

peace be unto thee, fear not, thou shall not die; let not thy mind be ruffled and disturbed, but serene and calm; fear not that any evil shall befall thee, and particularly death; thou shall be safe from any danger whatever, and especially from death, which he expected in his flight would immediately follow.

Ver. 24. *Then Gideon built an altar there unto the Lord,* etc.] On the top of the rock where he had laid his provisions, and which had been consumed by fire issuing out of it, as a token of divine acceptance, and as an assurance of his destroying the Midianites as easily and quickly as the fire had consumed them, and therefore had great encouragement to erect an altar here for God:

and called it Jehovahshalom; the Lord is peace, the author and giver of peace, temporal, spiritual, and eternal; so Jarchi,

“the Lord is our peace,”

a fit name for the angel that appeared to him, who was no other than the man of peace; who is our peace, the author of peace between God and man. This name he gave the altar, with respect to the words of comfort said to him in his fright,

peace be to thee; and by way of prophecy, that peace would be wrought for Israel by the Lord, and prosperity given them; or by way of prayer, the Lord grant or send peace:

unto this day it is yet in Ophrah of the Abiezrites; that is, the altar Gideon built remained to the times of Samuel, the writer of this book, and was then to be seen in the city of Ophrah, which belonged to the family of the Abiezrites, who were of the tribe of Manasseh.

Ver. 25. *And it came to pass the same night,* etc.] The night which followed the day in which the angel appeared to Gideon as he was threshing:

that the Lord said unto him; perhaps in a dream, since it was in the night: take thy father's young bullock: or "the bullock, the ox"^{f134}; a bullock which was a large grown ox, and was not only his father's property, but what his father designed and set apart for the service of Baal; and though it was his father's, yet having a divine warrant for it, it was sufficient for him to take it without his leave, and especially as it was designed for such an ill use:

even the second bullock of seven years old; which, according to Hesiod^{f135} is in its prime and full strength at nine years old, and lives much longer. In Homer^{f136}, one of five years old is said to be sacrificed: this further describes what he was to take, the second that stood in the stall of the bullocks, or that drew in the second row at plough, or the second in age and value, or the second that was set apart for the service of Baal; though the words may be rendered, "and the second bullock"^{f137}; besides that of his father's, he was to take another, which perhaps belonged to the people, and was the second in birth or age with respect to the former, being seven years old; or, as the Targum is, that had been fatted seven years, and had been so long preparing for the sacrifice of Baal; which was as long as the tyranny of the Midianites over them, and was occasioned by the idolatry of the people of Israel; and such a bullock was ordered to be taken with respect to that, and to show that it would end with the sacrifice of this creature:

and throw down the altar of Baal that thy father hath; upon his ground, in some part of his possessions, and perhaps built at his own expense, though for public use:

and cut down the grove that is by it; or "about it", as the Vulgate Latin version; it being usual with the Heathens to plant groves near or around their altars and temples where religious worship was performed; partly to make them more pleasant and venerable, and partly for the commission of deeds which would not bear the light; or "over it", for they were commonly tall trees which grew over the altar they erected. Some render it, "upon it"^{f138}, and understand by it an idol placed on it: so the Arabic version is,

"cut down the female idol Asira (perhaps the same with Astarte), which is upon the same altar;"

and so the Syriac version to the same purpose, which calls it the idol Estere, set upon the altar.

Ver. 26. *And build an altar to the Lord thy God upon the top of this rock,* etc.] Where the provisions were laid, and out of which came forth fire that consumed them; and where the altar, called by the name of Jehovahshalom, had been built by him, near it very probably; and there might be room enough for both upon the top of the rock; for this seems to be a distinct altar from that that was erected as a monumental altar, in memory of the miracle there wrought, and in gratitude by Gideon for the preservation of his life, and the peace and prosperity there and then promised, and which altar was to continue, and did; but this was for sacrifice, and only for the present time; for the proper place for sacrifice was the tabernacle: and this was to be built in the ordered place; either in the place where Gideon was ordered to put the flesh and the unleavened cakes; or in an orderly way and manner, according as was commanded in the law, as that it should be of earth and unhewn stones, and so framed as that it might be fit to have the wood and sacrifice laid in order on it; or in a plain place, as Kimchi, upon the top of the rock, where he might lay in order the stones of the altar:

and take the second bullock, and offer a burnt sacrifice with the wood of the grove which thou shall cut down; mention being made only of one bullock that was to be offered, has made some think that only one was ordered to be taken, namely, this second, which agrees with our version of (~~OFES~~ Judges 6:25) for if two were taken, what became of the first, since only the second was ordered to be sacrificed? to which Kimchi makes answer, that he was ordered to take it away, that his father might not offer it to an idol, as he intended, and therefore this was done to prevent idolatry; and as this second bullock was to be a burnt sacrifice, and to be burned with the wood of the grove just cut down, it seems to confirm the sense of such versions and interpreters who understand it of an idol on the altar of Baal; since wood just cut down would not be fit to burn, whereas an idol of wood, that had been of some standing, would be very proper: everything ordered and done were different from the laws and usages directed to by Moses, and practised by the Jews. Gideon was no priest, and yet bid to offer sacrifice, and that on an altar of his own erecting, and not the altar of God; and upon the top of a rock, and not at the tabernacle; and the wood of a grove or idol was to be made use of, which in other cases was not allowed; and all this done in the night, which was not the time of sacrificing; but the divine warrant was sufficient for Gideon. The Jews say ^{f139}, there were eight things that were made free or allowed now, which were not at another time: and it was necessary, before Gideon acted the

part of a deliverer, that he should become a reformer, and it was proper to begin at his own family.

Ver. 27. *Then Gideon took ten men of his servants,* etc.] Not only whom he could command, but could confide in, and whom he knew would cheerfully engage in this work, being like himself, who had not bowed the knee to Baal; and as there was much work to do, and it required dispatch, such a number was necessary; since he had not only the altar of Baal to throw down, and his grove or idol to cut down, but an altar to build, and a sacrifice to be taken and offered:

and did as the Lord had said unto him; all the above things, he set about them at once, and dispatched them all in one night; so ready and cheerful was he in obedience to the divine command:

and so it was, because he feared his father's household, and the men of the city, that he could not do it by day, that he did it by night; for both his father's family, and the inhabitants of the city of Ophrah, were all idolaters, worshippers of Baal; and this fear of them was not a fear of being reproached or punished for what he did, or of any harm coming to him for the fact, which as he might expect would be known, so the risk was the same, be it done when it would; but it was a fear of being restrained and hindered from doing it, and therefore in point of prudence, and consulting the honour of God and religion, and not his own safety, he took the time of the night to do it in.

Ver. 28. *And when the men of the city arose early in the morning,* etc.] And came to the place where the altar of Baal, his grove and image, were, to pay their morning devotions to him: behold,

the altar of Baal was cast down, and the grove was cut down that was by it, and the second bullock was offered upon the altar that was built; upon the new altar that Gideon built, and which very probably was burning when they came: and it is very likely that the place, where the altar of Baal had stood, was not far from the rock where this new altar was erected.

Ver. 29. *And they said one to another, who hath done this thing?* etc.] They were struck with amazement, and could not devise who could be so daring and wicked as to do such an action:

and when they inquired and asked; one and another, everyone present, or they could think of as proper to inquire of; they were very diligent and

industrious to find it out; and perhaps they inquired of the family and servants of Joash and Gideon, in whose ground the altar stood:

they said, Gideon the son of Joash hath done this thing; when they had inquired of everybody they could, and thought of one person and another, there was none appeared to them more likely to have done it, than Gideon; partly because they knew he was no friend of Baal, and partly because he was a man of spirit and courage, and they concluded none but such an one would have ventured to have done it; and besides, they considered he was the son of Joash, who perhaps was their chief magistrate, and that he might presume on his father's protection, as they might surprise; and being near the premises, he was the most likely person they could think of; and it is not improbable, that upon inquiry they got it out of the servants concerned, or that had knowledge of it from them, or from some that saw him that morning at the sacrifice, or returning from it, and therefore peremptorily assert he was the man that did it.

Ver. 30. *Then the men of the city said unto Joash*, etc.] The principal inhabitants of the place met together, and in a body went to Joash their chief magistrate, to have justice done in this case:

bring out thy son, that he may die; they do not ask to have the cause tried by him, to hear what proof they had of the fact, or what Gideon had to say in his own defence; nor do they wait for the sentence of Joash, but determine it themselves, and require the delinquent to be given up to them, that they might put him to death; a strange request of Israelites, whose law judged no man before it heard him; and besides, according to that, the worshippers of Baal, and not the destroyers of him, and his altars, were to be put to death, which shows how strangely mad and infatuated these people were:

because he hath cut down the altar of Baal, and because he hath cut down the grove that was by it; they take no notice of the bullock which he had taken and offered, it being his father's property; and which seems to confirm the sense of our version, that there was but one, (^{<0165>}Judges 6:25) for had the second been a different one, and the people's property, they would have accused him of theft as well as sacrilege respecting that.

Ver. 31. *And Joash said unto all that stood against him*, etc.] Against his son; that were his accusers and adversaries, and required him to be given up to them, that they might put him to death:

will ye plead for Baal? what, Israelites, and plead for Baal! or what need is there for this, cannot he plead for himself?

will ye save him? what, take upon you to save your god! cannot he save himself? he ought to save both himself and you, if he is a god, and not you save him:

he that will plead for him, let him be put to death, while it is yet morning; immediately, before noon, for it was now morning when they came to him; this he said to terrify them, and to express the hatred he now had of idolatry, and the just sense of its being punishable with death by the law of God. This he may be supposed to say, to save his son from their present wrath and fury, hoping by that time to find out some ways and means for his safety:

if he be a god, let him plead for himself, because one hath cast down his altar; if he is a god, he knows who has done it, and is able to avenge himself on him, and put him to death himself that has done it, and therefore leave it with him to plead his own cause, and avenge his own injuries; this he said, deriding the deity; for though Joash had been a worshipper of Baal, yet he might be now convinced by his son of the sinfulness of it, and of the necessity of a reformation, in order to a deliverance from the Midianites, for which he had a commission, and had perhaps informed his father of it; or however he was not so attached to Baal, but that he preferred the life of his son to the worship of him.

Ver. 32. *Therefore on that day he called him Jerubbaal,* etc.] That is, Joash called his son Gideon by that name; who, some think, is the same with Jerombalus, the priest of the god Jevo, or Jehovah; from whom Sanchoniatho, an ancient Phoenician writer, as Philo Byblius says^{f140}, received the principal things in his history respecting the Jews:

saying, let Baal plead against him, because he hath thrown down his altar; giving this as the reason of the name of Jerubbaal he called him by, which signifies, “let Baal plead”; let Baal plead his own cause, and avenge himself on Gideon for what he has done to him, and put him to death if he can.

Ver. 33. *Then all the Midianites, and the Amalekites, and the children of the east,* etc.] The Arabians, (^(Arab)Judges 6:3) were gathered together; not as being alarmed with this fact of Gideon in destroying the altar of Baal, and so came to avenge it; but it was their usual time of gathering together

to come into Canaan, being harvest time, as appears by Gideon being employed in threshing, to fetch away the increase of the earth, as they had done for some years past:

and went over; the river Jordan, which lay between the Midianites and the Israelites:

and pitched in the valley of Jezreel; a very large, delightful, and fruitful plain; of which (see Gill on “^{f1406}Hosea 1:5”); a very proper place for such a large number to pitch on, and from whence they might receive much; and a suitable place to bring the increase of the land to, from the several parts of it, which was the business they came upon; and as this lay on the borders of Issachar and Manasseh, it was not far from Gideon, and this gave him an opportunity of exerting himself, and executing his commission.

Ver. 34. *But the Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon*, etc.] Not the spirit of prophecy, as Maimonides ^{f141}, who calls this spirit the first degree of prophecy, but a spirit of fortitude and courage, as the Targum; the Spirit of God filled him, or, as in the Hebrew text, “clothed” ^{f142} him with zeal, strength, and might, moved and animated him to engage with this great body of people come into the land, to ravage and waste it, and to attempt the deliverance of Israel from their bondage:

and he blew a trumpet; as an alarm of war, and as a token to as many as heard to resort to him, and join with him in the common cause against the enemy:

and Abiezer was gathered after him; the Abiezrites, one of the families of the tribe of Manasseh, of which Gideon and his father’s house were; and even it is probable the inhabitants of Ophrah, who were Abiezrites, being now convinced of their idolatry, and having entertained a good opinion of Gideon as a man of valour, and who, in the present emergence, they looked upon as an hopeful instrument of their deliverance, and therefore joined him.

Ver. 35. *And he sent messengers through all Manasseh*, etc.] Of which tribe he was; not only he called by the trumpet that part of the tribe, the Abiezrites, who were within the sound of it, but the rest of the tribe at a greater distance from him he sent messengers to, acquainting them with his design, and inviting them to his assistance. Some think this refers both to the half tribe of Manasseh within Jordan, and the other half tribe on the

other side Jordan; but that is not very probable, only the half tribe within it is meant:

who also was gathered after him; obeying the summons and invitation he gave them by the messengers:

and he sent messengers unto Asher, and unto Zebulun, and unto Naphtali; which three tribes lay nearest to him on the north; but he sent not to the inhabitants of the tribe of Ephraim, which lay to the south, and which afterwards occasioned a quarrel, (~~1080~~Judges 8:1)

and they came up to meet them; that is, the inhabitants of the above three tribes, at least many of them, came up from the places of their habitations to meet Gideon, and those that were associated with him, at their place of rendezvous.

Ver. 36. *And Gideon said unto God*, etc.] Not to a prophet of God who was there, of whom he asked the following signs to be done, as Ben Gersom, but to God in prayer, as Abarbinel:

if thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as thou hast said; not that he doubted of it, but was willing to have a confirmation of his faith; and perhaps his view was more for the encouragement of those that were with him than himself, that he desired the following signs; and though he had had one before, that was to show that he was truly an angel that spoke to him, and not to ascertain the salvation that should be wrought by him; though that might be concluded from his being an angel that spoke to him, and assured him of it.

Ver. 37. *Behold, I will put a fleece of wool on the floor*, etc.] On the floor where he was threshing, where the angel first appeared to him, and which lay exposed to the open air, so that the dew might easily fall upon it:

and if the dew be on the fleece only; the dew that falls from heaven in the night, when he proposed it should lie on the floor till morning:

and it be dry upon all the earth beside; meaning not upon all the world, nor even upon all the land of Israel, but upon all the floor about the fleece: then shall I know that thou wilt save Israel by my hand, as thou hast said; for the dew being a token of divine favour, (see ~~2345~~Hosea 14:5) it would show that Gideon would partake of it, while his enemies would be dry and desolate, and ruin and destruction would be their portion.

Ver. 38. *And it was so*, etc.] The Lord condescended to work this miracle for the confirmation of his faith, and for the encouragement of those that were with him; the fleece was wet with the dew of heaven, and all the ground about it dry:

for he rose up early in the morning; being eagerly desirous of knowing whether his request would be granted, and how it would be with the fleece:

and thrust the fleece together; to satisfy himself whether the dew had fallen on it, and there was any moisture in it, which by being squeezed together he would more easily perceive:

and wringed the dew out of the fleece, a bowl full of water; so that it appeared it had not only fallen on it, but it had taken in a large quantity of it; the word here used is the same as in (⁴⁰⁶²⁵Judges 5:25); the Targum calls it a flagon.

Ver. 39. *And Gideon said unto God*, etc.] In the same way as before, and on the morning when he had been favoured with the sight of the above miracle:

let not thine anger be hot against me, and I will speak but this once; he was conscious to himself that it showed great presumption and boldness in him to repeat his request, and that it had the appearance of great diffidence and distrust in him, after he had been indulged with such a sign to confirm his faith; but as it was not so much on his own account as others, and promising to ask no more favours of this kind, he hoped his boldness would not be resented:

let me prove, I pray thee, but this once with the fleece one time more with it, and that not to try the power of God, of which he had no doubt, but the will of God, whether it was the good pleasure of God to save Israel by his hand, and whether now was the time, or another:

let it now be dry only upon the fleece, and upon all the ground let there be dew; which might seem to be a greater, at least a plainer miracle than the former, and less liable to cavil and objection; for it might be urged, that a fleece of wool naturally draws in and drinks up moisture about it; wherefore that to be dry, and the ground all around it wet, would be a sure sign and evidence of the wonderful interposition of the power and providence of God, in directing the fall of the dew on the one, and not on the other.

Ver. 40. *And God did so that night*, etc.] The night following, the night being the season in which the dew falls:

for it was dry upon the fleece only, and there was dew on all the ground; and this might signify, that not Gideon only, as before, should partake of the divine favour, but all the Israelites, who would share in the salvation wrought by him. Many interpreters observe, that all this is an emblem of the different case and state of the Jews and Gentiles under the different dispensations; that whereas under the former dispensation the Jews partook of the divine favour only, and of the blessings of grace, and enjoyed the words and ordinances with which they were watered, when the Gentiles all around them were like a barren wilderness; so, under the Gospel dispensation, the Gentiles share the above benefits to a greater degree, while the Jews are entirely destitute of them.

CHAPTER 7

INTRODUCTION TO JUDGES 7

In this chapter we have an account of the army under Gideon gathered out of several tribes, which from 32,000 were reduced to three hundred, and we are told by what means this was done, (^{<000>}Judges 7:1-8) and how he was directed to go into the host of the Midianites, where he heard one of them telling his dream to his fellow, which greatly encouraged him to believe he should succeed, (^{<000>}Judges 7:9-15) also we are told the form and manner in which he disposed of his little army to attack the Midianites, and the orders he gave them to observe, which had the desired effect, and issued in the total rout of that large body of people, (^{<000>}Judges 7:16-22) and those that were not destroyed were pursued by persons gathered out of several tribes, and the passages of Jordan were taken by the Ephraimites, so that those that attempted their escape into their own country, there fell into their hands, (^{<000>}Judges 7:23-25).

Ver. 1. *Then Jerubbaal, who is Gideon*, etc.] That being the name his father had lately given him, (^{<000>}Judges 6:32)

and all the people that were with him, rose up early; encouraged by the signs and miracles wrought, by which he was assured of success; he was eager to be about his work, and therefore rose early in the morning, and got his army together, and marched to engage the enemy:

and pitched beside the well of Harod; which he might choose for the refreshment of his army on occasion; or, however, so he was directed in Providence here, where a trial was to be made of them by water: this well, or fountain, seems to be the same with that in (^{<000>}1 Samuel 29:1) it signifies fear and trembling, and might have its name either from the fear and trembling of the 22,000 Israelites, whose hearts were dismayed at the Midianites, and they were ordered to return home; or from the fear and trembling of the Midianites, who were discomfited here; the former seems to be the true reason, (see ^{<000>}Judges 7:3) so that the Midianites were on the north side of them; which Gideon, no doubt, judged to be an advantageous post to him:

by the hill of Moreh, in the valley; the valley of Jezreel, one of the mountains of Gilboa, as is supposed; the Targum is,

“by the hill which looks to the plain;”

from whence he could have a view of the Midianitish army, and the disposition of it. Some think this hill had its name from the Midianitish archers; but, according to Kimchi and Ben Melech, from there being a watch here to direct the ways, or to give notice to the inhabitants of the valley when an army came against them; though some take it to be a school of some eminent teacher in those days ^{f143}.

Ver. 2. *And the Lord said unto Gideon, the people that are with thee are too many*, etc.] It appears, by what follows, that there were 32,000 of them, which was but a small army to engage with one of 100,000 more than they; for such was the army of the Midianites and their associates, (see ~~1780~~ Judges 8:10) but the people were too many, says the Lord,

for me to give the Midianites into their hands; who would be apt to ascribe the victory to themselves, and not to the Lord; to their number, strength, and valour, and not to the hand of the Lord:

lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, mine own hand hath saved me; or glory over me, take the glory from me, and ascribe it to themselves, boasting that by their power and prowess they had obtained the victory.

Ver. 3. *Now therefore go to, proclaim in the ears of the people*, etc.] Such a proclamation as follows, was, according to the law of God, to be made when Israel went out to battle against their enemies, (~~1818~~ Deuteronomy 20:8); though it looks as if Gideon would not have made such proclamation, had he not been directed to it by the Lord, his army being so small in comparison of the enemy; and perhaps Gideon might understand that law to have respect only to war made for the enlargement of their country, and not for defence against invaders:

saying, whosoever is fearful and afraid; to, engage in battle, because of the number of the enemy:

let him return, and depart early from Mount Gilead; where it seems they now were, being the same with the hill of Moreh, or adjoining to it; a mountain in the tribe of Manasseh, so called either from its likeness to Mount Gilead on the other side Jordan; or rather in memory of Gilead, the

son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, from whence the half tribe sprung, which was on this side, as well as that on the other; and perhaps this name might be given to the mount, to show that they were of the same tribe, though separated by Jordan: now the fearful and faint hearted had leave given them by this proclamation to return home directly; and as both armies lay so near, and it might reasonably be expected the battle would be the next day, they are directed to get away in the morning, as early as they could, that they might not be seen, and so be filled with shame themselves, and discourage others. Though some think Mount Gilead, on the other side Jordan, is meant, from whence it is supposed many came to Gideon, (^{<0765>}Judges 6:35) and now are ordered to return back, as many as were fearful; and instead of “from”, they render the word “to”, or “towards”, or “beyond” Gilead. Kimchi thinks the word we render “depart early” has the signification of surrounding, a diadem being expressed by a word from hence, which encompasses the head, (^{<2885>}Isaiah 28:5) and so the sense is, that they were ordered to go round about Mount Gilead, and so return home; but it rather may signify their hasty departure and speedy flight, like that of a bird, (^{<9101>}Psalms 11:1) and there returned of the people 22,000, and there remained 10,000; so that they were in all 32,000: now though these of their own accord came and joined Gideon with an intention and resolution to stand by him, and fight the enemy, yet when they came and saw what a large host they had to engage with, and how small the army was with Gideon, their hearts failed them, and they were glad to take the advantage of the proclamation.

Ver. 4. *And the Lord said to Gideon, the people are yet too many*, etc.] Though they were but just the number that Barak had with him, when he attacked Sisera’s army and got the victory, which yet was ascribed to God, whose hand was manifestly seen in it; but as these might be supposed to be able men of valour that remained, they were too many for God to have that glory he intended to display in this victory:

bring them down unto the water; from the hill on which they were, to a brook that ran at the bottom of it, perhaps a stream from the fountain or well of Harod, (^{<0701>}Judges 7:1)

and I will try them for thee there, or “purge them” ^{f144}, as silver is purged from dross, so the word signifies, as Kimchi observes, the righteous from the wicked, as he thinks; who, with others, suppose that by those who bowed on their knees to drink, were such as had been used to bow the

knee to Baal, and the rest not, and so one were discerned from the other; but this trial was only for the sake of Gideon, to direct him whom he should take with him, and whom not:

and it shall be, that of whom I say unto thee, this shall go with thee, the same shall go with thee; and of whomsoever I say unto thee, this shall not go with thee, the same shall not go; by the different manner of his men drinking at the water, later related, Gideon knew not who should go with him, and who not, whether they that bowed down to drink, or only lapped the water; this was determined by the mouth of the Lord, as follows but this trial was only for the sake of Gideon, to direct him whom he should take with him, and whom not:

and it shall be, that of whom I say unto thee, this shall go with thee, the same shall go with thee; and of whomsoever I say unto thee, this shall not go with thee, the same shall not go; by the different manner of his men drinking at the water, after related, Gideon knew not who should go with him, and who not, whether they that bowed down to drink, or only lapped the water; this was determined by the mouth of the Lord, as follows.

Ver. 5. *So he brought them down to the water,* etc.]] His whole army of 10,000 men:

and the Lord said unto Gideon, everyone that lappeth of the water with his tongue, as a dog lappeth, him shall thou set by himself; this has led some, as particularly Grotius, to think of the Egyptian dogs; of whom Aelianus relates ^{f145}, that they do not drink at once freely, and to satiety, being afraid of the crocodiles in the river; but run about the bank, and by stealth snatch a little here and a little there, and so satisfy themselves: but the allusion here is to dogs in common, whose usual way it is not to sup in, and drink a draught, but by putting out their tongues to lick and lap water with them, as Aristotle ^{f146} says all creatures do that have teeth like saws; and the likeness between the drinking of these men, to be observed lay not in anything else but in the single action of lapping; for they first took the water in the hollow of their hands, out of the stream, and then lapped it, as in (~~4006~~Judges 7:6) whereas a dog does not and cannot take water that way; and this lapping was standing upright, whereas dogs in common, as Aelianus in the same place suggests, bow themselves, and lap as much water as will satisfy their thirst; and by this these men were distinguished from those that bowed on their knees to drink; for had they not taken up water in their hands, they must have bowed down on their knees to have

lapped, as well as those did, to sup it, or take in a large draught of it; now all those that thus lapped were to be set apart by themselves; but whether they were to go with Gideon or not, as yet he knew not: likewise everyone that boweth down on his knee to drink; were to be set by themselves also, but which of those were to go with him is after related.

Ver. 6. *And the number of them that lapped, putting their hand to their mouth,* etc.] That is, that took up water in the hollow of their hands, which they lifted up to their mouths, and so lapped it, as the Egyptians about the Nile are said ^{f147} to do, who drank not out of pots and cups, but used their hands to drink with:

were three hundred men; only such a number out of 10,000: but all the rest of the people bowed down upon their knees to drink water; even 9,700; and it was the custom of some nations, as the Ichthyophagy, or fish eaters, to cast themselves with their face to the ground, and drink after the manner of oxen ^{f148}.

Ver. 7. *And the Lord said unto Gideon, by the three hundred men that lapped I will save and deliver the Midianites into thine hand,* etc.] It is hard to say what character this action of the three hundred is expressive of, whether of weakness or of courage. Some think that those who drank upon their knees were faint and weary, and men of intemperance, and indulged themselves, and were unfit for war, while those that only lapped a little water to refresh themselves appeared to be eager, and in haste and readiness to engage in it; and so Ben Gersom takes those that bowed to be slothful persons, and those that lapped courageous and mighty men, and so were ordered to be taken and go along with Gideon; and this agrees with the method before taken, to dismiss the fearful, and only take those that were men of courage; but Josephus ^{f149} is of opinion that they that drank upon their knees were the men of spirit and courage, and those that lapped, such who drank hastily, with trembling, and through fear of the enemy, and these were ordered to go with Gideon, and not the other: and indeed this most displays the glory of God to save Israel, and deliver them from the Midianites by a handful of such poor dispirited creatures. Though it seems that all the 10,000 men were men of courage; and this method was taken not to distinguish those that were the most courageous from those that were the least so, but only to reduce the number that should be engaged in this battle; for it being the summer season, it may reasonably be supposed that the greater part of the army was very thirsty, and would kneel down to

take a large draught of water, when those that were not so thirsty would be the fewer number, and so taken:

and let all the other people go every man to his place; all the rest, who bowed on their knees to drink, which were 9,700, these were ordered to march homewards; though perhaps before they got home, hearing of the victory, they returned and joined in the pursuit, (~~10072~~ Judges 7:23).

Ver. 8. *So the people took victuals in their hands and their trumpets*, etc.] That is, the three hundred took victuals of those that departed, as much as was necessary for them, and also their trumpets, being directed thereunto by Gideon, no doubt; perhaps they took all the trumpets they had; however, as many as would furnish every man with one. And from hence it appears, that these three hundred that were ordered to stay and go with Gideon were unarmed men, at least could carry no arms in their hands; for in one hand they carried their victuals, and in the other hand their trumpets, so that the salvation wrought by them would most clearly appear to be of the Lord:

and he sent all the rest of Israel every man unto his tent; not to his tent in the army, but to his own house, in the tribe and city to which he belonged: and retained these three hundred men; that had lapped water, to engage with the Midianites and their associates:

and the host of Midian was beneath him in the valley; in the valley of Jezreel; for it seems as if Gideon, after he had brought down his men to the water to be tried, went up to the hill again with his three hundred men only, to wait the divine orders, when he should attack the army of Midian below him.

Ver. 9. *And it came to pass the same night that the Lord said to him*, etc.] The night after there had been so great a reduction of his army, from 32,000 to three hundred:

arise, get thee down unto the host, for I have delivered it into thine hands; that is, go down from the hill where he and his little army were, to the valley of Jezreel, where lay the numerous host of Midian; assuring him, that though the disproportion was so very great, the army of Midian should be delivered into his hands; and it was enough that the Lord had said it, for him to believe it; but in such circumstances that he was, it is no wonder that he had his fears and misgivings of heart, wherefore it follows;

Ver. 10. *But if thou fear to go down*, etc.] With his little army, to attack a numerous host in the night, then he is directed to take this step first:

go thou with Phurah thy servant down to the host; in a private manner; perhaps this man was his aid-de-camp, or however a trusty servant in whom he could confide, as well as valiant: more it was not proper to take in such a secret expedition, and the fewer the better to trust, and less liable to the observation of the enemy; and yet it was proper to have one with him, being company and animating, and who would be a witness with him of what should be heard; in like manner, and for like reasons, as Diomedes and Ulysses went into the Trojan army^{f150}.

Ver. 11. *And thou shalt hear what they shall say*, etc.] The Midianites, or what shall be said by any of them; for though it was the night season, and so not a time for much conversation, as it may be supposed to be the dead of the night; yet something would be said and heard, which is a clear proof of the prescience of God respecting future contingent events:

and afterwards shall thine hands be strengthened; and his heart encouraged by what he should hear:

to go down into the camp; in an hostile manner, with his three hundred men, after his return to them:

then went he down with Phurah his servant; first privately, only they two, leaving his little army on the hill: and came

unto the outside of the armed men that were in the host; the sentinels, who were without side the camp, and stood complete in armour to guard it; and they came as near to them, in as still and private manner as they could, without being discovered. The Septuagint version is,

“to the beginning of the fifty that were in the host;”

and the Syriac and Arabic versions,

“to the captain of the fifty;”

these might be a party of the outer guards, consisting of fifty men, with one at the head of them, placed for the safety of the army in the night season, and to give notice of any approach to them, or attempt on them.

Ver. 12. *And the Midianites and the Amalekites, and the children of the east*, etc.] The Arabians, who with the Amalekites joined the Midianites in this expedition:

lay along in the valley in the valley of Jezreel, in their tents, which overspread the valley, or at least great part of it:

like grasshoppers for multitude; or locusts, which usually come in great numbers, and cover the air and the sun where they fly, and the earth where they light, as they did the land of Egypt; this army consisted at least of 135,000 men, as is clear from (~~1080~~) Judges 8:10)

and their camels were without number; as the sand is by the sea side for multitude; an hyperbolic expression, setting forth the great number of them which the countries of Midian and Arabia abounded with; and were very proper to bring with them, to load and carry off the booty they came for, the fruits of the earth; (see ~~1084~~) Judges 6:4,5).

Ver. 13. *And when Gideon was come*, etc.] With his servant, near and within hearing the talk and conversation of the outer guards or sentinels: there was

a man that told a dream unto his fellow; his comrade that stood next him, and was upon guard with him; perhaps it was a dream he had dreamed the night before or this selfsame night, being just called up to take his turn in the watch, and so it was fresh upon his mind:

and said, behold, I dreamed a dream, and, lo; thus it was as I am going to relate; twice he uses the word “behold”, or “lo”, the dream having rely much struck and impressed his mind, and was what he thought worthy of the attention of his comrade:

a cake of barley bread tumbled into the host of Midian: barley bread, Pliny ^{f151} says, was the most ancient food; the word for “cake” ^{f152} signifies a “shadow”, and may design the appearance of a barley loaf; or something like one to him appeared in the dream: or a “noise”; the noise of it rolling and tumbling, so that it seemed to the soldier that he heard a noise, as well as saw something he took for a barley loaf. Jarchi observes, that it signifies a cake baked upon coals, and it seemed to this man as if it came smoking hot from the coals, tumbling down an hill, such an one where Gideon and his army were and rolling into the host of Midian, which lay in a valley:

and came unto a tent; or, “the tent ^{f153}” the largest and most magnificent in the host; and Josephus ^{f154} calls it expressly the king’s tent, and the Arabic version the tent of the generals:

and smote it that it fell; which might justly seem strange, that a barley loaf should come with such a force against a tent, perhaps the largest and strongest in the whole camp, which was fastened with cords to stakes and nails driven into the ground, so as to cause it to fall: yea, it is added,

and overturned it, that the tent lay along: turned it topsy-turvy, or turned it “upwards” ^{f155}, as the phrase in the Hebrew text is; it fell with the bottom upwards; it was entirely demolished, that there was no raising and setting of it up again.

Ver. 14. *And his fellow answered and said*, etc.] As the dream was no doubt from God, so the interpretation of it was; it was he that put into the mind of the soldier’s comrade to whom he told it to interpret it as follows; or otherwise in all likelihood he would never have thought of it:

this is nothing else save the sword of Gideon, the son of Joash, a man of Israel; that is, this signifies nothing else, and a fit emblem it was of him and his little army. A cake is but a small thing, and, let it come tumbling as it will, can have no force or strength in it equal to overturn a tent; and a cake of barley is mean and contemptible; and a cake baked under ashes, or on coals, is what is soon and hastily done, and fitly represented the smallness and weakness of Gideon’s army, their meanness and contemptibleness; the Israelites being, as Josephus ^{f156} represents the soldier saying, the vilest of all the people of Asia; and those that were with Gideon were suddenly and hastily got together, raw and undisciplined, and very unfit to engage the veteran troops of the united forces of Midian, Amalek, and Arabia. It appears from hence that Gideon’s name was well known in the camp of Midian, what was his descent, and his character as a valiant man, which is meant by

a man of Israel; namely, a courageous mighty man, and the very name of him might strike with terror:

for into his hands hath God delivered Midian and all his host; which the man concluded from this dream, and the interpretation of it suggested to him from God, and impressed upon his mind; which he speaks of with the greatest assurance and confidence, which he was inspired to do, for the

strengthening of Gideon, and the encouragement of him to come down with his army, and fall on the host of Midian.

Ver. 15. *And it was so, when Gideon heard the telling of the dream, and the interpretation thereof*, etc.] Or, “the breaking of it”¹⁵⁷; the dream itself being like something closed up and sealed, and the interpretation of it was like the breaking of a seal, and discovering what is hid under it; or like a nut, the kernel of which cannot be come at till the shell is broken:

that he worshipped; bowed his head with an awful reverence of God and a sense of his divine Majesty, and worshipped him by sending an ejaculatory prayer and praise to him; and so the Targum,

“and he praised”

praised God for this gracious encouragement he had given, the assurance of victory he now had; for he saw clearly the hand of God in all this, both in causing one of the soldiers to dream as he did, and giving the other the interpretation of it, and himself the hearing of both:

and returned into the host of Israel; such an one as it was, consisting only of three hundred unarmed men: and said, arise; from their sleep and beds, it being the night season; and from their tents, and descend the hill with him:

for the Lord hath delivered into your hand the host of Midian; he made now no doubt of it, it was as sure to him as if it had been actually done; hence Gideon is renowned for his faith, though he sometimes was not without his fits of diffidence; (see ⁸¹³²Hebrews 11:32).

Ver. 16. *And he divided the three hundred men into three companies*, etc.] One hundred in a company, partly to make the better figure, a show of an army, with a right and left wing, and partly that they might fall upon the camp of Midian in different parts:

and he put a trumpet in every man's hand; they that returned of the trumpeters having left their trumpets behind them, whereby there was a sufficient number for three hundred men; and these were put into their hands, that when they blew them together, the noise would be very great; and it would seem as if they were an exceeding great army, and so very much terrify their enemies:

with empty pitchers, and lamps with the pitchers; the pitchers were of earth, and so easily broken, and would make a great noise when clashed

against each other; and these were empty of water, or otherwise would not have been fit to put lamps into, and the lamps put in them were not of oil; for then, when the pitchers were broken, the oil would have run out; but were a kind of torches, made of rosin, wax, pitch, and such like things; and these were put into the pitcher, partly to preserve them from the wind, and chiefly to conceal them from the enemy, till just they came upon them, and then held them out; which in a dark night would make a terrible blaze, as before they served to give them light down the hill into the camp.

Ver. 17. *And he said unto them, look on me, and do likewise,* etc.]

Observe what I do, and do the same, in blowing a trumpet, breaking a pitcher, and shouting with the words expressed by him:

and, behold, when I come to the outside of the camp; where the sentinels stood, and the watch was set:

it shall be, that as I do, so shall ye do; and not before; a trumpet was not to be blown, nor a pitcher broken, nor a torch held out, nor a word spoken, till just they came to the outside of the camp: and then they were to observe the motions of Gideon, and do as he did.

Ver. 18. *When I blow with a trumpet, I and all that are with me,* etc.] He being at the head of one of the three companies, (^{<0079>}Judges 7:19) perhaps the middlemost, which might stand for the body of the army; and the other two be one to the right and the other to the left of him, and so could more easily discover his motions:

then blow ye the trumpets also on every side of all the camp; for it seems they were so disposed as to be around the camp, which when the trumpets were blown at once on every side, with such a blaze of light, and crashing of the pitchers, must be very terrifying, as if there was no way for them to escape, and especially when they should hear the following dreadful sounds:

and say, [the sword] of the Lord, and of Gideon; or “for the Lord, and for Gideon”; and which may be supplied, either the light is for the Lord, and for Gideon; or the victory is for the Lord, and for Gideon; we supply it from (^{<0072>}Judges 7:20). The name Jehovah, these Heathens had often heard, as the God of Israel, would now be dreadful to them, and the name of Gideon also; whose name, as appears by the interpretation of the dream, was terrible among them; for which reason Gideon added it, and not out of arrogance and vanity; and puts it after the name of the Lord, as being only

an instrument the Lord thought fit to make use of, otherwise all the glory belonged to him.

Ver. 19. *So Gideon, and the one hundred men that were with him,* etc.] Which was one of the three companies his army was divided into, and which company he had the command of particularly:

came unto the outside of the camp, in the beginning of the middle watch; the second watch, for the night was divided into three watches; for though in later times there were four watches, among the Romans ^{f158}, and which the Jews received from them; hence in the New Testament we read of the fourth watch; yet in earlier times, with the Jews and other eastern nations, there were but three watches, as affirmed by Jarchi and Kimchi on the place: and very wisely did Gideon fix on this watch for the time of his coming; for had he come at the first watch, many as yet might not have been in bed, or at least not fallen asleep; and had he come in the third watch, many might have been awake out of their sleep, and others up; but he took this time, a little after midnight, in the dead of the night, when the whole army was fast asleep:

and they had but newly set the watch; the first watch were just gone off, and the second were placed in their room; but since such an observation seems in a good measure unnecessary, for as Gideon came in the beginning of the watch it must in course be newly set; rather the words may be rendered, “in raising they raised up the watch” ^{f159}; that is, Gideon and his men did it by their approach; and they might call to them on purpose to give the alarm to the army, who upon that would at once hear the sound of the trumpets, and the clattering of the pitchers, and see the torches burning, to their great surprise:

and they blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers that were in their hands; as soon as they came up to the watch and had raised them; this did Gideon and his hundred men.

Ver. 20. *And the three companies blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers,* etc.] The other two, observing what Gideon and his company did, followed their example, and at the same time blew their trumpets, and broke their pitchers; for that there were four companies, three besides Gideon’s, as Kimchi and Ben Melech suggest, there is no reason to believe:

and held the lamps in their left hands; which they took out of the pitchers when they broke them, and holding them up in their left hands, gave a great

blaze of light, which must be very surprising to the host of Midian, just awaked out of their sleep:

and the trumpets in their right hands to blow withal; and which they continued blowing, the sound of which must be very dreadful, since it might be concluded, from such a number of trumpets, that there must be a vast army:

and they cried, the sword of the Lord and of Gideon; signifying that was drawn against the Midianites, and they must expect to be cut in pieces by it, since the sword was Jehovah's, sent and commissioned by him, and was put into the hand of Gideon as an instrument, with which execution would be done, the Lord helping him. The Targum is, "the sword of the Lord, and victory by the hand of Gideon"

which victory was to be ascribed to the sword and power of God. This was an emblem of the efficacy of the word of God, accompanied with his power, to the destruction of the kingdom of Satan; the blowing of the trumpets may denote the ministration of the Gospel, the great trumpet to be blown by the apostles and ministers of the word; the holding forth the lamps may signify the same, the light of the divine word in the ministers of it, and the holding forth of it to others; and which is carried in earthen vessels, frail mortal men; and done that the excellency of the power may appear to be of God, and not of men; and the sword of the Lord is the word of God in the mouths of ministers, accompanied by the power of God; for it can only be through God that such weapons of warfare can become mighty to do the execution that is done by them; (see [1 Cor. 4:7](#) [10:4,5](#)) blowing of trumpets, and then a cry or shout of the soldiers to terrify the enemy, were used in later times ^{f160}.

Ver. 21. *And they stood every man in his place around the camp*, etc.] To see the salvation of God, and that it might most clearly appear to be his own doing; and indeed, had they gone into it, they could have done nothing; they had no weapons in their hands, a trumpet in one hand, and a lamp in the other; though this their position served to increase the terror of the enemy, who might suppose that they stood either to light and introduce a large army at the back of them; or to light the forces already in the midst of them, while they destroyed them; which latter seems rather to be the thing their imaginations were possessed with, since they fell to slaying their fellows, supposing them to be enemies, as in the following verse:

and all the host ran, and cried, and fled; or “were broken”^{f161}; as some render the first word, their lines were broken; they could not put themselves in rank and file, but were thrown into the utmost confusion; and cried as being in the utmost danger of their lives, and fled for their safety as fast, as they could; (see ^{<2773>}Isaiah 27:13 ^{<368>}Hebrews 6:18).

Ver. 22. *And the three hundred men blew the trumpets*, etc.] Kept blowing them to continue and increase the terror of the enemy, and still held the lamps in their hands, and stood as torch bearers to light the Midianites and their associates to destroy one another, as follows:

and the Lord set every man’s sword against his fellow throughout the host; and so slew one another; either suspecting treachery, as Grotius, and so in revenge, wrath, and indignation, drew their swords on each other; or through the terror and amazement they were in at the sounds they heard, and the blazing torches dazzling their eyes, they knew not what they did, or who they fell upon, taking their friends for foes, supposing the Israelites were got into their camp; and the rather they might be led into this mistake, since there were people of different languages among them, as Josephus^{f162} observes; but the thing was of God, it was he that took away their reason and judgment from them, and infatuated them, and filled their imaginations with such strange apprehensions of things; and threw into their minds such terror and amazement, and directed them to point their swords at one another:

and the host fled to Bethshittah in Zererath; that is, which was left of it, which had not destroyed each other; the first of these places should be read Bethshittah; and perhaps had its name from the “shittah” or “shittim” trees which might grow near it in plenty, or the houses in it might be built of shittim wood; or it may be here stood a temple formerly dedicated to some deity of this name, and near it a grove of the above trees. Zererath, Kimchi observes, is written with two “reshes”, or R’s, to distinguish it from another place called Tzeredah; but where either of these places mentioned were cannot be particularly said; though it is highly probable they were in the tribe of Manasseh, and in the way to Jordan, whither in all probability the Midianites would steer their course to escape to their own land:

and to the border of Abelmeholah unto Tabbath; the former of these was the birth place of Elisha the prophet, (^{<1196>}1 Kings 19:16) and it appears very plainly that it was in the tribe of Manasseh, being mentioned with

other places in that tribe, (~~1042~~1 Kings 4:12). Jerome ^{f163} under this word says, there was in his time a village in Aulon, or the plain, ten miles from Scythopolis to the south, which was called Bethahula; and the Targum is,

“to the border of the plain of Abelmeholah;”

but of Tabbath we nowhere else read.

Ver. 23. *And the men of Israel gathered themselves together*, etc.] Not out of all the tribes, but out of those which lay nearest, and which are particularly mentioned:

out of Naphtali, and out of Asher, and out of all Manasseh: and these seem to be the same persons out of those tribes who first joined Gideon, but were separated from his army; both those that were fearful, and those that bowed their knees to drink, and who perhaps had not gone far before they heard of the defeat and flight of the Midianites; and therefore though they had not courage to face the enemy, at least most of them, yet had spirit enough to pursue a flying enemy; wherefore they returned, or however directed their course the nearest way, where they supposed they fled:

and pursued after the Midianites; and those that were with them.

Ver. 24. *And Gideon sent messengers throughout all Mount Ephraim*, etc.] To raise the inhabitants of it, who lay nearer Jordan, to which the Midianites would make, in order to intercept them in their flight; or however get possession of the fords of Jordan before them, and hinder their passage over it:

saying, come down against the Midianites; for though he had routed them, and they were fled before him, yet he had not men enough with him to destroy them; and besides, as they had their camels to ride on, and he and his men only on foot, they could not come up with them:

and take before them the waters unto Bethbarah and Jordan; namely, all the fords and passages over Jordan, reaching from the lake of Gennesaret to Bethbarah, the same with Bethabara, (~~8028~~John 1:28) which was a passage over Jordan; or these waters were, as Kimchi thinks, distinct from those of Jordan; and were waters that lay in the way of the flight of the Midianites, before they came to Bethbarah, their passage over Jordan; and Jarchi thinks they were waters, which divided between Syria and the land

of Canaan, which is not likely; others think the waters are the same with Jordan, and render the words, “take the waters” --even Jordan ^{f164}; gain the passes over that before them, and so prevent their escape to their own land:

then all the men of Ephraim; that is, great numbers of them, whose hearts were inclined to, and whose situation lay best for this service:

gathered themselves together; in a body, at some place of rendezvous appointed:

and took the waters unto Bethbarah and Jordan; took possession of all the passes, and guarded them, as Gideon directed.

Ver. 25. *And they took two princes of the Midianites, Oreb and Zeeb, etc.*] The one signifies a “raven”, and the other a “wolf”; which were either nicknames given them because of their voraciousness and cruelty, or which they took themselves, or their ancestors before them, to make themselves terrible to others; so the Romans had the families of the Corvini, etc.

and they slew Oreb upon the rock Oreb; perhaps they found him in a cave of the rock, and dragging him out slew him, from whence the rock afterwards had its name. So we read of the rock Corax in Homer ^{f165}, which was in Ithaca, and another high mountain of the same name in Aetolia, mentioned by Livy ^{f166} and which signifies the same as Oreb. This is a different rock or mountain from Horeb, the same with Sinai, from whence the law was given; which always ought to be written with an “H” or “Ch”, to distinguish it from this; though that is written Oreb by Lactantius ^{f167}, and so by Milton ^{f168}, contrary to the propriety of the language:

and Zeeb they slew at the winepress of Zeeb; the Targum is, the plain of Zeeb, which, as Kimchi and Ben Gersom suppose, was in the form of a winepress, having high lips or hills around it, and which afterwards took its name from this prince being slain in it:

and pursued Midian; the rest of the Midianites, even beyond Jordan, those that got over it:

and brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon on the other side Jordan; that is, when he had passed over it the next morning, as Jarchi remarks; for after this we read of Gideon’s going over Jordan, (^{<OT&R>}Judges 8:4) unless this is said by way of anticipation; though the phrase will bear

to be rendered, “on this side Jordan”, for it signifies both. It seems they cut off the heads of those two princes, and presented them to Gideon, as it has been usual to bring the heads of enemies to kings and conquerors; (see ~~<01754>~~ 1 Samuel 17:54 ~~<1001E>~~ 2 Samuel 4:2,8).

CHAPTER 8

INTRODUCTION TO JUDGES 8

In this chapter we are told how Gideon pacified the Ephraimites, who complained because they were not sent unto to fight the Midianites, (~~OR8E~~Judges 8:1-3) how he pursued the Midianites, until he took their two kings, and on his return chastised the men of Succoth and Penuel, because they refused to relieve his men with food as they were pursuing, (~~OR8E~~Judges 8:4-17) how he slew the two kings of Midian, (~~OR8E~~Judges 8:18-21) and after this conquest refused to take the government of Israel when offered him, (~~OR8E~~Judges 8:22,23) how he requested of the Israelites the earrings they had taken from the Midianites, with which he in weakness made an ephod, which proved a snare to his house, (~~OR8E~~Judges 8:24-27) how that the people were in peace forty years during his life, and that he had a numerous issue, and died in a good old age, (~~OR8E~~Judges 8:28-32) but that after his death the Israelites fell into idolatry, and were ungrateful to his family, (~~OR8E~~Judges 8:33-35).

Ver. 1. *And the men of Ephraim said unto him,* etc.] To Gideon, when they brought him the heads of Oreb and Zeeb; taking this to be a proper opportunity to expostulate and chide with him, when they had done so much service:

why hast thou served us thus; neglected them, overlooked them, which they took as a reproach to them, and as if he had bore them ill will:

that thou calledst us not when thou wentest to fight with the Midianites? that he did not call them first, when he called other tribes, as Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali, when they were as near or nearer, and more nearly allied, being both the descendants of Joseph; and were the tribe that Jacob had given the preference to; and being of proud spirits they envied the glory that Gideon, who was of the tribe of Manasseh, had got; and by which they were jealous he would advance that tribe above theirs:

and they did chide with him sharply; used rough words and ill language, and threw out many keen and biting expressions, which discovered great anger and wrath, envy and ill will.

Ver. 2. *And he said unto them,* etc.] In a very mild and gentle manner, giving soft words, which turn away wrath:

what have I done in comparison of you? he and his men, he signifies, had only blew trumpets, broke pitchers, and held torches; it was the Lord that did all, and set the Midianites one against another to slay each other; and in the pursuit as yet he had only picked up and slain some common soldiers, they had taken two princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb, and had brought their heads in triumph to him:

is not the gleaning of the grapes of Ephraim better than the vintage of Abiezer? the family of Abiezer, of which Gideon was; the meaning is, that whereas he began the fight, which may be called the vintage, and they had finished it, which was like gleaning; yet what they did last was much preferable to what was done by him at first; or the princes of Midian, which they had taken in the pursuit, and was like gleaning after a vintage, were equal, yea, superior to all the camp of Midian, or that part of it that had fallen into his hands. The Targum is,

“are not the weak of the house of Ephraim better than the strong of the house of Abiezer?”

Ver. 3. *God hath delivered into your hands the princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb,* etc.] A high honour this conferred upon you, and with which you may be well contented:

and what was I able to do in comparison of you? what he had done in defeating and pursuing the army of Midian, in slaying and taking any of them prisoners, was nothing in comparison of what they had done; nay, he signifies that he was not capable of doing anything worth mentioning without them; the glory of finishing this conquest was reserved for them:

then their anger was abated towards him when he had said that; it being what gratified their pride and was pleasing to them; and this conduct of Gideon showed him to be a wise and humble man.

Ver. 4. *And Gideon came to Jordan, and passed over.* etc.] That river; (see Gill on “^{Q0725}Judges 7:25”) he and three hundred men that were with him, at the defeat of the Midianites in the valley of Jezreel; so that neither at that nor in the pursuit of them hitherto, had he lost one man:

faint, yet pursuing [them]: they were faint with being up all night, and continually blowing their trumpets; and had been upon the pursuit of their enemies ever since the defeat; and yet, though they were so faint, they did not leave off the pursuit, but were eager at it.

Ver. 5. *And he said to the men of Succoth*, etc.] The inhabitants of that place, the principal men of it, which lay in his way as he was pursuing the Midianites in their flight to their own country; for this was a city on the other side Jordan, and in the tribe of Gad and was inhabited by Israelites, (⁴⁶¹³⁷Joshua 13:27) it had its name from the booths or tents which Jacob erected here, (⁴⁰¹³¹⁷Genesis 33:17)

give, I pray you, loaves of bread unto the people that follow me; he did not desire them to leave their habitations and families, and join him in pursuing his and their enemies, or to furnish him and his men with arms; only to give them some provisions and that not dainties, but loaves of bread; or “morsels of bread”^{f169}, and broken pieces; and these he did not demand in an authoritative manner, as he might have done as a general, but in a way of entreaty; and the arguments he uses are,

for they be faint; for want of food, through the long fatigue from midnight hitherto, in the pursuit of the enemy, and which was not over:

and I am pursuing after Zebah and Zalmunna, kings of Midian; who had fled with 15,000 men, and were now, as Jarchi conjectures, destroying the countries of Reuben and Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh; and now Gideon and his men were closely pursuing them, in hopes of taking them, and so complete the conquest, and thoroughly deliver Israel from their bondage on both sides Jordan, the benefits of which these men of Succoth would share with others; these were the arguments, and cogent ones they were, to persuade them to give his weary troops some refreshment.

Ver. 6. *And the princes of Succoth said*, etc.] The chief magistrates of the place made answer, one in the name of the rest; for the word said is in the singular number:

are the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in thine hands; that is, are they taken prisoners, and handcuffed, or their hands bound behind them, and put into the hands of Gideon, to do with them as he pleased? no, they were not; and they suggest they never would, deriding him and his small number of men as not a match for these kings, whom, perhaps a little before, they had seen pass by with 15,000 men; with whom his little army would not be

able to encounter, should they turn and fall upon them, which they supposed would be the case; and therefore, say they, when these are in thine hands, which they thought would never be, it will be time enough

that we should give bread to thine army? for they feared, should they do that, these kings would hear of it, and they should suffer for it, and their bondage be harder than it was before; so selfish and diffident in themselves, so cruel and uncompassionate to their brethren, and so ungrateful to their deliverers, which stirred up the spirit of this humble and good man to great resentment.

Ver. 7. *And Gideon said,* etc.] In answer to the princes of Succoth:

therefore when the Lord hath delivered Zebah and Zalmunna into mine hand; of which he made no doubt, having the promise of God that he would deliver the host of Midian into his hand, on which his faith rested; and having it in great part performed already, most firmly believed the full performance of it, (see ^{<OR>}Judges 7:7,9)

then I will tear your flesh with the thorns of the wilderness, and with briers; which grew in a wilderness near this city, and from whence as Kimchi thinks, it had its name; the word “Succoth” being used for thorns in (^{<SH>}Job 41:7) and the sense is, either that he would scourge them with thorns and briers; or, as the Targum thrust their flesh upon them; which Kimchi interprets of casting their naked bodies upon thorns and briers, and then treading on them with the feet; or draw a cart over them as they thus lay, in like manner as it was usual to do when corn was threshed out; (see ^{<SH>}Isaiah 28:27).

Ver. 8. *And he went up thence to Penuel,* etc.] A place not far from Succoth, and to which also Jacob gave name, from the Lord’s appearing to him there face to face, (^{<OR>}Genesis 32:30) but here was nothing of God in this place now:

and spoke unto them likewise; desired bread for his men, as he had of the inhabitants of Succoth:

and the men of Penuel answered him as the men of Succoth had answered him; denied him his request in the same jeering manner.

Ver. 9 *And he spoke also unto the men of Penuel,* etc.] In a threatening way, as he had spoken to the men of Succoth: saying, when I come again

in peace: having conquered all his enemies, and delivered Israel from their bondage, and restored peace and prosperity to them, of which he had no doubt:

I will break down this tower; pointing to it and which stood in their city, and in which they placed their confidence; and when he threatened them, boasted of it as their security.

Ver. 10. *Now Zebah and Zalmunna were in Karkor.* etc.] Jerom ^{f170} under this word says, there was in his time a castle called Carcuria, a day's journey from Petra, which was the metropolis of Idumea; but whether the same with this is not clear:

and their host with them, about fifteen thousand men; to which number Gideon and his three hundred men were very unequal; and yet, faint and weary as they were, closely pursued them, attacked and conquered them. Josephus ^{f171} very wrongly makes this number to be about 18,000:

all that were left of the hosts of the children of the east; the Arabians, who with the Amalekites joined the Midianites in this expedition; and perhaps the remainder of the army chiefly consisted of Arabians, the others having mostly suffered in the valley of Jezreel, and at the fords of Jordan:

for there fell an hundred and twenty thousand men that drew sword; besides infirm men, women, and children, which may reasonably be supposed; so that this host consisted of 135,000 fighting men.

Ver. 11. *And Gideon went up by the way of them that dwell in tents,* etc.] That is of the Arabians and Kedarenes, who dwelt in tents for the sake of feeding their flocks, as the Targum and Jarchi; he did not pursue them in the direct road, but went a roundabout way, where these people dwelt, that he might surprise the host of the kings of Midian at an unawares: and he came upon them,

on the east of Nobah and Jogbehah; the first was in the tribe of Manasseh, and the latter in the tribe of Gad, and both it seems were on the confines of those tribes; (see ⁴⁰³⁵Numbers 32:35,42) the Targum calls the latter Ramatha; both words have the signification of height in them, this city very probably being built on an eminence. According to Bunting ^{f172} Penuel was two miles from Succoth, Nobah two miles from Penuel, and Jogbehah four miles from Nobah and Karkor four miles from Jogbehah, whither he pursued the kings, and took them, after he had discomfited the army:

and smote the host, for the host was secure: having got over Jordan, and at night very probably, they thought themselves safe from Gideon's army, who they could have no thought that they would come up with them so soon, on foot, weary, and fatigued.

Ver. 12. *And when Zebah and Zalmunna fled,* etc.] Their host being smitten and thrown into confusion by the sudden approach of Gideon's army; and who probably attacked them in somewhat like manner as before, blowing their trumpets, and calling out the sword of the Lord and of Gideon; which were such terrifying sounds to them, that they fled at once:

he pursued after them, and took the two kings of Midian, Zebah and Zalmunna, and discomfited all the host; or terrified them, so that they fled some one way and some another, and the kings being left alone were easily taken.

Ver. 13. *And Gideon the son of Joash returned from battle,* etc.] To Penuel and Succoth, to chastise them for their ill treatment of him and his men:

before the sun was up; by which it appears that it was in the night that he fell upon the host at Karkor, which must be the night following; it could not be the same night in which he had defeated them in the valley of Jezreel; though Vatablus thinks this battle was begun and finished in one night; but there were, according to this history, so many things done after the first defeat, as sending messengers to Mount Ephraim and the Ephraimites, upon the taking the fords of Jordan, and bringing the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon, expostulating with him, and his answer to them, and his stay at Succoth and Penuel; which make it more probable that the day following was spent in the pursuit, and that it was the night after that that the whole affair was finished; and before sunrise Gideon returned to Penuel and Succoth again; so Ben Gersom and Abarbinel; but according to the Targum, Jarchi, and Kimchi, this phrase is to be rendered, "before the sunset", while it yet appeared, and was above the horizon; and so it must be in the daytime that he pursued the two kings and took them, and returned before sunset. Abendana observes the word for "sun" may be the name of a place, and so the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions call it the ascent of Ares or Heres; as if it was the name of the place from whence Gideon returned, so called in like manner as the ascent of Akrabbim, and the like.

Ver. 14. *And caught a young man of the men of Succoth, and inquired of him*, etc.] Just before he came to the city, he spied a young man which belonged to it, and laid hold on him, and inquired of him about the chief magistrates of the city, who they were, what their names, and their places of abode:

and he described unto him the princes of Succoth, and the elders thereof, even seventy seven men; by which it appears that this was no inconsiderable city to have so many princes and elders in it; these the young man described to Gideon, what sort of men they were, what their names, and where they dwelt: or “he wrote unto him”^{f173}; wrote down their names, and what part of the city they dwelt in; or Gideon took down in writing for himself their names and places of abode from the young man, that he might not forget: and in this Gideon showed great wisdom, and strict justice; being desirous to punish only the delinquents, and not the innocent with the wicked, the people with their rulers; for though he asked bread of the men of Succoth, the answer was returned in the ill natured manner it was by the princes.

Ver. 15. *And he came unto the men of Succoth*, etc.] Entered the city, and bespoke the inhabitants of it in the following manner:

and said, behold, Zebah and Zalmunna, with whom ye did upbraid me; as not in his hands, and never would be, he being with his three hundred men an unequal match to them with 15,000; but he had taken them, and brought them with him, and perhaps spared them for this very reason, to let them see they were in his hands, and now calls upon them to behold them with their own eyes, concerning whom they had flouted and jeered him:

saying, are the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in thy hand, that we should give bread unto thy men that are weary? he delivers their own express words, which he had carefully observed and laid up in his memory, for their greater conviction and confusion; only adds the character of his men, that they were “weary”, to expose their vile ingratitude the more, that they should refuse them a few loaves of bread, who were faint and weary in the service of them.

Ver. 16. *And he took the elders of the city*, etc.] All of them, especially those of them who had been most guilty, and had them to a proper place, where they might be made public examples of:

and thorns of the wilderness, and briers; which were near at hand, and soon cut up, for which he gave orders to proper persons:

and with them he taught the men of Succoth; either the inhabitants of the place, as distinct from the elders, whose punishment he taught them to be cautious not to follow such examples, or to behave ill to their superiors; or the princes and elders of the city are meant by the men of it, whom Gideon taught or chastised with thorns and briers; and so it is usual with us for a parent or master to say to his child or servant that has offended, I will “teach” you to do so or so, or to do otherwise, when he threatens to chastise: or “with them he made them to know”^{f174}; that is, their sin and the heinousness of it, by the punishment he inflicted on them. Abarbinel thinks the word “know” has the signification of mercy in it, as in (⁽¹⁰²⁵⁾Exodus 2:25) in that he did not punish in general the men of that city, only the elders of it. The Targum is,

“he broke upon them, or by them, the men of Succoth;”

so Jarchi and others; that is, he broke the briers and thorns upon them, scourging them with them; or rather broke and tore their flesh by them: whether they died or no is not certain.

Ver. 17. *And he beat down the tower of Penuel*, etc.] As he threatened he would, (⁽¹⁰⁸⁹⁾Judges 8:9) whether this was before or after he had chastised the elders of Succoth, is not clear; one would think by the course he steered going from Succoth to Penuel, as he went, he should come to Penuel first at his return; however, he demolished their tower in which they trusted:

and slew the men of the city; perhaps they might, as Kimchi conjectures, resist when he went about to beat down their tower; on which a fray might ensue, in which they were slain; or they might upon his approach, sensible of the offence they had given him, fly to their tower for safety, and were killed in it when that was beaten down about them. In what manner this was done is not said; no doubt they had instruments in those days for demolishing such edifices.

Ver. 18. *Then said he unto Zebah and Zalmunna*, etc.] Not at Penuel or Succoth, but when he had brought them into the land of Canaan, and perhaps to his own city Ophrah:

what manner of men were they whom ye slew at Tabor? Mount Tabor, to which these men had betaken and hid themselves, in some caves and dens there: (see ^(~~QRE~~)Judges 6:2) and these kings some little time before the battle had taken them, and slew them, of which it seems Gideon had notice; and some of his brethren being not to be found, he suspected they were the persons, and therefore asked this question:

and they answered, as thou art, so were they; very much like him in countenance and stature, stout, able bodied men, of a graceful and majestic appearance. Abarbinel takes it to be a curse on Gideon, be thou, or thou shalt be, as they are; as they died by the hand of the Midianites, so shalt thou; but the former sense seems best, and agrees with what follows:

each one resembled the children of a king; being brought up in a delicate manner, as these persons seemed to have been: according to Jarchi and Kimchi, the sense is, they were like him, and had all one and the same form and lovely aspect, resembling kings' children; but according to Ben Gersom they were in general very much like Gideon, and one of them was like his children, who were then present, particularly his eldest son, as appears from (^(~~QRE~~)Judges 8:20). It is said in the Misnah ^{f175} all the Israelites are the children of kings.

Ver. 19. *And he said, they were my brethren, even the sons of my mother,* etc.] His brethren by his mother's side, but not by his father's side; or the phrase

the sons of my mother is added, to show that he did not mean brethren in a large sense, as all the Israelites were, but in a strict sense, being so nearly related as his mother's children:

as the Lord liveth, if ye had saved them alive, I would not slay you; for not being Canaanites, he was not obliged by the law of God to put them to death, and by the law of nations, as they had surrendered themselves, and were made prisoners of war, they ought to have been saved; but as they appeared to be murderers, and had slain the Israelites in cold blood, they deserved to die; and the persons they had slain being Gideon's brethren, he was the avenger of blood, and it became him to put them to death.

Ver. 20. *And he said unto Jether, his firstborn, up, and slay them,* etc.] Being the near kinsman of his father's brethren, whom these kings had slain, was a proper person to avenge their blood on them; and the rather Gideon might order him to do it, for the greater mortification of the kings,

to die by the hand of a youth; and for the honour of his son, to be the slayer of two kings, and to inure him to draw his sword against the enemies of Israel, and embolden him to do such exploits:

but the youth drew not his sword, for he feared, because he was yet a youth; his not drawing his sword was not out of disobedience to his father, but through fear of the kings; not of their doing him any harm, being bound; but there was perhaps a ferocity, as well as majesty in their countenances, which made the young man timorous and fearful.

Ver. 21. *Then Zebah and Zalmunna said, rise thou and fall upon us*, etc.] Since they must die, they chose rather to die by the hand of so great a man and valiant a commander as Gideon, which was more honourable than to die by the hand of a youth:

for as the man is, so is his strength; signifying, that as he was a stout able man, he had strength sufficient to dispatch them at once, which his son had not, and therefore they must have died a lingering and painful death: wherefore as they consulted their honour, so their ease, in desiring to die by the hand of Gideon:

and Gideon arose, and slew Zebah and Zalmunna; nor was it unusual in those early times for great personages, as judges and generals, to be executioners of others, as were Samuel and Benaiah, (^{<0153>}1 Samuel 15:33 ^{<1025>}1 Kings 2:25,34)

and took away the ornaments that were on their camels' necks; the Targum calls them chains, as in (^{<0035>}Judges 8:26) no doubt of gold; so the horses of King Latinus ^{f176} had golden poytrels or collars hanging down their breasts. They were, according to Jarchi, Kimchi, and Ben Gersom, in the form of the moon; (see ^{<2083>}Isaiah 3:18) some have thought that these were worn in honour of Astarte, or the moon, the goddess of the Phoenicians, from whom these people had borrowed that idolatry.

Ver. 22. *Then the men of Israel said unto Gideon*, etc.] Some time after his return, the chief men of Israel having met in a body, and consulted matters among themselves, sent a deputation to Gideon with an offer of the government of them:

rule thou over us, both thou and thy son, and thy son's son also; by which they meant, that he would take the kingly government of them, and which they proposed to settle in his posterity for ages to come; for, as a judge in

Israel, he had a sort of rule and government of them under God already, but amounted not to regal power and authority; and this was what the people of Israel were fond of, that they might be like their neighbours; and this they tempted Gideon with, who had done such very wonderful and extraordinary things for them, which they allege as a reason:

for thou hast delivered us from the hand of Midian; from the bondage they were in to them, and therefore fit to be a king over them.

Ver. 23. *And Gideon said unto them, I will not rule over you*, etc.] Not that he declined the government of them as a judge, to which he was raised of God, but as a king, for which he had no authority and call from God; the choice of a king belonging to him, and not to the people:

neither shall my son rule over you; which Abarbinel thinks he spake as a prophet, and under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit; for after his death neither Jether his eldest son, nor any of the rest of his legitimate sons, ruled over them; for they were all slain by Abimelech, the son of his concubine, who was made king:

the Lord shall rule over you; as he did; their government was a theocracy, which they would have changed, but Gideon would not agree to it.

Ver. 24. *And Gideon said unto them, I would desire a request of you*, etc.] Which he thought they would scarcely deny, and it was now a fair opportunity to make it, since they had offered him a crown, or to be king over them: and the favour he asked was,

that you would give me every man the earrings of his prey; or, “an earring of his prey”; for it is in the singular number; every man one earring, as Abarbinel interprets it; for though they might have more, yet only one earring of every man is desired:

for they had golden earrings, because they were Ishmaelites; so the Midianites and Ishmaelites are spoken of as the same, they being mixed and dwelling together, or very near each other, (^{<0375>}Genesis 37:25,28,36) and Kimchi accounts for it thus, why the Midianites are called Ishmaelites; because they were the sons of Keturah, and Keturah was Hagar the mother of Ishmael. The Targum calls them Arabians, and who it seems used to wear earrings, as men in the eastern countries did; (see ^{<0394>}Genesis 35:4 ^{<0392>}Exodus 32:2,3). So Pliny says ^{f177} in the east it was reckoned ornamental for men to wear gold in their ears.

Ver. 25. *And they answered, we will willingly give them,* etc.] Or, “in giving we will give”^{f178}; give them with all their hearts, most freely and cheerfully:

and they spread a garment, and did cast therein every man the earrings of his prey; every man one, which would amount to no more than three hundred; though perhaps those who joined in the pursuit might take many more, or otherwise the weight of them would not amount to what in the next verse they are said to weigh.

Ver. 26. *And the weight of the golden earrings he requested was one thousand and seven hundred shekels of gold,* etc.] Which, as Schuchzer^{f179} computes, was eight hundred and ten ounces, five drachms, one scruple, and ten grains, of the weight of physicians; but as reckoned by Moatanus^{f180} amounted to eight hundred and fifty ounces, and were of the value of 6800 crowns of gold; and, according to Waserus^{f181}, it amounted to 3400 Hungarian pieces of gold, and of their money at Zurich upwards of 15,413 pounds, and of our money 2,380 pounds:

besides ornaments; such as were upon the necks of the camels, (~~xxx~~Judges 8:21) for the same word is used here as there:

and collars; the Targum renders it a crown, and Ben Melech says in the Arabic language the word signifies clear crystal; but Kimchi and Ben Gersom take them to be golden vessels, in which they put “stacte”, or some odoriferous liquor, and so were properly smelling bottles:

and purple raiment that was on the kings of Midian; which it seems was the colour that kings wore, as they now do; so Strabo^{f182} says of the kings of Arabia, that they are clothed in purple:

and besides the chains that were about their camels’ necks; which seem to be different from the other ornaments about them, since another word is here used; now all these seem to have been what fell to his share, as the general of the army, and not what were given him by the people.

Ver. 27. *And Gideon made an ephod thereof,* etc.] That is, of some of this gold; for such a quantity could never have been expanded on an ephod only, even taking it not for a linen ephod, but such an one as the high priest wore, made of gold, of blue, purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, with curious work, together with a curious girdle of the same work; unless we suppose such a breastplate with it, of twelve precious stones, as Aaron

had; and with little images of teraphim or cherubim in it, as Dr. Spencer thinks^{f183}. The Jewish commentators generally understand this ephod to be made as a memorial of the great salvation God had wrought by his hands for Israel, and of the wonderful things done by him; so Jarchi, Kimchi, and Ben Gersom; but such a garment, whether worn by him, or hung up in some certain place, seems not so proper and pertinent to perpetuate the memory of his victories, as a monument or pillar would have been; it looks therefore more likely to be done with a religious view, which afterwards was perverted to superstitious uses; and whereas Gideon had built an altar already by the command of God, and had sacrificed upon it, he might think himself authorized as a priest, and therefore provided this ephod for himself; or however for a priest he might think of taking into his family, and so use it as an oracle to consult upon special occasions, without going to Shiloh, the Ephraimites having displeased him in their rough expostulations with him; and so R. Isaiah interprets it of a kind of divination or oracle which gave answers:

and put it in his city, even in Ophrah; hung it up in some proper place as a monument of his victories, as is generally thought; or in a structure built on purpose for it, to which he might resort as to an oracle:

and all Israel went thither a whoring after it: made an idol of it and worshipped it, and so committed spiritual fornication, which is idolatry. Some render it, “after him”^{f184}; not after the ephod, but after Gideon; that is, after his death, so Jarchi; no ill use was made of it in Gideon’s time, though he cannot be altogether excused from sin and weakness in making it; but after his death it was soon made an ill use of:

which thing proved a snare to Gideon and to his house; it was a snare to him if he consulted it as an oracle, which could not be without sin, since the only Urim and Thummim to be consulted were in the breastplate of the high priest at the tabernacle; and it was what led his family into idolatry, and was the ruin of it, as well as it reflected great discredit and disgrace upon so good and brave a man: some read the words^{f185}: “to Gideon, that is, to his house”; or family; he being so good a man himself, it is not thought that he could be ensnared into idolatry itself; though it is apparent that men as wise and as good have fallen into it, as particularly Solomon.

Ver. 28. *Thus was Midian subdued before the children of Israel,* etc.] By the hand of Gideon humbled and brought under, their power over Israel was broken, and they delivered out of their hands:

so that they lifted up their heads no more; in a proud and haughty manner to insult them, and in an hostile way to invade and oppress them; such a blow was given them that they could not recover themselves, nor do we read of any effort of theirs ever after, or of their giving or attempting to give any disturbance to Israel, or any other nation:

and the country was in quietness forty years in the days of Gideon; that is, the land of Canaan; it was free from wars with Midian, or any other people, and enjoyed undisturbed peace and tranquillity. According to Bishop Usher ^{f186}, this was the fortieth year from the rest restored by Deborah and Barak; and, according to Abarbinel and others, these forty years are to be reckoned from the beginning of the servitude; that is, the seven years' oppression under the Midianites are included in them; but I cannot see that in this instance, and in others before met with, years of bondage can be counted with years of peace and prosperity, and go under that general name. The true sense seems to be, that after the Israelites had been in subjection to the Midianites for seven years, and Gideon had delivered them, that from thenceforward they had rest and quietness forty years, which in all probability was the time Gideon lived after his victories.

Ver. 29. *And Jerubbaal the son of Joash*, etc.] That is, Gideon, Jerubbaal being another name of his; (see ^{<0182>}Judges 6:32 7:1) went and dwelt in his own house; which was at Ophrah, as appears from (^{<0182>}Judges 9:5) the war being ended, he disbanded his army, and retired to his own house; not that he lived altogether a private life there, but as a judge in Israel.

Ver. 30. *And Gideon had seventy sons of his body begotten*, etc.] Not after his victories, for it is plain he had children before; mention is made of Jether, his firstborn, as a youth able to draw a sword, and slay with it, (^{<0182>}Judges 8:20) but this was the number of all his sons, both before and after, and a large number it was; and the phrase "of his body begotten", or "that went out of his thigh" is used to show that they were his own sons, begotten in wedlock, and not sons that he had taken into his family by adoption, or that he was father-in-law to, having married a woman or women that had sons by a former husband; but these were all his own:

for he had many wives; which, though not agreeable to the original law of marriage, was customary in those times, and even with good men, and was connived at; and this is a reason accounting for his having so many sons.

Ver. 31. *And his concubine that was in Shechem*, etc.] Which was not an harlot, but a secondary or half wife; such were generally taken from handmaids, and of the meaner sort, and were not in such esteem as proper wives, had not the management of household affairs, only a share in the bed, and their children did not inherit. This concubine of Gideon's seems not to have been taken into his house at all, but lived at Shechem, perhaps in her father's house, and here Gideon met with her when he went to Shechem as a judge to try causes; her name, according to Josephus^{f187}, was Druma:

she also bare him a son; as his other wives did; perhaps all the children he had were sons, and this was one over and above the seventy, and not to be reckoned into that number:

whose name he called Abimelech: which signifies, "my father a king"; which he gave him either in memory of the offer made him to be king of Israel, or through foresight of what this son of his would be; or he might be moved to it by the mother from pride and vanity, and which name might afterwards inspire the young man to be made a king, as he was; and the account given of his name is because of the narrative of him in the following chapter.

Ver. 32. *And Gideon the son of Joash died in a good old age*, etc.] Having lived it seems forty years after his war with Midian, blessed with a large family, much wealth and riches, great credit and esteem among his people, and in favour with God and men:

and was buried in the sepulchre of Joash his father, in Ophrah of the Abiezrites; a city which belonged to the family of the Abiezrites, who were of the tribe of Manasseh, in which Gideon lived, and his father before him; and where there was a family vault, in which he was interred. In the days of this judge it is supposed^{f188} was the famous expedition of the Argonauts to Colchis, to fetch from thence the golden fleece.

Ver. 33. *And it came to pass, as soon as Gideon was dead, that the children of Israel turned again*, etc.] from God, and the pure worship of him, to idolatry:

and went a whoring after Baalim; the gods of the Phoenicians and Canaanites, the several Baals of other nations, the lords many which they served; these they committed spiritual whoredom with; that is, idolatry: particularly

and made Baalberith their god; which was the idol of the Shechemites, as appears from a temple being built at Shechem for it, (~~000~~Judges 9:4) and had its name either from Berytus, a city of Phoenicia, of which Mela^{f189} and Pliny^{f190} make mention, and where this Baal might be first worshipped; it was fifty miles from Sidon, and was in later times a seat of learning^{f191}; of this city was Sanchoniatho, a Phoenician historian, who is said to receive many things he writes about the Jews from Jerombalus, supposed to be Jerubbaal, or Gideon; (see Gill on “~~000~~Judges 6:32”) and who tells^{f192} us, that Cronus or Ham gave this city to Neptune and the Cabiri, and who also relates^{f193} that Beruth is the name of a Phoenician deity. Though it may be rather this idol had its name from its supposed concern in covenants, the word “Berith” signifying a covenant; and so the Targum and Syriac version call him the lord of covenant; and the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions are,

“and they made a covenant with Baal, that he should be their god;”

as if he had his name from hence; though rather from his presiding over covenants, as Janus is said^{f194} to do, and from his avenging the breach of them, and rewarding those that kept them; the same with Jupiter Fidius Ultor, and Sponsor^{f195} with the Romans, and Horcius^{f196} with the Greeks.

Ver. 34. *And the children of Israel remembered not the Lord their God,* etc.] Or, as the Targum, the worship of the Lord their God; they forgot him, and forsook him, which showed base ingratitude:

who had delivered them out of the hands of their enemies on every side; not only out of the hands of Midian, but all other nations round about them, as Edom, Moab, Ammon, etc. not one attempting to oppress them.

Ver. 35. *Neither showed they kindness to the house of Jerubbaal, namely Gideon,* etc.] But, on the contrary, great unkindness and cruelty, slaying his seventy sons, as related in the following chapter:

according to all the goodness which he had showed unto Israel; in exposing his life to danger for their sake, in delivering them out of the hands of their oppressors, in administering justice to them, in protecting them in their civil and religious liberties, and leaving them in the quiet and peaceable possession of them.

CHAPTER 9

INTRODUCTION TO JUDGES 9

This chapter contains an account of the craft and cruelty of Abimelech, by which he got himself made king of the Shechemites, (^{<000E>}Judges 9:1-6) of the parable of Jotham, the youngest son of Gideon, concerning the trees, in which he exposes their folly in making Abimelech king, and foretells the ruin of them both, (^{<000E>}Judges 9:7-21) of the contentions which arose between Abimelech, and the men of Shechem, increased by Gaal the son of Ebed, (^{<000E>}Judges 9:22-29) who was drawn into a battle with Abimelech, and beaten and forced to fly, (^{<000E>}Judges 9:30-41) but the quarrel between Abimelech and the men of Shechem ceased not, but still continued, which issued in the entire ruin of the city and the inhabitants of it, (^{<000E>}Judges 9:42-49) and in the death of Abimelech himself, according to Jotham's curse, (^{<000E>}Judges 9:50-57).

Ver. 1. *And Abimelech the son of Jerubbaal went to Shechem, unto his mother's brethren*, etc.] It seems that though the mother of Abimelech lived at Shechem, he was taken and brought up in his father's house at Ophrah, where he was when he died; and from hence he came to Shechem, to pay a visit to his uncles there; whether his mother was now living, is not certain:

and communed with them; about the death of his father, the state of his family, and the government of Israel:

and with all the family of the house of his mother's father; that descended from his grandfather, the several branches of them, and of the family, the heads of them at least:

saying, as follows.

Ver. 2. *Speak, I pray you, in the ears of all the men of Shechem*, etc.] Which, though the Targum calls the inhabitants of the place, Ben Melech better interprets it the lords of Shechem, as the phrase will bear to be rendered; for it is more likely he would have this first whispered and

suggested to the principal men of the city, before the common people were acquainted with it, and indeed in order to use their influence with them:

whether is better for you, either that all the sons of Jerubbaal, [which are] seventy persons, reign over you, or that one reign over you? intimating thereby, that though Gideon his father had refused the regal government when offered him, it was but reasonable that his sons, or some one of them, should be tried, whether it would be acceptable to them; nay, he would insinuate, that the sons of Gideon, who were seventy in number, were either contending with one another about it, or contriving to divide the government among them, and therefore desired it might be moved to consideration, whether it would not be more eligible to fix upon some one person to be their ruler, than to be under the government of seventy; or, in other words, whether it was not better to have one king than seventy kings; but in reality there was no necessity for any consultation about this matter, the sons of judges never succeeded their fathers in government; nor does it appear that any of Gideon's sons had any thought about it, nor any desire to be made kings, as appears from Jotham's parable; and this was only a wicked insinuation of this man's, with an ambitious view of getting the kingdom to himself, as follows:

remember also that I am your bone and your flesh; was of the same tribe and city with them, born among them, his mother always living with them, and he having now many near relations by his mother's side that dwelt there; and therefore while they had this affair of government under consideration, he would have them think of him to be their king, which would be to their honour, and to their advantage, to have one so nearly related to them on the throne, from whom they might expect many favours.

Ver. 3. *And his mother's brethren spake of him in the ears of the men of Shechem all these words,* etc.] Got them together in some certain place, and laid before them all that Abimelech had suggested to them, and spake in his favour to them:

and their hearts inclined to follow Abimelech, for they said, he is our brother; being fond of kingly government, as the Israelites generally were, it seemed most agreeable to them to have one king over them, and none more acceptable than one so nearly related to them, who they doubted not, from his alliance to them, would be ready to oblige them on all occasions.

Ver. 4. *And they gave him seventy pieces of silver out of the house of Baalbirith*, etc.] The temple of their idol; of this name (see Gill on “~~0083~~Judges 8:33”), out of the money which had been dedicated to his service by freewill offering, or out of a bank which they deposited there for greater safety, and perhaps out of a superstitious notion of its being more prosperous and successful: of what value these pieces were is not certain; by pieces of silver, commonly shekels are meant; but these are thought to be of too little value to be given to a man to raise an army with, or carry on a scheme to advance himself to the throne; and talents are judged to be too large a sum for such a city to contribute out of a temple of theirs, and that but lately built, as it must be since the death of Gideon; they are therefore thought to be pounds, as the Vulgate Latin version renders it; however, in the number of them there seems to be some reference to the number of Gideon’s sons, who were to be destroyed by bribing men with this sum, which was the scheme concerted between Abimelech and the men of Shechem;

wherewith Abimelech hired vain and light persons, which followed him; perhaps seventy of them, giving to each a piece or pound of silver; these were a base scoundrel sort of people, that lived in an idle scandalous manner, a sort of freebooters, that lived upon what they could lay hold on in a way of force and rapine; men of light heads and empty brains, and whose pockets were as light and empty as their heads, and fit to engage in any enterprise, though ever so barbarous, for the sake of a little money.

Ver. 5. *And he went to his father’s house at Ophrah*, etc.] Which, according to Bunting ^{f197}, was ten miles from Shechem:

and slew his brethren the sons of Jerubbaal, being seventy persons, upon one stone: in which he was assisted by the ruffians he had hired with seventy pieces of silver; these were laid one after another upon one and the same stone, as being convenient for the execution of them; or as serving as an altar on which they were sacrificed to Baal, out of whose temple the money was taken to hire the executioners with. They are said to be seventy that were slain, though one escaped, the round number being given, as in many other instances, as in (~~0452~~Genesis 46:27 ~~431b~~John 20:24),

notwithstanding, yet Jotham the youngest son of Jerubbaal was left; or remained alive, not out of compassion to his youth, but because he could not be found:

for he hid himself; for no doubt Abimelech, and his crew, were most forward to lay hold of the eldest, and sacrifice them first, as being most in his way; this gave Jotham the youngest not only notice of their design, but an opportunity of providing for his safety, or however his friends; for it may be rendered, as in some versions, “he was hidden”^{f198}, that is, by others.

Ver. 6. *And all the men of Shechem gathered together*, etc.] Upon the return of Abimelech, after he with his banditti had committed the execrable murder of his brethren:

and all the house of Millo; which was either the men of a place near to Shechem, or of his brother’s family, or of some grand leading family in Shechem; or it may mean the town hall, where the principal inhabitants met in full house, as Millo signifies, on this occasion:

and went and made Abimelech king; which was a most bold and daring action; being done without asking counsel of God, without which no king was to be set over Israel, and by a single city, without the knowledge, advice, and consent of the body of the people of Israel: by the plain of the pillar that was in Shechem; the place where they met together, and did this business in voting Abimelech to be king, was near a place where a pillar was set in Shechem; or by the oak of the pillar in Shechem, and so may mean the stone under an oak, which Joshua placed there as a testimony between God and the people, (^{f195}Joshua 24:25-27) and here, in the same place where Joshua convened the people of Israel, and made his last speech to them, was this business done.

Ver. 7. *And when they told it to Jotham*, etc.] Or when it was told him that Abimelech was made king in Shechem by some of his friends:

he went and stood in the top of Mount Gerizim; a mount near Shechem; it hung over the city, as Josephus says^{f199}, and so a very proper place to stand on and deliver a speech from it to the inhabitants of it; who, as the same writer says, were now keeping a festival, on what account he says not, perhaps to Baalberith their idol: over against this mountain was another, called Ebal, and between them a valley; and very likely they were assembled in this valley, where the children of Israel stood when the blessings were delivered from Gerizim, and the curses from Ebal; and if so, Jotham might be heard very well by the Shechemites:

and he lifted up his voice, and cried; that he might be heard by them:

and said unto them, hearken unto me, ye men of Shechem, that God may hearken unto you; which was a very solemn manner of address to them, tending to excite attention, as having somewhat of importance to say to them, and suggesting, that if they did not hearken to him, God would not hearken to them when they cried to him, and therefore it behoved them to attend: it is an adjuration of them to hearken to him, or a wish that God would not hearken to them if they were inattentive to him.

Ver. 8. *The trees went forth on a time to anoint a king over them,* etc.] This is an apologue or fable, and a very fine and beautiful one; it is fitly expressed to answer the design, and the most ancient of the kind, being made seven hundred years before the times of Aesop, so famous for his fables, and exceeds anything written by him. By the trees are meant the people of Israel in general, and the Shechemites in particular, who had been for some time very desirous of a king, but could not persuade any of their great and good men to accept of that office:

and they said unto the olive tree, reign thou over us; a fit emblem of a good man, endowed with excellent virtues and qualifications for good, as David king of Israel, who is compared to such a tree, (~~Psalm~~ Psalm 52:8), Jarchi applies this to Othniel the first judge; but it may be better applied to Gideon, an excellent good man, full of fruits of righteousness, and eminently useful, and to whom kingly government was offered, and was refused by him; and the men of Shechem could scarcely fail of thinking of him, and applying it to him, as Jotham was delivering his fable.

Ver. 9. *But the olive tree said unto them,* etc.] In reply to the request of the trees:

should I leave my fatness, wherewith by me they honour God and man; by “fatness” oil is meant, pressed out of the fruit of the olive tree, and which was much made use of both in the burning of the lamps in the tabernacle, and in many sacrifices, as the meat offerings and others, whereby God was honoured; and it was also made use of in the investiture of the greatest personages with the highest offices among men, as kings, priests, and prophets, as well as eaten with pleasure and delight by all sorts of men, and even by the greatest, and so men are honoured by it:

and go to be promoted over the trees; desert so useful a station, in which it was planted and fixed, to move to and fro, as the word signifies, and reign over trees; suggesting that it was unreasonable, at least not eligible to a

good man to desert a private station in life, to which he was called of God, and in which he acted with honour and usefulness to others, and take upon him a public office, attended with much care and trouble, and with neglect of private affairs, and with the loss of much personal peace and comfort.

Ver. 10. *And the trees said to the fig tree*, etc.] Another useful and fruit bearing tree, and to which also good men are sometimes compared, (see ~~203~~ Song of Solomon 2:13),

come thou, and reign over us: which Jarchi applies to Deborah, but may be better applied to one of Gideon's sons, who, though they had not a personal offer of kingly government themselves, yet it was made to them through their father, and refused, as for himself, so for them; and had it been offered to them, they would have rejected it, as Jotham seems to intimate by this parable.

Ver. 11. *And the fig tree said unto them*, etc.] Rejecting the offer made:

should I forsake my sweetness and my good fruit; for such the fruit of the fig tree is, sweet and good: so Julian^{f200} the emperor shows from various authors, Aristophanes, Herodotus, and Homer, that nothing is sweeter than figs, excepting honey, and that no kind of fruit is better, and, where they are, no good is wanting:

and go to be promoted over the trees? the same is designed by this as the former.

Ver. 12. *Then said the trees unto the vine*, etc.] Another emblem of good and useful men; and it may be observed, that Jotham takes no notice of any trees but fruitful ones till he comes to the bramble, and them only such as were well known, and of the greatest use, in the land of Judea, as olives, figs, and vines, (see ~~888~~ Deuteronomy 8:8 ~~887~~ Habakkuk 3:17)

come thou, and reign over us; this Jarchi applies to Gideon; but since there are three sorts of trees brought into the fable, and when the kingdom was offered to Gideon, it was proposed to him, and to his son, and his son's son, and refused, some reference may be had unto it in this apologue. Abarbinel thinks three sorts of men are intended as proper persons for rule and government, as honourable ones, such as are wealthy and rich, and also of good behaviour to God and man, as Gideon's sons were; but Abimelech was all the reverse.

Ver. 13. *And the vine said unto them*, etc.] By way of denial and refusal, as the other two:

shall I leave my wine, which cheereth God and man; which being used in the drink offerings was acceptable to God, and of a sweet savour to him, (^(~~HEB~~)Numbers 15:7) and being drank by than, revives, refreshes, and makes glad, when before sorrowful, drooping, faint, and weary, (^(~~DAIS~~)Psalm 104:15) though some by Elohim, rendered God, understand great personages, as men of quality, magistrates, etc. and by man the common people, and so in (^(~~HEB~~)Judges 9:9)

and go to be promoted over the trees? all speak the same language, being of the same sentiment.

Ver. 14. *Then said all the trees unto the bramble*, etc.] Perceiving they could not prevail upon any of the useful and fruitful trees to take the government of them, they unite in a request to a bramble, scarce to be called a tree, and however a very barren and fruitless one, yea, hurtful and distressing:

come thou, and reign over us; this respects Abimelech, and describes him as a mean person, the son of a concubine, as having no goodness in him, not any good qualifications to recommend him to government, but all the reverse, cruel, tyrannical, and oppressive; and this exposes the folly of the Shechemites, and their eagerness to have a king at any rate, though ever so mean and despicable, useless and pernicious.

Ver. 15. *And the bramble said unto the trees*, etc.] Accepting of their offer at once:

if ye in trust anoint me king over you; suspecting they were not hearty and cordial in their choice and call to the kingly authority over them:

then come and put your trust in my shadow; promising protection to them as his subjects, requiring their confidence in him, and boasting of the good they should receive from him, as is common with wicked princes at their first entering on their office; but, alas! what shadow or protection can there be in a bramble? if a man attempts: to put himself under it for shelter, he will find it will be of no use to him, but harmful, since, the nearer and closer he comes to it, the more he will be scratched and torn by it:

and if not, let fire come out of the bramble, and devour the cedars of Lebanon; signifying, that if they did not heartily submit to his government, and put confidence in him, and prove faithful to him, they should smart for it, and feel his wrath and vengeance, even the greatest men among them, comparable to the cedars of Lebanon; for thorns and brambles catching fire, as they easily do, or fire being put to them, as weak as they are, and placed under the tallest and strongest cedars, will soon fetch them down to the ground; and the words of the bramble, or Abimelech, proved true to the Shechemites, he is made to speak in this parable.

Ver. 16. *Now therefore, if ye have done truly and sincerely, in that ye have made Abimelech king*, etc.] If they had done this conscientiously, and in the uprightness of their hearts, to take such a base man, and a murderer, and make him their king, which Jotham doubted, and put it in this manner to them, that they might consider of it themselves:

if ye have dealt well with Jerubbaal, and his house; if they could think so, which surely they could not, when they reflected upon the murder of his family they had consented to:

and have done unto him according to the deserving of his hands; to his memory, and to his family, according to the merit of his works which he had performed on their account, next mentioned.

Ver. 17. *For my father fought for you*, etc.] In the valley of Jezreel, and at Karkor, where with three hundred men he routed and destroyed an army of 135,000:

and adventured his life far: which, according to our version, may seem to have respect to his going over Jordan, and following the Midianites, fleeing into their country, and fighting them at Karkor, at a great distance from his native place; but the phrase in the original text is, “he cast away his life afar”^{f201}, made no account of it, exposed it to the greatest danger; or, as the Targum,

“he delivered his life as it were to destruction:”

and delivered you out of the hand of Midian; from the oppression and bondage of the Midianites, under which they had laboured seven years.

Ver. 18. *And ye are risen up against my father's house this day,* etc.] Which was an instance of great ingratitude in them, after such services done for them, and favours received by them:

and have slain his sons, seventy persons on one stone; excepting one, himself, and he was intentionally slain, their design was to cut off everyone; and all being slain but one, the round number is given, and this being so large, is the rather observed; and though Abimelech committed the fact, the men of Shechem were accessory to it, they gave him money, with which he hired men to assist him in it, (see ^(xxx)Judges 9:20") and it is very probable they were privy to his intention, and encouraged him to it; and certain it is they showed their approbation of it, by making Abimelech king after it, and therefore they are justly charged with it:

and have made Abimelech, the son of his handmaid, king over the men of Shechem; which was both to the disgrace of Gideon, and his family, and of themselves too, that a base son of his should be made their king; when it would have been more to the credit of Gideon, and his family, that he had lived in obscurity, and had not been known as a son of his; and this was to the reproach of the men of Shechem, and especially to the princes thereof; for, by the men of Shechem are meant the lords, and great men thereof, as Kimchi observes; and great contempt is cast on Abimelech himself, who is here represented as making a very poor figure, being by extraction the son of an handmaid, and king only over the men of Shechem; and who made him so for no other reason but this,

because he is your brother; not because he had any right to the kingdom, or had any qualification for it, but because his mother lived among them, and her family belonged to them, and so he was related to many of them, and they hoped on that account to have preferment and favours from him.

Ver. 19. *If ye then have dealt truly and sincerely with Jerubbaal and his house this day,* etc.] If they could in their consciences think and believe they had done well, and acted the faithful and upright part by him and his family, which he left with them to consider of:

then rejoice ye in Abimelech, and let him also rejoice in you; may you be happy in him as a king, and he be happy in you as his subjects, and live peaceably and comfortably together; and this he suggests as a test of their former conduct, that should this alliance between Abimelech and them be attended with happiness, which he could not believe would be the case,

then it would seem that they had done a right part by Gideon and his family; but if they should be unhappy together, as he supposed they would, then it would be clear that they had acted a base and disingenuous part by his father's family.

Ver. 20. *But if not*, etc.] If it appeared that they had not acted uprightly and sincerely in this matter:

let fire come out of Abimelech, and devour the men of Shechem, and the house of Millo; let wrath, rage, and fury, break out from Abimelech like fire, and issue in the destruction of those that made him king, both those of Shechem and of Millo:

and let fire come out from the men of Shechem, and from the house of Millo, and devour Abimelech; let them be incensed against Abimelech, and seek his ruin, and procure it: the sense is, that he wishes that strife, contention, and quarrels, might arise among them, and they mutually destroy each other; the words are imprecative of evil upon them both, and which had its exact fulfilment.

Ver. 21. *And Jotham ran away, and fled*, etc.] Having delivered his fable, and the application of it, he made his escape, having the advantage of being on the top of a mountain, at some distance from the people, and perhaps they might not be inclined to do him any harm:

and went to Beer; which some take to be the same with Baalathbeer in the tribe of Simeon, (⁶⁹⁰⁸Joshua 19:8) Jerom ^{f202} says, the village Bera, whither Jotham fled, is eight miles from Eleutheropolis to the north; but Mr. Maundrell ^{f203}, who was in those parts in 1697, gives us a better account of it; and, according to him, it is about two hours and a half's travel from Bethel to it, and three hours and one third from it to Jerusalem; Beer, he says, enjoys a very pleasant situation, on an easy declivity, fronting southward; at the bottom of the hill it has a plentiful fountain of excellent water, from which it had its name:

and dwelt there for fear of Abimelech his brother; how long he dwelt there is not certain, and we hear no more of him after this, Josephus says ^{f204} he lay hid in the mountains three years for fear of Abimelech, which perhaps he concluded from Abimelech's reigning three years, as follows.

Ver. 22. *When Abimelech had reigned three years over Israel.*] The people in general consenting to what the men of Shechem had done, at

least not opposing it, all being desirous of a king, and therefore put up with a mean person, rather than have none; though it is amazing they should, and that they had not rose up as one man against Abimelech, and avenged the blood of the sons of Gideon, who had been so useful and serviceable to them; it is indeed said that he reigned over all Israel, and his reign, such as it was, was very short, as is often the case with wicked princes.

Ver. 23. *Then God sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the men of Shechem,* etc.] Permitted, yea, gave a commission to Satan, the evil spirit, to go among them, who stirred up suspicions, jealousies, hatred, and ill will to one another, and sowed the seeds of discord and contention among them; or God gave them up to their own hearts' lusts, to think ill of one another, grow jealous, and meditate revenge:

and the men of Shechem dealt treacherously with Abimelech; did not openly declare their minds, but secretly conspired against him, and privately consulted ways to find means to get rid of him, and shake off his government.

Ver. 24. *That the cruelty done to the seventy sons of Jerubbaal might come,* etc.] That vengeance might come on the authors of it; so things were ordered in Providence that this might come to pass:

and their blood be laid upon Abimelech their brother, which slew them; be charged to his account, and he suffer for shedding it:

and upon the men of Shechem which aided him in killing of his brethren; by giving him money to hire men to go with him to do it, and perhaps by words encouraging the assassins, and who might be of the city of Shechem.

Ver. 25. *And the men of Shechem set liers in wait for him in the top of the mountains,* etc.] Of Ebal and Gerizim, which were near Shechem, by the way of which he passed when he came to that city, and these they set there, either to slay him, or to seize his person, and bring him to them:

and they robbed all that came along that way by them; that belonged to Abimelech and others also; and this they did to show their contempt of his government, and that they were no longer under it, and every man did what was right in his own eyes, as if they had no governor over them; though some think this was done to draw him thither to secure his subjects from such rapine and violence, that they might have an opportunity to lay hold upon him, or this they did on purpose to begin a civil war:

and it was told Abimelech; that they lay in wait for him, and so he kept himself from them.

Ver. 26. *And Gaal the son or Ebed came with his brethren, and went over to Shechem,* etc.] Who this Gaal was, and who his brethren, and from whence he came, and the place he went over, are all uncertain. Jarchi thinks he was a Gentile, and it looks, by some speeches of his afterwards, as if he was a descendant of Hamor, prince of Shechem, in the times of Jacob, who, since the expulsion of the Canaanites, his family had retired to some distant parts; but hearing of a difference between Abimelech and the Shechemites, Gaal, with some of the family, came over, perhaps over Jordan, to make what advantage he could of it:

and the men of Shechem put their confidence in him; freely told him their mind, the ill opinion they had of Abimelech, and what was their design against him; and he assuring them he would take their part, and defend them to the uttermost, they depended on him, and therefore very securely went about their business in the fields, as follows.

Ver. 27 *And they went into the fields, and gathered their vineyards,* etc.] Before they kept within the city, and durst not stir out to gather in the vintage, the time being come, for fear of the troops of Abimelech; for their lying in wait for him, and the robberies committed being made known to him, he had prepared to raise some forces, and attack them, of which they had had information; but now being encouraged with the protection of Gaal, they ventured out to gather their grapes in their vineyards without fear:

and trode the grapes, and made merry: sung songs and danced, as was usual at the ingathering of the fruits of the earth, and treading the winepress, (²³⁶⁰Isaiah 16:10 ²⁴⁸³Jeremiah 48:33) though Abendana thinks this joy and merriment were made to their idol, to whom they gave the praise of their vintage, they should have done to the true God, and what follows may seem to confirm it:

and they went into the house of their god; the temple of Baalberith, (⁴⁰⁹⁵Judges 9:5)

and did eat and drink; in their idol temple, as was the manner of idolaters to do, bringing their firstfruits to rejoice, and make glad with:

and cursed Abimelech; wished they had never seen him and known him, hoped they should be rid of him in a little time, and that he would meet with his deserved disgrace and punishment; and this they did in that very temple from whence they had taken money to assist him in making way for his government of them; so fickle and changeable were they.

Ver. 28. *And Gaal the son of Ebed said*, etc.] As they were then making merry, drinking and carousing:

who is Abimelech, and who is Shechem, that we should serve him? who is this Abimelech the Shechemite? or who is he more than Shechem, the old prince of this place, long ago dispossessed of it? the one is no better than the other, nor has a better title to rule and government than the other, that we should serve him; nay, of the two, the descendants of the old Shechem have the best title:

is not he the son of Jerubbaal? that pleaded against Baal, and threw down his altar, the god you now serve:

and Zebul his officer? has he not set him over you? not content to rule you himself, he has set up another as an officer over you under him, and thus you are like to be governed in a tyrannical manner, and oppressed:

serve the men of Hamor--for why should we serve him? that is, rather serve them than him; which was speaking very contemptuously of his government, preferring the descendants of Hamor, the old Canaanitish prince, that ruled in this place, to Abimelech; and if Gaal was a descendant of his, he spoke in good earnest, and thought this a proper opportunity to get the government of the city restored to him and his family, since their old religion and idolatry were established among them; and if they had received the one, why not the other?

Ver. 29. *And would to God this people were under my hand*, etc.] Or government, that I were but the ruler of their city, and general of their forces:

then would I remove Abimelech; from his kingly office, and rid Shechem of him, and all the country round about, and indeed remove him out of the world:

and he said to Abimelech; as if he was present, in a hectoring and blustering manner; or he said what follows to his officer under him, that represented him; or he sent a messenger to him, saying,

increase thine army, and come out; bidding him defiance, challenging him to come into the open field and fight him, and bring as many forces along with him as he could or would, not doubting but he should be a match for him; and the men of Shechem would see they had nothing to fear from him, having such a man as Gaal at the head of them; this he said to engage the Shechemites to make him their ruler.

Ver. 30. *And when Zebul the ruler of the city*, etc.] Whom Abimelech had placed there under him: heard

the words of Gaal the son of Ebed, his anger was kindled; because he spoke slightly of him, and wished to have his place; perhaps before Zebul was inclined to be on the side of the Shechemites against Abimelech, or at least dissembled that he was; but now, being incensed at the words of Gaal, determined to take the side of Abimelech, and let him know how things were carrying on against him.

Ver. 31. *And he sent messengers unto Abimelech privily*, etc.] In a secret manner, unknown to Gaal and the men of Shechem; or “craftily”, as Jarchi and Kimchi interpret it, still dissembling, notwithstanding his anger, to be in the interest of Gaal, and the men of Shechem, as appears indeed afterwards by a show of friendliness with Gaal, (^{<0026>}Judges 9:36) though, according to Joseph Kimchi and Ben Gerson, Thormah is the name of the place where Abimelech was, the same with Arumah, (^{<004E>}Judges 9:41) and the sense is, that he sent messengers to Abimelech at Thormah or Arumah:

saying, Gaal the son of Ebal, and his brethren, be come to Shechem; a family that Abimelech well knew, and if they were of the race of the old Canaanites, he would easily perceive their design:

and, behold, they fortify the city against thee; by repairing its fortifications, or adding new works; or “besiege”^{f205} it, which, as that is done by placing an army around it without, that none can come out of it, so by setting a watch within, and upon the walls, and at the gates of it, that none can come in, which is here meant; though some interpret it of their design to besiege the city Thormah, where Abimelech was, of which he gives him notice; or rather they set the city against thee, make the inhabitants thine enemies.

Ver. 32. *Now therefore up by night*, etc.] The night following, that no time might be lost:

and the people that is with thee; the troops he had with him; not only such he had for his own guards, but what he had been raising, having intelligence before this of the revolt of the Shechemites from him:

and lie in wait in the fields; he thought it most advisable for him to march with the forces he had, from the place where he was in the night, and less liable to be discovered, and remain in the fields of Shechem till morning, and then come upon Shechemites before they were aware, and surprise them.

Ver. 33. *And it shall be, that in the morning, as soon as the sun is up, thou shalt rise early, and set upon the city*, etc.] For being with his forces advanced near to it by a march in the night, he would be able by sunrising to attack the city before the inhabitants were up to defend it, and so surprise them:

and, behold, when he and the people that is with him come out against thee; that is, Gaul, and the men with him, as many as he upon a surprise can get together:

thou mayest do to them as thou shalt find occasion; as the situation of things would direct him, and he, in his wisdom, and according to his ability, and as opportunity offered, would see plainly what was fit and right to be done; Zebul did not pretend to advise him further, but left the rest to his discretion, as things should appear to him.

Ver. 34. *And Abimelech rose up, and all the people that were with him, by night*, etc.] According to the advice of Zebul:

and they laid wait against Shechem in four companies; he divided his army into four parts, which he placed on the four sides of the city, at some distance from it, to act as they should have opportunity, to find ways and means of getting into it on either quarter.

Ver. 35. *And Gaul the son or Ebed went out*, etc.] He rose up early that morning, being a man of vigilance and activity, and perhaps had some intelligence of the preparations of Abimelech, his design against the city, though he did not expect he was so near at hand:

and stood in the entering of the gate of the city; to see whether the guards were on their duty within, and whether he could observe any thing without, any approaching danger:

and Abimelech rose up, and the people that were with him, from lying in wait; came out of their ambush, and appeared just as Gaul was at the gate.

Ver. 36. *And when Gaal saw the people, he said to Zebul*, etc.] Who was up as early, and came to the gate of the city, to see how things went, and whether there was any appearance of Abimelech and his forces, and whether any opportunity offered to let him into the city; and it seems as if he came and stood by Gaul, and appeared friendly with him:

behold, there come people down from the tops of the mountains; the mountains of Ebal and Gerizim, which were near to Shechem:

and Zebul said unto him, thou seest the shadow of the mountains, as [if they were] men; either deriding him, as being just out of his bed, and his eyes scarce open, that he could not discern shadows from men; or rather as being of such a timorous spirit, that he was afraid of shadows; or else he said this, putting on an air of seriousness, as if he really believed this to be the case, on purpose to deceive him, and keep him from talking about them, while Abimelech and his men made further advances before Gaul could make any preparation to meet them.

Ver. 37. *And Gaal spake again, and said*, etc.] Looking towards the mountains, and taking another view of what he before saw, for further satisfaction:

see, there come people down by the middle of the land; either in the valley between the two mountains; or rather those he first saw on the top of the mountains were now come down about the middle of them, called in the Hebrew text the navel, from the prominence of the mountains thereabout, or because the navel is in the middle of the body, as this part of them was the middle on which he saw them. R. Isaiah interprets it, between the two cities:

and another company come along by the plain of Meonenim; of which we read nowhere else. Montanus renders it, “the oak of Meonenim”; or of the soothsayers; oaks being had in great esteem with idolaters for their oracles and divinations; and perhaps this was a place, whether an oak or, a plain, where such persons used to meet to make their divinations.

Ver. 38. *Then said Zebul unto him,* etc.] Not being able to put him off any longer, and willing to take the opportunity to upbraid him with what he had said:

where is now thy mouth, [wherewith] thou saidst, who is Abimelech, that we should serve him? darest thou say the same thou hast done, and utter the contemptuous language concerning Abimelech, asking who he was, that he should be served? Here he is, speak to his face; what are become of those boasts and brags, and great swelling words, what thou wouldest do if thou hadst the command of this city?

is not this the people thou hast despised? as small and insignificant, bidding Abimelech increase his army, and come out and fight:

go out, I pray thee, now, and fight with them; and show thyself to be a man of courage, and not a mere blusterer, a man that can use his sword as well as his tongue.

Ver. 39. *And Gaal went out before the men of Shechem,* etc.] At the head of them, to meet Abimelech, having gathered together as many, and put them in as good order, as he could, and the time would admit of:

and fought with Abimelech; without the city.

Ver. 40. *And Abimelech chased him, and he fled before him,* etc.] Abimelech got the better of him in the battle, and obliged him to give way, and he pursued him closely as he was fleeing:

and many were overthrown and wounded, even unto the entering of the gate; or, “they fell many wounded” ^{f206}, or slain, as the Targum; that is, many were killed and wounded, as in the battle, so in the pursuit, and lay all the way to the entrance into the gate of the city, to which Gaal, and the men of Shechem, made for their safety, and got in.

Ver. 41. *And Abimelech dwelt at Arumah,* etc.] Called also Aarima as Jerom ^{f207} says, and in his time called Remphtis; it seems to be not far off from Shechem, he returned to the place where he was before, (see ~~1081~~ Judges 9:31) contenting himself with the advantage he had got, and waiting when another opportunity would offer, which quickly did, to be revenged on the Shechemites:

and Zebul thrust out Gaal and his brethren, that they should not dwell in Shechem; there seems to have been two parties in Shechem before, one

that hated Abimelech, and another more friendly to his interest; by which means Zebul his officer kept his post, and Gaal could not get the government into his hand; and now by the loss in the late battle, who were Abimelech's sworn enemies, and the disgrace Gaal fell into by being beaten, Zebul was able, so far able to carry his point, as to drive Gaal and his brethren out of the city; though he had not strength to put him to death, or to seize him and deliver him into the hands of Abimelech.

Ver. 42. *And it came to pass on the morrow*, etc.] The day after the battle:

that the people went out into the field; some think to fight, and try the event of another battle, in order to be freed from Abimelech, but that seems not so likely: rather to finish their vintage, as Josephus^{f208}, or to till their ground, to plough and sow, which quickly came on after the vintage was ended; find this they might do the more securely, since Abimelech had withdrawn himself and his forces to his place of habitation, and so concluded he would not soon at least return to them; and the rather they might think he would be more easy, with then, since Gaal was thrust out from among them:

and they told Abimelech; or it was told Abimelech, that the people came out into the field, and so an opportunity offered to him to come and cut them off, as they were at their business unarmed.

Ver. 43. *And he took the people*, etc.] That is, the forces he had with him at Arumah:

and divided them into three companies: each having a separate leader, and the command of one of them he had himself:

and laid wait in the field; in the field of Shechem, one company in one part, and one in another part of the field:

and looked, and, behold, the people were come forth out of the city; he watched them when they did:

and he rose up against them, and smote them; the companies rose up out of their ambush, in different parts, and killed them.

Ver. 44. *And Abimelech, and the company that was with him*, etc.] Which he had the particular command of; or "the heads"^{f209}, for in the company with him, as Kimchi observes, were great men; and so the Septuagint renders it, the princes that were with him:

rushed forward, and stood in the entering of the gate of the city; to prevent the people that were in the field getting into it, and any from coming out of it to their relief:

and the two other companies ran upon all the people that were in the fields, and slew them; so that by this means none escaped.

Ver. 45. *And Abimelech fought against the city all that day,* etc.] By throwing stones or arrows into it:

and he took the city; it was surrendered to him, not being able to stand out against his forces:

and slew the people that was therein; all but those that were of his own family and his friends; all that had taken up arms against him, or had shown their dislike of his government, and were his enemies:

and beat down the city; the houses in it, and walls of it, though it was his native place:

and sowed it with salt; not to make it barren, for he would rather then have sowed the field, though this would not have had any effect of that kind, for any time at least; but to show his detestation of it, because of the ill usage he had met with, and as a token of its perpetual destruction, to which he devoted it, determining that if it was in his power it should never be rebuilt; but it was hereafter, and became again a very flourishing city in Jeroboam's time. Thus the Emperor Frederic Barbarossa, in the year 1162, when he took Milan, not only ploughed it up, but sowed it with salt; and in memory of it there is a street in it, now called "la contrada della Sala"^{f210}: besides, Abimelech did this to deter other cities from rebelling against him; for if he so used his own city, more severely, if possible, would he use others.

Ver. 46. *And when all the men of the tower of Shechem heard that,* etc.] That the city of Shechem was taken, the inhabitants of it slain, the city beaten down, and sowed with salt; by which it appears that this tower was not within the city, for then the men of it would have seen what was done, and not be said only to hear it; though it was not far from it, and possessed by Shechemites, and whither some of the principal inhabitants had now fled for safety; perhaps it is the same with the house of Millo, and so that part of Jotham's curse, which respected that, had now its accomplishment, otherwise no account is given of it:

they entered into an hold of the house of the god Berith; not thinking themselves safe enough in the tower, they betook themselves to the temple of Baalberith their god, (see ~~<000>~~Judges 9:4 8:33) which was a strong fortified place, as temples often were; or however had a strong hold belonging to it, and hither they fled, either because of the greater strength of the place, or because of the sanctity of it, and imagining Abimelech would not destroy it on that account; and the rather, because of the supply he had from it, which enabled him to raise himself to the government of Israel.

Ver. 47. *And it was told Abimelech*, etc.] Who had his spies about, and particularly to observe the motions of the men in this tower:

that all the men of the tower of Shechem were gathered together; in the hold of the temple of Baalberith.

Ver. 48. *And Abimelech got him up to Mount Zalmon*, etc.] A mountain near Shechem, and thought to be the same with Salmon in (~~<0084>~~Psalm 68:14) which seems to have had its name from the shade of the trees which grew upon it:

he and all the people that were with him; his whole army:

and Abimelech took an axe in his hand, and cut down a bough from the trees; which grew upon Mount Zalmon:

and took it, and laid it on his shoulders; and carried it along with him:

and said unto the people that were with him, what ye have seen me do, make haste, and do as I have done; take an axe, and every man cut down a bough with all possible haste, and lay it on his shoulder.

Ver. 49. *And all the people likewise cut down every man his bough, and followed Abimelech*, etc.] With their boughs on their shoulders, so that they were men that seemed to be as trees walking:

and put them to the hold, and set the hold on fire upon them; upon the men in it, or with them, the boughs of trees; it is probable the hold was made of wood, and so could the more easily be set on fire. Jarchi says it was a wood or forest, where they bent the trees, and divided them round about, and made a fence of them; but they would scarcely have left the tower for such a shelter:

so that all the men of the tower of Shechem died also; fire being put to the hold, and they burnt in it; the Vulgate Latin version adds, with fire and smoke; for they being boughs of trees just cut down, with which they set fire to the hold, they would not burn easily and clearly, but make a prodigious smoke, with which many might be suffocated, as others burnt with fire; and it is unaccountable that Josephus^{f211} should say that faggots of dry wood were taken, and with them fire set to the hold, when the text is so express for it that they were boughs of green trees just cut off:

about a thousand men and women; but the above historian makes them to be many more; he says the men were about 1500, and the rest a great multitude; this literally fulfilled Jotham's curse.

Ver. 50. *Then went Abimelech to Thebez*, etc.] Which, according to Ben Gersom, had rebelled against him; it was near to Shechem. Adrichomius says^{f212}, the ruins, where he thinks stood the city of Thebez, were but one furlong from Neapolis or Shechem, where, to the left of Jacob's well, were to be seen ruins of a large town, marble stones, whole pillars, and other signs of large palaces, and the soil wonderfully fruitful; and Jerome says^{f213}, that in his time there was a village called Thebes, on the borders of Neapolis or Shechem, as you go to Scythopolis, thirteen miles from it. It must be near Shechem, inhabited by Shechemites, to fulfil Jotham's curse, (~~4000~~Judges 9:20)

and encamped against Thebez, and took it: it seems not to have held out long, being deserted by its inhabitants, who fled to the tower, as follows.

Ver. 51. *But there was a strong tower within the city*, etc.] The tower of Shechem was without the city, but this within, as towers generally are:

and hither fled all the men and women, and all they of the city; men, women, and children, man and maid servants, all the inhabitants of the city; the tower being a large place, having not only many rooms in it, but perhaps a large area in the midst of it, as well as it had battlements on the top of it:

and shut it to them; the gates of it, and which no doubt they strongly barred and bolted, to keep out the enemy:

and gat them up to the top of the tower; to observe the motions of Abimelech, and annoy him as much as they could with what they carried with them, as stones, and the like.

Ver. 52. *And Abimelech came unto the tower,* etc.] With his army to besiege it:

and fought against it; using all the methods he could to oblige those in it to surrender:

and went hard unto the door of the tower to burn it with fire; in order to get entrance into it; and perhaps the tower was built of stone, so that no other part could be set fire to; and to do this he drew near to the door himself, for nothing more is meant by the phrase, “went hard”, than drawing near in his own person to the door; hazarding his life in the enterprise, being so bent upon it, thinking to do by this tower what he had done to the hold of the temple of Baalberith.

Ver. 53. *And a certain woman cast a piece of a millstone,* etc.] Of the upper millstone, as the word signifies, which is observed by Jarchi and other Jewish commentators; this with other stones being carried up to the top of the tower, to do what execution they could with them: and a woman observing Abimelech making up to the door of the tower, took up this piece of millstone, and threw it down

upon Abimelech’s head, and all to break his skull; she did it with that view, though it may as well be rendered, or “she”, or “it broke his skull”^{f214}; it made a fracture in it, which was mortal. Abendana observes, and so others, that that was measure for measure, a righteous retaliation, that as he had slain seventy of his brethren on one stone, he should die by means of a stone.

Ver. 54. *Then he called hastily to the young man his armourbearer,* etc.] Perceiving it was a mortal blow that was given him, and he should soon expire; and that the cast of the stone was by the hand of a woman, and therefore he was in haste to have the young man come to him:

and said unto him, draw thy sword and slay me, that men say not of me, a woman slew him; it being reckoned very ignominious and reproachful to die by the hand of a woman, and especially any great personage, as a king or general of an army^{f215}; to avoid this, he chose rather to be guilty of suicide, or of what cannot well be excused from it, and so died by suicide; which, added to all his other sins, he seemed to have no sense of, or repentance for; and the method he took to conceal the shame of his death served the more to spread it; for this circumstance of his death could not be

given without the reason of it, and which was remembered and related punctually near two hundred years afterwards, (~~1012~~ 2 Samuel 11:21).

Ver. 55. *And when the men of Israel saw that Abimelech was dead*, etc.] That is, those that were with him, the men of his army, who were all Israelites:

they departed every man to his place; disbanded themselves, and went everyone to their own home, and so the inhabitants of Thebez escaped the vengeance of Abimelech.

Ver. 56. *Thus God rendered the wickedness of Abimelech which he did unto his father*, etc.] To the disgrace of his father's character, and to the hurt of his father's family:

in slaying his seventy brethren; excepting one, which was a piece of unheard of wickedness, attended with most sad aggravations; the shedding such blood required blood to be shed again, and it was righteous judgment God rendered to him; this, and the following verse contain the remarks made upon this history by the writer of it, who, as we have seen, in all probability, was the Prophet Samuel.

Ver. 57. *And all the evil of the men of Shechem*, etc.] In aiding Abimelech to slay his brethren, and in making him king after so foul a fact committed:

did God render upon their heads; by suffering Abimelech to beat down their city, and destroy the inhabitants of it, and by burning the hold in which the men of the tower of Shechem were, and them in it:

and upon them came the curse of Jotham the son of Jerubbaal; both upon Abimelech, and the men of Shechem, they being destroyed by one another, as Jotham imprecated they might, and foretold they would, see (~~1013~~ Judges 9:20).

CHAPTER 10

INTRODUCTION TO JUDGES 10

This chapter gives an account of two judges of Israel, in whose days they enjoyed peace, (^{<0700>}Judges 10:1-5), after which they sinning against God, came into trouble, and were oppressed by their enemies eighteen years, and were also invaded by an army of the Ammonites, (^{<0700>}Judges 10:6-9), when they cried unto the Lord for deliverance, confessing their sin; but he had first refused to grant them any, though upon their importunity and reformation he had compassion on them, (^{<0700>}Judges 10:10-16) and the chapter is concluded with the preparation made by both armies for a battle, (^{<0700>}Judges 10:17,18).

Ver. 1. *And after Abimelech there arose to defend Israel*, etc.] To save, deliver, and protect Israel; which does not necessarily imply that Abimelech did; for he was no judge of God's raising up, or the people's choosing, but usurped a kingly power over them; and was so far from saving and defending them, that he involved them in trouble and distress, and ruled over them in a tyrannical manner, and left them in the practice of idolatry: it only signifies that after his death arose a person next described to which this may well be attributed, that he was raised up as a judge by the Lord; and though we read of no enemies particularly, that he delivered the people from in his days, yet it is not impossible nor unlikely that there might be such, though not made mention of; besides, he might be said to save them, as the word signifies, in that he was an happy instrument of composing those differences and dissensions, which Abimelech had occasioned, and of recovering them from the idolatry they had fallen into in his times, and of protecting them in their liberties, civil and religious: and this was

Tola the son of Puah, the son of Dodo, a man of Issachar; he was of the tribe of Issachar, and bore the same name as the eldest son of Issachar did, as his father Puah had the name of the second son of Issachar, (^{<1300>}1 Chronicles 7:1) and as for Dodo his grandfather, this is elsewhere mentioned as the name of a man, as it doubtless is here, (^{<1200>}2 Samuel 23:9,24) though some copies of the Targum, the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions, render it, the son of his uncle, or father's brother; meaning

that his father Puah was the son of Abimelech's uncle, or father's brother, and so was one of the family which was raised up to be a judge after his death; but it is not likely that Gideon, the father of Abimelech, and Puah, the father of this man, should be brethren, when the one was of the tribe of Manasseh, and the other of the tribe of Issachar:

and he dwelt in Shamir in Mount Ephraim: that is, when he became judge in Israel he removed to this place, as being in the midst of the tribes, and near the tabernacle of Shiloh, and so fit for a judge to reside in, to whom the people might apply from all parts to have justice and judgment administered to them. It is called Shamir in Mount Ephraim, to distinguish it from another of the same name in the mountain of Judah, (~~(158)~~ Joshua 15:48) it seems to have its name from the thorns which grew about it.

Ver. 2. *And he judged Israel twenty three years, and died*, etc.] He did not take upon him to be king, as Abimelech did, but acted as a judge, in which office he continued twenty three years, and faithfully discharged it, and died in honour:

and was buried in Shamir; the place where he executed his office. It is said ^{f216}, that in the first year of Tola, the son of Puah, Priamus reigned in Troy.

Ver. 3. *And after him arose Jair, a Gileadite*, etc.] Who was of the half tribe of Manasseh, on the other side Jordan, which inhabited the land of Gilead, and who is the first of the judges that was on that side Jordan; it pleased God, before the government was settled in a particular tribe, to remove it from one to another, and to honour them all, and to show that though the two tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh, were separated from their brethren by the river Jordan, they were not neglected by the Lord; and generally speaking judges were raised up in all those parts which were most oppressed, and liable to be oppressed by their enemies, as Gilead by the Ammonites; wherefore this, and the next judge that followed him, Jephthah, were of Gilead:

and judged Israel twenty two years; protected them from their enemies, administered justice to them, and preserved them in the true religion.

Ver. 4. *And he had thirty sons that rode upon thirty ass colts*, etc.] Which to ride on in those times was reckoned honourable, and on which judges rode in their circuit, (~~(150)~~ Judges 5:10) and such might be these sons of Jair, who were appointed under him to ride about, and do justice in the several

parts of the country, as Samuel's sons were judges under him, (^{<0801>}1 Samuel 8:1),

and they had thirty cities, which are called Havothjair unto this day, which are in the land of Gilead; or the villages of Jair. There were some of this name that belonged to Jair, a son of Manasseh, in the times of Moses, (^{<0824>}Numbers 32:41) and these may be the same, at least some of them; for they were but twenty three he had, whereas these were thirty, (^{<1322>}1 Chronicles 2:22) and these coming by inheritance to this Jair, a descendant of the former, and he being of the same name, and these cities perhaps repaired and enlarged by him, the name of them was continued and established, for it is not reasonable to suppose, as some have done, that this is the same Jair that lived in the times of Moses, who, if so, must have lived more than three hundred years, an age men did not live to in those times.

Ver. 5. *And Jair died, and was buried in Camon.*] A city of Gilead, as Josephus ^{f217} calls it; Jerom ^{f218}, under this word Camon, makes mention of a village in his times, called Cimana, in the large plain six miles from Legion to the north, as you go to Ptolemais; but, as Reland ^{f219} observes, this seems not to be the same place, but rather this is the Camon Polybius ^{f220} speaks of among other cities of Peraea, taken by Antiochus.

Ver. 6. *And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord,* etc.] After the death of the above judges they fell into idolatry again, as the following instances show:

and served Baalim, and Ashtaroth; as they had before, (see Gill on "^{<0721>}Judges 2:11, 13") and, besides these,

also the gods of Syria; their gods and goddesses, Belus and Saturn, Astarte and the Dea Syria, Lucian writes of:

and the gods of Zidon; the goddess of the Zidonians was Ashtaroth, (^{<1105>}1 Kings 11:5) and it seems they had other deities:

and the gods of Moab; the chief of which were Baalpeor and Chemosh, (^{<0823>}Numbers 25:3 ^{<1107>}1 Kings 11:7)

and the gods of the children of Ammon, as Milcom or Molech, (^{<1105>}1 Kings 11:5,7)

and the gods of the Philistines; as Dagon the god of Ashdod, Beelzebub the god of Ekron, Marnas the god of Gaza, and Derceto the goddess of Ashkalon:

and forsook the Lord, and served not him; not even in conjunction with the above deities, as Jarchi and others observe; at other times, when they worshipped other gods, they pretended to worship the Lord also, they served the creature besides the Creator; but now they were so dreadfully sunk into idolatry, that they had wholly forsaken the Lord and his worship at the tabernacle, and made no pretensions to it, but entirely neglected it.

Ver. 7. *And the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel*, etc.] His anger burned like fire, he was exceedingly incensed against them, nothing being more provoking to him than idolatry, as after mentioned:

and he sold them into the hands of the Philistines, and into the hands of the children of Ammon; that is, delivered them into their hands, and they became subject and were in bondage to them, as such are that are sold for “slaves”; part of them, that lay to the west of the land of Israel, fell into the hands of the Philistines; and another part, which lay to the east, were oppressed by the children of Ammon, particularly those that were on the other side Jordan came into the hands of the latter.

Ver. 8. *And that year they vexed and oppressed the children of Israel*, etc.] The Philistines on one side, and the children of Ammon on the other; meaning either that year in which Jair died, as Jarchi; or the first year they began to bring them into bondage, as R. Isaiah: “and from that year”, as Kimchi and Ben Melech, that they vexed and distressed them, they continued to vex and distress them

eighteen years; or, as Abarbinel interprets it, “with that year”, they vexed and oppressed them eighteen years, that is, so many more, or reckoning that into the number of them; and these eighteen years of their oppression are not to be reckoned into the years of Jair’s government, and as commencing from the fourth of it, as Bishop Usher, Lightfoot, and others; for it does not appear that there was any oppression in his days, but from the time of his death to the raising up of Jephthah a new judge: and the people oppressed by the children of Ammon during that time

were all the children of Israel that were on the other side Jordan, in the land of the Ammonites, which is in Gilead; even the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh.

Ver. 9. *Moreover, the children of Ammon passed over Jordan,* etc.] Not content with the oppression of the tribes on the other side Jordan, which had continued eighteen years, they came over Jordan into the land of Canaan to ravage that, and bring other of the tribes into subjection to them, particularly the three next mentioned, which lay readiest for them, when they were come over Jordan:

to fight also against Judah, and against Benjamin, and against the house of Ephraim who lay to the south and the southeast of the land of Canaan, and were the first the Ammonites had to fight with and subdue, when they had crossed Jordan to the east of it:

so that Israel was sore distressed; by the Ammonites in the east, threatening those three tribes, mentioned, and the Philistines on the west, who gave disturbance to the tribes that lay nearest them, as Asher, Zebulun, Naphtali, Issachar, and Dan; and this distress was begun the same year in different parts, by different enemies.

Ver. 10. *And the children of Israel cried unto the Lord,* etc.] In this their distress, seeing nothing but ruin and destruction before their eyes, their land being invaded by such powerful enemies in different quarters; this opened their eyes to a sense of their sins, the cause of it, and brought them to a confession of them:

saying, we have sinned against thee, both because we have forsaken our God, and also served Baalim; had been guilty not only of sins of omission, neglecting the pure of God, but also of sins of commission, even gross idolatry, in serving Baalim, and other gods, before mentioned.

Ver. 11. *And the Lord said unto the children of Israel,* etc.] By a prophet he sent unto them, as Kimchi and Abarbanel, (see ^{<0008>}Judges 6:8), whom Ben Gersom takes to be Phinehas, but he could not be living at this time; or by an angel, a created one, sent on this occasion; or the uncreated one, the Son and Word of God, who might appear in an human form, and to whom all that is here said is applicable:

did not I deliver you from the Egyptians; by bringing them out of subjection and bondage to them, and by delivering them out of their hands at the Red sea:

and from the Amorites; the kings of Sihon and Og, whose countries were taken from them, and put into their hands, when they attempted to stop them in their march to the land of Canaan:

from the children of Ammon; when they joined with the Moabites against them, (^{<0813>}Judges 3:13)

and from the Philistines? in the times of Shamgar, (^{<0813>}Judges 3:31).

Ver. 12. *The Zidonians also*, etc.] Who were left in the land to distress them, though there is no particular mention of them, and of the distress they gave them, and of their deliverance from it, which yet is not at all to be questioned:

and the Amalekites; both quickly after they came out of Egypt, (^{<02713>}Exodus 17:13) and when they were come into the land of Canaan, joining the Moabites and the Midianites against them, (^{<0813>}Judges 3:13 6:3)

and the Maonites did oppress you; meaning either the old inhabitants of Maon, a city in the mountains of Judah, near to which was a wilderness of this name, (^{<0655>}Joshua 15:55 ^{<0234>}1 Samuel 23:24) or rather a people of Arabia, called by Strabo ^{f221}, and Diodorus Siculus ^{f222}, Minaeans, the same with Mehunim, mentioned with the Arabians, (^{<0807>}2 Chronicles 26:7) and who perhaps came along with the Midianites, when they oppressed Israel; though some have thought of the old inhabitants of Bethmeon and Baalmeon, (^{<0823>}Numbers 32:38 ^{<0423>}Jeremiah 48:23)

and ye cried unto me, and I delivered you out of their hands; all those mercies and deliverances are mentioned to aggravate their sins, that notwithstanding the Lord hath so often and eminently appeared for them, yet they deserted him and his worship, and fell into idolatry. Jarchi observes, that here are seven salvations or deliverances mentioned in opposition to the seven sorts of false gods or idols they had served, (^{<0706>}Judges 10:6).

Ver. 13. *Ye have forsaken me, and served other gods*, etc.] Since they had been so remarkably saved, time after time, and delivered from so many powerful enemies, which was dreadful ingratitude:

wherefore I will deliver you no more; which is not to be understood absolutely, since after this he did deliver them, but conditionally, unless

they repented of their idolatries, and forsook them. This is said to bring them to a sense of their sin and danger.

Ver. 14. *Go and cry unto the gods which ye have chosen*, etc.] For they were their choice, and not what they were obliged to serve through persecution, and by compulsion of others, and whom they needed not, having the Lord Jehovah to be their God; and they are bid not seriously, but in an ironical or sarcastic way, to call upon them for help in this their time of distress, in whose power it was not to relieve them:

let them deliver you in the time of your tribulation; if they can, whom you have served in your prosperity.

Ver. 15. *And the children of Israel said unto the Lord, we have sinned*, etc.] By serving other gods particularly; and they seemed to have a true sense of their sin, and their confessions of it to be ingenuous, by what follows:

do thou unto us whatsoever seemeth good unto thee; inflict what punishment he would upon them, as famine or pestilence, they could not but own it would be just and righteous, and what their sins deserved:

deliver us only, we pray thee, this day; out of the hands of men; they chose rather to fall into the hands of God; and however he thought fit to deal with them, they entreated that this once he would save them out of the hands of their enemies.

Ver. 16. *And they put away the strange gods from among them*, etc.] Which was an evidence of the truth of their repentance, and showed their confessions and humiliations to be genuine:

and served the Lord; and him only, both in private and public; in the observance of duties, both moral and ceremonial; in an attendance on the service of the sanctuary, and by offering sacrifices to God there, according to his will:

and his soul was grieved for the misery of Israel; which is to be understood after the manner of men; for grief properly does not belong to God, there being no passion in him; but it denotes a carriage or behaviour of his, which shows what looks like sympathy in men; a love and affection for Israel, notwithstanding their ill behaviour to him, and a change of his dispensations Providence towards them, according to his unchangeable

will; so Maimonides ^{f223} understands it of the good will and pleasure of God, to cease from afflicting the people of Israel; but Abarbinel is of opinion that this refers to the soul of Israel, which was shortened and contracted, as the word signifies, because of the labour of servitude, the affliction and distress they were in.

Ver. 17. *Then the children of Ammon were gathered together*, etc.] By a crier, as Jarchi; they had passed over Jordan, as in (^{<0700>}Judges 10:9) and had been distressing three of the tribes of Israel on that side; but now being informed, by an herald at arms, that the children of Israel, on the other side Jordan, were risen up in defence of their country, rights, and liberties, the children of Ammon came back and crossed over Jordan again:

and encamped in Gilead; in the land of Gilead, part of which belonged to the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the other part to the half tribe of Manasseh:

and the children of Israel assembled themselves together, and encamped at Mizpeh: of which name there were several cities in the land of Israel, on both sides Jordan; this must design a place on the other side Jordan, either in the tribe of Gad or Manasseh, for it seems there was of this name in each, (see ^{<0134>}Genesis 31:49 ^{<0103>}Joshua 11:3).

Ver. 18. *And the people and princes of Gilead said one to another*, etc.] Being thus assembled and encamped:

what man is he that will begin to fight with the children of Ammon? for though the forces were assembled together for battle, yet it seems they had no general to command them, and lead them on to it:

he shall be head over all the inhabitants of Gilead, this they ordered to be proclaimed, to encourage some person to take the command of them, and go before them to battle, promising him that he should be judge or governor over all the tribes on that side Jordan.

CHAPTER 11

INTRODUCTION TO JUDGES 11

This chapter gives an account of another judge of Israel, Jephthah, of his descent and character, (^{<0710>}Judges 11:1-3) of the call the elders of Gilead gave him to be their captain general, and lead out their forces against the Ammonites, and the agreement he made with them, (^{<0714>}Judges 11:4-11) of the message he sent to the children of Ammon, which brought on a dispute between him and them about the land Israel possessed on that side Jordan the Ammonites claimed; Israel's right to which Jephthah defended, and made it clearly to appear, hoping thereby to put an end to the quarrel without shedding of blood, (^{<0712>}Judges 11:12-27) but the children of Ammon not attending to what he said, he prepared to give them battle, and previous to it he made a vow, and then set forward and fought them, and got the victory over them, (^{<0718>}Judges 11:28-33) and the chapter concludes with the difficulties Jephthah was embarrassed with upon his return home, on account of his vow, and the performance of it, (^{<0713>}Judges 11:34-40).

Ver. 1. *Now Jephthah the Gileadite was a mighty man of valour*, etc.] Jephthah had his name of Gileadite either from his father, whose name was Gilead, or from the city and country in which he was born, which is most likely, and so was of the same country with the preceding judge; and he was a man of great strength and valour, and which perhaps became known by his successful excursions on parties of the enemies of Israel, the Ammonites, being at the head of a band of men, who lived by the booty they got from them:

and he was the son of an harlot; the Targum says, an innkeeper; and, according to Kimchi, she was a concubine, which some reckoned no better than an harlot, but such are not usually called so; some Jewish writers will have her to be one of another tribe his father ought not to have married; and others, that she was of another nation, a Gentile, so Josephus ^{f224}; and, according to Patricides ^{f225}, he was the son of a Saracen woman; but neither of these are sufficient to denominate her a harlot:

and Gilead begat Jephthah; he was his son; this was a descendant of Gilead the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, called after the name of his great ancestor.

Ver. 2. *And Gilead's wife bare him sons*, etc.] It seems that, after the birth of Jephthah, Gilead took him a lawful wife, who bore him sons:

and his wife's sons grew up; to the estate of men:

and they thrust out Jephthah: out of his father's house, his father in all likelihood being dead, or he would not have suffered it, and what follows confirms it that he was dead:

and said unto him, thou shalt not inherit in our father's house: as he might not, if the son of an harlot, or of a woman of another tribe, or of a concubine; though as Kimchi, from their Rabbins, observes, the son of such an one might, provided his mother was not an handmaid nor a stranger. And it looks as if this was not rightly done, but that Jephthah was injuriously dealt with by his brethren, of which he complains:

for thou art the son of a strange woman: or of another "woman"^{f226}, that was not their father's lawful wife; or of a woman of another tribe, as the Targum; or of another nation, as others, prostitutes being used to go into foreign countries to get a livelihood, and hide the shame of their families; hence a strange woman, and a harlot, signified the same^{f227}, (see <07100> Judges 11:1).

Ver. 3. *Then Jephthah fled from his brethren*, etc.] Being ill used by them, and a man of spirit and courage, and could not bear to be treated with contempt, nor to live in a dependence on others, and therefore sought to make himself another way:

and dwelt in the land of Tob; which Kimchi and Ben Gersom think was the name of the lord and owner of the land; Abarbinel interprets it, a good land, as Tob signifies, so the Targum; but others the name of a city or country, and conjecture it may be the same with Ishtob, and which was not far from the children of Ammon, since they sent thither for assistance, (<0006> 2 Samuel 10:6). Jerom^{f228} takes it for a country, in which Jephthah dwelt, but says no more of it. Junius says it was on the entrance of Arabia Deserta, in the Apocrypha:

“Yea, all our brethren that were in the places of Tobie are put to death: their wives and their children also they have carried away captives, and borne away their stuff; and they have destroyed there about a thousand men.” (1 Maccabees 5:13)

“Then departed they from thence seven hundred and fifty furlongs, and came to Characa unto the Jews that are called Tubieni.” (2 Maccabees 12:17)

where the inhabitants of it are called Tobienians or Tubienians:

and there were gathered vain men to Jephthah; not wicked men, but empty men, whose pockets were empty; men without money, as Abarbinel interprets it, had nothing to live upon, no more than Jephthah, and he being a valiant man, they enlisted themselves under him:

and went out with him; not on any bad design, as to rob and plunder, but to get their living by hunting; or rather by making excursions into the enemy’s country, and carrying off booty, on which they lived. Josephus ^{f229} says he maintained them at his own expense, and paid them wages.

Ver. 4. *And it came to pass in process of time*, etc.] Some time after Jephthah had been expelled from his father’s house, and he was become famous for his martial genius, and military exploits; or at the close of the eighteen years’ oppression of the children of Israel by the Ammonites, or some few days after the children of Israel were gathered together at Mizpeh, that the people and princes of Gilead were preparing for war with Ammon, and were thinking of a proper person to be their general:

that the children of Ammon made war against Israel; not only passed over Jordan again, and encamped in Gilead, but began to attack them in some place or another, at least threatened them with it, and made motions towards it.

Ver. 5. *And it was so, that when the children of Ammon made war against Israel*, etc.] Were preparing for it, and had assembled their forces near them, and had begun to make some efforts against them:

the elders of Gilead went to fetch Jephthah out of the land of Tob; they did not send messengers to him, but went themselves, partly to show greater respect to him, and partly in hopes of better success, being aware of

objections he would make, which they could better answer themselves than a deputation.

Ver. 6. *And they said unto Jephthah, come and be our captain*, etc.] The general of their army, to conduct and lead on their forces; they did not propose him to be their king, being convinced by Abimelech's conduct that such a step would be wrong; nor did they say anything of his being their judge, having no other view than to serve their present exigence; besides, a judge was not one chosen by the people, but raised up of God, and which honour was conferred on Jephthah afterwards:

that we may fight with the children of Ammon; with judgment, courage, and success; they did not make this proposal to him to save themselves from being engaged in the war, but that they might have one skilful in military affairs at the head of them, to instruct them in the art of war, and lead them on in a regular manner, and animate them by his brave example.

Ver. 7. *And Jephthah said unto the elders of Gilead*, etc.] In answer to their request; who though not backward to engage in the war with them, yet thought it proper to take this opportunity to upbraid them with their former unkindness to him:

did not ye hate me, and expel me out of my father's house? for it seems some of these elders at least were his brethren; for who else could be thought to hate him, and through hatred to thrust him out of his father's house, but they? nor is it at all improbable that they were among the elders of Gilead, considering what family they were of: though indeed the magistrates of the city might be assisting to Jephthah's brethren in the expulsion of him, or however connived at it, when they should, as he thought, have protected him, and taken care that he had justice done him; for even though illegitimate, a maintenance was due to him:

and why are ye come unto me now, when ye are in distress? intimating, that it was not love and respect to him, but necessity, that brought them to him with this request; and that since they used him so ill, they could not reasonably expect he should have any regard unto them.

Ver. 8. *And the elders of Gilead said unto Jephthah*, etc.] In reply to his objection:

therefore we turn again unto thee now; being sensible of the injury they had done him, and repenting of it, of which their return to him was an

evidence; it being with this view to remove the disgrace and dishonour that had been cast upon him, by conferring such honour on him, as to be their chief ruler:

that thou mayest go with us, and fight against the children of Ammon, and be our head over all the inhabitants of Gilead; the end of their coming to him was not only to bring him back with them to his own country, and to fight against the Ammonites, and the defence of it, but to be the sole governor of it; not of all Israel, but of the tribes beyond Jordan, which inhabited the land of Gilead: more than this they could not promise, though he afterwards was judge over all Israel, notwithstanding there was a law in Israel, that no spurious person should enter into the congregation, or bear any public office; so it was a law with the Athenians ^{f230}, that unless a man was born of both parents citizens, he should be reckoned spurious, and have no share in the government, (see ^{<07102>}Judges 11:2 ^{<6210>}Deuteronomy 23:2).

Ver. 9. *And Jephthah said unto the elders of Gilead*, etc.] Considering the former usage he had met with from them, and the character which he himself bore, and the fickleness of men, when their turn is served, was willing to make a sure bargain with them:

if ye bring me home again to fight against the children of Ammon; that is, should he consent to go along with them, and fight their battle for them:

and the Lord deliver them before me; or into his hands, on whom he depended for success, and not on his own courage and valour, and military skill:

shall I be your head? not only captain general of their forces during the war, but the chief ruler of them when that was ended.

Ver. 10. *And the elders of Gilead said unto Jephthah*, etc.] Assenting to his proposal, and not only giving their word for it, but their oath:

the Lord be witness between us, if we do not so according to thy words; that is, make him head over them; they appealed to the omniscient God, and called on him to be a witness of their agreement to it, and swore by him they would fulfil it; or if they did not, that the Lord would take vengeance on them for it, and punish the breach of this covenant and oath in some way or another; the Targum of Jonathan is,

“the Word of the Lord be a witness between us, etc.”

Ver. 11. *Then Jephthah went with the elders of Israel,* etc.] From the land of Tob into the land of Gilead, his native country:

and the people made him head and captain over them; ratified and confirmed what the elders had promised, and by a general unanimous vote appointed him both to be the captain of their forces, and to be the chief ruler and governor of them. And this they did, though he was the son of an harlot; and according to the law in (⁽⁴⁷¹²⁾Deuteronomy 23:2), such an one was not to be a civil magistrate; but this was a case of necessity, and in which, no doubt, they were directed by the Lord, who could dispense with his own law: besides, they had come to such an agreement before they had pitched on any particular person, that who should begin to fight with the children of Ammon should be head over all the inhabitants of Gilead so that they were obliged to it by their vote and decree, when they assembled at Mizpeh, where it is probable they consulted the Lord, and acted under his direction, (⁽⁴⁷¹⁷⁾Judges 10:17,18) and where this was confirmed, as seems from the following clause:

and Jephthah uttered all his words before the Lord in Mizpeh; where the congregation of Israel were assembled, and in which the Shechinah, or divine Majesty, dwelt, as is observed by Jarchi and Kimchi, and not Mizpeh in (⁽⁴⁸¹⁸⁾Joshua 11:3,8), as the latter says, but this was on the other side Jordan, in the land of Gilead; however, as it was a solemn meeting, the Lord was there, and, as in his presence, Jephthah rehearsed all that passed between him and the elders of Gilead; and, no doubt, in prayer to God, desired he would signify his approbation and ratification of their agreement, and would give him success in his undertakings against the children of Ammon.

Ver. 12. *And Jephthah sent messengers unto the king of the children of Ammon,* etc.] Being now declared chief and sole governor of the tribes on the other side Jordan, he acted in character, and as such sent messengers to the king of the Ammonites, to know the reason of his invading the land that belonged to Israel, being desirous of adjusting things in an amicable way, and to prevent the shedding of blood; in which he behaved as a good man, and not at all inconsistent with a man of valour and courage:

saying, what hast thou to do with me; to invade my land, and disturb my people, what have I or they done to give occasion for it?

that thou art come against me to fight in my land? he speaks in the language of a governor, and as a man of spirit concerned for the good of his country, and determined to defend the rights and liberties of it.

Ver. 13. *And the king of the children of Ammon answered unto the messengers of Jephthah,* etc.] Who this king of Ammon was is not said, however he returned an answer to Jephthah's messengers, which they brought to him, and it was to this purpose; that the reason of his invading the land, and bringing war into it, was,

because Israel took away my land when they came out of Egypt; not as soon as they came out of Egypt, for it was thirty nine years afterwards, and upwards, even a little before they entered into the land of Canaan; and the land they took was not theirs, but in the possession of Sihon and Og, kings of the Amorites; though indeed, before their conquest of it, it had been in the hands of the Moabites and Ammonites, and who being confederates, or subjects of the same king, is here claimed by the king of the children of Ammon:

from Arnon even unto Jabbok, and unto Jordan; the river Arnon was the border between Moab and the Amorites, and the river Jabbok was the border of the children of Ammon, (⁽⁴²¹³⁾Numbers 21:13,24), the one was to the south of the country claimed, and the other to the north and to the west, which was Jordan, and the wilderness to the east, (⁽⁴⁷¹²⁾Judges 11:22),

now therefore restore these lands again peaceably; this is demanded or proposed as terms or conditions of peace, and what would prevent a war, and nothing short of this would do it.

Ver. 14. *And Jephthah sent messengers again unto the king of the children of Ammon.*] Being willing to give him all the satisfaction he could, and if possible live peaceably with him, and prevent the effusion of blood.

Ver. 15. *And said unto him,* etc.] By his messengers:

thus saith Jephthah; in a majestic style, as governor of Israel:

Israel took not away the land of Moab, nor the land of the children of Ammon; they were charged not to take any, nor did they take any that belonged to any of these countries, or that was then in the possession of either of them, (⁽⁴⁸¹⁹⁾Deuteronomy 2:9,19) what they did take was in the

hands of Sihon and Og, and they had obtained it by conquest, and so no more belonging to either of these.

Ver. 16. *But when Israel came up from Egypt*, etc.] In order to go to the land of Canaan, which was higher than the land of Egypt, which lay low ^{f231}.

and walked through the wilderness unto the Red sea; which is to be understood not of their walking to it; when they first came out of Egypt, they indeed then came to the edge of the wilderness of Etham, and so to the Red sea, and walked through it as on dry land, and came into the wilderness of Shur, Sin, and Sinai; and after their departure from Mount Sinai they came into the wilderness of Paran, in which they were thirty eight years; and this is the wilderness meant they walked through, and came to Eziongaber, on the shore of the Red sea, (^{ORIS}Numbers 33:35)

and came to Kadesh; not Kadeshbarnea, from whence the spies were sent, but Kadesh on the borders of Edom, from whence messengers were sent to the king of it, as follows.

Ver. 17. *Then Israel sent messengers unto the king of Edom*, etc.] The history of which may be read in (^{ORIS}Numbers 20:14), etc.

saying, let me, I pray thee, pass through thy land; the land of Edom, from the south to the north of it, according to Jarchi, which was the nearest and shortest way to the land of Canaan; so far were the Israelites from invading and seizing upon the properties of others, that they would not attempt to set their foot in another's country without leave; which they asked in an humble manner, promising to do no injury to any, but pay for whatever they ate and drank in their passage:

but the king of Edom would not hearken thereto; or grant their request, but refused them passage through his country:

and in like manner they sent unto the king of Moab, but he would not consent; that they should pass through his country, which lay, as Jarchi says, at the end of the land of Edom, to the west of it, and to the south of Canaan; and though we nowhere else read of their sending messengers to the king of Moab, and of the denial he made them, it is not at all to be doubted of, and the Jewish commentators observe, that it is clearly intimated by Moses, (^{ORIS}Deuteronomy 2:29)

as the children of Esau, who dwelt in Seir, and the Moabites which dwelt in Ar, did unto me; which they interpret thus, as the children of Esau would not suffer Israel to pass through their land, when desired of them, so neither would the Moabites, when the same request was made to them:

and Israel abode in Kadesh; quietly and peaceably, and did not attempt to force their way through either country, but continued in Kadesh some little time to consider what way they should take, and to wait for divine direction.

Ver. 18. *Then they went along the wilderness,* etc.] The wilderness of Paran, which lay along the borders of Edom; they went, according to Jarchi, from the west to the east on the south border of Edom and Moab:

and compassed the land of Edom, and the land of Moab; all the south of the land of Edom, and all the south of the land of Moab; towards the sunrising, as in (^{4021B}Numbers 21:11)

and pitched on the other side of Arnon; the river Arnon, which, according to Jarchi, was at the east end of the land of Moab, where began the country of Sihon and Og:

but came not within the border of Moab; so far were they from attempting to take away any part of that land from the king of it, though ill treated by him:

for Arnon was the border of Moab; which divided between Moab and the Amorites, (^{4021B}Numbers 21:13).

Ver. 19. *And Israel sent messengers unto Sihon king of the Amorites, the king of Heshbon,* etc.] Which was his royal city, where he had his palace, and kept his court, and is therefore particularly mentioned; and the rather, because he had taken it from the Moabites, and was part of that land now in dispute; and this Sihon was not only in possession of, when Israel sent messengers to him, but it was his royal seat, the metropolis of his kingdom, and he was called king of it:

and Israel said unto him, let us pass, we pray thee, through thy land unto my place; the land of Canaan, prepared and reserved for them when the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, promised by the Lord to their ancestors and to them, and given unto them, who is sovereign Lord of all; and all that Israel desired of Sihon was only a passage through his land

to that, promising the same as to the king of Edom; see the history of it in (⁴⁰²¹³Numbers 21:21-35).

Ver. 20. *But Sihon trusted not Israel to pass through, his coast,* etc.] For fear they should seize upon his dominions, and retain them; and the more fearful he might be, as he knew that his people were one of the seven nations of the Canaanites, whose land they were going to possess, and whom they were to destroy:

but Sihon gathered all his people together; in some certain place, and armed them, and went out in an hostile manner against Israel in the wilderness, to attack them; whereby it appears that he was the aggressor, and therefore Israel was not to be blamed, as not for fending themselves, so neither for seizing and possessing his country when they had conquered him:

and pitched in Jahaz, and fought against Israel; there was a battle between them at the place mentioned, and the victory was on Israel's side, (see ⁴⁰²¹³Numbers 21:23-35).

Ver. 21. *And the Lord God of Israel delivered Sihon and all his people into the hand of Israel,* etc.] So that as Sihon, his people, and his country, fell into the hands of Israel through the victory the Lord gave them over him, they had a divine right to the land now in dispute:

and they smote them: destroyed him and all his people, as they were ordered to destroy the seven nations of Canaan, of which the Amorites were one, (⁴⁸⁰⁰¹Deuteronomy 7:1),

so Israel possessed all the land of the Amorites, the inhabitants of that country; by means of the above victory they came into the lawful and rightful possession of all the land that belonged to the Amorites, who were at that time, and none else, the inhabitants of it; and therefore the Ammonites could have no claim to it, nor was any made till now.

Ver. 22. *And they possessed all the coasts of the Amorites,* etc.] Peaceably and quietly, nor did any pretend to call their right in question, or dispute their title, or give them any disturbance:

from Arnon unto Jabbok: which was the length of the country, and the direction was from south to north, and reached from the river Arnon, the

border of Moab, to the river Jabbok, the border of Ammon; so that it included no part of what was at this time in the possession of either:

and from the wilderness even unto Jordan; which was the breadth of it, and its direction was from the west to the east, reaching from the wilderness of Arabia to the river Jordan.

Ver. 23. *So now the Lord God of Israel hath dispossessed the Amorites from before his people Israel*, etc.] It is his doing, and not the work of the Israelites; it is he that dispossessed the Amorites, and put the Israelites into the possession of their land, and therefore they enjoy it by a good tenure:

and shouldest thou possess it? what through the blessing of God on their arms they have obtained by conquest, and he has settled them in; did they conquer, that thou should possess what they conquered? did their God put it into their hands to deliver it into thine? did they fight to recover for thee what thou hadst lost, and to put thee into the possession of it? did not they fight in their own defence, and their enemies and their land fell into their hands, and by the laws and right of nations became theirs? and canst thou expect to possess it? what reason is there for it?

Ver. 24. *Wilt not thou possess that which Chemosh thy god giveth thee to possess?* etc.] Chemosh was the idol of the Moabites, (see ^{<0023>}Numbers 21:29), which has led some to think, that the present king of Ammon was also king of Moab, and who insisted on that part of the country, which formerly belonged to Moab, to be delivered to him, as well as that which had belonged to Ammon. Now since the land, which they now inhabited, as well as what they had lost, they had taken away from others, (^{<0020>}Deuteronomy 2:10,11,20,21), having conquered them, and which they ascribed to the help and assistance they had from their idol, and possessed as his gift; Jephthah argues with them “ad hominem”, from the less to the greater:

so whomsoever the Lord our God shall drive out from before us, them will we possess; we have surely as good a claim to what the Lord our God gives to us in a way of conquest, as you have, or can think you have, to what your idol, as you suppose, has given you: however, what we have got, or get this way, we are determined to possess, and keep possession of.

Ver. 25. *And now art thou anything better than Balak the son of Zippor king of Moab?* etc.] This argument seems to strengthen the conjecture, that this king was king of Moab at this time, and so Balak was one of his

predecessors. Now he is asked, whether he thought he was a wiser and more knowing prince than he, as to what was his right and due; or whether he had a better claim, or any additional one to the land in dispute the other had not; or whether he judged he was more able to regain what belonged to him:

did he ever strive against Israel? for the land they took away from Sihon formerly in the possession of the Moabites? did he ever lay any claim to it, or enter into any dispute, or litigate with Israel about it? not at all:

or did he ever fight against Israel? that is, on that account; no, he sent for Balaam to curse Israel, and sought to defend and secure his own country he was in possession of, which he thought was in danger by the Israelites being so near him; but he never made war with them under any such pretence, that they had done him any injury by inheriting the land they had taken from Sihon and Og, kings of the Amorites.

Ver. 26. *While Israel dwelt in Heshbon and her towns*, etc.] This was the principal city, which formerly belonged to the Moabites, and was taken from them by Sihon; who being conquered by Israel, it fell into their hands, and they inhabited it, and the towns adjacent to it, from that time to the present; (see ^{<0425>}Numbers 21:25)

and in Aroer and her towns; another city with its villages, taken at the same time, and ever since inhabited by the Israelites, even by the tribe of Gad, who rebuilt it; it lay near the river Arnon; (see ^{<0424>}Numbers 32:34 ^{<0412>}Deuteronomy 3:12)

and in all the cities that be along by the coasts of Arnon; which lay along by the side of that river, which divided Moab from the kingdom of the Amorites; these Israel had dwelt in three hundred years; and during this time, neither Balak king of Moab, nor any of his successors, had ever disputed Israel's title to those cities, or commenced a war with them on account of them; but they had continued in the peaceable enjoyment of them so long as three hundred years; which are thus reckoned in the Jewish chronology ^{f2.32}; Joshua governed Israel twenty eight years, Othniel forty, Ehud eighty, Deborah forty, Gideon forty, Abimelech three, Tola twenty three, Jair twenty two, and eighteen years Israel was oppressed by the children of Ammon, which with the six years of Jephthah make just three hundred; so that, according to this computation, there were six years short of it; but being so near, the round number is given:

why therefore did ye not recover them within that time? signifying they ought to have put in their claim sooner, and endeavoured to have recovered them long before this time, if they had any right unto them; wherefore Jephthah pleads prescription, and which in a course of time ought to take place; or otherwise the world would be full of endless contentions and controversies, and kingdoms and states would never be at peace, nor each one know and enjoy for certainty its proper domains.

Ver. 27. *Wherefore I have not sinned against thee*, etc.] Had done him no injury, not wronged him of anything, nor had taken away any part of his country from him; this Jephthah said in the name of all Israel, of whom he was governor:

but thou doest me wrong to war against me; meaning that he had no just cause to commence a war against Israel, but acted an injurious part; and seeing things could not be adjusted in an amicable way, but must be decided by the sword, he leaves the affair with the Lord, and appeals to him:

the Lord the Judge; the Judge of the whole earth, the omniscient God, that knows all things, the right and wrong of every cause, on which side truth and justice lie:

be Judge this day between the children of Israel and the children of Ammon; not that he expected a decision of the controversy between them would be made that precise and exact day; but that from henceforward the Lord would appear, by giving success to that party which was in the right in this contest.

Ver. 28. *Howbeit, the king of the children of Ammon hearkened not unto the words of Jephthah which he sent him.*] He attended not to the arguments Jephthah made use of, and did not choose to seem at least to be convinced by them, nor to regard the awful appeal he had made to the great Jehovah.

Ver. 29. *Then the Spirit of the Lord came upon Jephthah*, etc.] The spirit of strength, as the Targum; of fortitude of mind, of uncommon valour and courage, and of zeal for God and Israel, and against their enemies; such a spirit as used to be given to men, when they were in an extraordinary manner raised up by the Lord, to be judges, saviours, and deliverers of his people; so that as Jephthah was before chosen by the people to be the general and head of the tribes beyond Jordan, he was raised up and

qualified by the Lord now to be the judge of all Israel; of which the Spirit of the Lord coming on him was a sufficient proof and evidence:

and he passed over Gilead and Manasseh; the countries that belonged to Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh; however, all that part of it which lay from the place where he was, to the land of the children of Ammon:

and passed over Mizpeh of Gilead; which lay to the north of the land of Gilead, or tribe of Gad:

and from Mizpeh of Gilead he passed over to the children of Ammon; did not stay for them, to bring on the war in the land of Gilead, but prevented it by carrying it into the land of the children of Ammon. It seems by this, that though the children of Ammon had encamped in Gilead some time before, (⁴⁰⁰⁰⁷Judges 10:17), yet for some reason or another they had decamped, and had retired into their own country; but yet threatening Israel with a war, and preparing for it.

Ver. 30. *And Jephthah vowed a vow unto the Lord*, etc.] Before he set out for the land of the children of Ammon, and to fight with them; hoping that such a religious disposition of mind would be regarded by the Lord, and be acceptable to him, and he should be blessed with success in his enterprise:

and said, if thou shall without fail deliver the children of Ammon into mine hands; though he was assured of the justness of his cause, and of his call to engage in it, he seems to have some little diffidence in his mind about the success of it; at least, was not fully certain of it.

Ver. 31. *Then it shall be, that whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me*, etc.] If this phrase, “to meet me”, is meant intentionally, then no other than an human creature can be meant; a child, or servant, or any other of mankind; for none else could come forth with a design to meet him: but if this is to be understood eventually, of what might meet him, though not with design, then any other creature may be intended; and it must be meant what came forth first, as the Vulgate Latin version expresses it, or otherwise many might come forth at such a time:

when I return in peace from the children of Ammon: safe in his own person, and having conquered the Ammonites, and restored peace to Israel:

shall surely be the Lord's; be devoted to him, and made use of, or the price of it, with which it is redeemed, in his service: and I will offer it for a burnt offering; that is, if it is what according to the law may be offered up, as an ox, sheep, ram, or lamb; some read the words disjunctively, “or I will offer it”, etc. it shall either be devoted to the Lord in the manner that persons or things, according to the law, are directed to be; or it shall be offered up for a burnt offering, if fit and proper for the service; so Joseph and David Kimchi, Ben Melech, and Abarbinel, with others, interpret it; but such a disjunction is objected to as improper and ridiculous, to distinguish two sentences, when the one is more general, and the other more special.

Ver. 32. *So Jephthah passed over unto the children of Ammon, to fight against them*, etc.] As in (^{<07129>}Judges 11:29), after he had made the above vow:

and the Lord delivered them into his hands; when both armies met and engaged, victory was on the side of Jephthah; the Lord being with him, and giving him success, to where all is justly ascribed.

Ver. 33. *And he smote them from Aroer*, etc.] A city which lay near the river Arnon, on the borders of Moab, (^{<0812>}Deuteronomy 3:12)

even till thou come to Minnith; which seems to have been a place famous for wheat, (^{<0607>}Ezekiel 27:17) so David de Pomis ^{f233} says it was a place where the best wheat grew. Jerom says ^{f234} in his time was shown a village called Mannith, four miles from Esbus (or Heshbon), as you go to Philadelphia. Josephus ^{f235} calls it Maniathe, and it is thought by some to be the Anitha of Ptolemy ^{f236}, which he places in Arabia Petraea even “twenty cities”; which he pursued them through and took:

and unto the plain of the vineyards, with a very great slaughter; or, Abel Ceramim. Jerom says ^{f237} in his time was seen a village called Abela, planted with vineyards, seven miles from Philadelphia:

thus the children of Ammon were subdued before the children of Israel; so that they were not able to oppress them any more.

Ver. 34. *And Jephthah came to Mizpeh unto his house*, etc.] Where he had uttered his words before the Lord, which had passed between him and the elders of Gilead, and from whence he set out to fight the children of Ammon, and whither he returned after he had got the victory over them,

(^{<07111>}Judges 11:11,29) and where it seems he had a house, and his family dwelt; for upon his being fetched from the land of Tab, he brought what family he had with him, and settled them at Mizpeh, while he went on the expedition against the children of Ammon:

and, behold, his daughter came out to meet him, with timbrels, and with dances; accompanied with young women, having timbrels in their hands, and playing upon them, and dancing as they came along; expressing their joy at, and congratulating him upon, the victory he had obtained over the children of Ammon:

and she [was his] only child: and so dear unto him, and upon whom all his hopes and expectations of a posterity from him depended:

besides her he had neither son nor daughter: some read it, “of her” ^{f238}; that is, she had neither son nor daughter; and so by this vow, be it understood in which way it may be, if fulfilled, she must die without any issue; though the phrase in the Hebrew text is, “of himself” ^{f239}; he had none, though his wife whom he married might have sons and daughters by an husband she had before him, and so these were brought up in Jephthah’s house as his children; yet they were not begotten by him, they were not of his body, not his own children; he had none but this daughter, which made the trial the more grievous to him; her name, according to Philo, was Seila.

Ver. 35. *And it came to pass, when he saw her,* etc.] She being the first person that presented to his view, as she was at the head of the virgins with their timbrels and dances:

that he rent his clothes; as was the usual manner, when anything calamitous and distressing happened; (see ^{<015734>}Genesis 37:34 ^{<18012>}Job 1:20)

and said, alas, my daughter, thou hast brought me very low; damped his spirits, sunk him very low, so that he was ready to drop into the earth, as we say; he that was now returning in triumph, amidst the acclamations of the people, in the height of his glory, and extolled to the skies, and perhaps elated in his own mind; on a sudden, at the sight of his daughter, was so depressed in his spirits, that he could not bear up; but was ready to sink and die away, all his honour being as it were laid in the dust, and nothing to him:

and thou art one of them that trouble me: or among his troublers, and the greatest he ever met with; he had been in trouble from his brethren, when

they drove him from his father's house, and he had had trouble with the children of Ammon to subdue them; but this was the greatest trouble of all, that his daughter should be the first that should meet him; of whom, according to his vow, he was to be deprived, and so all his future comforts, hopes, and expectations from her gone; and therefore ranks her among, and at the head of, his troublers:

for I have opened my mouth unto the Lord; in a vow; not only had purposed it in his heart, but had expressed it with his lips:

and I cannot go back; or retract it; looking upon himself under an indispensable obligation to perform it; of which, be it as it may, he seems to have had mistaken notions and apprehensions; for if his vow was to sacrifice her, as some think, he was not obliged to do it, since it was contrary to the law of God, and abominable in his sight; and besides, what was vowed to be the Lord's, or devoted to him, might be redeemed according to the law, a female for thirty pieces of silver, (^(LEVITICUS 27:2-4)) and if the vow was to separate his daughter from the company of men, and oblige her never to marry, such a power as this parents had not allowed them over their children, according to the laws of God or of men, in the Jewish nation; and therefore, be it which it will, what he had to do was to repent of this rash vow, and humble himself before God for making it, and not add sin to sin by performing it.

Ver. 36. *And she said unto him, my father, [if] thou hast opened thy mouth unto the Lord*, etc.] The conditional word "if" may be left out, as it is not in the original text; for her father had told her that he had opened his mouth, or made a vow to the Lord, and had no doubt explained it to her what it was, though it is not expressed; she knew it respected her, as it had issued, and was concerning her, as appears by her later request:

do to me according to that which hath proceeded out of thy mouth; which is a remarkable instance of filial subjection and obedience to a parent, and which perhaps was strengthened by a like mistaken notion as that of her father concerning the vow, that it could not be dispensed with; and therefore was moved under a sense of religion, as well as filial duty, to express herself in this manner, as well as by what follows:

forasmuch as the Lord hath taken vengeance for thee of thine enemies, even of the children of Ammon: such was her public spirit, and the grateful sense she had of the divine goodness, in giving victory over Israel's

enemies, and delivering them from them, with vengeance on them, she cared not what was done to her; yea, desired that what was vowed might be performed.

Ver. 37. *And she said unto her father, let this thing be done for me*, etc.] She had but one favour to ask of him, which she thought might be granted, without any breach of the vow:

let me alone two months she desired such a space of time might be allowed her before the vow took place; and the rather she might be encouraged to expect that her request would be granted, since no time was fixed by the vow for the accomplishment of it, and since the time she asked was not very long, and the end to be answered not unreasonable

that I may go up and down upon the mountains; or, “ascend upon the mountains”^{f240}; Jephthah’s house in Mizpeh being higher than the mountains; or there might be, as Kimchi and Ben Melech note, a valley between that and the mountains, to which she descended in order to go up to the mountains; (see ~~10:25~~ Judges 9:25) these she chose to make her abode, and take her walks in, during the time she asked, as being most fit for retirement and solitude; where she might give up herself to meditation and prayer, and conversation with her fellow virgins she would take with her, and so be wrought up to a greater degree of resignation and submission to her father’s will, and to the will of God in it, as she might suppose:

and bewail my virginity, I and my fellows; the virgins her companions; this she proposed to be the subject that she and her associates would dwell upon, during this time of solitude; and the rather, as this may be thought to be the thing contained in the vow, that as she was a virgin, so she should continue; by which means she would not be the happy instrument of increasing the number of the children of Israel, nor of being the progenitor of the Messiah; upon which accounts it was reckoned in those times to be very grievous and reproachful to live and die without issue, and so matter of lamentation and weeping.

Ver. 38. *And he said, go*, etc.] He granted her request at once:

and he sent her away for two months; as she desired:

and she went with her companions, and bewailed her virginity upon the mountains; for the space of two months: the Jewish commentators make mention of an allegorical exposition of a writer^{f241} of theirs, who by

mountains understands the sanhedrim, to whom she proposed to go, who perhaps might find a way for the loosing of the vow; but it is a question whether there was such a court then in Israel; and had there been one, and either she or her father had applied to it, in this case the priests would have pointed out what was to be done, and especially if the vow had any regard to the sacrifice of his daughter; and even to her virginity, which he had no power to oblige her to; but the literal sense is no doubt to be followed.

Ver. 39. *And it came to pass at the end of two months she returned to her father,* etc.] For the request she made was not a pretence to make her escape out of his hands; but having done what she proposed to do, and the time fixed for it being come, she returned to her father's house, and delivered herself to him:

who did with her according to his vow which he had vowed: but what he did is a question, and which is not easily resolved; some think he really sacrificed her, through a mistaken sense of (^{<18729>}Leviticus 27:29) and which his action are accounted for through his living a military life, and in a distant part of the country, and at a time when idolatry had greatly prevailed in Israel, and to such a degree as it had not before, and no doubt that branch of it, sacrificing children to Molech; and Jephthah might think that though that was sinful, yet such a sacrifice might be acceptable to the Lord; and especially since his vow, as he thought, bound him to it; and how far the instance of Abraham offering up his son Isaac might encourage him to it, cannot be said: of this mind were Josephus^{f242}, Jonathan Ben Uziah the Targumist, and some other Jewish writers^{f243}; and many of the ancient Christian fathers, and many modern authors of every name among Christians; and it has been thought that the story of Iphigenia, who Capellus^{f244} thinks is the same with Jephthengia, that is, the daughter of Jephthah, and was slain by her father Agamemnon, having several circumstances in it similar to this, is taken from hence: and there is much such a case as this related^{f245} of Idomeneus, a king of the Cretians, who upon his return after the destruction of Troy, being in a tempest, vowed, should he be saved, that he would sacrifice the first he met with to the gods; and as it was his son he first met with, he sacrificed him; or, as others say, would have done it, but was prevented by the citizens, and who on this account drove him from his kingdom. But others are of opinion that what Jephthah did according to his vow was, that he shut up his daughter, and separated her from the company of men, and obliged her to live unmarried all her days, and therefore she is said to bewail her virginity. Kimchi and

Ben Melech say, he built a house for her without the city, where she dwelt alone, and knew no man; and where her father supported her, and obliged her to live all her days; and Abarbinel thinks, that the Romanists from hence learnt to build their cloisters to put their nuns in; and so Ben Gersom interprets this vow of her being separated from men, and devoted to the service of God; and which is the sense of many Christian interpreters. Now though Jephthah had no such power over his daughter, as to oblige her to perpetual virginity, nor did his vow bind him to it; for persons devoted to the Lord were not obliged to abstain from marriage, nor have we any instances of a monastic life in those times, nor among the Jews at any time; yet as he did something not right, which he thought his vow obliged him to, one would be rather tempted to think, in charity to him, that of the two evils he did the least; for if she was put to death, it must be done either by the magistrates, or by the priests, or by Jephthah himself; neither of which is probable:

and she knew no man; never married, but lived and died a virgin: “and it was a custom in Israel”; the Targum adds,

“that a man might not offer his son or his daughter for a burnt offering, as Jephthah the Gileadite did, and did not consult Phinehas the priest; for had he consulted Phinehas the priest, he would have redeemed her with a price;”

so Jarchi, according to (^{<RB704>}Leviticus 27:4) but each stood upon their honour, as the Jews say ^{f246}; Jephthah being a king would not go to Phinehas, and Phinehas being an high priest; and the son of an high priest, would not go to a plebeian; and so, between them both, the maiden was lost: but the custom refers to what follows.

Ver. 40. *That the daughters of Israel went yearly to lament the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite*, etc.] Either the death of her, as some, or her virginity, as others; though the word ^{f247} used may signify to talk and discourse with her, to hold a confabulation with her, and comfort her, as Kimchi and Ben Melech interpret it; to bring her some news, and tell her some diverting stories, to cheer and refresh her in her solitude. De Dieu observes, that the word signifies in the Arabic language to “praise”, or speak in commendation of a person or thing; and indeed in this sense it seems to be used in this book, (^{<RB11>}Judges 5:11), “they shall rehearse”, that is, with praise and thanksgiving, “the righteous acts of the Lord”; and so the daughters of Israel went every year to the place where the daughter of

Jephthah was, to speak in the praise of her, of her heroism, in so cheerfully submitting to her father's vow, and expressing such gratitude and joy at the same time for victory over the enemies of Israel; and this they did in her presence and while she lived, to keep up her spirits; or it may be, in some public place, and even after her death, in memory of her, and to celebrate her praise. Epiphanius says ^{f248}, that in his time, at Sebaste, formerly called Samaria, they deified the daughter of Jephthah, and kept a feast for her every year. The meeting of the daughters of Israel, so long as the custom lasted, which perhaps was only during the life of Jephthah's daughter, was four days in a year; but whether they were four days running, or once in a quarter of a year, is not certain; the latter seems most probable.

CHAPTER 12

INTRODUCTION TO JUDGES 12

This chapter relates a quarrel between Jephthah and the Ephraimites, which was fatal to the latter, (^{<0711E>}Judges 12:1-6), the time of Jephthah judging Israel, his death and burial, (^{<0711E>}Judges 12:7) and it briefly makes mention of three more judges of Israel, Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon, (^{<0711E>}Judges 11:8-15).

Ver. 1. *And the men of Ephraim gathered themselves together*, etc.] Or “cried” ^{f249}; got together by a cry or proclamation made: in the Hebrew text it is, “a man of Ephraim”; not a single man, but a body of men, who met together and joined as one man. It is highly probable that there were no less than 50,000 of them; for 42,000 of them were slain, (^{<0711E>}Judges 12:6)

and went northward; or, “went over northward” ^{f250}; that is, over the river Jordan, which lay between Gilead and Ephraim; and when they had crossed the river, they turned northward; for Mizpeh, where Jephthah lived, was in the north of the land, near Hermon and Lebanon, (^{<0611E>}Joshua 11:3)

and said unto Jephthah, wherefore passedst thou over to fight against the children of Ammon? not over Jordan, but over that part of the land of Israel from the plain where Jephthah dwelt, to the country of the children of Ammon:

and didst not call us to go with thee? they quarrel with him just in the same manner as they did with Gideon: these Ephraimites were a proud and turbulent people, and especially were very jealous of the tribe of Manasseh, of which both Gideon and Jephthah were; the one of the half tribe on this side Jordan, and the other of the half that was on the other side; and they were jealous of both, lest any honour and glory should accrue thereunto, and they should get any superiority in any respect over them, since Jacob their father had given the preference to Ephraim; and this seems to lie at the bottom of all their proceedings:

we will burn thine house upon thee with fire; that is, burn him and his house, burn his house and him in it; which shows that they were in great

wrath and fury, and argued not only the height of pride and envy, but wretched ingratitude, and a cruel disposition; who, instead of congratulating him as Israel's deliverer, and condoling him with respect to the case of his only child, threaten him in this brutish manner.

Ver. 2. *And Jephthah said unto them, I and my people were at a great strife with the children of Ammon,* etc.] As to the cause of the war, or the reason of his going over to fight the children of Ammon, it was a strife or contention between the Gileadites and them, concerning their country; which the children of Ammon claimed as theirs, and the Gileadites insisted on it they had a just right to it; by which it appeared that this was not a personal contention between Jephthah and them; and therefore the Ephraimites had no reason to fall so furiously upon him particularly; and it was a contention which chiefly concerned the two tribes and a half, and not the rest; and so could not be blamed for defending themselves alone if they could, without interesting others in the quarrel: but this is not all he has to say, he adds,

and when I called you, ye delivered me not out of their hands; it seems he had called them to assist in driving the enemy out of their borders when there, and they refused to help him; though it is not elsewhere said, and it is not denied by them, so that it was false what they alleged; or however, since they declined giving him any assistance, when the children of Ammon were in his country, he could not expect they would join him in an expedition into theirs.

Ver. 3. *And when I saw that ye delivered me not,* etc.] Gave him no assistance against their common enemy, did not attempt to save him and his people out of their hands, but left them to defend themselves:

I put my life in my hands; ready to deliver it up in the defence of his country; the meaning is, that he exposed himself to the utmost danger, hazarded his life in going with a few troops into an enemy's country to fight him, and so liable to lose his life; which was in as much danger, as some observe, as any brittle thing contained in the hand is in danger of falling, or of being snatched out of it:

and passed over against the children of Ammon: took a long and fatiguing march over the land of Gilead into that of the children of Ammon, to fight with them:

and the Lord delivered them into my hand; gave him victory over them, which showed that his cause was just, and his call to engage in it clear:

wherefore then are ye come up unto me this day to fight against me? who rather should have come with thanks to him for the service he had done, not only for the Gileadites, but for all Israel; for had he not fought against the children of Ammon, and conquered them, they would have soon not only overrun and oppressed Gilead, but would have come over Jordan, and dispossessed the other tribes, and particularly Ephraim, as they had done already, (⁽⁷¹¹⁾Judges 10:9) so that it was base ingratitude in these people to come to fight against Jephthah, who had fought for them, and wrought salvation for them.

Ver. 4. *Then Jephthah gathered together all the men of Gilead, and fought with Ephraim*, etc.] The Ephraimites not being pacified with the account Jephthah gave of the war between him and the children of Ammon, but continuing in their tumultuous outrage; he, being a man of spirit and courage, got as many of the Gileadites together as he could, and gave them battle:

and the men of Gilead smote Ephraim; had the advantage of them, worsted them, killed many of them, and put the rest to flight:

because they said, ye Gileadites are fugitives of Ephraim among the Ephraimites, and among the Manassites; what provoked them to fall upon them with the greater fury, and use them the more severely when, they had the better of them, was their reproachful language to them, insulting the Gileadites, who perhaps were chiefly, if not all, of the half tribe of Manasseh beyond Jordan, of which Jephthah was, that they were the scum of the house of Joseph, that they had run away from their brethren, and dwelt in a corner of the land by themselves; and were of no account at all among Ephraim and Manasseh, and disclaimed by them both, and not esteemed by either. The Targum is,

“the fugitives of Ephraim said, what are ye Gileadites accounted of among the Ephraimites, and among the Manassites?”

on which Kimchi remarks, that those Ephraimites that came in this tumultuous manner, and insulted Jephthah, were a most abject company of men, the refuse of the tribe of Ephraim, shepherds who through necessity were obliged to come over Jordan with their flocks and herds for pasture: but the words may be rendered, “for they said, fugitives of Ephraim are ye,

even the Gileadites, who were, or being between the Ephraimites and the Manassites”; that is, the Gileadites called the Ephraimites so, when they fled before them, and when they got at the fords of Jordan, which lay between Ephraim and the half tribe of Manasseh on the other side Jordan; and they are in the next verse expressly so called.

Ver. 5. *And the Gileadites took the passages of Jordan before the Ephraimites*, etc.] Being either swifter of foot, or going a nearer and shorter way, being better acquainted with their own country:

and it was so, that when those Ephraimites which were escaped said, let me go over; the fugitives of Ephraim, as before called, who ran away from the battle, made their escape, and the best of their way to the passages of Jordan, to get over there to their own country:

that the men of Gilead said unto him; to everyone of them, as they came up,

art thou an Ephraimite? or an Ephrathite; for so it seems those of the tribe of Ephraim were called, as Jeroboam, (⁴¹¹²⁶1 Kings 11:26)

if he said, nay; that he was not an Ephraimite;

Ver. 6. *Then said they unto him, say now “Shibboleth”*, etc.] Which signifies a stream or course of water, at which they now were; and so it was as if they had bid them say,

“may I, or let me, pass over the stream of this river;”

so Jarchi; and this being the case, though it was done to try them, and by their pronunciation learn whether they were Ephraimites or not, they were not upon their guard, but in an hurry, and at once expressed the word as they commonly did:

and he said, sibboleth; pronouncing the letter “shin” as if it was “sin”, or a “samech”; just as the French, as Kimchi observes, pronounce “s” like a “t”; and though the Gileadites and Ephraimites were of the same nation of Israel, and spoke the same language, yet their pronunciation differed, as did that of the Galilean Jews from others in the times of Christ, (⁴¹¹⁷³Matthew 26:73), and so in all nations, among the Greeks, Romans, and among ourselves, people in different counties pronounce in a different manner; which Kimchi thinks was in the Ephraimites owing to the air or climate, as

the French, he observes, pronounce “s” as a “t”, with a soft and gentle sound:

for he could not frame to pronounce it right; or “thus” ^{f251}, as he was bid to do; being used to pronounce otherwise, he could not frame the organs of speech, or so dispose and order them as to say “shibboleth”; or he did not frame, order, and dispose ^{f252}; he was not careful to do it, though with some care he could, being not aware of the design of the Gileadites in it:

then they took him and slew him at the passages of Jordan; everyone as they came thither, who could not say “shibboleth”; these they suffered not to pass over, but slew them:

and there fell at that time of the Ephraimites forty and two thousand; not at the passages of Jordan only; but what fell there, with those at the battle, and in the pursuit, amounted to this number; so that the Ephraimites paid dearly for their pride and insolence.

Ver. 7. *And Jephthah judged Israel six years*, etc.] After the affair of the Ephraimites, he was acknowledged by all Israel as their judge and supreme governor, but did not live long; being perhaps depressed and worn away with grief, on account of his daughter, and other troubles that attended him:

then died Jephthah the Gileadite, and was buried in one of the cities of Gilead: it is not said in what city he was buried, but very probably it was in his own city Mizpeh, where he dwelt. Josephus ^{f253} says it was in his own country, Sebee, a city of Gilead.

Ver. 8. *And after him Ibzan of Bethlehem judged Israel.*] There were two Bethlehems, one in the tribe of Zebulun, (^{f695}Joshua 19:15) of which some think this man was; and another in the tribe of Judah, the city of Jesse and David, and of the Messiah; and Josephus says ^{f254}, Ibzan was of the tribe of Judah, of the city of Bethlehem; and because Boaz was of the same place, and lived in the times of the judges, the Jewish Rabbins ^{f255} are of opinion that he is the same with Ibzan; so Jarchi and Ben Gersom.

Ver. 9. *And he had thirty sons and thirty daughters*, etc.] Which was a very uncommon case for a man to have so many children, and those as to their sex to be equal. Between the former judge and him there was a great difference, in respect of this circumstance of children; he had but one daughter, an only child; and she, by reason of his vow, not suffered to

marry. Such a difference does God, in his all wise Providence, make even among good men: nor is this any certain characteristic of a good man. Danaus had fifty daughters, and his brother Egyptus fifty sons, who were married to each other; and the husbands were all slain by their wives but one, on the wedding night, and so far from being happy in them: but it was otherwise with this judge:

whom he sent abroad, and took in thirty daughters from abroad for his sons; his daughters he sent abroad, or married them, to persons not of another nation, nor of another tribe, but of another family of the same tribe, and these he dismissed from him to live with their husbands; and he took in daughters of families in the same tribe to be wives to his sons, and who seem to have dwelt together; it being the custom then for sons, though married, to abide with their father, and their wives with them; as Abarbinel says is the custom at Zenobia unto this day:

and he judged Israel seven years; and in his days the wars of Troy are said ^{f256} to begin; but they began in the times of Jephthah his predecessor, and ended in his ^{f257}.

Ver. 10. *Then died Ibzan, and was buried in Bethlehem.*] He died at the end of his seven years of government, and was buried in his native place; nothing memorable having happened during his being judge; this is all that is recorded of him.

Ver. 11. *And after him Elon a Zebulonite judged Israel,* etc.] One of the tribe of Zebulun:

and he judged Israel ten years; administered justice to them, preserved them in the true religion, and from idolatry; though it does not appear that any enemies arose in his time against them, from whom he delivered them.

Ver. 12. *And Elon the Zebulonite died,* etc.] At the end of his ten years of government:

and was buried in Aijalon in the country of Zebulun; which is added to distinguish it from another Aijalon in the tribe of Dan (^{<07015>}Judges 1:35).

Ver. 13. *And after him Abdon the son of Hillel, a Pirathonite, judged Israel.*] So called from Pirathon, where he was born, and which was in the tribe of Ephraim, as appears from (^{<07125>}Judges 12:15).

Ver. 14. *And he had forty sons, and thirty nephews*, etc.] Or sons' sons, that is, grandsons; so that he lived not only to see his sons married, but his grandchildren grown up to men's estate; since it follows,

that rode on seventy ass colts; who were either employed by him to ride about on these animals, which in those times were honourable; (see ~~v.50~~Judges 5:10) to administer justice throughout the nation in their circuits; or rather, not following any trade, or being concerned in husbandry, or feeding cattle, but being men of estates, rode about like gentlemen:

and he judged Israel eight years; in his time it is said ^{f258} the city of Troy was destroyed; so Eusebius ^{f259}, who calls this judge Labdon, though he elsewhere ^{f260} places it in the times of Eli; (see Gill on "~~v.4713~~Judges 12:9").

Ver. 15. *And Abdon the son of Hillel the Pirathonite died*, etc.] At the end of his eight years' government;

and was buried at Pirathon, in the land of Ephraim, in the mount of the Amalekites; in the place where he was born, and from whence he had the name of a Pirathonite; and this was in the tribe of Ephraim, and the particular spot was Mount Amalek; so called either from the name of the person to whom it belonged, or because the Amalekites formerly dwelt in it; or rather because of some remarkable advantage got over them at this place: here, Josephus says ^{f261}, this judge had a magnificent funeral.

CHAPTER 13

INTRODUCTION TO JUDGES 13

This chapter relates the birth of Samson, another of the judges of Israel, which was foretold by an angel to his mother, who told her husband of it, (^{<0710>}Judges 13:1-7) upon whose entreaty the angel appeared again, and related the same to them both, (^{<0718>}Judges 13:8-14) and who was very, respectfully treated by the man, and by the wonderful things he did was known by him to be an angel of the Lord, which greatly surprised him, (^{<0715>}Judges 13:15-23) and the chapter is closed with an account of the birth of Samson, and of his being early endowed with the Spirit of God, (^{<0719>}Judges 13:24,25).

Ver. 1. *And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord*, etc.] Committed idolatry, which was the evil they were prone unto, and were frequently guilty of:

and the Lord delivered them into the hands of the Philistines forty years: which according to Josephus ^{f262} are to be reckoned from the death of the last judge, and the time of Samson's birth; or rather from some time after the death of Jephthah, particularly taking in the two last years of Ibzan, when the Ephraimites having been weakened through the slaughter of them by Jephthah, might encourage the Philistines to break in upon them; from which time to the birth of Samson were twenty years, and twenty more may be allowed before he could begin to deliver Israel out of their hands; so that the oppression lasted forty years. According to others, it began at the same time as the oppression of the Ammonites did, though it lasted longer, (^{<0707>}Judges 10:7).

Ver. 2. *And there was a certain man of Zorah, of the family of the Danites*, etc.] Of the tribe of Dan, in which tribe Zorah was, and seems to have lain both on the borders of Judah and Dan, (^{<0653>}Joshua 15:33 19:41); (see Gill on "^{<0653>}Joshua 15:33"), (see Gill on "^{<0694>}Joshua 19:41"), and this man was not a mean man, but of rank and figure, a principal man in the country, according to Josephus ^{f263}; though the Talmudists ^{f264} say he was a plebeian:

whose name was Manoah; which signifies “rest”, and has much the same signification as Noah; and by this name he was well known in those times, and among his people:

and his wife was barren, and bare not; had no child, as the Targum; and it is observed by many, that several eminent persons were born of women that had been barren, as Isaac, Jacob, Samuel, and John the Baptist; and it is remarkable, that the strongest man that ever was born of such a woman, as the following account relates. The name of this woman, the mother of Samson, is said ^{f265} to be Zalalpnith; see (^{430B}1 Chronicles 4:3).

Ver. 3. *And the angel of the Lord appeared unto the woman*, etc.]

According to Josephus ^{f266}, it was in a plain without the city; and that he appeared in the form of a man is certain from (^{473B}Judges 13:6) but was not a mere man, a prophet of the Lord, nor a created angel, but the uncreated one, the Angel of the covenant, the Son and Word of God, who often appeared in an human form; since his name is said to be “Wonderful”, and he to do wonderful things, and is called “Jehovah”, (^{473B}Judges 13:18,23),

and said unto her, behold now, thou art barren, and bearest not; barren at that time, and so she had been ever since she was married to that time; and this is observed, that it might appear the more wonderful that she should after this have a child:

but thou shalt conceive, and bear a son; which to do, must be ascribed to divine power, that one in her circumstances should bear a son; as the prediction of it was owing to divine omniscience, and a proof of it.

Ver. 4. *Now therefore beware, I pray thee, and drink not wine nor strong drink*, etc.] Any liquor inebriating and intoxicating, neither new wine nor old wine, as the Targum, and so Jarchi; the reason of this appears in the next verse, because the child she should conceive and bear was to be a Nazarite, and to be one from his mother’s womb; and from all such liquors, Nazarites, according to the law, were to abstain, (^{408B}Numbers 6:3)

and eat not any unclean thing; meaning not so much such sort of food as was forbidden by the law to be eaten, which every Israelite was to abstain from, but such as were particularly forbidden to Nazarites, as moist and dried grapes, or anything made of the vine tree, from the kernel to the husk, (^{408B}Numbers 6:3,4). The reason of this is, because the child in the womb is nourished with the same the mother is; and as this child was to be

a Nazarite from the womb, and even in it, his mother was to abstain both from eatables and drinkables forbidden a Nazarite by the law.

Ver. 5. *For, lo, thou shalt conceive and bear a son,* etc.] Which is not only repeated for the confirmation of it, but that she might take notice that he was to be a Nazarite, and therefore must conform to everything agreeable to the law of the Nazarites, and take care that it was observed in him:

and no razor shall come on his head; to cut off the hair of it, not from the time of his birth to his death; for he was to be a perpetual Nazarite: other Nazarites during the time of their Nazariteship were not to suffer a razor to come upon them, but afterwards might; but for such an one as Samson, it was not lawful ever to suffer his hair to be cut off; (see ⁴⁰⁰⁵Numbers 6:5)

for the child shall be a Nazarite unto God from the womb; in which he was a type of Christ, who was sanctified by the Lord, separated from sinners, and called a “Nazarene”: was born of a virgin, as Samson was of a barren woman, and his birth foretold by an angel as this:

and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines; for the salvation he wrought for Israel was not complete and perfect; it was only begun by him, and carried on in the times of Eli, Samuel, and Saul, and perfected by David. In this his antitype exceeds him, who is the author of the complete salvation of his people out of the hands of all their enemies, sin, Satan, and the world; though in this there is a great resemblance between Samson and our Lord Jesus, in that what he did he did himself alone; not at the head of an army, and with forces under him, as other judges; so Christ with his own arm, and of himself, and without others, wrought salvation for his people; (see ²⁶⁵Isaiah 63:5).

Ver. 6. *Then the woman came and told her husband,* etc.] To whom it would be joyful news, as it was to her:

saying, a man of God came unto me; he appeared in an human form, and therefore she calls him a man; and by his mien and deportment, and the message he brought, she concluded he was a man of God, that is, a prophet; by which name such persons went in those days; and so the Targum calls him a prophet of the Lord: but it is a mere conceit of Ben Gersom that it was Phinehas, who in all probability was not living; besides what is after related shows that this was a divine Person, and no other than the Son of God:

and his countenance was like the countenance of an angel of God, very terrible; for though she might never have seen an angel, yet it being a common notion that angels were very illustrious, of a beautiful form and of a shining countenance, and very majestic, she compares the man she saw to one; for by being “very terrible”, is not meant that he was frightful, and struck her with horror, but venerable and majestic, which filled her with admiration:

but I asked him not whence he [was], neither told he me his name; this she added to prevent her husband’s inquiring about his name and place of abode; and perhaps, as she came along, she reflected on herself that she did not ask those questions; which might be owing to the surprise she was in, partly at the awful and venerable appearance of the person, and partly at the joyful news he brought her; though it seems as if she did ask his name, but he did not tell her what it was.

Ver. 7. *But he said unto me, behold, thou shalt conceive and bear a son,* etc.] She says nothing of her barrenness, which the angel took notice of to her, that having been to her reproach:

and now drink no wine nor strong drink; neither new wine nor old wine; so the Targum as before:

neither eat any unclean thing; which was so in a ceremonial sense; otherwise every creature of God is good, and not to be called common or unclean; it here respects what was forbidden Nazarites to eat; (see ~~4713~~Judges 13:4)

for the child shall be a Nazarite to God from the womb; it is here added, what is not before expressed,

unto his death; for he was to be a perpetual Nazarite; some were only Nazarites for a time, for so many days or months, according to their vow; but this son was to be a Nazarite all his days, by the appointment of God; nor is it any objection to what is here said, that his hair was cut off before his death, which caused his Nazariteship to cease; since these words are not a prophecy, but a precept; and besides, that affair happened but a little before his death, he died quickly afterwards.

Ver. 8. *Then Manoah entreated the Lord,* etc.] Josephus ^{f267} makes the woman to entreat the Lord; but the text is clear for it that it was Manoah that prayed:

and said, O my Lord, let the man of God which thou didst send unto us; he believed that the man that came to his wife was a man of God, and that he was of his sending; nor was he incredulous of the message he brought, as appears by what follows:

and teach us what we shall do unto the child that shall be born; he believed there would be a child born, and he knew what was to be done to a Nazarite in common, according to the law of God respecting such, and the angel had mentioned somewhat to the woman; yet this being an extraordinary case, a Nazarite from his birth to his death, he was desirous of knowing what was further to be done; or if there was any thing more special and particular to be observed concerning him; which showed his readiness and cheerfulness to obey the will of God in all things.

Ver. 9. *And God hearkened unto the voice of Manoah*, etc.] Heard his prayer and answered it:

and the angel of God came again unto the woman as she sat in the field; who very likely returned to the same place where she was before, in hope her husband's prayers would be heard, and the man return and come to her where he had before met her; as well as she might be here retired for meditation and prayer; unless it can be supposed that she had business here to do, as keeping a flock of sheep, which women, and those great personages too, were wont to do in those times and countries, as Rebekah the sister of Laban, and the daughters of Jethro, prince of Midian:

but Manoah her husband was not with her; the angel appeared to the woman again, because she would know him to be the same; whereas had he appeared to Manoah, especially alone, he could not have known whether he was the same or not. This clause is observed for the sake of what follows.

Ver. 10. *And the woman made haste, and ran*, etc.] It is not improbable what Josephus says ^{f268}, that she entreated the angel to stay a little till she fetched her husband, which he assented to, and then made all the haste she could to him, partly through eagerness to acquaint him with it, and partly that she might not make the prophet she took him to be wait too long:

and showed her husband; that his prayer was heard:

and said unto him, behold, the man hath appeared unto me that came unto me the [other] day; or, as the Targum, "this day"; so Kimchi and Ben

Melech; for the word “other” is not in the text. It is very probable it was the same day he came again he had appeared to her; perhaps it was in the former part of the day he first came to her, when she went home to her husband, and acquainted him with it, who prayed to the Lord that he might be sent again; and then she returned to her place in the field, and in the latter part of the day the angel appeared again.

Ver. 11. *And Manoah arose and went after his wife*, etc.] As soon as she had delivered the above, she made all the haste she could to the man again, lest he should think her too long, and depart; and it was proper enough she should go first, to direct her husband where the man was; Jarchi interprets it, after her counsel and advice:

and came to the man, and said unto him, art thou the man that spakest unto the woman? meaning his wife then present:

and he said, I am; the very same person; for though he was not a man, yet appearing in an human form was taken for one; and therefore makes answer according to the supposition of him, and was the selfsame person, and in the same form he had appeared before.

Ver. 12. *And Manoah said, now let thy words come to pass*, etc.] Which was not only a wish that they might, but a prayer of faith that they would come pass:

how shall we order the child? and how shall we do unto him? he believed a child would be born, and as he was to be a Nazarite, he knew what were the rules and orders to be observed concerning one in common; but as he was to be an extraordinary one, he was desirous of knowing what particular laws and rules were to be observed with respect to him, or what more was to be done to him than to another: the words may be rendered, as in the margin of our Bibles, “what shall be the judgment of the child, and his work?” and seems to relate not to what should be done to it, but what that should do; for being an extraordinary Nazarite, he supposed that some extraordinary work would be done by him, and he was curious to know it; and so Abarbinel interprets it of his request to know things future and wonderful, that should be done after the child was grown up; but this the angel chose not to inform him of, since it might have been prejudicial to them, should the Philistines get knowledge that this child would be a judge and saviour of Israel, and do such and such things to them as he did, they would have sought to have slain his wife while she bare him, or the child

when born; and it may be observed, that though the angel told the woman at first, that he should “begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines”, (^{4713B}Judges 13:5), yet she said nothing of it to her husband, nor did the angel repeat it.

Ver. 13. *And the angel of the Lord said unto Manoah*, etc.] Giving him no direct answer to his question, either what should be done to the child, or what that should do; only reminds of and repeats what he had said to his wife, which she should be careful to observe and would, and that was enough for him to know:

of all that I said to the woman, let her beware; take to abstain from everything in eating and drinking during the time of her going with child, he had joined, which are particularly repeated in the next verse.

Ver. 14. *She may not eat of anything that cometh from the vine*, etc.] Grapes moist or dried, kernels, or husks, or anything made of them:

neither let her drink wine, or strong drink; as she was to be careful to abstain from such liquors, so her husband also is enjoined not to suffer her to drink any:

nor eat any unclean thing; which was so by the law of Moses, and particularly by the law of the Nazarites:

all that I commanded her, let her observe; both with respect to herself and the child.

Ver. 15. *And Manoah said unto the angel of the Lord*, etc.] Being satisfied with what he had said, and perceiving that he chose to say no more, and was about to depart:

I pray thee let me detain thee, until we shall have made ready a kid for thee; to eat a meal with them, in token of gratitude for the trouble he had been at in bringing these messages to them, taking him to be a man, a prophet of the Lord, for whom they were wont to make entertainments; and Abarbinel thinks Manoah proposed this, on purpose to detain him, in hope that while they were eating together he would reveal some secrets unto him.

Ver. 16. *And the angel of the Lord said unto Manoah*, etc.] In answer to his request:

though thou detain me, I will not eat of thy bread; that is, should he be prevailed upon to stay awhile with him, until an entertainment should be got ready, he would not eat of any of his provisions; for “bread” is put for all eatables, or whatsoever he might provide for the entertainment:

and if, or “but if” ^{f269}

thou wilt offer a burnt offering, thou must offer it unto the Lord; if he meant to provide not a festival entertainment, but a sacrifice, then he should take care that he did not offer it to strange gods, as was now very much the custom with Israel in this their time of apostasy, (^{<07130>}Judges 13:1) but to the true Jehovah, and not to a servant of his, a prophet or an angel, but to himself:

for Manoah knew not that he was an angel of the Lord; he took him to be a man, a prophet sent of God, and not an angel; and much less the uncreated one, to whom as such only the sacrifice could be offered.

Ver. 17. *And Manoah said unto the angel of the Lord, what is thy name*, etc.] Who art thou, and by what name art thou called? for since he could not prevail upon him to stay and eat a meal with him, he desired to know his name, and where he lived, that when he heard his name mentioned he might speak well of him, or send to him upon occasion; or if any message was sent from him, as Jarchi suggests, that he might show a respect to him, and observe it: and particularly,

that when thy sayings come to pass, we may do thee honour? say that such a prophet, whose name is such, and lives in such a place, foretold these things; or that they might send him a present, in gratitude for, and as a reward of his service and trouble; so the reward of a labourer, and the maintenance of a Gospel minister, is called “honour”, (^{<5487>}1 Timothy 5:17) and thus Josephus ^{f270} understood it, that they might give him thanks, and send him a present.

Ver. 18. *And the angel of the Lord said unto him*, etc.] Being so importunate, and pressing upon him;

why askest thou thus after my name, seeing it is secret? and not to be known; as his nature and essence as a divine Person, which may be meant by his name, is what passes knowledge, is infinite and incomprehensible; (see ^{<3804>}Proverbs 30:4) or “wonderful” ^{f271}; which is one of the names of Christ, and fitly agrees with him, who is wonderful in his person, as God

and man; in his incarnation, in his offices and relations, in his love to his people, and in all he is unto them, and has done for them; (see Gill on ^{<-2096>}Isaiah 9:6”).

Ver. 19. *So Manoah took a kid with a meat offering*, etc.] The kid which he proposed to make an entertainment with, for the man of God, he took him to be, he fetched and brought for a burnt offering, at the hint which the angel had given him, and joined to it a meat offering, as was usual whenever burnt offerings were made; (see ^{<0453>}Numbers 15:3,4),

and offered it upon a rock unto the Lord; for though Manoah was not a priest, nor was this a proper place for sacrifice; high places were now forbidden, and only at the tabernacle in Shiloh were offerings to be brought; yet all this was dispensed with, and Manoah was justified in what he did by the warrant of the angel, (^{<07316>}Judges 13:16). The rock was probably near the place where this meeting of Manoah and his wife with the angel was, and where the discourse between them passed; and which served instead of an altar, and on which Manoah sacrificed, not to idols, but to the true Jehovah, as the angel directed:

and the angel did wondrously; agreeably to his name, which was “Wonderful”, (^{<07318>}Judges 13:18) or “he, Jehovah, did wondrously” for this angel was no other than Jehovah the Son. The instance in which he did wondrously was, as Kimchi observes, by bringing fire out of the rock, which consumed the flesh of the kid, and the meat offering; and so Josephus ^{f272} says, that he touched the flesh with a rod he had, and fire sparkled out, and consumed it with the bread, or meat offering; just in the same manner as the angel did with the kid and cakes that Gideon brought, (^{<0462>}Judges 6:21)

and Manoah and his wife looked on; to see either fire come down from heaven, or spring up out of the rock, which consumed the sacrifice, and showed the Lord’s acceptance of it, and also the angel’s ascending in it, as follows.

Ver. 20. *For it came to pass, when the flame went up towards heaven from off the altar*, etc.] That is, from the rock, which served instead of an altar, and from whence perhaps the fire sprung which consumed both the burnt offering and the meat offering, the flame of which went up to heaven; this rock or altar having no covering, but was “sub dio”, open to the heavens:

that the angel of the Lord ascended in the flame of the altar; making use of the smoke, as Josephus^{t273} says, as a vehicle in which he openly went up to heaven:

and Manoah and his wife looked on it; on the flame and smoke, and the angel in it as he ascended; just as the disciples of Christ looked steadfastly on him as he went up to heaven, when a cloud received him out of their sight, (~~4009~~Acts 1:9,10)

and fell on their faces to the ground; with astonishment and surprise at what they saw, through fear and reverence of the divine Being, of whose presence they were now sensible, and as worshipping of him, and praying to him.

Ver. 21. *But the angel of the Lord did no more appear to Manoah and to his wife*, etc.] As the flame and smoke ascended, he disappeared therewith, and was seen no more:

then Manoah knew that he was an angel of the Lord; by the wondrous things he did, causing fire to come down from heaven, or out of the rock, ascending in the midst of the flame, without being hurt by it, and going up to heaven in it.

Ver. 22. *And Manoah said unto his wife*, etc.] Being risen from the ground, where they fell on their faces:

we shall surely die, because we have seen God; by which it appears that he not only believed him to be an angel, and not a man, but a divine Person; for though angels are sometimes called “Elohim”, the word here used, yet good men were not wont to fear death, or conclude they should die on sight of an angel; but their notion was, that an appearance of God to them was death, and were surprised when it did not follow, (~~01320~~Genesis 32:30 ~~0062~~Judges 6:22,23 ~~0230~~Exodus 33:20).

Ver. 23. *But his wife said unto him*, etc.] Who was less fearful, and the strongest believer of the two, seeing her husband so very much intimidated, endeavoured to comfort and strengthen him by the three following arguments:

if the Lord was pleased to kill us, he would not have received a burnt offering and a meat offering at our hands; for it was at the direction of this illustrious Person that they offered these offerings, and who testified

the divine acceptance of them, by causing fire in an extraordinary manner to consume them, which was always reckoned a token of God's acceptance of them; and besides, the angel went up in the flame, as being well pleased with them, and, as it were, carrying up the sacrifice to heaven with him, as a sweetsmelling savour to God. Here the angel is called Jehovah by the woman, and shows this was the uncreated angel:

neither would he have showed us all these things; which they saw as the appearance of a divine Person to them in an human form, the consuming of the sacrifice by fire in so strange a manner, and the ascent of the angel heavenwards in the flame of it:

nor would, as at this time, have told us [such things] as these; as that they should have a son; how the woman was to manage herself, while with child of him; and how when born he was to be brought up, and what things God would do by him, and begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines. Now all this would not have been told at such a time of distress, as the nation was now in, but to comfort them, or he would never have told them of a son to be born of them, if they were to be destroyed immediately. So an enlightened soul may reason from the sight and sense he has had of his sinful, lost, and undone state by nature; from the revelation of Christ to him as the only way of salvation; from the views he has had of the glories of his person, and the riches of his grace; and from that communion with God he has sometimes enjoyed; from all this he may reason, that if God had a design to damn him for his sins, he would never have made such discoveries of love, grace, and mercy to him; as well as from the sacrifice of Christ, God has provided and accepted of, on the foot of which justice is engaged to save; and besides, grace and glory are inseparable.

Ver. 24. *And the woman bare a son, and called name Samson*, etc.] After these appearances were over, Manoah and his wife returned to their habitation, and she soon became pregnant, and at the usual course of time brought forth a son, and she gave him the name of Samson; for what reason it is not easy to determine. Josephus says ^{f274} the word signifies "strong"; perhaps he was born a strong robust child, which is not unlikely, or the woman might have some prophetic hint of his future strength, and so gave him this name; but the word has not the signification of strength in it; it rather signifies the sun, which is indeed a strong body, and is compared to a strong man running his race, and so a strong man may be compared to

that; but rather, with respect to the sun, this name might be given him, because of the splendour of his countenance with which he might be born, or in memory of the shining countenance of the angel which brought the tidings of his birth, or because he was to be the instrument of dispelling the darkness of calamity and distress Israel were now in: but the word more properly signifies a minister or servant, from whence the sun has its name; for Samson was to be, and was, a minister and servant of God, and of his people Israel. There is an agreement between the type and the antitype in this name in either sense. Christ is the mighty God, and mighty Saviour, the sun of righteousness, the light of the world, and the deliverer of his people from darkness of calamity and distress; and who came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and perform the great service of redemption and salvation:

and the child grew in bodily strength and stature, and grew up to man's estate, (^{<4124>}Luke 2:40,52)

and the Lord blessed him; not only with extraordinary strength of body, but with great endowments of mind, with the Spirit and graces of the Spirit; with grace, and blessings of it, and with his gracious presence; with this compare (^{<4320>}Psalm 21:3,6 ^{<4010>}Ephesians 1:3).

Ver. 25. *And the Spirit of the Lord began to move him at times in the camp of Dan*, etc.] To go out into it, in order to be trained up in and inured to military exercises; or it began to "strike" his mind, inject thoughts into it, and impress it with them concerning doing great things for the people of God in time to come; and for the present put him upon doing strange and wonderful exploits, which were omens of what was to be done by him hereafter; and these were done by him now and then, not always, but as the Spirit of God came upon him, under the impulse of which he did them, and by the strength he gave him; so the Targum,

"and the Spirit of strength from the Lord began to strengthen him."

This camp of Dan was either a camp formed in that tribe, to prevent the incursions of the Philistines; or rather, since it does not seem that Israel had strength enough to resist them, they having got the power over them, this was the name of a place called Mahanehdan near Kirjathjearim, from the Danites encamping in it, when they went to besiege Laish, (^{<4718>}Judges 18:11,12) for the fact was done before this time, though related afterwards:

between Zorah and Eshtaol; which were two cities in the tribe of Dan, and upon the borders of the tribe of Judah; of which see (~~Joshua~~ Joshua 15:33 19:41). It may be observed, that as the tribe of Dan lay near to the Philistines, and so liable to their ravages, and might be most oppressed by them, so a deliverer of Israel was raised up in this tribe.

CHAPTER 14

INTRODUCTION TO JUDGES 14

This chapter treats of Samson's courtship, and marriage of a Philistine woman, (^{<0740>}Judges 14:1-5) of his meeting with a young lion as he went courting, and of his slaying it, and afterwards finding honey in it, (^{<0746>}Judges 14:6-9), of a riddle which he framed out of this incident, and put to his companions at his marriage to solve, giving them seven days to do it in, with a promise of a reward, (^{<0740>}Judges 14:10-14) and of their solving it by means of his wife, who got the secret from him, (^{<0745>}Judges 14:15-18), which led him to slay thirty Philistines, to make good his promise of thirty sheets and changes of raiment, and to leave his newly married wife, who was given to his companion, (^{<0749>}Judges 14:19,20).

Ver. 1. *And Samson went down to Timnath*, etc.] A city which by lot fell to the tribe of Judah, but was afterwards given to the tribe of Dan, and now in the hands of the Philistines, (^{<0657>}Joshua 15:57 19:43). Judah is said to go up to it, because the place where he lived lay below it, (^{<0383>}Genesis 38:13), but Samson is said to go down to it, because he lived above it. The Jews ^{f275} differ about the reconciliation of these two places; some say there were two of this name, the one is a descent, and the other is an ascent; others say there was but one, so situated, that they that came to it on one side ascended, and they that came to it on the other side descended. Bochart ^{f276} approves of the former. According to Bunting ^{f277}, this was twelve miles from Eshtaol, where Samson lived:

and saw a woman in Timnath, of the daughters of the Philistines; who at this time dwelt there; he saw no doubt many other women besides her, but he took special notice of her, and entertained a particular affection for her; or, in other words, on sight of her fell in love with her.

Ver. 2. *And he came up, and told his father and his mother*, etc.] Of his passion of love, being desirous of having their approbation and consent, in which he acted a dutiful part, and what became him; and may be an example to children to advise with their parents, and have their opinion and

consent before they engage in such an enterprise, even before courtship: and said,

I have seen a woman in Timnath of the daughters of the Philistines; whom he had a good liking of, and a strong affection for; he is very open and ingenuous in his account, does not go about to hide anything from his parents, or colour things over, or conceal her descent, but frankly tells them she was a Philistine woman, which he knew would at once furnish out an objection against her:

now therefore get her for me to wife: for it seems it was the custom then, when a young man had found a woman he liked, that it was left to his parents to entreat with the woman and her friends about the marriage of her to him.

Ver. 3. *Then his father and his mother said unto him,* etc.] What he might expect, and doubtless did expect:

is there never a woman among the daughters of thy brethren, or among all my people, that thou goest to take a wife of the uncircumcised Philistines? none in their own family, nor in the tribe of Dan, nor among the whole nation of Israel, but must go among the uncircumcised Philistines; for though they were not of the seven nations of the Canaanites, with whom marriage was forbidden, yet they not only dwelt where they did, and where the Israelites should, but were idolaters and impure persons, and therefore affinity should not be contracted with them, as being of a dangerous consequence, which might entice to idolatry. Ben Gersom observes, that their Rabbins say he made her a proselyte first, though he did not acquaint his parents with it, and so Abarbinel; but this seems not likely, for, had this been the case, he would have had an easy and ready reply to this objection of theirs:

and Samson said unto his father, get her for me, for she pleaseth me well; or “is right in mine eyes”ⁱ²⁷⁸; not only his eyes were taken with her beauty or external form, but it was right in his sight, in his judgment, to marry her; he having an impulse upon his mind from the Spirit of God unto it, though he did not let his parents know of it, but left them to conclude it sprung from a strong affection to her person. Abarbinel observes, that he only addressed his father, and not his mother, she being most vehemently against the match, and expressing more uneasiness at it than his father did;

but it is most likely that he addressed his father particularly, because he was the proper person to negotiate this affair for him.

Ver. 4. *And his father and mother knew not that it was of the Lord,* etc.]

That he should marry this uncircumcised Philistine; Samson knew it was, and that his desire of having her in marriage did not arise from carnal affection to her merely, being captivated with her beauty and external form, for she was not so very fair, her younger sister was fairer than she, (~~0719D~~Judges 15:2) but he perceived it was the mind and will of God that he should take such a person to wife, by the impulse of the Spirit of God upon him, pointing it, unto him, inclining and urging him to it, suggesting the end and design of it, and the opportunity it would give him of quarrelling with the Philistines, and taking vengeance on them; but this his parents were ignorant of, nor did he let them know that this was of God:

that he sought an occasion against the Philistines; in this way, by this means; they might know he sought to get an opportunity to be avenged on them for their oppression, and to attempt the deliverance of Israel; but they knew not that it was the will of God that a way should be opened for it by this means. Samson might be directed by the Lord to reason thus in his mind, that if he proposed to the Philistines to marry one of their daughters, and they should reject his proposal, this would give him a reason to fall out with them, and fall upon them; and if they should agree to such a match, he might expect they would be kind to him, and to his people for his sake, being in alliance with them, or he should resent it, and take occasion from hence to come to a quarrel with them:

for at that time the Philistines had dominion over Israel; had invaded their country, and dwelt in their cities, and made them tributary to them, and used them ill; which Samson observing, was provoked to seek an opportunity of avenging the injuries done them, and of delivering them, and he was directed to it this way.

Ver. 5. *Then went Samson down, and his father and his mother, to*

Timnath, etc.] They were prevailed upon to go with him, either because they perceived his affections were so strongly set upon a wife, that they thought it advisable to agree to it, lest it should be of bad consequence to him, or because he let them know that the thing was of God, and what was his design in it:

and came to the vineyards of Timnath; the land of Canaan was a land of vineyards, and particularly that part of it which was inhabited by the Philistines and Phoenicians; and though we nowhere read of the wine of Timnath, yet frequent mention is made in authors of the wine of Ashkelon, Gaza, and Sarepta, inhabited by the above people; these vineyards seem to have lain somewhat out of Samson's way; but hither he turned on some account or another from his parents, perhaps to eat some grapes:

and, behold, a young lion roared against him; not a whelp, that is expressed by another word, but one more grown, and is afterwards called a lion simply; and, by the Targum, a lion, the son of lions or lionesses; which seeing him in the vineyards, where he was lurking, came out to meet him, and roared at him in a hideous manner, and came up to him to destroy him: these creatures, though now more rare in those parts, were at this time frequent, and in later times: (see ^{<0173>}1 Samuel 17:34 ^{<1133>}1 Kings 13:24 20:36) and several writers ^{f279} make mention of lions in Mesopotamia and Syria; and Strabo ^{f280}, and Pliny ^{f281} speak of a city in Phoenicia near Sidon, called the city of lions, because perhaps it had been much infested with them; and for a like reason it may be some cities in the tribes of Judah and Simeon were called Lebaoth and Bethlebaoth, (^{<0152>}Joshua 15:32 19:6).

Ver. 6. *And the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him*, etc.] The Spirit of might from the Lord, as the Targum, inspiring him with courage and intrepidity of mind, and increasing his bodily strength:

and he rent him as he would rend a kid; as he came up to him to seize him, he laid hold on him and strangled him, as Josephus ^{f282} says, caught him by the throat, and tore it out; for it does not seem that the carcass was torn to pieces, or limb from limb, by what follows; and this he did with as much ease as if he had had only a kid to deal with:

and he had nothing in his hand; not a staff to keep it off, nor a spear, sword, or knife to stab it with: in this Samson was a type of Christ, who has destroyed our adversary the devil, compared to a roaring lion, (^{<0118>}1 Peter 5:8) to a lion for his strength, cruelty, and voraciousness; to a roaring lion, making a hideous noise and stir when the Gospel was carried unto the Gentiles, and they were about to be called and espoused to Christ; from among whom he was cast out, and by no other weapon than the ministration of the Gospel, accompanied with the power of Christ, and his Spirit:

but he told not his father or his mother what he had done; when he overtook them, as he quickly did, he said not a word to them of his meeting with a lion and slaying it; which, as it showed his modesty in not blazing abroad his wonderful and heroic actions, in which also he was a type of Christ, but his great prudence in concealing this, lest his great strength should be known too soon, and the Philistines be upon their guard against him, or seek to dispatch him privately; though no doubt he had pondered this in his own mind, and considered it as an omen and presage of the advantage he should have over the Philistines his enemies, whom he should as easily overcome as he had that lion, and that without any instrument of war.

Ver. 7. *And he went down, and talked with the woman*, etc.] Entered into a conversation with her, that he might the better judge of her other qualifications, besides that of outward form and beauty, whether she would be a suitable yoke fellow for him; and he talked with her about marriage, and proposed it to her, or talked about her to her father and near relations; and, as the Targum expresses it, asked the woman, not only asked of her consent, but demanded her of her friends: it may refer, as Abarbinel observes, to his father, that he went down and talked with the woman and with her relations about her, concerning the affair of his son's marriage with her:

and she pleased Samson well; he liked her conversation as well as her person, and the more he conversed with her, the more agreeable she was to him, and the more desirous he was to marry her. Though some observe from hence, that she did not please the father of Samson as himself; so Abarbinel.

Ver. 8. *And after a time he returned to take her*, etc.] Matters being agreed on, and settled on both sides, and the espousals made, he and his parents returned, and, at the proper usual time for the consummation of the marriage, he went again to Timnath for that purpose. It is in the Hebrew text, "after days"^{f283}, which sometimes signifies a year, (see ^{<004B>}Genesis 4:3 ^{<0130>}Exodus 13:10) and so Ben Gersom interprets it, that a year after this woman became Samson's wife (i.e. betrothed to him) he returned to take her to himself to wife; and it seems, adds he, that twelve months were given her to prepare herself; and some considerable time must have elapsed, as appears from what had happened to the carcass of the lion, next related:

and he turned aside to see the carcass of the lion: just before he came to Timnath he thought of the lion he had slain some time ago, and he went a little out of the way to see what was become of it, or had happened to it. Josephus says ^{f284}, when he slew it he threw it into a woody place, perhaps among some bushes, a little out of the road; for which reason it had not been seen and removed, and was in a more convenient place for what was done in it:

and, behold, [there was] a swarm of bees and honey in the carcass of the lion; and though naturalists ^{f285} tell us that bees are averse to flesh, and will not touch any, yet in the course of time that the carcass of this lion had lain, its flesh might have been clean eaten off by the fowls of the air, or was quite dried away and consumed, so that it was nothing but a mere skeleton; a bony carcass, as the Syriac version. Josephus ^{f286} says, the swarm was in the breast of the lion; and it is no more unlikely that a swarm of bees should settle in it, and continue and build combs, and lay up their honey there, than that the like should be done in the skull of Onesilus king of Cyprus, when hung up and dried, as Herodotus ^{f287} relates. Besides, according to Virgil ^{f288}, this was a method made use of to produce a new breed of bees, even from the corrupt gore and putrid bowels of slain beasts; and Pythagoras ^{f289} observes, they are produced from thence. This may be an emblem of those sweet blessings of grace, which come to the people of Christ through his having destroyed Satan the roaring lion, and all his works; particularly which came to the poor Gentiles, when the devil was cast out from them, and his empire there demolished.

Ver. 9. *And he took thereof in his hands, and went on eating,* etc.]

Josephus ^{f290} says he took three honeycombs, he means three pieces of the honeycomb, and ate the honey as he went along to Timnath; which he might do without touching the carcass of the lion, and defiling himself thereby, which, as a Nazarite, he was more especially to be careful of:

and came to his father and mother, and he gave them, and they did eat; who went down with him to the consummation of the marriage, and from whom he had turned a little aside; and now overtook them, and to whom he gave some of his honey to eat, which, having travelled some way, might be grateful to them. The above writer takes no notice of this, but says he gave of it to the young woman whom he betrothed, when he came to her; but of that the text makes no mention:

but he told not them that he had taken the honey out of the carcass of the lion; either lest they should scruple eating it, being taken out of such a carcass; or that the riddle, which perhaps he meditated as he came along eating the honey, might not be found out, which might more easily have been done, had this fact been known by any.

Ver. 10. *So his father went down unto the woman*, etc.] At Timnath, whom Samson had espoused; the Targum is,

“about the business of the woman;”

about the consummation of the marriage with her; they all three went, the father, the mother, and the son, as appears from the preceding verse:

for Samson made a feast, for so used the young men to do; at the time of marriage; this was the nuptial feast common in all nations; but it seems the custom now and here was for the bridegroom to make it; whereas from other instances we learn, that the father of the bridegroom used to make it, (see Gill on “^{<412D>}Matthew 22:2”) and the Vulgate Latin version here renders it,

and he made a feast for his son Samson; the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions add, seven days, and so long this feast was kept, (^{<414D>}Judges 14:12). Now this marriage of Samson with a daughter of the Philistines was a type of the marriage of Christ with his people, especially with the Gentile church, such as were not of the commonwealth of Israel, but sinners of the Gentiles, very ignorant of divine things, reproached by the Jews, and their calling an offence to them; and may fitly express the love of Christ to his church, though unworthy of it, which is a love of complacency and delight, arising from his own good will and pleasure, and not owing to any superior beauty, excellence, worth, or worthiness in them, they being no better than others, children of wrath, even as others, (see ^{<415D>}Judges 15:2) as well as there is an agreement in the manner of his obtaining and betrothing her, which was by applying to his father to get her for him, and being got and given, he betrothed her; so Christ asked his people of his father to be his spouse, which request being obtained, he betrothed them to himself in righteousness; and the Gospel feast, or ministry of the word, is kept and continued on account of it, (^{<421D>}Psalms 21:2 ^{<416D>}Hosea 2:19 ^{<417D>}Matthew 22:2-4).

Ver. 11. *And it came to pass; when they saw him*, etc.] That is, the Philistines, the citizens of Timnath, when they saw that he was come to consummate his marriage:

that they brought thirty companions to be with him; to be the bridegroom's men, or children of the bridechamber, as they are called, (^{<1015>}Matthew 9:15) or friends of the bridegroom, (^{<1019>}John 3:29) to keep him company during the nuptial feast: this they did according to custom, and in honour and respect unto him; though some think, and so Josephus ^{f291}, that they were brought to be guards upon him, observing that he was a man of great might, strength, and courage, so that they were afraid of him, lest he should have some design upon them; but it is not certain that there was anything very visible or terrible in him, more than in another man, that showed him to be of extraordinary courage and strength, since it was but at times the Spirit of the Lord came upon him, and as yet he had done nothing to their knowledge which showed him to be such; had they indeed known of his encounter with the lion, they might have had such thoughts of him, but this they knew nothing of.

Ver. 12. *And Samson said unto them*, etc.] His thirty companions, very likely on the first day of the feast:

I will now put forth a riddle to you: a secret, hidden, abstruse thing, not easy to be understood; a dark saying, wrapped up in figurative terms; and this he proposed as an amusement to them, to exercise their wits, which it seems was usual to entertain guests with, and might be both pleasing and profitable:

if you can certainly declare it unto me within the seven days of the feast; for so long the nuptial feast was usually kept, (see ^{<1027>}Genesis 29:27,28). If they could find it out; and with clearness and certainty explain the riddle to him within that period of time, which was giving them time enough to do it in:

then I will give you thirty sheets, and thirty change of garments: that is, every man one of each. By "sheets" he means, as Kimchi and Ben Melech interpret it, a covering of the body in the night next to the flesh, in which a man lies, and was made of linen; meaning either what we call shirts, or bed sheet, and by change of raiment, a suit of clothes worn in the daytime.

Ver. 13. *But if ye cannot declare it unto me*, etc.] Explain the riddle in the space of time allowed:

then shall ye give me thirty sheets, and thirty change of garments; so many shirts and suits of apparel:

and they said unto him, put forth thy riddle that we may hear it; not thereby to judge whether they would agree to his proposals, but hereby suggesting that they accepted his terms and conditions, either to give or receive the above premium, if they did or did not hit on the explanation of the riddle.

Ver. 14. *And he said unto them, out of the eater came forth meat,* etc.] Out of a devouring eater, such as the lion is, came forth honey, or that was taken out of it, which Samson, and his father and mother, ate of, and which was the common food of some persons, as of John the Baptist:

and out of the strong came forth sweetness: not only out of that which was strong in body while alive, but of a strong and ill scent, as the carcass of a dead lion is, and out of that came forth honey, than which nothing is sweeter. Josephus^{f292} expresses it,

“that which devours all things furnishes out pleasant food, when that itself is altogether unpleasant:”

and they could not in three days expound the riddle; so long they laboured to find it out, but then began to despair of it.

Ver. 15. *And it came to pass on the seventh day,* etc.] Not on the seventh day of the feast, for some time before that they applied to his wife, and she pressed him hard to disclose it; but on the sabbath day, as Kimchi, and so Jarchi says, on the seventh day of the week, not on the seventh day of the feast, for it was the seventh day of the feast; this is so clear, that the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, instead of the seventh, read the fourth day:

that they said unto Samson's wife, entice thy husband, that he may declare unto us the riddle; that is, persuade him to tell the meaning of it to her, that she might declare it to them:

lest we burn thee and thy father's house with fire; in which she now was, not as yet being taken home to her husband, and her in it; this they said to terrify her, and make her importunate with Samson to explain the riddle to her, if he had any value for her, and her life:

have ye called us to take that we have? invited them to the wedding feast, to strip them of their clothes, and even take their very shirts off of their backs, which they must have been obliged to part with, if they could not explain the riddle, or send for other suits and shirts from their own houses: “is it not so?” verily this is the case, nor can it be understood otherwise than a contrived business between thee and thy husband, to get our raiment, woollen and linen, from us.

Ver. 16. *And Samson’s wife wept before him,* etc.] When she came to him to get out of him the explanation of the riddle, thinking that her tears would move him to it:

and said, thou dost but hate me, and lovest me not: another artifice she used, well knowing he could not bear to have his affection called in question, which was now very strong, as is usual with newly married persons:

thou hast put forth a riddle unto the children of my people; her countrymen, fellow citizens, and neighbour, and could not but be dear to her, and respected by her; so that what affected and afflicted them must have some influence upon her:

and hast not told me; that is, the explanation of it, otherwise it is likely she had heard the riddle itself told:

and he said unto her behold, I have not told it my father nor my mother, and shall I tell it thee? his parents he was greatly indebted to, for whom he had the highest reverence and esteem, whose fidelity and taciturnity he had sufficient knowledge of, and yet he had not thought fit to impart it to them; how therefore could she expect to be trusted with such a secret, with whom he had not been long acquainted, not long enough to know whether she could keep it or not?

Ver. 17. *And she wept before him the seven days, while the feast lasted,* etc.] Those that remained of the seven days, from the fourth to this time, as Kimchi seems rightly to interpret it; though some think she began to beseech him with tears, on the first day of the feast, to impart the secret to her for her own satisfaction; and then, after the men had urged her on the fourth day to persuade her husband to it, she continued pressing him more earnestly with tears unto the seventh day. Some, as Abarbinel observes, and to whom he seems to incline, think there were fourteen days, seven days before the festival began, on the last of which they importuned her to

try to get the secret from him, (^{<07415>}Judges 14:15), and that she continued pressing all the second seven days; but it seems quite clear that it was at the beginning of the seven days of the feast that the riddle was put, which was to be explained within that time, (^{<07412>}Judges 14:12)

and it came to pass on the seven day, that he told her, because she lay sore upon him; pressed him most earnestly with her entreaties, cries, and tears:

and she told the riddle to the children of her people; though she knew it would be to her husband's detriment, and that he must be obliged to give them thirty sheets of linen, and as many suits of apparel, and though it is probable she had promised not to tell them.

Ver. 18. *And the men of the city said unto him, on the seventh day, before the sun went down*, etc.] And so soon, enough to free them from the obligation they otherwise would have been under, to have given him the sheets and changes of raiment agreed unto:

what is sweeter than honey? nothing, at least that was known, sugar not being invented. Julian the emperor ^{f293}, in commendation of figs, shows, from various authors, that nothing is sweeter than they, excepting honey:

and what is stronger than a lion? no creature is, it is the strongest among beasts, (^{<2880>}Proverbs 30:30). Homer ^{f294} gives the epithet of strong to a lion:

and he said unto them, if ye had not ploughed with my heifer; meaning his wife, whom he compares to an heifer, young, wanton, and unaccustomed to the yoke ^{f295}; and by "ploughing" with her, he alludes to such creatures being employed therein, making use of her to get the secret out of him, and then plying her closely to obtain it from her; and this diligent application and search of theirs, by this means to inform themselves, was like ploughing up ground; they got a discovery of that which before lay hid, and without which they could never have had the knowledge of, as he adds:

ye had not found out my riddle; the explanation of it. Ben Gersome and Abarbinel interpret ploughing of committing adultery with her; in which sense the phrase is used by Greek and Latin writers ^{f296}; but the first sense is best, for it is not said, "ploughed my heifer", but with her.

Ver. 19. *And the Spirit of the Lord came upon him*, etc.] The Spirit of might from the Lord, as the Targum; which filled him with zeal and courage, animating him to the following undertaking, and increased his bodily strength to perform it:

and he went down to Ashkelon; one of the five principal cities of the Philistines; it lay near the Mediterranean sea, and, according to Bunting ^{f297}, was twenty four miles from Timnath; why he went so far, is not easy to say; some think there was some grand solemnity or festival observed there at this time, which he knew of, when persons put on their best suits of apparel, and such he wanted: and slew thirty men of them; in vindication of which, it may be observed, that Samson was now raised up of God to be judge of Israel; and that he acted now as such, and under the direction and impulse of the Spirit of God, and the persons he slew were the common enemies of Israel; and if now observing a festival in honour of their gods, they were justly cut off for their idolatry:

and took their spoil; their clothes off their backs, stripped them of their apparel, and even of their shirts, all which he brought away with him: and here it may be observed, that though Samson was a Nazarite, yet not a common one, and was an extraordinary person, and not in all things bound to the law of the Nazarites; at least that law was dispensed with in various instances relative to him, as taking honey out of the carcass of the lion, and here stripping dead bodies which were defiling, and other things:

and gave change of garments unto them which expounded the riddle; to the thirty companions, to whom it was proposed, each man a suit of apparel taken from the thirty men he slew at Ashkelon, and sheets or shirts also no doubt, though not expressed. Indeed some have thought, because they did not find out the riddle of themselves, he did not give them the whole premium, and that by their own consent:

and his anger was kindled; against his wife, for her treachery and unfaithfulness to him, and against his companions for their deceitful usage of him, and against the citizens of the place, who perhaps laughed at him, being thus tricked and deceived:

and he went up to his father's house; left his wife, and her relations, and his companions, and the men of Timnath, and betook himself to his father's house again, as if he had been never married; his parents very probably had returned before him.

Ver. 20. *But Samson's wife was given to his companion*, etc.] By her father, and with her consent, both being affronted and provoked by Samson leaving her, who judged her not only to be injured, but hereby discharged from him, and free to marry another:

and whom he had used as his friend; though there were thirty of them that were his companions, yet there was one of them that was the principal of them, and was the most intimate with him, whom he used in the most friendly manner, and admitted to a more free conversation than the rest, the same that is called the friend of the bridegroom, (~~415~~ John 3:29) while the others were called the children of the bridechamber, (~~405~~ Matthew 9:15). It is not unlikely that this person had too much intimacy with Samson's wife before, and so had the secret of the riddle from her, and so very readily married her, as soon as Samson departed; and all this furnished out an occasion and opportunity, which Samson sought for, to be revenged on the Philistines, as in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 15

INTRODUCTION TO JUDGES 15

This chapter relates, that Samson being denied his wife, did by a strange stratagem burn the corn fields, vineyards, and olives of the Philistines, (^{<0715>}Judges 15:1-5), and that because of their burning her and her father, he made a great slaughter of them, (^{<0716>}Judges 15:6-8), which brought the Philistines against the men of Judah, who took Samson and bound him, to deliver him to the Philistines, when he, loosing himself, slew a thousand of them with the jaw bone of an ass, (^{<0719>}Judges 15:9-17) and being athirst, God in a wonderful manner supplied him with water, (^{<0718>}Judges 15:18-20).

Ver. 1. *But it came to pass within a while after*, etc.] Or “after days”, a year after, the same phrase as in (^{<0714>}Judges 14:8) in the time of wheat harvest; which began at Pentecost, as barley harvest did at the passover; this circumstance is mentioned for the sake of the following piece of history:

that Samson visited his wife with a kid; by this time his passion of anger subsided, and he “remembered” his wife, as the Targum expresses it, and thought proper to return to her, and attempt a reconciliation with her; and for that purpose took a kid with him to eat a meal with her in her own apartment, which in those days was reckoned an elegant entertainment, and was a present to a king, (^{<0717>}1 Samuel 16:20). Isidore ^{f298} derives the Latin word for a kid, “ab edendo”, from eating, as if it was food by way of eminency, as it is both savoury and wholesome:

and he said, I will go with my wife into the chamber; where she was, as women had their chambers and apartments by themselves; this he said within himself, or resolved in his own mind, and perhaps expressed it in her father’s hearing, or however moved that way, which plainly indicated his design:

but her father would not suffer him to go in; placed himself perhaps between him and the door, and parleyed with him, and declared he should not go into his daughter’s chamber; Samson, through his superior strength,

could easily have pushed him away, and broke open the door, but he did not choose to use such violent methods, and patiently heard what he had to say, and submitted.

Ver. 2. *And her father said, I verily thought that thou hadst utterly hated her*, etc.] Not only thought so, but said so, and had said it over and over again; for the words are, “saying I said”^{f299}, affirmed it confidently and constantly, that “in hating thou hast hated her”^{f300}, with an implacable hatred, that there was no hope of any reconciliation:

therefore I gave her to thy companion; this he said to excuse his daughter, and soften his resentment, that it was not his daughter’s doing, but his, and that he had disposed of her not to anybody, but to a companion of Samson’s; and what follows seems to be said with the same view, for he might be in some fear of Samson, knowing him to be a man of spirit and strength:

is not her younger sister fairer than she? take her, I pray thee, instead of her; that is, to wife; and two things he observes to recommend her, her youth and beauty, in which she was preferable to her sister. Such incestuous marriages were common with the old Canaanites, and it seems still continued; but were condemned by the law of God, and not allowed an Israelite, which Samson knew full well, and therefore listened not to the proposal; (see ^{CRIBB}Leviticus 18:3,18).

Ver. 3. *And Samson said concerning them*, etc.] His wife’s father, and other relations, and the citizens of Timnath; this, which is what follows, he said either within himself respecting them, or he said it to them openly and publicly before them all:

now shall I be more blameless than the Philistines, though I do them a displeasure; signifying, that if he did them an ill thing, or what might be reckoned an injury to their persons or properties, and which would be disagreeable and displeasing to them, they could not justly blame him for it, since they had given him such a provocation as to dispose of his wife to another man; though Samson did not mean to act, nor did he act in the following instances as a private person taking private revenge, but as a public person, and judge of Israel; and took occasion, from the private injuries done him, to avenge the public ones of the children of Israel upon the Philistines; and they might thank themselves for giving the opportunity, which they could not justly condemn him for taking.

Ver. 4. *And Samson went and caught three hundred foxes*, etc.] Nor should this be thought at all incredible, since Canaan and Palestine abounded with foxes; hence several places therein had their names of Shual, which signifies a fox, (^{<0653>}Joshua 15:28 19:3,42 ^{<0937>}1 Samuel 13:17). A traveller ^{f301} in those parts says that foxes swarm there, and that there are very great numbers of them in the hedges, and ruins of buildings: and these creatures were very pernicious to vines, and so may reasonably be thought to be about Timnath in great numbers, because of the vineyards there, (^{<0745>}Judges 14:5 ^{<2125>}Song of Solomon 2:15), besides, there is no necessity of supposing that Samson took all these himself, he might employ others in catching them for him, nor that he took them at the same time, on one and the same day; he might be many days and weeks about it, and keep them up until he had got his number: to which may be added, there was a creature in those parts very much like a fox, called Thoes, which, as Bellonius ^{f302} says, were about Caesarea and Palestina, and go two hundred in company; and so making use of proper means, which Samson was not unacquainted with, great numbers might be taken together; but, above all, it may be observed, that as this was under the direction of the divine Providence, God could easily cause such a number of creatures to be gathered together, and taken, as he ordered all the living creatures, as by an instinct, to come into the ark to Noah:

and he took fire brands; or rather torches, made of oily and resinous matter, which were not easily extinguished:

and turned tail to tail; took two foxes, and tied their tails together with a cord, giving them room enough to run about, as such creatures do, not forward, but in a crooked, flexuous manner, here and there:

and put a firebrand in the midst between two tails: which torch seems to have been fastened to the cord with which the tails were tied; he did not put a firebrand or torch to the tail of every single fox, which then would have made its way to its own den, but between two, which could not enter into one hole, and would draw different ways, and stop each other, and so do greater damage to the fields and vineyards into which they came.

Ver. 5. *And when he had set the brands on fire*, etc.] Disposed as before related; and foxes being naturally fearful of, and frightened with fire, and especially so near them as at their tails, would run into the first place they could for shelter:

he let them go into the standing corn of the Philistines; which being ripe, as it was now wheat harvest, would soon take fire; and taking fire, this would in course cause the foxes to run still further to other parts of standing corn, and set fire to them also; besides, it is reasonable to suppose that Samson did not let them go all at once on one spot, but disposed of them, some here, and some there, to do the greater and more speedy execution:

and burnt up both the shocks, and also the standing corn, with the vineyards and olives; for as it was in the time of harvest, in some places the corn was standing, and in other places it was cut down, and put into shocks or heaps; and to these the foxes would naturally run to shelter themselves, and so set fire to them, as well as they would make their way to the vineyards or oliveyards, either for shelter also, or for the sake of the grapes and olives, to satisfy their hunger, after having been detained long for this purpose; and thus by one means or another they destroyed the corn, the vines, and olives of the Philistines in those parts. Some would have it, in order to shun the difficulties objected by the enemies of revelation, that the word for “foxes” should be rendered “sheaves” or shocks of corn, set end to end^{f303}, which the word for “tail” is said to signify; and firebrands or torches being set on fire, communicated it to standing corn, shocks of corn, vineyards, and oliveyards; but there is no need to put such a sense upon the words, as already observed; nor is the word translated “foxes” ever used in Scripture in any form for “sheaves” or shocks of corn, but always others; nor in any Jewish writings, nor in the sister dialects, Arabic, Chaldee, or Ethiopic; and in any place of Scripture where it is translated “fox” or “foxes”, should the word “sheaves” or “shocks” be put, the sense would appear most ridiculous; nor is the word for “tail” ever used in Scripture, in a literal sense, but for the tail of a living creature; nor is the word for “took” or “caught” ever used of taking anything in common, but either of taking men or cities by force, or of creatures in nets, traps, and snares: and the sense which such a version of the words would give is not only contrary to the Hebrew text, and to the Chaldee paraphrase, but to all the ancient versions, Arabic, Syriac, Septuagint, and Vulgate Latin, and to Josephus. The memory of this great event was kept up, or a custom borrowed from it, as some learned men have observed in the Vulpinaria of the Romans, mentioned by Ovid^{f304}, and others, which bore a great resemblance to this, and which was observed at the same time of the year, about the middle of April, or calends of May;

which exactly agrees with the time of wheat harvest in Palestine; when in the Circus they used to send out foxes with burning torches fixed to their backs. Nor need this affair of Samson's seem more strange or incredible than the great number of creatures brought into the Circus at Rome, to be seen there together. Sylla first introduced one hundred lions, after him Pompey the great three hundred, and Julius Caesar, when he was dictator, four hundred, as Pliny ^{f305} relates. Probus ^{f306} sent into the amphitheatre at one time, which he made like a wood full of trees, 1000 ostriches, a like number of harts, does, boars, and other creatures each; and at another time one hundred lions, as many lionesses and leopards each, and three hundred bears; Heliogabalus ^{f307} got together 1000 weasels, 10,000 mice, 10,000 weight of spiders and flies.

Ver. 6. *Then the Philistines said, who hath done this?* etc.] They asked and inquired one of another, who they thought could be the author of such mischief:

and they answered, Samson, the son in law of the Timnite; this they said either by conjecture, which might be the case of some; and others more confidently asserted it, having heard what he said, (^{<0713B>}Judges 15:3) and they assign a very good reason for it,

because he had already taken away his wife, and given her to his companion, which had provoked him to do such an action as this; and perhaps the very same persons that were very well pleased before that Samson was so served, yet now were full of wrath and indignation at the Timnite, having suffered so much in their property on his account:

and the Philistines came up, and burnt her and her father with fire; Josephus ^{f308} says, her and her relations; they set fire to her father's house, where she was, and burnt them both in it, whereby that evil came upon her she thought to avoid by getting the secret of the riddle out of Samson, and telling it to his companion, (^{<07145>}Judges 14:15) and suffered the proper punishment for her adultery; the people that did this were those that lived in the towns adjacent, from whence they came up to Timnath, whose fields, vineyards, and oliveyards, had been destroyed by the foxes with their firebrands.

Ver. 7. *And Samson said unto them,* etc.] After they had burnt his wife and her father in their dwelling house, by which they thought to appease him, being afraid of him:

though ye have done this, yet will I be avenged of you; not for burning his wife and father-in-law; his sense is, that though they had done this, in order to ingratiate themselves with him, yet he should not stop on this account, but be avenged on them, not for private injuries done to him, or any that had been in connection with him, but for public injuries done to Israel, and their oppression of them:

and after that I will cease; when he had taken full vengeance on them, and not before.

Ver. 8. *And he smote them hip and thigh with a great slaughter*, etc.] Either smote them on their hips and thighs with his hands (for it does not appear he had any weapon of war), so that they were sadly bruised, and maimed, and lamed, that they could not stir, and of which blows and bruises multitudes died: or he smote them with his legs on their thighs, kicked them about at pleasure, which kicks numbers of them never got over; or the meaning of the proverbial expression is, he laid on them at a great rate, and smote them here and there, and any where, which issued in the death of many of them: the Targum is,

“he smote them horse and foot,”

their cavalry and infantry, destroyed them both; but it does not appear that they came out in an hostile manner unto him, and much less in the form of a regular army:

and he went down and dwelt in the top of the rock Etam. Josephus says ^{f309}, that Samson having slain many in the fields of the Philistines, went and dwelt at Etam, a strong rock in the tribe of Judah; and which agrees with (⁴¹⁰⁶2 Chronicles 11:6), where mention is made of the city Etam, along with Bethlehem and Tekoah, cities in that tribe, which had its name either from this rock, or the rock from that. The Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions read,

“in a cave of the rock of Etam;”

and the Syriac and Arabic versions, in Sahaph, which is on the rock of Etam, as if Sahaph was the name of a city there; hither Samson went, not through fear, or for safety, but to wait for another opportunity of further avenging the injuries of Israel on the Philistines.

Ver. 9. *Then the Philistines went up*, etc.] From Palestine, which lay low on the shore of the Mediterranean sea:

and pitched in Judah; in the land of Judea, which lay higher, particularly in the tribe of Judah, whither they came with an army, and encamped there:

and spread themselves in Lehi; their forces were so many, that they extended a considerable way, and particularly reached to Lehi, that is, which was afterwards so called; for it has its name by anticipation from the jaw bone, which it signifies, with which Samson slew many in this place, as after related.

Ver. 10. *And the men of Judah said*, etc.] To the Philistines, very probably by a deputation, which they sent unto them, to know the reason of this formidable appearance:

why are ye come up against us? in this hostile manner, with such a number of forces, since they were not conscious to themselves that they had done anything to offend them; they had not attempted to cast off their yoke, they quietly submitted to their government, and had paid their whole tribute, as Josephus^{f310} represents them saying; they could not imagine what should be the meaning of all this:

and they answered, to bind Samson are we come up; that is, to oblige them to bind him, and deliver him into their hands:

to do to him as he hath done to us: to put him to death, as he had slain many of their people in the last rencounter with them.

Ver. 11. *Then three thousand of Judah went up to the top of the rock of Etam*, etc.] Or “went down”^{f311}; that is, into the cave of the rock of Etam, as the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions; and so it is taken by David de Pomis^{f312} for a cave dug in the rock: this was a large number that went to take one man; the reason is, they knew his great strength:

and said to Samson, knowest thou not that the Philistines are rulers over us? and therefore it must be a very unwise thing to disoblige and provoke them, when it lay in their power to oppress them yet more and more, to increase their tribute, and make their burdens heavier, and even take away their lives:

what is this that thou hast done unto us? they ask not what he had done to them, but unto us; though they mean that, but express themselves thus,

because what he had done to the Philistines was the occasion of their coming up against them, and so eventually it was doing them ill:

and he said unto them, as they did unto me, so have I done to them; they had done him ill, and therefore he did ill to them; they had burnt his wife and her father with fire, and he had slain many of them; at least this was what he thought fit to say in his own vindication; otherwise what he did was not in a way of private revenge, but on account of the injury done to the people of Israel, he taking what was done to them as done to himself, the chief magistrate and judge of Israel.

Ver. 12. *And they said unto him, we are come down to bind thee,* etc.] That is, they were come down into the cave where he was; otherwise more properly they were come up to the top of the rock:

that we may deliver thee into the hands of the Philistines; they own what was their intention in binding him, and what put them upon it was not ill will to him, but fear of the Philistines:

and Samson said unto them, swear unto me that ye will not fall upon me yourselves; which shows he did not fear them, though they were 3000; and that if they attempted to take away his life, he should defend himself, but he chose not to shed the blood of any of them; and rather than they should come into any distress through the Philistines, consented to be bound by them, and delivered into their hands; which he was a type of Christ, who was betrayed by the Jews, and delivered by them into the hands of the Romans; and though he could have delivered himself by his great strength, would not, but suffered himself to be taken and bound, and given into the hands of his enemies, that his own people might go free; (see ^{<BIB04>}John 18:4-12).

Ver. 13. *And they spake unto him, saying, no,* etc.] They declared they would not fall upon him themselves and slay him; nor would the Jews put Christ to death themselves, though they were virtually his betrayers and murderers, (^{<BIB31>}John 18:31)

but we will bind thee fast and deliver thee into their hands; as the Jews did Christ, and not only delivered him bound to the high priest, but also to the Roman governor, (^{<BIB2>}Matthew 27:2)

but surely we will not kill thee: not with their own hands, but then they proposed to deliver him into the hands of the Philistines, from whence

nothing but death could be expected; so that had they put him to death, they would have been accessory to it, as the Jews were to the death of Christ by delivering him to the Gentiles, and are charged with it, (~~4023~~ Acts 2:23,36).

and they bound him with two new cords; not with one only, lest it should not be sufficient to hold him, knowing his strength, but with two, and these not old worn out ones, but new ones just made, and very strong; and, as Joseph Kimchi, noted by Ben Melech, were trebled, or made of three cords or thongs, for greater security; and of flax, as the following verse intimates, and such are most firm and strongest to hold anything; hence nets were made of flax to hold creatures in, fish, fowl, or beasts ^{f313}:

and brought him up from the rock; the place, as Kimchi says, where the men of Judah dwelt, being higher than the rock; though rather the true sense is, they brought him up out of the cave in the rock.

Ver. 14. *And when he came unto Lehi*, etc.] The place which was afterwards so called, from what happened there at this time, and where the Philistines were spread, (~~0759~~ Judges 15:9) this, according to Bunting ^{f314}, was six miles from Etam:

the Philistines shouted against him: for joy that they had got him into their hands, and in the circumstances he was, being bound, so that they had nothing to fear from him:

and the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him: as it at times did, and had done before; the Targum is,

“the Spirit of might from the Lord,”

which gave him courage and resolution of mind, and great strength of body, even while he was speaking, as a token of the wonders God more than he had at other times:

and the cords that were upon his arms became as flax that was burnt with fire; as easily parted as the flax when fire takes it, which is consumed at once:

and his bonds loosed off from his hands; by which it appears that both arms and hands were bound with the cords; his arms were pinioned close to his body, as well as his hands were tied together; and these, as in the original, “melted away” ^{f315}, like wax before the fire, or snow before the

sun, so easily were these bands separated from him; this may be an emblem of Christ's loosing himself from the cords of death, (^{<412>}Acts 2:24).

Ver. 15. *And he found a new jawbone of an ass*, etc.] That is, the jawbone of an ass lately killed, which perhaps had some of the flesh upon it, the blood or purulent matter on it; for Jarchi says, he had read in the books of physicians, that the word here used signifies the sanies or purulent matter of a wound; however, it was moist, and fresh, and so tough and strong, and would bear to strike with, and give hard blows with, when an old jawbone would have been dry and brittle; and perhaps the asses of those countries were larger than ours, and so their jawbones bigger and stronger:

and put forth his hand and took it; it lay near him, being so disposed by the providence of God at the time and place where his cords were loosed from him, and he reached and took it up:

and slew one thousand men therewith, such was his great strength, that every blow he gave in all probability killed a man; there have been wonderful things done by mighty warriors, but none like this; they have by the use of warlike weapons destroyed many, as with the sword or spear, but not with such an instrument. One of David's worthies slew three hundred men at one time with his spear, (^{<3111>}1 Chronicles 11:11) and Scanderbeg with his sword slew great numbers of the Turks with his own hand at different times; what comes nearest to this is Shamgar's killing six hundred Philistines with an ox goad, (^{<0031>}Judges 3:31), this may be an emblem of the weak and contemptible means of the Gospel, the foolishness of preaching, by which Christ has conquered and subdued multitudes to himself.

Ver. 16. *And Samson said*, etc.] In a kind of triumphant song:

with the jawbone of an ass, heaps upon heaps; that is, with such an instrument he had slain heaps of men, who lay dead in heaps upon one another; in the words for an "ass", and for an "heap", is an elegant "paronomasia", not easy to be expressed in our language:

with the jaw of an ass have I slain a thousand men: this he said not in a proud and haughty manner, ascribing it to himself, as Josephus suggests ^{f316}, since he takes notice of the mean instrument he used; which showed that he was sensible it was not done by his own power, but by the power of God, which enabled him by such weak means to do such wonderful things.

Ver. 17. *And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking,* etc.] Of delivering out the above song, which very probably consisted of much more than what is here expressed:

that he cast away the jawbone out of his hand; which he held in his hand had wrought by him through the means of it, and so served to animate him to praise and thankfulness; but having no further use for it, he threw it away:

and called the place Ramathlehi; that is, the casting away the jawbone, so Kimchi; but Ben Gersom thinks it was an high place where it was thrown, and so signifies the elevation or lifting up of the “jawbone”, as the Septuagint version renders it.

Ver. 18. *And he was sore athirst,* etc.] Which Josephus^{f317} thinks came upon him as a rebuke unto him, for ascribing the victory he had obtained to his own strength, and not to the Lord, whereby he was shown his own weakness, and how easily his strength could be reduced; but for this there seems to be no foundation; it is not to wondered at, in a natural way, that he should be athirst after he had been bound with cords, after he had so exerted himself, and slain 1000 men with his own hand, and after he had celebrated this victory with a triumphant song; and it may also be observed, that it was so ordered in Providence, that he might in this be a type of the Messiah, who on the cross, as he was spoiling principalities and powers, and triumphing over them in it, said, “I thirst”, (~~Gen~~ John 19:28)

and called on the Lord, and said; in prayer to him:

thou hast given this great deliverance into the hand of thy servant; he owns the deliverance to be great, as indeed, it was, and that it was of the Lord, and he only his servant and instrument in it:

and now shall I die for thirst; when my life has been saved in so wonderful a manner, and so great a salvation has been wrought by my hands, as an instrument:

and fall into the hands of the uncircumcised? which would be matter of joy and triumph to them, and mar the glory of the deliverance wrought.

Ver. 19. *And God clave an hollow place that was in the jaw, and there came water thereout,* etc.] A socket in which was fastened one of the teeth, and was in the form of a mortar; so Jarchi and Ben Melech, as the word for

an hollow place signifies; one of the grinders was knocked out, and so the place where it had been was left hollow, and out of that sprung a stream or flow of water; which was very wonderful, since out of such a place rather blood, or purulent matter, would naturally have issued; the Targum is,

“the Lord clave the rock which was in the jaw;”

which Kimchi interprets thus, the rock was under the jaw and the rock was made as a hollow place, and therefore they call it “mactes”, a mortar: the sense seems to be this, that the place on which Samson cast the jawbone was a rock, and there God clave an hollow place, out of which water sprung, and which perhaps was under the jawbone, and sprung under it, and through it; and so Josephus says ^{f318}, that God at his prayer brought a sweet and large fountain out of a certain rock; and the words of the text will bear to be rendered, “and God clave, an hollow place, which is in Lehi”; that is, in the place called Lehi, (^{<0715>}Judges 15:9,14) and not in the jawbone itself:

and when he had drank, his spirit came again, and he revived; his spirit was sunk and gone, as it were, but upon drinking a draught of this water he was refreshed and cheered, recovered his spirits, and became brisk and lively:

wherefore he called the name thereof Enhakkore; that is,

“the fountain of him that was calling;”

of Samson that called upon God in prayer, and was heard, in memory of which he gave it this name; so the Targum,

“therefore its name was called the fountain that was given through the prayer of Samson:”

which is in Lehi unto this day; or in the jawbone: not that the jawbone continued unto the time of the writer of this book, but the name of the place where this miracle was wrought, which was in Lehi, continued to be called Enhakkore unto that time, and it may be the fountain itself continued also; nay, Giycas ^{f319} says, who lived but about six hundred years ago, that the fountain continued unto his time, and was to be seen in the suburbs of Eleutheropolis, and was called the fountain of the jawbone.

Ver. 20. *And he judged Israel in the days of the Philistines twenty years.*]

While they had the power over the Israelites, who were not entirely

delivered out of their hands by Samson, he only began to deliver them, but did not completely do it; though he got many advantages over them, and wrought many salvations and deliverances, yet was not the author of perfect salvation, (see ~~07135~~Judges 13:5) however, he was a check upon the Philistines, and protected the Israelites from heavier oppressions, which otherwise they would have come under; and no doubt administered justice and judgment among them, and was an instrument of their reformation, and of preserving them from idolatry; for in such things the work of a judge chiefly lay: some from hence observe, that this shows the years of servitude and bondage are included in the years of the judges.

CHAPTER 16

INTRODUCTION TO JUDGES 16

In this chapter we have an account of Samson's too great familiarity with two harlots; by the one he was brought into great danger, and narrowly escaped, (^{<0710>}Judges 16:1-3), and by the other he was betrayed into the hands of the Philistines, having got the secret out of him wherein his great strength lay, (^{<0710>}Judges 16:4-20) who having him in their hands, put out his eyes, imprisoned him, and in their idol temple made sport of him, (^{<0712>}Judges 16:21-25), where praying for renewed strength from the Lord, he pulled down the temple, and destroyed multitudes with the loss of his own life, (^{<0713>}Judges 16:26-31).

Ver. 1. *Then went Samson to Gaza*, etc.] One of the five principalities of the Philistines, which was ten miles from Ashkelon, as Sandys^{f320} says; who also describes^{f321} it as standing upon an hill environed with valleys, and these again well nigh enclosed with hills, most of them planted with all sorts of delicate fruits; and, according to Bunting^{f322}, forty two miles from Ramathlehi, the place where we last hear of him, (see Gill on "Amos 1:6") (see Gill on "^{<300>}Zephaniah 2:4") what he went hither for is not easy to say; it showed great boldness and courage, after he had made such a slaughter of the Philistines, to venture himself in one of their strongest cities, where he must expect to be exposed to danger; though it is highly probable this was a long time after his last encounter with them:

and saw there an harlot, and went in unto her; the Targum renders it an innkeeper, one that kept a victualling house; so Kimchi, Ben Gersom, and Ben Melech interpret it; into whose house he went for entertainment and lodging, and very probably in the dusk of the evening; and the woman that kept this house might herself be an harlot, or, however, Samson saw one in her house, with whom he was captivated, and went in unto her, or had criminal conversation with her; it seems as if he did not turn in thither with any such wicked design, but on sight of the person was ensnared to commit lewdness with her; and, as Lyra says, there were many hostesses in some places, and so here, who too easily prostituted themselves to their guests.

Ver. 2. *And it was told the Gazites, etc.*] The inhabitants of Gaza, the principal ones of it, the magistrates of the city, either by some persons that saw him come in, who knew him, or by the harlot into whose company he fell, to whom he made himself known:

saying, Samson is come hither; the man so famous for his strength, and such an enemy to the Philistines; his name was well known for his great exploits, and rung throughout Palestine, and was a terror to the whole country:

and they compassed [him] in; not that they surrounded the house where he was, which perhaps they might not certainly know, but they secured all the avenues and gates of the city, made them fast, and placed guards there, that he might not escape their hands:

and laid wait for him all night in the gate; particularly at that gate, where, if he went out for his country, he must pass:

and were quiet all the night; did not attempt to disturb Samson, or seize on him, if they knew where he was; knowing his great strength, and what a tumult might be raised in the city, they said nothing of it to anybody that passed, what they were placed there for, lest it should come to his ears; they made as if they were deaf and dumb, as some interpret it, and heard and knew nothing:

saying, in the morning, when it is day, we shall kill him; when they should better know him, and make sure their blow at him, and do it suddenly, unawares to him, as he came to the gate, to pass through it.

Ver. 3. *And Samson lay till midnight, and arose at midnight, etc.*] Either not being able to lie any longer through the conviction of his conscience for his lewdness, or being warned by a dream, or having an impulse upon his spirit, which suggested to him that wait was laid for him, and the danger he was in; and coming to the gate of the city, which he found shut and fast barred and bolted, and the watch perhaps asleep, not expecting his coming until daylight:

and took the doors of the gate of the city, and the two posts, and went away with them, bar and all; did not stand to break open the doors of the gate, but took the two side posts up, on which the folding doors of the gate were hung, out of the ground in which they were fastened, with the bar which went across the doors for the security of them:

and carried them up to the top of an hill that is before Hebron; if this hill was near Hebron, as the words thus read seem to intimate, he must carry the gates twenty miles upon his shoulders, for so far was Hebron from Gaza; so Josephus says it was over Hebron; but according to Adrichomius^{f323}, it was near Gaza, looking towards Hebron; and so Sandys says^{f324}, in the valley, on the east side of the city, are many straggling buildings, beyond which there is a hill more eminent than the rest, on the north side of the way that leads to Babylon, said to be that to which Samson carried the gates of the city. It is very probable, as some think, that it was between Gaza and Hebron, in sight of both cities, which may be meant by the phrase “before”, or “on the face of”; being so high might be seen as far as Hebron, as well as at Gaza. This was an emblem of Christ’s resurrection, of whom Samson was a type, who being encompassed in a sepulchre, and sealed and watched by soldiers, broke through the bars of death and the grave, and carried off the doors in triumph; and in a short time ascended to heaven, whereby he declared himself to be the Son of God with power. It was usual for doors and bars of gates to be carried in triumph, and laid up in temples^{f325}; and the Jews say these doors were not less than sixty cubits, and suppose Samson’s shoulders to be as broad^{f326}.

Ver. 4. *And it came to pass afterwards, that he loved a woman in the valley of Sorek*, etc.] Which, according to Adrichomius^{f327} was but half a mile from the brook Eshcol, from whence the spies brought a bunch of grapes, as a specimen of the fruit of the land of Canaan; and this valley of Sorek seems to have been famous for the best wine, and hither Samson retired for refreshment and pleasure; but, according to Jerom^{f328}, it was on the north of Eleutheropolis, where, he says, was shown a village in his time called Capharsorech, near the village Zorah, from whence Samson was; and Bunting^{f329} makes it to be twelve miles from Hebron, and twelve from Jerusalem; where he met with a woman he loved; whether she was an Israelite, or one of the daughters of the Philistines, they now being the rulers of Israel, is not said; most likely the latter, as say Ben Gersom and Abarbinel, since the lords of the Philistines were so intimate with her, and were entertained in her house, and she showed more respect to them than to Samson. The Jews say she became a proselyte, but if she did, there is very little evidence of her being a sincere one: some have thought, that the courtship to her was a lawful conjugal love; that falling in love with her, he courted and married her; but this is not very likely, since no mention is made of his marriage to her, nor did he take her home, but dwelt in her

house: it rather seems to be an impure and unlawful love he had to her, and that she was an harlot, as Josephus^{f330}; and all her conduct and behaviour confirm the same:

whose name was Delilah; the Jews say^{f331} she was so called because she weakened the heart and spirit of Samson, and weakened his strength, and weakened his works; and therefore, if this had not been her name, they say it was one very proper for her.

Ver. 5. *And the lords of the Philistines came up unto her*, etc.] Having heard that Samson kept company with her, she being a noted strumpet, like Lais among the Grecians. These were in number five, as appears from (~~400B~~Judges 3:3) and had under them five principalities, into which Palestine was divided; and these, if not united in their government, which possibly might be the case at this time, yet were united against their common enemy Samson; and being great personages, it is thought by some they came not themselves to this harlot's house, but sent a deputation of five persons in their names, though the text is very express here and after: they are said to come up to her, because their country lay on the shore of the sea, and lower than Judea:

and said unto her, entice him; persuade him with soothing and flattering words; take an opportunity when in an amorous mood to improve her interest in his affections:

and see wherein his great strength lieth; for it might not appear by the size of his body, or from his natural constitution, and in the common actions of life, but only at certain times, and as it should seem when he pleased; and he might have been heard to say that it was a secret he kept to himself, and no man knew it; or they might suspect something of magic in the case, that he carried something about with him, which, if it could be gotten from him, would deprive him of his strength:

and by what means we may prevail against him, that we may bind him to afflict him; to humble him, bring him low, and reduce him to the common condition of men; they did not propose to kill him, which they might think she would not agree to, and so reject their proposal at once, but at most to distress him, and to chastise him with mockings and scourgings, bonds and imprisonment, for the mischief he had indeed done them, and prevent him from doing more:

and we will give thee, everyone of us, eleven hundred [pieces] of silver or shekels; it may seem strange that they should promise each 1100: some think their principalities offered each 1000 shekels, and the princes themselves one hundred; but Abarbinel supposes that this was, on some account or another, in those times an usual sum or computation, since the same is mentioned in the following chapter; though it may be observed that these five several sums put together make a round number, 5500 pieces of silver; which, taking them to be shekels, according to Waserus^{f332}: they amounted to 1375 rix dollars, and of Helvetian money 3666 pounds, and a little more, and of our money near seven hundred pounds sterling; a considerable bribe, and very tempting to a person of such a character, and which she readily embraced, as appears by what follows.

Ver. 6. *And Delilah said to Samson*, etc.] At a proper opportunity, when in his hands and caresses, as Josephus relates^{f333}, and introduced it in an artful manner, admiring his strange exploits, and wondering how he could perform them:

tell me, I pray thee, wherein thy great strength lieth; which she proposed seemingly out of mere curiosity, and as it would be a proof of his affection to her, to impart the secret to her:

and wherewith thou mightest be bound to afflict thee; not that she suggested to him that she was desirous to have him afflicted, or to try the experiment herself in order to afflict him, but to know by what means, if he was bound, it would be afflicting to him so that he could not relieve himself; she knew he might be bound, if he would admit of it, as he had been, but she wanted to know how he might be bound, so as to be held, and could not loose himself.

Ver. 7. *And Samson said unto her*, etc.] In answer to her pressing solicitations:

if they bind me with seven green withs that were never dried; the word is sometimes used for nerves, and cords or ropes; but neither of these can be here meant, since these, if moistened or made wet, are the less fit to bind with, and the drier the better; but rods or branches of trees just cut off, such as faggots are bound up with, or green osiers, which are easily bent and twisted, and may bind with; Josephus^{f334} calls them vine branches:

then shall I be weak, and be as another man; which cannot well be excused from a lie; for Samson knew full well that being bound would not

weaken his strength; but as he had fallen into one sin, it is no wonder he was drawn into another: unless this can be understood, as it is by some, as jesting with her; however, it shows that he was “*compos mentis*”, as Josephus ^{f335} observes, and was upon his guard with respect to the secret of his strength.

Ver. 8. *Then the lords of the Philistines brought up to her*, etc.] To the chamber where she was with Samson, she having acquainted them with what he had told her:

seven green withs, which had not been dried; just such as he had described and directed to:

and she bound him with them; taking an opportunity, very likely, when he was asleep, and drunk too, according to Josephus ^{f336}: the Philistines did not attempt to bind him, supposing that he would not admit them to do it, if aware of them; and they might fear, if asleep, he might awake before they could do it, and fall upon them and destroy them; but as for Delilah, if she had been found at it, she could have excused it as a piece of curiosity, being willing to try whether he told her truth or not.

Ver. 9. *Now there were men lying in wait*, etc.] Very likely some of the servants of the lords of the Philistines, who were placed privately on purpose, that when an opportunity offered, they might rush out, and fall upon Samson; Josephus ^{f337} calls them soldiers:

abiding with her in the chamber; in a private part of it, or otherwise they could not be said to lie in wait; in it may mean near it; perhaps it was in the next apartment to hers, where they were set:

and she said unto him, the Philistines be upon thee, Samson; are just ready to fall upon thee, and seize thee; this she said to arouse him, and try whether he could break the withs or not, before she called in the men that lay in wait, and whether he had told her the truth or not:

and he brake the withs as a thread of tow is broken when it toucheth the fire; or “smells it” ^{f338}; as soon as it comes near it; a thread of tow or linen catches the fire presently, it being so weak that it cannot stand before the least force of it; so easily did the withs give way, and were broken, when Samson did but just stir himself, and move his arms:

so his strength was not known; by Delilah, nor by the Philistines; that is, where it lay, so as that it might be weakened; for otherwise it was known by the easy breaking of the withs.

Ver. 10. *And Delilah said unto Samson*, etc.] Not on the same day, but some time after, as Kimchi observes, when an opportunity offered, and he was in like circumstances as before; for had she immediately attacked him, it might have created some suspicion in him of a design against him:

behold, thou hast mocked me, and told me lies; deceived her with lies, by telling her the other day that if he was bound with green withs, he should become as weak as other men; which she, out of curiosity as she might pretend, had tried, and had found to be false; and which, she might add, was an argument of want of true love to her, to mock her in such a manner:

now tell me, I pray thee, wherewith thou mightest be bound; so as to be held.

Ver. 11. *And he said unto her*, etc.] Abarbinel presents Samson replying to her, that he had told her the truth at first, only forgot one circumstance, that the “cords”, for so he takes the word for “withs” to signify, should be “new”, such as were never used, as follows:

if they bind me fast with new ropes, that never were occupied; the word signifies thick ropes, which, according to Kimchi and Ben Melech, were trebled, or made of three cords twisted together, and those such as were just made, and had never been put to any use, and so strong and firm:

then shall I be weak, and be as another man; (see ^{וְהָיָה}Judges 16:7).

Ver. 12. *Delilah therefore took new ropes, and bound him therewith*, etc.] Tried this experiment with him, according to his directions, being very desirous of getting the sum of money offered her:

and said unto him, the Philistines be upon thee, Samson: using the same words, and with the same view as she had done before, (^{וְהָיָה}Judges 16:9)

(and there were liers in wait abiding the chamber); as before, ready upon occasion to rush in upon him, as soon as any notice was given them:

and he brake them from off his arms like a thread; as easily as a thread of linen can be snapped asunder.

Ver. 13. *And Delilah said unto Samson*, etc.] At another time, when she thought it most proper to upbraid him with his deception of her:

hitherto thou hast mocked me, and told me lies; both the times that she had solicited him to impart the secret of his strength to her:

tell me wherewith thou mightest be bound; tell me the real truth, and deceive me no more:

and he said unto her, if thou weavest the seven locks of my head with the web; it seems that Samson's hair was parted into seven locks, which no doubt hung down very long; and now he tells her, that if these were interwoven with the warp which was upon the beam in a loom near by; perhaps in the same room, where Delilah used to weave, as was the custom of those times, and in various nations^{f339}; his strength would be weakened; for Braunius^{f340} is mistaken in supposing this to be the beam about which the web was rolled, as he is also in the pin next mentioned, which he takes to be the "spatha", or lathe, with which the threads are knocked together.

Ver. 14. *And she fastened it with the pin*, etc.] That is, after she had interwoven the locks of his hair into the warp, she fastened the beam on which it was with the pin, that it might not roll back; or else her machine or loom to the ground, that it might stand more firmly; or the web into which the hair was woven, with the hair itself; which of them is right, it is difficult to say: but if the addition of the Septuagint version can be admitted as genuine, which supplies some things which seem to be wanting, and which best agrees with what follows, the whole will be plain and easy, and which after the preceding verse runs thus;

“and fastenest “them” with a pin to the wall, then shall I be weak as another man; and it came to pass when he slept, and Delilah took seven locks of his head, and wove “them” in the web, and fastened them with a pin to the wall;”

and then it follows as here:

and said unto him, the Philistines be upon thee, Samson; as she had twice before:

and he awaked out of his sleep; in which he was during her weaving his locks into the web; and this makes it probable that he was in the same

circumstances when she bound him both with withs and ropes, though it is not expressed:

and went away with the pin of the beam, and with the web; carried off not the pin of the beam only, but the beam itself, and the warp on it, and the whole web into which his hair was woven. The Septuagint version is, he took the pin of the web out of the wall; and the Vulgate Latin, the pin with the hairs and web.

Ver. 15. *And she said unto him, how canst thou say, I love thee, when thine heart is not with me?* etc.] She took an opportunity, when he was caressing her, to upbraid him with dissembled love, and a false heart: thou hast mocked me these three times; she had urged him to tell her where his strength lay, and by what it might be weakened, first pretending it might be done by binding him with green withs, and then with new ropes, and a third time by weaving his locks into the web:

and hast not told me wherein thy great strength lieth; the thing so frequently and so importunately requested.

Ver. 16. *And it came to pass, when she pressed him daily with her words, and urged him,* etc.] Lay at him day after day to communicate the secret to him, gave him no rest, but was incessant in her applications to him:

so that his soul was vexed unto death: could hardly bear to live, but wished to die, being in the utmost perplexity what to do between two different passions, love and fear; on the one hand chained by his lust to this harlot, that was continually teasing him, and whom he had not an heart to leave, or otherwise that would have cleared him of his difficulties; and on the other hand, should he disclose the secret, he feared, and was in danger of losing his strength, in which his glory lay: or

“his soul was shortened unto death”^{f341};

it was the means of shortening his days, and hastening his death. Abarbanel thinks that Samson was sensible of this, that his days were short, and the time of his death at hand; which made him the more willing to impart the secret. This may put in mind of the story of Milo, a man famous for his great strength, said to carry an ox upon his shoulders a furlong without breathing; of whom it is reported, that none of his adversaries could deliver themselves out of his hands, but his whore could, often contending with him; hence it is observed of him, that he was strong in body, but not of a

manly soul ^{f342}; and there are many other things said ^{f343} of him concerning his great strength, which seem to be taken from this history of Samson.

Ver. 17. *That he told her all his heart*, etc.] All that was in his heart concerning this affair, all that he knew relating to it; he had told her something before, or at least what came nearer to the truth of the matter, when he directed her to the weaving of his locks into the web; but now he told her all, which is as follows:

and said unto her, there hath not come a razor upon mine head; his head had never been shaved since he was born; which was the order of the angel that foretold his birth, and it had been carefully observed to that time:

for I have been a Nazarite unto God from my mother's womb; one condition of which, or what was enjoined a Nazarite, was, that he should not be shaved, and which had been religiously observed in Samson; and whereas abstinence from wine and strong drink was another part of the law of Nazariteship, or what such persons were obliged unto, what Josephus says concerning Samson being drunk in the above cases could not be true; since his Nazariteship would have been made void by it, and so have affected his strength: but it must be owned that there were other things Nazarites were obliged to, which were dispensed with, as has been observed in the case of Samson, a perpetual Nazarite; and therefore it is probable, that the principal thing he was to regard, and upon which his strength was continued, was not shaving his head:

if I be shaven, then my strength will go from me, and I shall become weak, and be like any other man; in which he says more than he ever did before, namely, that his strength should go from him; for though that did not arise from his hair, yet the keeping on of that was the condition of his retaining it.

Ver. 18. *And when Delilah saw that he had told her all his heart*, etc.] Which she perceived by his countenance, and the serious manner in which he expressed himself; and Abarbinel conjectures that he might swear to her that what he said was truth; and who observes from their Rabbins, as does also Kimchi, that she concluded he had told her the truth, by his making mention of the name of God, saying he was a Nazarite unto God, whose name she knew he would not take in vain; and with the account he gave agreed the long hair he wore:

she sent and called for the lords of the Philistines, saying, come up this once; for it seems as they were returned home, finding that she could do nothing with him, and was not able to get the secret out of him; but now, believing she had it, sends to them, and entreats them to come once more, being very desirous of having the money they had offered her:

for he hath showed me all his heart; there is a double reading of this clause; the Keri or marginal reading, which our version follows, is, “hath showed me”, as being the words of Delilah to the lords of the Philistines; but the Cetib or textual reading is, “he hath showed her”, as being the words of the messengers to them:

then the lords of the Philistines came up unto her; that is, from their own country; for it can hardly be understood of their coming up into her room, or chamber; and especially since it follows,

and brought money in their hand; 1100 shekels of silver apiece, the sum they first proposed to give her; and now being pretty well assured of success, brought it along with them to pay her for the service done.

Ver. 19. *And she made him sleep upon her knees*, etc.] Giving him, as some think, a sleepy potion; or however encouraged him to take a nap upon her knees, and by her fondness lulled him to sleep:

and she called for a man; a barber; in former times to shave was the work of a servant^{f344} and sometimes of a woman; she gave orders for one to be sent for; for Jarchi calls him a messenger of the lords of the Philistines:

and she caused him to shave off the seven locks of his head; this shows that they were not wove into one another, and made but one lock, as some interpret what she was before directed to do:

and she began to afflict him; as his hair was shaving off; though he was asleep, yet he discovered some uneasiness, the effects of it began to appear: though the word “began” here may be redundant, as in (~~Q251~~ Numbers 25:1 ~~Q234~~ Judges 20:40) and then the meaning is, that she afflicted him, or again afflicted him; for she had afflicted him, or at least attempted it, three times before, and therefore did not begin now; this Hebraism is used in (~~Q100~~ Mark 4:1) and frequently in Jewish writings^{f345}:

and his strength went from him; sensibly and gradually; though some understand it of her shaking him in a violent manner to awake him, and

shrieking and crying out terribly to frighten him, with her old cry of the Philistines being on him, and of her binding him, though not expressed; whereby she perceived his strength was gone, and he could not loose himself.

Ver. 20. *And she said, the Philistines be upon thee, Samson,* etc.] In like manner as she had before, that she might have full proof that the case was really such, that his strength was gone from him:

and he awoke out of his sleep; upon the cry she made: and said; within himself, purposing and determining in his own mind:

I will go out as at other times before; as he had done at the three former times, and did not meet with any Philistines to fall upon him, and so concluded it would be the case now, and he, if he did, should be able to defend himself against them:

and shake myself; that he might be thoroughly awake, and be on his guard and defence:

and he wist not that the Lord was departed from him; might have forgot what he had told Delilah of, and knew not what had been done to him, that his hair was shaved off; or if he did, was not sensible that the Lord had removed from him; but might hope that he would renew his strength, when he should stand in need of it; but he soon found his mistake; he was quickly taken by the Philistines, and ill used, and in a little time lost his life. And from hence it is thought sprung the story of Nisus, king of the Megarenses, who is supposed to reign about this time; of whom it is reported^{f346}, that the hair of his head was of a purple colour, and was told by the oracle, that so long as that was kept on he should be safe, but if it was shaved off he should die; and so it was, that when the Cretians besieged him, his daughter falling in love with Minos, the king of the Cretians cut off her father's hair, and so both he and his country were delivered into the hands of the enemy.

Ver. 21. *But the Philistines took him,* etc.] Being assured by Delilah that his strength was gone from him, of which perhaps she had made trial by binding him, and found he could not free himself from the bonds till she loosed them; or otherwise they would have been afraid to have ventured to lay hold upon him;

and put out his eyes; that should his strength return to him, he might not be able to see where and whom to strike, and so be incapable of doing much mischief any more; the word signifies, they “dug” or “bored them”^{f347} out; they plucked or cut out his eye balls, so that it was impossible his sight should ever be recovered; according to the Arabic version, they blinded him by putting fire to his eyes; the Jews observe, that this was done in just retaliation, measure for measure; Samson, they say^{f348}, went after his eyes; that is, by taking one harlot after another; therefore the Philistines put out his eyes:

and brought him down to Gaza: which lay on the sea coast, and therefore they are said to bring him down to it; here he had been before of his own will, now against it; for in one instance he had acted to his own shame, by going in to an harlot; and in another, to the shame and disgrace of the city, and the inhabitants of it, by carrying off their city gates; through which they now brought him in triumph, in order to repair the dishonour done them: though, perhaps, the true reason of carrying him thither was, that he might be at the greater distance from the Israelites, should they think of rescuing him out of their hands; and especially because it was a very strong fortified city, it had its name from strength; hence Mela^{f349} calls it “Munita admodum Gaza”, and says, that when Cambyses made war in Egypt, he carried his wealth and money to this place:

and bound him with fetters of brass; the Targum calls them chains of brass, and the word being of the dual number, it is probable there were two of them, with which he was bound the greater security:

and he did grind in the prison house; the motion of mills by water or wind was as yet not invented, but it was usual, as it is still in the eastern countries, to grind with hand mills, at which one or more worked; or with mills moved around by beasts or slaves, and was a work prisoners were employed in, (^{<21105>}Exodus 11:5 12:29 ^{<23700>}Isaiah 47:1,2) and Samson being a strong man, they might expect much service from him this way. The Talmudists^{f350} understand this in a criminal sense, as they do (^{<18310>}Job 31:10) but this is justly rejected by Kimchi.

Ver. 22. *Howbeit, the hair of his head began to grow again after he was shaven.*] It began to grow immediately no doubt, as it naturally would do; but it is highly probable it grew in an extraordinary manner, and in a short time became as when it was shaved^{f351}, as it may be rendered, and upon which his strength was renewed; not that his strength naturally lay in his

hair, and so naturally increased as that grew; but he being made sensible of his sin, and repenting of it, renewed his Nazariteship, of which letting his hair grow was a token; and it pleased God, who accepted of his repentance as genuine, of his own good will and pleasure to renew his strength; particularly upon his prayer to him, after related.

Ver. 23. *Then the lords of the Philistines gathered them together,* etc.]

The five lords, with their friends, not directly upon Samson's being taken and committed to prison, but some time after; perhaps some months:

for to get a great sacrifice to Dagon their god; in later times their god was called Marnas ^{f352}, which signifies the lord of men, but now Dagon; who also had a temple at Ashdod, another of the five principalities of the Philistines, (^(HHD)1 Samuel 5:2) and seems to have been at this time their common and chief deity: according to Jarchi in the place referred to, it was in the form of a fish, for "dag" in Hebrew signifies a fish; and Kimchi on the same place says, that from its navel upwards it was in the form of a man, and from thence downwards in the form of a fish ^{f353}; and Diodorus Siculus ^{f354} relates that Derceto, a goddess of Ashkelon, another of the five principalities of Palestine, its face was human, and the other part of its body resembled a fish; and the same Lucian says of the Syrian goddess; and Cicero ^{f355} testifies, that the Syrians worshipped a fish, and Porphyry ^{f356} says they will not eat any; and Gaza being a maritime city, a sea port, this might be their sea god in this form: but Ben Gersom in the above place says, it was in the form of a man; and Sanchoniatho ^{f357} making mention of Dagan, a brother of Saturn, Philo Byblius, who translated his history into Greek, interprets it by Siton, which signifies corn, deriving it from Dagan, which so signifies; as if this deity presided over corn, as Ceres in other nations, and Jupiter Frumentarius, or Aratrius; yea, he says he invented corn and the plough; however this be, the Philistine princes met together to sacrifice to him, not a common offering, but a great sacrifice. It is very probable that this was a public festival of the Philistines, as Josephus ^{f358} says, an anniversary one; and perhaps was held in a more grand manner on the present occasion, since it is added,

and to rejoice: for they said, our god hath delivered Samson our enemy into our hands; for though Samson's harlot had done it, and they had paid her for it, yet they attribute it to their god, such was their blindness and stupidity; and yet this may shame us believers in the true God, who are so backward to ascribe to him the great things he does for us, when such

Heathens were so forward to give glory to their false deities, without any foundation for it.

Ver. 24. *And when the people saw him*, etc.] In the condition he was, blinded and fettered, of whom and of his great exploits they had heard so much: they praised their god; as Belshazzar did his, (²⁷⁸⁴Daniel 5:4) in hymns and songs composed for them, the substance of which was as follows:

for they said, our god hath delivered into our hands our enemy, and the destroyer of our country; as he had been, by tying firebrands to the tails of three hundred foxes, and letting them go into their cornfields, vineyards, and oliveyards:

which slew many of us; thirty men at Ashkelon, more at Timnath, and 1000 with the jawbone of an ass at Lehi.

Ver. 25. *And it came to pass when their hearts were merry*, etc.] With wine, for which Gaza is famous in many writers^{f359}; with eating and drinking, dancing, and music; for it was usual for the Heathens to feast in their temples, and especially no doubt they would on such an occasion as this:

and they said, call for Samson, that he may make us sport; by which it seems that what is before said, “when the people saw him”, (⁴⁷⁶²⁴Judges 16:24) is said by anticipation; for as yet he was not in the temple, but in the prison; and therefore a motion was made by some of the great personages, that he might be fetched from thence, and they might have some diversion with him:

and they called for Samson out of the prison house; sent some messengers to fetch him from thence:

and he made them sport; not actively, but passively; it cannot well be thought, that a man of so great a spirit as Samson was, and in such circumstances as he now was, would ever, either by words or gestures, do anything on purpose to divert his enemies, and make them laugh; but he was the object of their sport and scorn, and he bore it patiently, their cruel mockings, buffetings, and spittings; in which he was a type of Christ. It was a diversion to them to see him in his rattling chains, groping, and blundering along from post to pillar, one perhaps giving him a box of the ear, or a slap of the face, another plucking him by his nose or beard, and

another spitting in his face, and others taunting at him, and reproaching him:

and they set him between the pillars; that he might be the better seen, and in which there was the direction of Providence to bring about what follows.

Ver. 26. *And Samson said to the lad that held him by the hand*, etc.] And led him about; as nothing is more common now than for a blind man to be led by a boy:

suffer me that I may feel the pillars whereupon the house standeth; he might by information know in what manner the house was built, that it was supported by pillars, if he had never been in it before when he had his sight; and he might understand, by some means or another, that he was near these pillars, and placed between them, though being blind, did not know which way to direct his hands towards them to feel them, as he proposed to do, and therefore desired the lad that led him to guide his hands towards them:

that I may lean upon them; being, as he might at least pretend to be, weary, as Josephus says ^{f360}; either by grinding at the mill, or through being led to and fro in this house, that all might see him, and cast their flouts and jeers at him,

Ver. 27. *Now the house was full of men and women*, etc.] Within it, who were gathered together from all parts of the city, and perhaps from other places on this occasion:

and all the lords of the Philistines were there; their five lords, the lords of Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Gath, and Ekron:

and there were upon the roof three thousand men and women; it being a flat roof, as the houses in Canaan and Phoenicia, and the places adjacent, were; (see ^{v1218}Deuteronomy 22:8) and there might be some openings or windows in several parts of it, through which the people might see who were below them, and were within the house, and what was doing there, and particularly could have a sight of Samson through them as follows:

that beheld while Samson made sport; or was made a sport of; while he was buffeted and used in a ludicrous manner.

Ver. 28. *And Samson called unto the Lord*, etc.] In an ejaculatory manner, by mental prayer; though he might possibly express it aloud, without being heard and observed by the people, amidst their noise and mirth; and if it

was heard, it might only furnish out more ridicule and contempt; and be it as it may, the prayer must have been preserved by the Lord himself, and given by inspiration to the writer of this book; since there were none that heard it that lived to relate it to others, no, not Samson himself:

and said, O Lord God, remember me, I pray thee; the office that I bear as judge of Israel, the reproaches cast upon me, and which fall upon thy people, cause, and interest; remember thy lovingkindness, formerly expressed to me, the gracious promises made unto me, and the help and assistance I have had from thee:

and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God; and it was a prayer of faith, as appears by its being heard, accepted, and answered; and shows that his strength did not come with his hair, but was owing to the immediate communication of it from the Lord:

that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes; once for all, and no more; take his last and final vengeance on them; or one vengeance for his two eyes, or vengeance for one of his two eyes; either senses will bear. This was said not from a private spirit of revenge for personal injuries; but as a civil magistrate, a judge of Israel, whose office it was to be a revenger, to execute wrath; and though he mentions only his own eyes, yet he suffered the loss of them, and every other indignity and injury, as a public person, the common enemy of the Philistines, and destroyer of their country, and protector of Israel; and in this character he now acted.

Ver. 29. *And Samson took hold of the two middle pillars, upon which the house stood, and on which it was borne up,* etc.] Some have objected, that a building so large and so capacious as this was could not be supported by two pillars, and those placed in the middle, and so near to each other that Samson could lay hold on them; on which it has been observed, that the architecture of the ancients is little known to us, and they might have curious and ingenious arts of building, now lost; and several authors have taken notice of two Roman theatres built by Curio, that held abundantly more people than this house did, which were supported only by a single pin or hinge, as Pliny^{f361} relates; and our Westminster hall, which was built by William Rufus, and is two hundred and seventy feet long, and seventy four broad^{f362}, and has a roof the largest in all Europe, is supported without any pillars at all; add to all which, that mention being made of the two middle pillars of this house, supposes that there were others in other parts of it,

though these were the main and principal ones, on which the weight of the building chiefly lay. Kimchi observes, that the word signifies to incline or bend, as if Samson made the pillars to bend or bow; but it is a better sense that he laid hold of them:

of the one with his right hand, and the other with his left; and thus he stood with his arms stretched out, as Jesus on the cross, of whom he was a type, as often observed.

Ver. 30. *And Samson said, let me die with the Philistines,* etc.] He sought their death, and was content to lose his own life to be avenged on them; in neither of which did he act a criminal part as a judge of Israel; and from a public spirit he might desire the death of their enemies, and seek to effect it by all means possible; and was the more justifiable at this time, as they were not only insulting him, the representative of his nation, but were affronting the most high God with their idolatries, being now in the temple of their idol, and sacrificing to him. As for his own death, he did not simply desire that, only as he could not be avenged on his enemies without it, he was willing to submit to it; nor did he lay hands on himself, and cannot be charged with being guilty of suicide, and did no other than what a man of valour and public spirit will do; who for the good of his country will not only expose his life to danger in common, but for the sake of that will engage in a desperate enterprise, when he knows most certainly that he must perish in it. Besides, Samson said this, and did what he did under the direction and influence of the Spirit of God; and herein was a type of Christ, who freely laid down his life for his people, that he might destroy his and their enemies:

and he bowed himself with all his might, having fresh strength, and a large measure of it given him at this instant, which he had faith in, and therefore made the attempt, and for which he is reckoned among the heroes for faith in (⁸¹¹²Hebrews 11:32)

and the house fell upon the lords, and upon all the people that were therein; who were all killed, and Samson himself; an emblem this of the destruction of Satan, and his principalities and powers, by the death of Christ:

so the dead which he slew at his death were more than they which he slew in his life; for besides the lords, and they that were in the house, there were 3000 men and women on the roof, which fell in, and lost their lives also, so

that it is very likely there were at least 6000 or 7000 slain; Philo Byblius says 40,000, which is not probable; whereas in his life we only read of 1000 slain by him with the jawbone, besides thirty men at Ashkelon, and the slaughter made when he smote hip and thigh, the number of which is not known. As this house pulled down by Samson is generally thought to be the temple of Dagon, a traveller ^{f363} in those parts tells us, that there is now extant the temple of Dagon in half demolished, and the pillars of it are yet to be seen; but he doubtless mistakes an edifice of a later construction for it: and another traveller ^{f364} of our own country says, on the northeast corner and summit of the hill (on which the city is built) are the ruins of huge arches sunk low in the earth, and other foundations of a stately building; the Jews, adds he, do fable this place to have been the theatre of Samson pulled down on the heads of the Philistines; but he takes it to be the ruins of a later building; (see Gill on “~~OUR~~ 1 Samuel 5:2”).

Ver. 31. *Then his brethren, and all the house of his father, came down,* etc.] To Gaza, having heard of what had befallen him there. This must be understood of his kindred and near relations, those of his father’s family; though it is not unlikely that he had brethren in a proper sense, since though his mother was barren before his birth, yet afterwards might have many children, as Hannah had, whose case was similar to her’s:

and took him and brought him up; took his body out of the ruins of the house, and brought him up on a bier, or some proper carriage, to his own country; and perhaps in great funeral pomp, as a judge of Israel; nor need it be wondered at that the Philistines should admit of it, it being usual in all ages, and among all people, to allow even an enemy to bury their dead; besides Samson’s friends had done them no injury, only Samson himself, and the Israelites in general were quiet and peaceable under their government; add to this, they were now in distress themselves for their own dead, and might be in some fear of the Israelites falling upon them, and attempting to deliver themselves out of their hands, since their five lords were dead, and no doubt many more of their principal men with them; so that they might judge this was not a proper time to refuse such a favour, lest it should occasion a quarrel, which they were not in a condition to engage in; and had Israel taken this opportunity, in all likelihood they might have freed themselves from them:

and buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol, in the burying place of Manoah his father; the former of these seems to have been his native

place, and the other was near it; and between these the Spirit of the Lord first began to move him, and here his father's sepulchre was, in which he was laid; (see ^{<0711D>}Judges 13:2,25) and he judged Israel twenty years; by distressing and weakening their enemies; and though he did not complete their deliverance out of their hands, yet no doubt their oppressions were fewer, and their burdens easier, on his account; the time of his judging Israel is observed before, (^{<0715D>}Judges 15:20) and here repeated for the confirmation of it, and the rather because they were now ended by his death. Ben Gersom observes, that this is said to show that the time that Samson dwelt in the land of the Philistines is included in these twenty years; some would infer from hence that he judged Israel forty years, twenty in the days of the Philistines, as it is expressed in the above place; that is, when they had the dominion over Israel, and twenty more afterwards; but it does not appear that their dominion over Israel ceased in his time. In the Jerusalem Talmud ^{f365} it is also said that he judged Israel forty years, but for it there is no foundation; nor is the reason given of any force, that the Philistines feared him twenty years after his death; the other Talmud ^{f366} says he judged Israel twenty two years; but the word "two" is put into a parenthesis.

CHAPTER 17

INTRODUCTION TO JUDGES 17

This chapter relates the first rise of idolatry in Israel after the death of Joshua, which began in Mount Ephraim, occasioned by a sum of money stolen by a man from his mother, which being restored, part was converted to an idolatrous use; two images were made of it, (^{<0710>}Judges 17:1-5) and there being no king in Israel to take cognizance of it, the idolatry took place and continued, and afterwards spread, (^{<0710>}Judges 17:6), and this idolater not only made one of his sons a priest, but took a Levite for another, whom he hired by the year to serve him, (^{<0710>}Judges 17:7-13).

Ver. 1. *And there was a man of Mount Ephraim,* etc.] This and the four following chapters contain an history of facts, which were done not after the death of Samson, as some have thought, and as they may seem at first sight, by the order in which they are laid; but long before his time, and indeed before any of the judges in Israel, when there was no king, judge, or supreme governor among them, as appears from (^{<0710>}Judges 17:6 19:1 21:25) even between the death of Joshua and the elders, and the first judge of Israel, Othniel; and so Josephus^{f367} places them in his history, and the connection of them is with (^{<0710>}Judges 2:10) and so accounts for the rise of idolatry in Israel, how it got into the tribe of Dan, and spread itself over all the tribes of Israel, (^{<0710>}Judges 2:11) which brought on their servitude to Cushanrishathaim, in which time the Jewish chronology^{f368} places those events; but they were certainly before that, for the idolatry they fell into was the cause of it; yet could not be so early as the times of Joshua, and before his death; because in his days, and the days of the elders, Israel served the Lord; the reasons why they are postponed to the end of this book, and the account of them given here, are, according to Dr. Lightfoot^{f369}, that the reader observing how their state policy failed in the death of Samson, who was a Danite, might presently be showed God's justice in it, because their religion had first failed among the Danites; that when he observes that 1100 pieces of silver were given by every Philistine prince for the ruin of Samson, (^{<0710>}Judges 16:5) he might presently observe the 1100 pieces of silver that were given by Micah's mother for the making of an

idol, which ruined religion in Samson's tribe; that the story of Micah, of the hill country of Ephraim, the first destroyer of religion, and the story of Samuel, of the hill country of Ephraim, the first reformer of religion, might be laid together somewhat near. That the facts after related were so early done as has been observed, appears from the following things; the priest of the idol Micah made was a grandson of Moses, (^{<0703>}Judges 18:30), the Danites' seeking to enlarge their possessions, related in the same chapter, was most probably as soon as they were driven into the mountains by the Amorites, (^{<0703>}Judges 1:34). Mahanah Dan, from whence they marched, and had its name from their expedition, (^{<0718>}Judges 18:12) is mentioned before in the history of Samson, (^{<0713>}Judges 13:25 *marg) and therefore the expedition must be before his time. Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, was alive at the battle of Gibeah, (^{<0728>}Judges 20:28) and Deborah speaks of the 40,000 Israelites slain by Benjamin at it, (^{<0708>}Judges 5:8). This man with whom the idolatry began was of the tribe of Ephraim, and dwelt in the mountainous part of it:

whose name was Micah; in the original it is Micajehu, with part of the name Jehovah affixed to it, as Dr. Lightfoot ^{f370} remarks, till he set up his image, and thenceforward was called Micah; but, according to Abarbinel, the former was his name while he was a child, and in his youth, and with his mother, being a diminutive term, and when he became a man he was called Micah, (^{<0717>}Judges 17:5).

Ver. 2. *And he said unto his mother*, etc.] Who seems to have been a widow, and an ancient woman since Micah had sons, and one of them at age to become a priest:

the eleven hundred shekels of silver that were taken from thee: which were taken away by stealth from her, though it may be rendered "taken to thee" ^{f371}; which she had taken to herself out of the rest of her substance, and had separated and devoted it to religious uses; but Jarchi and Kimchi interpret it as we do, and which seems to be the best sense; of the value of this sum, (see Gill on "^{<0716>}Judges 16:5") and because the like sum is there offered, and was given to Delilah, hence some have thought, as Jarchi relates, that this woman was Delilah; but, as he observes, it is a mistake; for this woman lived long before the times of Samson and Delilah:

about which thou cursedst; which when she perceived was stolen from her, she fell into a passion, and cursed and swore, cursed the thief that took it, whether of her own family or another; or adjured her son, that if he knew

anything of it, that he would declare it, suspecting him of the robbery; some think this refers to the oath she had made, that she would devote the silver to a religious use:

and spakest of also in mine ears; of the sum how much it was, and of the use she had designed it for; or rather the curse was delivered in his hearing, and cut him to the heart, and wrought that conviction in him, that he could not retain the money any longer, not being able to bear his mother's curse; though Abarbinel connects this with the following clause, "behold, the silver is with me"; as if the sense was, that she spake in his ears, and charged him with the theft to his face; saying, verily the silver is with thee, thou hast certainly taken it; upon which he confessed it, "I took it"; but the former sense seems best, that not being willing to lie under his mother's curse, he owned that the money was in his hands, and he had taken it from her:

and his mother said, blessed be thou of the Lord, my son; she reversed the curse, and pronounced a blessing on him, or wished one to him, and that without reproving him for his sin, rejoicing to hear of her money again.

Ver. 3. *And when he had restored the eleven hundred shekels of silver to his mother*, etc.] The whole sum, having embezzled none of it:

his mother said, I had wholly dedicated the silver unto the Lord from my hand, for my son to make a graven image and a molten image; this she had done either before it was stolen, and it troubled her the more, and caused her the rather to curse the man that had taken it; or after it was stolen, that if it should be recovered again she would appropriate it to such an use; so Abarbinel; and by the Lord, or Jehovah, she doubtless meant the true God; for she had no intention to forsake him, but to worship him in and by these images, and which she designed for the use of her son and his family, that they might not go so far as Shiloh to worship at the tabernacle there:

therefore I will restore it unto thee; for that use, and so gave him the money again, to be laid out in images, or to make images of it.

Ver. 4. *Yet he restored the money unto his mother*, etc.] Gave it to her a second tithe, not as disapproving her idolatrous intention, as the sequel shows, but being desirous to be entirely free of it, and not have his mind disturbed with it as it had been, and that she might do with it as she thought fit:

and his mother took two hundred shekels of silver, and gave them to the founder, who made thereof a graven image, and a molten image; the other nine hundred pieces she kept to herself, repenting of her vow, and being unwilling to part with so much money for such an use; or else they were laid out in an ephod, and teraphim, and what else were thought necessary for the idolatrous worship they were about to set up; though Kimchi is of opinion, that the two hundred shekels were what she gave the founder for making the images, and of the nine hundred the images were made; and indeed the images must be very small ones, if made out of two hundred shekels of silver only; some have thought there was but one image, called both molten and graven; because after the silver was melted, and cast into a mould, it was fashioned with a graving tool, as the golden calf was by Aaron; but they are manifestly distinguished and represented as two, (^{<07817>}Judges 18:17,18) and they were in the house of Micah; in an apartment in his house, peculiar for them, as appears by the next verse; here they were put and continued.

Ver. 5. *And the man Micah had an house of gods,* etc.] Having two images in it, besides teraphim, which were a sort of idols; and the Targum is, an house of images, or idols; though it may be rendered “an house of God”; a temple, a place for religious worship:

and made an ephod; a priestly garment, a linen one very probably, not so rich an one with a breastplate to it as the high priest had, which was very costly. Ben Melech interprets it a girdle, and there was a curious girdle of the ephod, with which it was girt; this may be here put for the rest of the priestly garments which Micah provided:

and teraphim; which were a sort of household gods, like the Lares and Penates of the Romans, and by which consultations were made; (see Gill on “^{<288B>}Hosea 3:3-4”) (see Gill on “^{<380D>}Zechariah 10:2”) Micah proposed to have an oracle in his house, whereby he might consult the Lord about future things, and not be at the trouble of going to the tabernacle, and consult there by Urim and Thummim; and the same some take the teraphim to be:

and consecrated one of his sons, who became his priest; or, “filled the hand”^{f372} of one of them; that is, with offerings, as Ben Melech interprets it; in which way priests were initiated, and consecrated to their office; (see ^{<0284>}Exodus 28:41 29:9,24) or, as Kimchi expresses it, he offered his

offerings by the hand of one of his sons, and appointed him to be a priest, very probably his eldest son.

Ver. 6. *In those days there was no king in Israel*, etc.] That is, no supreme magistrate, judge, or ruler, Joshua being dead and Caleb also, and the elders contemporary with them; for what the Samaritan Chronicle says ^{f373} is without foundation, that Joshua a little before his death cast a lot in the presence of the congregation, to know who should govern after him, and the lot came to one Abel, of the tribe of Judah:

[but] every man did that which was right in his own eyes; which accounts for the idolatry of Micah, there being no supreme magistrate to take cognizance of his sin, and restrain him from it, or punish him for it according to the law of God.

Ver. 7. *And there was a young man out of Bethlehemjudah*, etc.] As there were two Bethlehems, one in the tribe of Zebulun, (¹⁶⁹⁵-Joshua 19:15) and another in the tribe of Judah, the place here designed, Judah is added to it, to distinguish it from the other:

of the family of Judah: which refers either to the young man, who was by his father's side a Levite, and by his mother's side, as Jarchi thinks, of the tribe of Judah, which seems very probable, though the genealogies of families were not reckoned from the mother; wherefore he might be so called because he had lived chiefly in the tribe of Judah, and particularly at Bethlehem; but Kimchi, and several other Jewish commentators, refer this to the city of Bethlehem, that was of the tribe of Judah, family being put for the tribe; or belonged to the children of Judah; though one would think there was no need to have added this, since it was fully expressed before by calling it Bethlehemjudah; the former sense therefore seems best:

who was a Levite; his father being, as before observed, of that tribe, though his mother might be of the tribe of Judah: and he sojourned there; that is, at Bethlehem; he was not a native, nor an inhabitant there, but a sojourner, it not being a Levitical city.

Ver. 8. *And the man departed out of the city from Bethlehemjudah*, to sojourn where he could find a place, etc.] Either being a man that had a rambling head, and of an unsettled mind, and could not easily fix any where; or else there being no supreme magistrate, to take care that the Levites had their due maintenance, for which there was a sufficient provision made by law; and the people being negligent of paying their

tithes, there being none to oblige them to it, and they indifferent to the true worship of God, and prone to idolatry; this man was obliged to go abroad, and seek for a livelihood where he could get it, and sojourn in a place the most convenient for him:

and he came to Mount Ephraim, to the house of Micah, as he journeyed: not with a design to stay there, but called by the way, having heard perhaps that Micah was both a wealthy and an hospitable man, and he also might have heard of the new form of worship he had set up in his house.

Ver. 9. *And Micah said unto him, whence comest thou?* etc.] For as he might ask for a meal, or for a night's lodging, it was but natural to put such a question to him, as from whence he came, and what was his business in these parts? or whither he was going?

and he said unto him, I am a Levite of Bethlehemjudah; the tribe he was of was Levi, and so a Levite by tribe and office, and the place he came last from, and where he had sojourned awhile, was Bethlehem, a city in the tribe of Judah:

and I go to sojourn where I may find a place; the most convenient to abide in, where he could get a livelihood.

Ver. 10. *And Micah said unto him, dwell with me,* etc.] Hearing that he was a Levite, he thought him a fit man for his purpose, and would give some credit to, and put a better face upon his new form of worship, and therefore, without further inquiry after him and his character, invites him to make his abode with him:

and be unto me a father and a priest; a father to instruct him in the knowledge of divine things; so prophets were called fathers, and their disciples their sons; and a priest to offer sacrifices for him, and to consult before him by his teraphim upon occasion:

and I will give thee ten shekels of silver by the year; or yearly, which was but a small sum, a poor salary for a priest, at most amounting but to twenty five shillings, and scarce so much:

and a suit of apparel; or “an order of apparel”^{f374}; such as was fit for one of his rank and order as a priest to wear, so Jarchi and Abarbanel; or a couple of garments, as the Targum and Septuagint, a double suit of

apparel, according to the order of the season, one for summer and another for winter, as Kimchi and Ben Melech:

and thy victuals; his meat and drink:

so thy Levite went in; into his house, and it looks as if the parley was made, and the bargain struck at the door, Micah being at it as the Levite passed by, or came to it upon his knocking at it; he went after his counsel and advice, as Jarchi, or to do his business, as Kimchi.

Ver. 11. *And the Levite was content to dwell with the man*, etc.] To continue with him; after he had made trial for some time, he liked his service, and his wages, and way of living; it was all agreeable to him:

and the young man was unto him as one of his sons; as dearly beloved by him, and used as kindly and tenderly, as if he had been one of his own children; so strong were the affections of Micah to him, and so well pleased was he with his service.

Ver. 12. *And Micah consecrated the Levite*, etc.] Installed him into, and invested him with the priestly office; in like manner he had consecrated his son before, by filling his hand with sacrifices; (see ^{<QTT>}Judges 17:5)

and the young man became his priest; and did the work and office of one; this was a very daring piece of presumption in them both; in Micah, to take upon him to consecrate a priest, who was himself of the tribe of Ephraim; and in the young man, to suffer himself to be put into such an office, which did not belong to him, for though every priest was a Levite, or of the tribe of Levi, yet every Levite had not a right to be a priest, only those who were of the family of Aaron:

and was in the house of Micah; and continued there.

Ver. 13. *Then said Micah*, etc.] Within himself, pleased with what he had done, and with what he engaged in:

now know I that the Lord will do me good; that I shall enjoy his favour, be a happy man, and prosper; and by this it appears, that notwithstanding the idolatry he had fallen into, he had not utterly forsaken the Lord, but worshipped him in and by his images; there was a mixture of the worship of God, and of the worship of images:

seeing I have a Levite to my priest; who was of the same tribe the priests were, and so the nearest to them of any, and which he thought would be acceptable to God, and an omen of good to himself.

CHAPTER 18

INTRODUCTION TO JUDGES 18

This chapter relates how the Danites, being overcrowded in their inheritance, sent out spies to search the land, and see if they could find any proper place to add unto it, and enlarge it, (^{<071817>}Judges 18:1-6) who returned and reported Laish as such, and encouraged the Danites to go and possess it; for which purpose they sent six hundred men up to it, (^{<071817>}Judges 18:7-12) and as they went, called at the house of Micah, and took away his priests and his gods, (^{<071813>}Judges 18:13-27) and having taken Laish, set up Micah's graven image there, (^{<071828>}Judges 18:28-31).

Ver. 1. *In those days there was no king in Israel*, etc.] No supreme magistrate, no judge, for it was before the time of the judges, after the death of Joshua and before Othniel the first judge; this is observed before, (^{<071716>}Judges 17:6) and here repeated to account for the evil things done by the Danites, their consulting Micah's oracle, taking away his priest and his gods, and setting up his graven image in Dan, by which means idolatry was spread in Israel, and brought on their servitude to Chushanrishathaim, from which Othniel the first judge was their deliverer:

and in those days the tribe of the Danites sought them an inheritance to dwell in; that is, a family of them, as in the next verse, not the whole tribe; for as a family is sometimes put for a tribe, (^{<031717>}Joshua 7:17) so a tribe for a family, (^{<071212>}Judges 20:12)

for unto that day [all their] inheritance had not fallen to them among the tribes of Israel: we rightly supply the words "all their"; for otherwise an inheritance had fallen to them by lot, as the other tribes. (^{<031940>}Joshua 19:40), but that was not only too little for them, (^{<031947>}Joshua 19:47) but all that was allotted to them did not come into their possession, but a part remained unsubdued; and some they had possession of they could not keep, either through the superior strength of the Amorites, or their own sloth and cowardice, or for want of the help of their brethren; (see ^{<001334,35>}Judges 1:34,35).

Ver. 2. *And the children of Dan sent of their family five men, etc.]*

According to Abarbinel one out of a family, as Moses sent one out of a tribe to spy the land; and so there must be five families concerned in this affair:

from their coasts, men of valour from Zorah, and from Eshtaol, to spy out the land, and to search it; these men were sent from the borders of the tribe, the extreme parts of it, as the word may signify, where perhaps they were the most pressed and overcrowded: Zorah and Eshtaol are particularly mentioned, and were the first cities in their lot, and were the coast of their inheritance, (see Gill on “⁶⁹⁴Joshua 19:41”) some take the phrase rendered “from their coasts” to signify persons of extreme meanness, men of the lowest class among them; but the above mentioned writers interpret it to a quite contrary sense, by “Katzinim”, princes, such as Moses sent to spy the land; and this better agrees with the next clause, “men of valour”: and the word used signifies not only magnanimity and fortitude of mind, but wealth and riches; and these were sent not to spy the land of Canaan, but such places as fell to this tribe, but were possessed by the Canaanites; and their errand was to observe in what condition they were, and whether fit for their purpose, and easy to obtain, and how they might get the possession of any of them:

and they said unto them, search the land; and see if some convenient place cannot be found out to enlarge their inheritance, and give them more room and liberty for their families, now pent up, and a pasturage for their flocks and herds:

who when they came to Mount Ephraim; which lay upon the borders of them:

to the house of Micah, they lodged there; that is, when they were come near to the house of Micah, as Kimchi and Ben Melech interpret it, they took up their lodging in the neighbourhood of it, perhaps at a public house or inn; for the sense is not, that they lodged in Micah’s house, for after this we read of their turning into it, as in the next verse. According to Bunting ^{f375}, this place was twenty four miles from Zorah and Eshtaol, from whence these men came.

Ver. 3. *When they were by the house of Micah, etc.]* At their inn, which might be next to it, or as they were passing by it:

they knew the voice of the young man the Levite; who had been in their country, and they had been in his company and conversation, and they knew the tone of his voice when they heard it; a particular brogue he might have. Abarbinel conjectures, that he was singing to Micah's idol, or multiplying his prayers before him:

and they turned in thither; into Micah's house, and into the apartment where the young man was;

and said unto him, who brought thee hither? they knew he was of Bethlehemjudah; they inquire therefore how he came there, who sent for him, and by what means he was brought to that place:

and what makest thou in this place? they knew he was a Levite, and that such an one had no business to minister but at the tabernacle, and therefore they inquire what was his employment here: and what hast thou here? to support himself with, what he had for his maintenance, or how he lived.

Ver. 4. *And he said unto them, thus and thus dealeth Micah with me*, etc.] Told them the whole story, how he came to the door of Micah's house, how he inquired of him who he was, and from whence he came, and whither he was going, and then invited him into his house to stay with him:

and hath hired me; by the year, for ten shekels of silver, a suit of clothes, and meat and drink, and by this means he got a livelihood, and was supported:

and I am his priest; and that was his business to offer sacrifice for his family, and to consult his oracle for him, and for whomsoever should apply.

Ver. 5. *And they said unto him, ask counsel, we pray thee, of God*, etc.] They did not reprove him for assuming the priestly office, when they knew he was a Levite, such was the corruption of those times, and the great depravity and declensions they were fallen into; nor even for the idolatry he was guilty of, but encourage him in it, and thought they had got a fine opportunity, which they readily laid hold on, to have counsel asked for them of God, about the success of the errand they were sent about; to this they were led at sight of the ephod, which was like that in the tabernacle, and of the teraphim, images which, according to a notion that prevailed, when consulted, foretold future things; whether by God they meant the true God, who they thought would give an answer by these, or Micah's

gods, is not certain; according to the Targum of Jonathan, they meant the true God, which paraphrases it,

“ask of the Word of the Lord:”

that we may know whether our way which we go shall be prosperous or no; whether they should find out a proper place to dwell in, and be able to get possession of it.

Ver. 6. *And the priest said to them, go in peace*, etc.] After he had consulted the oracle, or had asked counsel by the ephod and teraphim; either of his own head, or by a voice he had heard, which Satan might be permitted of God to deliver, he very roundly told them that they might proceed on in their journey with their minds quite easy, and with full assurance of success:

before the Lord is your way wherein ye go; it is seen, observed, and taken notice of by him, and he approves of it; it is according to his will, and under his direction and protection, and success from him may be depended upon; though some observe that this answer is delivered in ambiguous terms, as generally the oracles of demons were, and might be taken in a good or bad sense, as the event should be; as that their way was before the Lord, and was seen by him either with pleasure or displeasure, with approbation or disapprobation, for their good, or for their harm: so that let it fall out as it might, the credit of the oracle was saved.

Ver. 7. *And the five men departed*, etc.] From Mount Ephraim, and Micah’s house there:

and came to Laish; which, according to Bunting^{f376}, was one hundred and four miles from Mount Ephraim, and so many he makes it to be from Jerusalem; it lay at the furthest northern border of the land of Canaan, at the foot of Mount Lebanon, near the fountain of Jordan; it was four miles from Paneas, as Jerom says^{f377}, as you go to Tyre; it is the Caesarea Philippi of the New Testament, and the same that is called Leshem, (see Gill on “~~(1097)~~ Joshua 19:47”),

and saw the people that were therein; went into the city, and made their observations on the inhabitants of it, their number, strength, and manner of living:

how they dwelt careless, after the manner of the Zidonians, quiet and secure; the inhabitants of Zidon, whose customs they might imitate, whose laws they might use, and might be under their government, since they are said to have no magistrate within themselves; and their carelessness and confidence might arise from their strong fortresses; or rather because they thought their city, and the land adjacent to it, did not belong to the land of Israel, and did not know that the Israelites made any pretensions to it, and therefore were quite easy, and in no fear of them; had no watchmen to guard their city, and did not take care to furnish themselves with weapons of war for their defence, even as the Zidonians; who, besides their city being a strong and fortified one, were in no fear of the Israelites, because their city was not in the land of Canaan, only the border of it reached to it:

and there was no magistrate in the land that might put them to shame in anything; to restrain them from vice, and punish them for it, or even to reprove and correct them, and so put them to shame; or put any mark of infamy and disgrace upon them in a public manner, that might shame them; hence they lived in a disorderly and dissolute manner, whereby they became the more easy prey to others: or the sense is, there was no king, nor an heir of the kingdom, as Kimchi interprets it, so that there were none to contest his right to the government of the place, or to accuse another, and put him to shame for taking it away from him. Jarchi takes the sense to be, that none needed to turn back his neighbour empty, when he asked anything of him for his relief, since there was no want of anything in the land, as after observed; but the first sense seems best:

and they were far from the Zidonians; who were the only people that could help them, being in friendship with them; and it may be they were under their government, as before observed; they are said ^{f378} to be about eleven miles from them; Josephus ^{f379} says, a day's journey:

and had no business with any man; no trade or commerce, but lived independent of others, and within themselves, their land affording them everything sufficient for them. Some understand it of their not being in any league or alliance with any other people, and so had none to call in to their assistance in case of any attack upon them.

Ver. 8. *And they came unto their brethren to Zorah and Eshtaol, etc.]*

After they had well viewed the city, and made their remarks on the inhabitants of it, the condition and circumstances in which they were, and took notice of the goodness of the land about it, they returned to their

brethren that sent them, particularly those that dwelt at the two places mentioned:

and their brethren said unto them, what say ye? what tidings do you bring? what account of the place and country where you have been?

Ver. 9. *And they said, arise, that me may go up against them,* etc.] That is, prepare for war, and go up in an hostile manner against the present possessors of the land, not doubting of being masters of it easily:

for we have seen the land, and, behold, it is very good. Adrichomius ^{f380} says it was very good pasture land, and fertile, abounding with fruits of all kinds; and the same is attested by Josephus ^{f381}:

and are ye still? can ye sit still, and be easy, and not bestir yourselves to go up and possess so good a country, of which an easy conquest may be made? or, affirmatively, “ye are still or silent” ^{f382}; ye make no answer to what we say, and seem careless and indifferent about the matter; or by way of exhortation, “be silent”, either that the people may remain in their quiet, easy, careless state, and lest, on hearing designs against them, should prepare for their defence; or, as Abarbinel, lest any of the other tribes of Israel should hear of it, and go take it before them:

be not slothful to go, and to enter to possess the land; they suggest that there was scarce anything more to be done than to go and take possession, and that it would be altogether owing to their sloth and indolence if they did not.

Ver. 10. *When ye go, ye shall come to a people secure, and to a large land,* etc.] For though it was but one city, the territories of it were large, and the villages belonging to it might be many; which, with the security of the people, might easily be surprised and taken, not being upon their guard, are the arguments used by the spies to encourage their countrymen to go up and take it, to which they add others:

for God hath given it into your hands; which they concluded from the state and condition they found the people in, thoughtless and defenceless; or it may be on account of the oracle in Micah’s house they had consulted, and to which they gave credit; though some think their faith was grounded upon this place being given by lot to the tribe of Dan, but this does not appear:

a place where there is no want of anything that is in the earth; in the land of Canaan; meaning, that there was nothing in the whole land but might be found there, as wheat and barley, vines, fig trees, pomegranates, olives, and honey, with all other necessaries and conveniences of life.

Ver. 11. *And there went from thence of the family of the Danites*, etc.] Or families, the singular being put for the plural; for it can hardly be thought that such a number of men, as after mentioned, went out of one family:

out of Zorah, and out of Eshtaol; the two places the spies were sent from, and now had returned unto: and upon their report, and at their instigation, and by the encouragement they gave, there were

six hundred men appointed with weapons of war; that set out armed from the above places, on the expedition to take Laish.

Ver. 12. *And they went up and pitched in Kirjathjearim in Judah*, etc.] Of which place (see ^{<0689>}Joshua 15:9,60). According to Bunting ^{f383} it was sixteen miles from Zorah and Eshtaol, and this was their first day's march:

wherefore they called the name of that place Mahanehdan unto this day; which signifies the camp of Dan, or of the Danites; so it was called in the times of Samson, (^{<0735>}Judges 13:25) and is a proof that this expedition was before his time; and it was so called, it seems, in the time of Samuel, the writer of this book:

behold, it is behind Kirjathjearim; to the west of it; for though they are said to pitch in that place, the meaning is, that they pitched near it, in the fields adjacent to it, which were the most proper and convenient for a camp.

Ver. 13. *And they passed thence unto Mount Ephraim*, etc.] Steering their coast still northward; this, according to Bunting ^{f384}, was eight miles from Kirjathjearim, or Mahanehdan, in which Micah's house was, for as yet they were not come to it, (see ^{<0785>}Judges 18:15).

Ver. 14. *Then they answered the five men that went to spy out the country of Laish*, etc.] That were sent by their brethren, (^{<0785>}Judges 18:5) and, as it seems from hence, were sent particularly to Laish; they had some notion of that place as proper for them, and therefore sent those men to reconnoitre it; and now as they had passed this way before, when they came within sight of Micah's house, it put them in mind of what they had seen there;

wherefore one in the name of the rest, and with their approbation, acquainted the company with it:

and said unto their brethren, do ye know that there is in those houses; in one of them, pointing to the houses of a village or town in sight:

an ephod and teraphim, and a graven image, and a molten image? of which (see ⁴⁷⁷⁰⁶Judges 17:4,5) and no doubt but they acquainted them, only that they had seen them, and so were certain but had consulted them, and that with success:

now therefore consider, say they,

what ye have to do; whether it may not be proper to consult them again, or rather to take them with us, to consult as occasion may require, and as tokens and pledges of God being with us, and so may the rather hope that everything will succeed to our wishes.

Ver. 15. *And they turned thitherward,* etc.] It seems as if the house lay a little out of their way, and therefore they turned on one hand to go unto it:

and came to the house of the young man the Levite, even unto the house of Micah; for the young man's house was only an apartment of Micah's, and lay very probably next to that in which the images, and oracle were; and they made up to the young man's apartment, rather than to Micah's, because the above things were under his care:

and saluted him; asked him of his welfare in a kind and obliging manner, the rather to ingratiate themselves unto him.

Ver. 16. *And the six hundred men appointed with their weapons of war,* etc.] Who were armed men, and marched with their armour about them:

which were of the children of Dan; for no other were concerned in this expedition: stood by the entering of the gate; not of Micah's house, but of the city in which his house was; here they stood while the five men went up to the house.

Ver. 17. *And the five men that went out to spy the land went up and came thither,* etc.] They first came to Micah's house, and saluted the young man, and after that salutation told him there was such a number of their brethren at the gate of the city, very probably, who would be glad to see him; and the young man being desirous also of seeing them, and paying his respects

to them, went with them thither, and after they had introduced him, left him discoursing with them, and then returned to his apartment:

and took the graven image, and the ephod, and the teraphim, and the molten image; and brought them away with them; and from hence it appears plainly that there were two images, the one graven, and the other molten, since they are so manifestly distinguished, and the ephod and teraphim are spoken of between them:

and the priest stood in the entering of the gate, with the six hundred men that were appointed with the weapons of war; who kept him in talk, while the five men went and stole the above things.

Ver. 18. *And these went into Micah's house,* etc.] Into that part of it where his gods were; not the six hundred men last mentioned, but the five men who knew the house, and the chapel where the things were:

and fetched the carved image, the ephod, and the teraphim, and the molten image; and brought them away in their hands to their brethren at the gate, where the priest also was: and when he saw them,

then said the priest to them, what do ye? what do you mean by this? is this your kindness to me, to take away what are my care and charge, and on which my livelihood depends? and do you consider the wickedness, the sin of sacrilege you are guilty of, to take away these sacred things, these objects of religious devotion?

Ver. 19. *And they said unto him, hold thy peace,* etc.] Be silent, make no disturbance, be quiet and easy:

lay thy hand upon thy mouth; as a token of silence; so the Egyptians used to paint Harpocrates, the god of silence, with his fingers pressing his lips:

and go with us; for they wanted him as well as his gods, not knowing well how to make use of them without him:

and be to us a father and a priest; to direct them, instruct them, perform acts of devotion for them, and ask counsel on their account; it seems as if it was common in those days to call a priest a father, (see ^{<0710>}Judges 17:10)

is it better for thee to be a priest unto the house of one man, or that thou be a priest unto a tribe and a family in Israel? suggesting, that it must be much more honourable for him, and more to his advantage, to officiate as a

priest to a body of people, that might be called a tribe, or to a family consisting of various houses, than in the house of a private person; this they left him to consider and judge of.

Ver. 20. *And the priest's heart was glad*, etc.] He rejoiced that such an opportunity offered; it suited well with his covetous, ambitious, rambling, and unsettled disposition of mind:

and he took the ephod, and the teraphim, and the graven image; and no doubt the molten image also, out of the hands of the five men into his own, agreeing to go with them, and officiate for them:

and went in the midst of the people; the six hundred armed men, either for the security of himself, if Micah should raise his servants, and his neighbours, to pursue after him, and fetch him back, with his images; or, as others think, in imitation of the priests bearing the ark, who in journeying marched in the middle of the camp.

Ver. 21. *So they turned and departed*, etc.] Turned from the gate of the city where Micah dwelt, and marched forward to Laish:

and put the little ones, and the cattle, and the carriage, before them; partly for safety from Micah, and his friends and neighbours, and partly that they might not be overdriven: their wives, who doubtless were with them, though not mentioned, and their children, and also their flocks and herds, they brought with them from Zorah and Eshtaol, as never intending to return again thither, and being fully assured they should take Laish, and the country about, and settle there; and also all their wealth and substance, as the Targum renders the word for "carriage", whatever they were possessed of that was movable; their vessels, silver and gold, and other movables, as Kimchi interprets it, whatever was weighty, valuable and glorious, as the word signifies, or that was of any importance and worth.

Ver. 22. *And when they were a good way from the house of Micah*, etc.] For it might be some time before Micah knew that his gods were stolen, and his priest was decoyed from him; and it must take up more time still to get his servants and neighbours together to pursue after those that injured him:

the men that were in the houses near to Micah's house were gathered together; no doubt at the request of Micah, who informed them of what had happened to him: and they being not only his neighbours, but deeply

involved in the same superstition and idolatry, and closely addicted to it, and to whom it might in some respects be advantageous as it brought people from various parts to worship, or to consult the oracle: these being got together in a body, pursued

and overtook the children of Dan; who were obliged to move but slowly, because of their wives, little ones, and heavy substance they carried with them.

Ver. 23. *And they cried unto the children of Dan*, etc.] When they had got pretty near them, and in their hearing, they called to them aloud, and desired they would stop, having something to say to them:

and they turned their faces; that is, the Danites turned and looked at them, and stopped to hear what they had to say to them; these were they who were in the rear in marching:

and said unto Micah; who was at the head of them:

what aileth thee that thou comest with such a company? as if he intended to attack them in an hostile way, and therefore asks what should be the occasion of it? what affront had been given him, what injury had been done him, that had provoked him to come out and follow them in such a manner?

Ver. 24. *And he said, ye have taken away my gods that I made*, etc.] Meaning his graven and molten images, which he had made, or caused to be made, out of the silver his mother gave him, or however had paid for the making of; and though this might be an argument proving his right unto them, it was a very poor one in favour of their deity; and it is astonishing he should call them gods he knew the making of, and who could not save themselves from being stolen and carried off:

and the priest and ye are gone away; they had not only took away his gods, but the priest that sacrificed for him unto them, and assisted him in acts of devotion to them, or to God by them, and were gone off with both:

and what have I more? signifying, that all he had in the world, wife, children, and substance, were all nothing in comparison of these; there was nothing he so much valued as he did these, nor could he take any pleasure or comfort in anything, being deprived of them, so much was his heart set on them:

and what is this that ye say unto me, what aileth thee? what a question is this you ask, as if the injury done me was none at all, and that I had no reason to complain; that it was a trifling insignificant thing, worthy of no regard, when it was a matter of the greater moment and importance to him in life.

Ver. 25. *And the children of Dan said unto him, let not thy voice be heard among us,* etc.] Complaining of us as having done an unjust thing, charging and reproaching us with theft and sacrilege, insisting upon a restoration of the things taken, and abusing with odious names and characters:

lest angry fellows run upon thee: lest men of bitter and passionate spirits, provoked by ill language given them, should draw their swords and fall upon thee:

and thou lose thy life, and the life of thy household; the life of himself, his family, servants, tenants, and neighbours with him, which ought to have been more precious and valuable than his gods; of which there was great danger in demanding his gods, which by this they let him know they would not part with.

Ver. 26. *And the children of Dan went their way,* etc.] Went on their way, would not stay to have any further talk with him, as being an impertinent man, and unworthy of their regard, bidding him defiance, and do his worst, having nothing to fear from him:

and when Micah saw they were too strong for him; that he could not prevail upon them by words and arguments; to take up arms, and use them, he perceived it was to no purpose, since they were more numerous and more mighty than he and his neighbours:

he turned and went unto his own house; and if he returned from his idolatry to the true God, and the right worship of him, having lost his gods, it was well for him they were taken away.

Ver. 27. *And they took the things which Micah had made,* etc.] The ephod, teraphim, and the two images, the Danites took them, or having taken them kept them, and went on with them:

and the priest which he had; him also they took, and who was willing enough to go with them:

and came unto Laish, unto a people that were quiet and secure; having no sentinels placed at any distance to give them warning of an enemy, nor any watchmen on their walls to discover one; and perhaps their gates not shut, nor any guard at any of their passes and avenues, having no apprehension at all of being visited by an enemy, especially from Israel, not being apprized that they had any pretensions to their city, and the land about it:

and they smote them with the edge of the sword; entered their city, and fell on them suddenly, and cut them to pieces:

and burnt the city with fire; to strike terror to all about; or it may be only they set fire to some part of it, as they entered, only to frighten the inhabitants, and throw them into the greater confusion, that they might become a more easy prey to them; for their intention was to inhabit it, and it seems to be the same city still, though they rebuilt it, and called it by another name.

Ver. 28. *And there was no deliverer, because it was far from Zidon*, etc.] Under whose government and protection they seem to have been; and that city being at a distance from them, and the Danites coming upon them suddenly, there was no time to send to them for help, or any to come in to their assistance, and save them from their enemies, (see ^{<07187>}Judges 18:7)

and they had no business with any man; that could have given them notice of the design of the children of Dan against them, nor to the Zidonians to come soon enough for their protection and defence; none there were in alliance with them except them:

and it was in the valley that lieth by Bethrehob; which lay in the northern border of the land of Canaan, as you go to Hamath of Syria, (see Gill on ^{<04132>}Numbers 13:21”).

and they built a city to dwell there; not a new one altogether, but they rebuilt and enlarged Laish, and made it convenient for them to dwell in.

Ver. 29. *And they called the name of the city Dan*, etc.] The name of their tribe, and to show that though they were at the furthest part of the land northward, and at such a distance from their tribe, which lay to the southwest, yet they belonged to it:

after the name of Dan their father, who was born unto Israel; one of the twelve sons of Jacob or Israel:

however, the name of the city was Laish at first; which signifies a “lion”, and might be so called from its being infested with lions, which might come from the mountain of Lebanon, near to which it was, and whither Dan, as a lion’s whelp, leaped, (^{f332}Deuteronomy 33:22) and now the prophecy had its accomplishment. This place was also called Leshem, (^{f397}Joshua 19:47) and it is remarkable that Leshem is the name of the precious stone in the high priest’s breastplate, on which the name of Dan was engraved, which was done many years before this city fell into the hands of the Danites, though that might portend it.

Ver. 30. *And the children of Dan set up the graven image*, etc.] In their new city Dan, and very probably had a house built for it, peculiar to it, in the same place where Jeroboam, in later times, set up one of his golden calves. The Danites having succeeded, according to the oracle in Micah’s house, they had a very great veneration for the images they brought away with them from thence, and set them up for religious worship in a proper place; for though only mention is made of the graven image, yet no doubt the molten image, and the teraphim, with the ephod, were all placed together for devotion and consultation:

and Jonathan the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh, he and his sons were priests to the tribe of Dan: not to the whole tribe, but to that part of it which resided in this city, called Dan; and this Jonathan seems to be no other than the Levite Micah took into his house, and made a priest of; and whom the Danites took with them to Laish, to be their priest, who is said to be the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh: now Gershom was the son of Moses, and this man is thought by some to be a grandson of his; and with this agrees the time in which he lived, for as Phinehas the grandson of Aaron was now living, (^{f718}Judges 20:28) so might a grandson of Moses; and though he is called a young man, he might be a younger son of Gershom’s; nor is his being a Levite any objection, since it is a clear case that Moses made no provision for his family, so disinterested was he, which may be observed against the deists: and it is remarkable that the “nun”, or “N” in Manasseh, is suspended over the other letters in our printed copies of the Hebrew Bible, and so without it may be read, Moses; and the Jews ^{f385} have a notion, that this was done for the honour of Moses, and to observe that he was more like a son of Manasseh than of Moses; though rather this being the first letter of חָצַן, “to forget”, may suggest, as Altung ^{f386} observes, that he had forgot the virtues of his grandfather; and the Vulgate Latin version reads, the son of Moses; and some ^{f387} are of

opinion that this is the true reading of the text; though it may be that another Gershom than the son of Moses, and another Manasseh we know nothing of, are here intended, so Marcus Marinus^{f388}: however, this man, and his sons in succession after him, were priests in Dan,

until the day of the captivity of the land; not till the captivity of Sennacherib or Salmaneser, when Dan, with the rest of the ten tribes, were carried captives, as Jarchi; for this idolatry, and these idolatrous priests, can hardly be thought to be continued here through the times of Samuel, David, and Solomon: nor is it to be understood of the captivity of Israel by Jabin king of Canaan, as Ben Gersom; for as the other is too long a time, this is too short, since it is clear, by the next verse, that this idolatry continued all the time the house of God was at Shiloh; and which directs us to the captivity here spoken of, when the ark was carried captive by the Philistines, and the house of Shiloh was forsaken; which is the sense of Kimchi, R. Isaiah, and Abarbinel; and may be illustrated and confirmed by some passages in (⁴⁷⁸⁸Psalm 78:58-61).

Ver. 31. *And they set them up Micah's graven image, which he made,* etc.] Which is repeated for the sake of the time of its continuance next expressed:

all the time the house of God was in Shiloh; which, according to some Jewish writers^{f389}, was three hundred and sixty years; that is, so long as the tabernacle was there, which was afterwards removed to Nob.

CHAPTER 19

INTRODUCTION TO JUDGES 19

This chapter gives an account of a sad affair of a Levite and his concubine, and of the bad consequence of it, how that she played the whore, and went away from him to her father's house, whither he followed her, and where he was kindly entertained by her father several days, (^{<07916>}Judges 19:1-9) and then set out on his journey to his own country; and passing by Jebus or Jerusalem, he came to Gibeah, and could get no lodging, (^{<07910>}Judges 19:10-15), but at length was taken in by an old man, an Ephraimite, (^{<07916>}Judges 19:16-21) when the house where he was beset by some wicked men in Gibeah, with the same intent as the men of Sodom beset the house of Lot, (^{<07922>}Judges 19:22-24) and after some expostulation of the old man with them, the concubine was brought out to them and abused by them even unto death, (^{<07925>}Judges 19:25-28) upon which the Levite her husband cut her into twelve pieces, and sent them into all the coasts of Israel, which was shocking and surprising, (^{<07929>}Judges 19:29,30) the consequence of which is related in the next chapter.

Ver. 1. *And it came to pass in those days, when there was no king in Israel,* etc.] The same is observed in (^{<07716>}Judges 17:6 18:1) and refers to the same times, the times before the judges, between them and the death of Joshua, during which time there was no supreme magistrate or ruler in Israel, which is meant; and this is observed, as before, to account for wickedness being committed with impunity, such as adultery, sodomy, murder, etc. afterwards related:

that there was a certain Levite sojourning on the side of Mount Ephraim; in a city that was on one side of that mountain; it seems not to have been a Levitical city, because he was only a sojourner in it; perhaps he chose to reside there, as being near to the tabernacle of Shiloh, which was in that tribe;

who took to him a concubine out of Bethlehemjudah; the same place from whence the wicked Levite came, spoken of in the preceding chapters, and who was the means of spreading idolatry in Israel; and here a wicked

concubine of a Levite comes from the same, and was the cause of great effusion of blood in Israel; which two instances may seem to reflect dishonour and disgrace on Bethlehem, which were wiped off by the birth of some eminent persons in it, as Boaz, Jesse, David, and especially the Messiah. The woman the Levite took from hence is in the Hebrew called, “a wife, a concubine”^{f390}; for a concubine was a secondary wife, taken without espousals and a dowry: some think they were espoused, though there was no dowry, and were reckoned truly wives, though they had not all the honour and privilege as others; and that this woman was accounted the wife of the Levite, appears from his being called her husband frequently; and her father is said to be his father-in-law, and he his son-in-law; nor could she have been chargeable with adultery otherwise.

Ver. 2. *And his concubine played the whore against him*, etc.] Was unfaithful to him and his bed, and broke the covenant and agreement between them; or “with him”^{f391}, while she was with him in the house; or “before him”^{f392}, of which he had knowledge and proof; though some think this is not to be understood of whoredom or adultery, but of her ill usage of him, and departure from him. The Targum is, she despised him; so Kimchi and Ben Gersom interpret it of her declining and turning aside from him, and returning to her father’s house, as follows: and indeed, had she been guilty of such a crime, one would think he would never have sought after her to reconcile her, and take her again, since she not only deserved to be put away, but to be put to death according to the law of God:

and went away from him to her father’s house to Bethlehemjudah; where she was received, as she knew she should, having a parent perhaps too indulgent, and which was an encouragement to her to leave her husband:

and was there some whole months or a year and four whole months, according to Ben Gersom; so Kimchi and Ben Melech observe the copulative “and” is wanting, which is expressed in (⁴⁰²⁰1 Samuel 27:7) and “yamim, days”, is so the times used for a year, (⁴⁰⁴⁸Judges 14:8 15:1 21:19).

Ver. 3. *And her husband arose*, etc.] From the place where he lived:

and went after her; to Bethlehemjudah, where her father lived:

to speak comfortably to her “or to her heart”^{f393}; having heard perhaps that she repented of her sin, or if it was only upon a quarrel between them, his anger might cool and subside, and therefore sought for a reconciliation;

and which was the more commendable in him, as he did not put her away, but she departed from him: and

to bring her again; to his own city, and to his own house and bed, as before:

having his servant with him, and a couple of asses; one of them for her to ride upon, and the other to carry provisions on:

and she brought him into her father's house; it seems she met with him before he came thither, in the fields, or in the street; and by this it appears that she was glad to see him, and received him in a loving manner, and introduced him into her father's house, so that things looked well, and promised success:

and when the father of the damsel saw him, he rejoiced to meet him; having a good opinion of him, and perhaps understood, even by his daughter's story, that she was most in fault, and therefore was well pleased to see him come after her; though he ought before this time to have sent her home, or sought for a reconciliation of her to her husband.

Ver. 4. *And his father in law, the damsel's father, retained him*, etc.] Prevailed upon him to stay some time with him:

and he abode with him three days; it seems as if he agreed to stay with him so long, and that time he stayed contentedly:

so they did eat and drink, and lodged there; the Levite and his servant were very handsomely entertained, and had everything provided for them convenient for meat, drink, and lodging.

Ver. 5. *And it came to pass on the fourth day*, etc.] The time the Levite had agreed to stay being up:

when they arose early in the morning the Levite, his concubine and servant, in order to set out on their journey: that he arose to depart; the Levite rose up from his seat to take his leave of his father-in-law, and depart from his house, and proceed on his way homeward; for rising out of his bed is before expressed:

and the damsel's father said to his son in law, comfort thy heart with a morsel of bread; take a breakfast first, that he might be fitter for his journey, for bread comforts or strengthens men's hearts, (¹⁹⁴¹⁵Psalm

104:15) though here it may be put for any and all sorts of provisions, whatever might be proper to take early in a morning, and before setting out on a journey: and afterwards go your way; he seemed as if he was willing he should set forward, after he had refreshed him with a meal.

Ver. 6. *And they sat down*, etc.] Not only sat down upon their seats again, the Levite having rose up in order to go away, but sat down at table:

and did eat and drink both of them together; both the Levite and his father-in-law; and it appears by this, and what follows, that the Levite did not take only a short repast, or breakfast with him, but stayed and dined with him, when they ate a plentiful meal, and drank freely after dinner:

for the damsel's father had said to the man, be content, I pray thee, and tarry all night, and let thine heart be merry; let us spend a pleasant evening together, in drinking freely, though not to excess, in cheerful conversation, and innocent mirth. This he proposed to him, and hoped he would agree to it.

Ver. 7. *And when the man rose up to depart*, etc.] Rose up from table, having ate and drank sufficiently, in order to depart the house, and proceed on his journey:

his father in law urged him; with much entreaty, and earnest solicitations, that he would stay all night with him:

therefore he lodged there again; another night, being prevailed upon through his father's importunity.

Ver. 8. *And he rose early in the morning on the fifth day to depart*, etc.] With a full intention to take his leave of his father, and be gone:

and the damsel's father said, comfort thine heart, I pray thee; with a meal's meat, with a breakfast, before he set out on his journey, that he might be heartier and stronger for it:

and they tarried until afternoon; or "until the decline of the day",^{f394} when the sun had passed the meridian, and was declining, as it immediately does when noon is past:

and they did eat both of them; the man stayed and took a dinner with his father-in-law; and though no mention is made of the concubine, neither in this, nor in the other instances, no doubt she ate with them.

Ver. 9. *And when the man rose up to depart, he and his concubine, and his servant*, etc.] Rose up from table, having comfortably refreshed themselves:

his father in law, the damsel's father, said unto him, behold, now the day draweth towards evening; or is “remiss”, or “weak”^{f395}; that is, the heat, light, and strength of the sun abated, and became weaker and more remiss, as it does the more it declines, and is nearer setting:

I pray you tarry all night; suggesting, it was a very improper time to set out in on a journey:

behold, the day groweth to an end; or “behold, it is the encampment of the day”^{f396}, when the day or sun seems to be pitching its tent, and going to rest; or it being the time when an army on the march stops and pitches their tents, in order to continue all night; or when men go to their tents and habitations, and lie down and take their rest:

lodge here, that thine heart may be merry; and let us have another pleasant evening together, which cannot be had in an inn upon the road; you cannot be comfortable there, as here, and therefore be persuaded to stay, since it is not possible to get home tonight:

and tomorrow get you early on your way, that thou mayest go home; to thy city, as the Targum; signifying, that he should not insist upon their staying any longer, and then they might set out on their journey as soon as they pleased.

Ver. 10. *But the man would not tarry that night*, etc.] He was determined upon his journey; he perceived there was no end of the solicitations of his father-in-law, and did not know how long he intended to detain him, and therefore was resolved not to hearken to him any longer:

but he rose up and departed; rose up from his seat, took his leave of his father-in-law, and proceeded on his journey:

and came over against Jebus, which is Jerusalem; which was then called Jebus, because inhabited by the Jebusites, as appears from the following verse; this was about six miles from Bethlehem^{f397}; so far they were come on in their journey homewards:

and there were with him two asses saddled; which he brought with him when he came to Bethlehem, (⁴⁷⁹³Judges 19:3) now said to be “saddled”,

either for him and his concubine to ride on; or they were bound or girt, as the word signifies, being loaded with bread, and wine, and provender; or it may be one of them was for him and his concubine to ride on by turns, and the other to carry the provisions:

and his concubine also was with him; matters being now made up between them, she had agreed to go with him, and did, which was the end of his coming to her father's house; and therefore this is observed on that account, as well as for what follows in the tragical part of this history.

Ver. 11. *And when they were by Jebus the day was far spent*, etc.] Or "was gone down very much"^{f398}, the sun was going down apace, and near setting:

and the servant said unto his master, come, I pray thee: he proposed it to him in a submissive manner, and might use some entreaty for his master's good and safety:

and let us turn in unto this city of the Jebusites, and lodge in it; for though that part of the city which belonged to the tribe of Judah was taken by them after the death of Joshua, yet that which belonged to the tribe of Benjamin, part of it was still possessed by the Jebusites, whom the Benjamites could not expel, (~~1002~~Judges 1:21) and Ben Gersom thinks, that this affair of this Levite, and his concubine, was before the men of Judah fought against it, and took it; which not unlikely, seeing it is called here a city of the Jebusites, and because the Levite objected going into it on that account; whereas there would not have been much in his objection, if one part or it was in the session of the men of Judah, and the other in the hands of the tribe of Benjamin, though they had some Jebusites dwelling among them.

Ver. 12. *And his master said unto him, we will not turn aside hither into the city of a stranger*, etc.] A city of the children of the Gentiles, as the Targum, as the Jebusites were, being one of the seven nations of the land of Canaan, who were to be dispossessed and destroyed; and which, one would think, he would not have so called, had it been inhabited, though but in part, by the children of Judah and Benjamin: by this it appears, that this Levite was a good man, and conscientious, and shunned all appearance of evil, and the company of wicked men, as became his character and profession: and it is added,

that is not of the children of Israel; which further confirms the above conjecture, that this city was not as yet at all in the hands of the Israelites; or if it had been, was retaken, and now in the hands of the Jebusites:

we will pass over to Gibeah; which was in the tribe of Benjamin, and inhabited by men of that tribe, and so more agreeable to this Levite, though it proved fatal to him; this was, as Josephus says ^{f399} thirty furlongs, or near four miles from Jebus or Jerusalem; and though it was near sun setting, he chose rather to proceed on to this place, than to lodge at Jebus, and the rather it may be, as it was a Levitical city, (^{<6217>}Joshua 21:17).

Ver. 13. *And he said to his servant, come, and let us draw near*, etc.] And get on as fast as we can:

to one of these places to lodge all night, in Gibeah, or in Ramah; which were both in the tribe of Benjamin, and he left it to his servant to go to either, to that which was most convenient, because of the time of the day, it being near sun setting; now, as before observed, Gibeah was not quite four miles from Jerusalem; whereas, according to Jerom ^{f400}, Ramah was six miles, and therefore we find they took up at Gibeah, as being nearest of these two places; (see Gill on "^{<6824>}Joshua 18:24-25") (see Gill on "^{<2818>}Hosea 5:8")

Ver. 14. *And they passed on, and went their way*, etc.] Proceeded on in their journey from Jebus or Jerusalem, near to which they were:

and the sun went down upon them when they were by Gibeah, which belongeth to Benjamin; which is added, to distinguish it from another Gibeah in the tribe of Judah, (^{<6857>}Joshua 15:57) when they were come pretty near to this place, on the side of it, as it seems, the sun was just setting, which determined them to take up their lodging here, as follows.

Ver. 15. *And they turned aside thither to go in and lodge in Gibeah*, etc.] Instead of going right forward, and passing by Gibeah, over against which they were, they turned out of their road, and went into the city to seek a lodging in it:

and when he went in, he sat him down in a street of the city; to see whether any person would invite him into any of their houses, as was usual in those hospitable times and countries, and where there were few inns for the entertainment of travellers and strangers, or none at all, and especially in cities; if any where, they were upon the public road:

for there was no man that took them into his house to lodging; the spirit of hospitality being greatly declined, and even gone from among them; or as some think, those that had such a spirit, and were willing to receive strangers, were afraid, because of their wicked neighbours, who would beset their houses to abuse strangers, as the sequel of this history shows.

Ver. 16. *And, behold, there came an old man from his work out of the field at even*, etc.] Which is the time that men come from their labour, and take their rest; and this man, though a man in years, and of some substance, as appears by what follows, yet attended the business of his calling, which was very commendable in him:

which was also of Mount Ephraim; as the Levite was, which when the old man understood, he was the more ready no doubt to receive him into his house:

and he sojourned in Gibeah; he was not a native of the place, and yet more kind to strangers than such as were; nor does he appear to be a Levite, though it was a Levitical city; on what account he sojourned here is not manifest:

but the men of the place were Benjamites: for as yet the number of Levites were not large, others dwelt in the cities besides them, even such as were of the tribe to which they belonged.

Ver. 17. *And when he had lifted up his eyes*, etc.] For it may be, as he came out of the field, he was musing and meditating with his eyes downwards directed, but coming into the city looked up:

he saw a wayfaring man in the street of the city; whom he supposed to be a traveller and a stranger by his dress, and other circumstances, having never seen him before, and knowing pretty well the inhabitants of the place:

and the old man said, whither goest thou? and whence comest thou? the meaning of the questions is, what place he was travelling to, and from whence he came last.

Ver. 18. *And he said unto him, we are passing from Bethlehemjudah*, etc.] He answers to his last question first, for this was the place from whence they came:

towards the side of Mount Ephraim: thither they were going, which is an answer to the first question: and then adds, which is more than what was requested,

from thence am I; that is, he was an inhabitant of a city on one side of Mount Ephraim, but what that city was, he says not, nor is it elsewhere said:

and I went to Bethlehemjudah; on what account he does not declare, but the above narrative clearly shows for what reason he went thither:

but I am now going to the house of the Lord; that is, the tabernacle in Shiloh, there he proposed to go first to offer sacrifice for the success of his journey, and for the reconciliation of his wife to him, and to pray to God for happiness in his family yet to come, and where some think his habitation was; but rather it was at some distance, not far from Mount Ephraim, and on the side of it, whither he should return when he had performed those acts of religion and devotion, which he judged were his duty:

and there is no man that receiveth me to house: that had invited him to his house to take a lodging there, as was common to do to travellers, as the instances of Abraham, Lot, Job, and others, show. It was a law with the Lucani (a people in Italy), that if a stranger came at sun setting, and was desirous of coming under the roof of anyone, if such an one did not receive him, he was to be fined, and suffer the punishment of inhospitality^{f401}.

Ver. 19. *Yet there is both straw and provender for our asses*, etc.] Straw to litter them with, and provender to feed them with, which he had brought with him on them:

and there is bread and wine also for me, and for thine handmaid; meaning himself and his concubine; there were enough for them both, which were packed up, and carried by the asses:

and for the young man which is with thy servants; the supplement, which is, seems quite needless, and even impertinent; for as yet the young man, by whom he means his servant, was not as yet in company with the servants of the old man; but the sense is, that there was not only provisions with him for himself, and his wife, and also for his servant, but even enough for the servants of the old man, whether maid or manservants: there is no want of anything; and therefore none needed to be shy of taking them in, since they

should not be burdensome to any upon any account; all they wanted was a lodging.

Ver. 20. *And the old man said, peace be with you,* etc.] All happiness attend thee, particularly ease and tranquillity of mind, let nothing disturb or distress thee:

howsoever, let all thy wants lie upon me; signifying, that if he had neither bread nor wine for himself, his wife, and his servant, nor any litter nor provender for his asses, he was welcome to all from him; and whatever his wants were, he would supply them, which was nobly and generously said:

only lodge not in the street: that I cannot bear to think of, as if he should say; for a stranger, an Israelite, one of my own country, a good man, a Levite going to the house of God, to take up a lodging in the streets, let it not be said.

Ver. 21. *So he brought him into his house,* etc.] Showed him the way to it, and in a kind and friendly manner introduced him, and bid him welcome:

and gave provender unto the asses; this is mentioned first, it being then perhaps, as now, the first thing that a careful man is concerned for, to see that his cattle is taken care of, and then himself; and such a method this ancient good man took with his guest:

and they washed their feet; which was commonly done to strangers in those hot countries, and was very refreshing, (see ^{CHAP.} Genesis 18:4 19:2)

and did eat and drink; sat down at table and supped with him.

Ver. 22. *Now as they were making their hearts merry,* etc.] With a glass of wine after supper, and conversing together in a cheerful manner about their country and friends:

behold, the men of the city, certain sons of Belial; very wicked, lawless, ungovernable, worthless, and unprofitable creatures, men under the influence of Satan, and their own lusts:

beset the house round about: that none might escape out of it, especially the Levite, his wife and servant:

and beat at the door; to get entrance, either by those within opening to them, or by breaking it open:

and spake to the master of the house, the old man; who, upon this noise and clamour made, came to the door, to inquire what was the meaning of all this: to whom they replied, saying,

bring forth the man that came into thy house, that we may know him; not what manner of person he was, of what country and profession, whither he was going, and what business he had here; but that they might have carnal knowledge of him in an unnatural way, or commit that sin with him which is commonly called sodomy; and the men of Sodom expressed their lust by the same word, (^{OLD}Genesis 19:5).

Ver. 23. *And the man, the master of the house, went out unto them*, etc.] Opened the door, and went out to converse with them, and talked them after this manner:

and said unto them, nay, my brethren, nay, I pray you, do not so wickedly; it is plain he understood them in such sense, that they meant not bare knowledge of the man, as who he was, etc. but to commit wickedness the most abominable; so great, that it cannot be well said how great it is; and to dissuade from it, he uses the most tender language, and the most earnest entreaties:

seeing this man is come into my house, do not this folly; he argues from the law of hospitality, which ought not to be infringed; a man being obliged to protect a stranger under his roof; and from the nature of the crime, which was folly, stupidity, and what was abominable to the last degree.

Ver. 24. *Behold, here is my daughter, a maiden, and his concubine*, etc.] His own daughter, a virgin, and the concubine of the Levite his guest:

them I will bring out now, and humble ye them, and do with them what seemeth good unto you; those he proposed to bring out, and deliver to them, to lie with, to do with as they pleased to gratify their raging lust, which to do was more than he ought, or had power to do: he had no right to prostitute his own daughter, and much less the concubine or wife of another man, though perhaps it might be with the consent of the Levite; but all this he said in a hurry and surprise, in a fright and terror, and of two evils choosing the least, and perhaps in imitation of Lot, whose case might come to remembrance:

but unto this man do not so vile a thing; as he apprehended that to be which they were desirous of, whether to kill him, as he himself says,

(~~0215~~Judges 20:5) or to commit the unnatural sin, and which, rather than comply with, he should have chosen to have been slain.

Ver. 25. *But the men would not hearken to him*, etc.] Especially with respect to his daughter, whom they knew very well, and had no affection for, perhaps was not handsome enough for them:

so the man took his concubine, and brought her forth unto them; that is, not the old man, but the Levite took his own wife or concubine, and put her forth to them, very probably with her consent, to try if that would pacify them, she being a fair and beautiful woman, as Ben Gersom and Abarbinel suggest; and Josephus^{f402} intimates, that some young men of the city had seen her in the street, and were captivated with her beauty, and came on purpose for her, and would not be satisfied unless she was delivered to them; and upon which her husband, perceiving this, laid hold on her by main strength, as the word signifies, and brought her out whether she would or not, as Kimchi notes:

and they knew her, and abused her all night until the morning; had carnal knowledge of her, and used her in a most shocking manner one after another, all the night long, until the morning appeared:

and when the day began to spring; at break of day, when the light dawned: they let her go; their works being works of darkness, and would not bear the light.

Ver. 26. *Then came the woman in the dawning of the day*, etc.] When those wicked wretches who had abused her had left her, having had her from place to place, at some distance from the house out of which she was put, and to which she got again, as well as she could:

and fell down at the door of the man's house where her lord was; her husband, so called, not because she had been his servant, but because she was his wife; and at the door of the old man's house, where he was, which she knew, and had found out by one means or another; she fell down, either purposely for her ease, and to lie and wait there, until the time of opening the door in the morning; or rather through weakness, not being able to stand, nor so much as to knock at the door to get admittance: and there she lay

till it was light; broad daylight.

Ver. 27. *And her lord rose up in the morning*, etc.] Very early no doubt, and it is scarcely reasonable to think he should sleep quietly after such a riot, and his concubine or wife delivered up to the lust of such brutish creatures:

and opened the doors of the house, and went out to go his way; either in search of her, or rather to make the best of his way on his journey, to preserve his own life, having given her up for lost:

and, behold the woman his concubine was fallen down at the door of the house, and her hands were upon the threshold; in a posture that persons are when they fall, stretching out their hands to save themselves what they can; or of such who lay themselves down to sleep with their hands under their heads, and which her husband thought was her case, by what follows.

Ver. 28. *And he said unto her, up, and let us be going*, etc.] He spoke to her as supposing her asleep, in order to awake her, and prepare for their journey with all the haste they could, lest greater mischief should befall them:

but none answered; for she was dead; and her death was occasioned, as Josephus^{f403} says, partly through grief at what she had suffered, and partly through shame, not daring to come into the sight of her husband; but chiefly through the injuries done her by the number of persons that had lain with her: so it is reported^{f404} of the Thessalonians, when they took Phocis, many women were destroyed through the abundance of rapes committed upon them. To these Abarbinel adds, the cold of the night, being without her clothes, or anything to cover her:

then the man took her up upon an ass; and carried off her dead body, without making any remonstrance to the inhabitants, from whom he could not expect that any justice would be done him:

and the man rose up, and got him unto his place; to his city on one side Mount Ephraim, to which he made as much haste as he could, instead of going to the house of God at Shiloh, as he proposed; for now the circumstances of things were changed with him, and instead of sacrificing and giving praise to God in his house, his business was to seek for justice from the tribes of Israel.

Ver. 29. *And when he was come into his house*, etc.] Having taken the dead body of his wife from off the ass, and brought it in thither, and laid it in a proper place and order:

he took a knife; a carving knife, such as food is cut with, as the word signifies; the Targum is, a sword:

and laid hold on his concubine, and divided her, together with her bones, into twelve pieces; cut off her limbs at the joints of her bones, and made twelve pieces of them, according to the number of the tribes of Israel:

and sent her into all the coasts of Israel; that is, to every tribe, as Josephus says^{f405}: there was now no supreme magistrate to apply unto for justice, nor the court of seventy elders, and therefore he took this strange and unheard of method to acquaint each of the tribes with the fact committed; this he did not out of disrespect to his wife, but to express the vehement passion he was in on account of her death, in the way it was, and to raise their indignation at the perpetrators of it. Ben Gersom thinks he did not send to the tribe of Benjamin, where the evil was done; but Abarbinel is of another mind, and as Levi was not a tribe that lay together in one part of the land, but was scattered in it, pieces might be sent to the two half tribes of Manasseh, as the one lay on the one side Jordan, and the other on the other, and so there were twelve for the twelve pieces to be sent unto. So Ptolemy king of Egypt killed his eldest son, and divided his members, and put them in a box, and sent them to his mother on his birthday^{f406}. Chytraeus^{f407} writes, that about A. C. 140, a citizen of Vicentia, his daughter being ravished by the governor Carrarius, and cut to pieces, who had refused to send her to him, being sent back again, he put up the carcass in a vessel, and sent it to the senate of Venice, and invited them to punish the governor, and seize upon the city.

Ver. 30. *And it was so, that all that saw it*, etc.] The dismembered pieces of the dead body, and were made acquainted with the cause of it; for so Josephus^{f408} says, he gave the messengers a command to declare what was the cause of her death:

said, there was no such deed done nor seen, from the day that the children of Israel came out of Egypt, unto this day; meaning not so much the cutting in pieces the dead body, and sending it to different parts; though that was awful and shocking, as the complicated wickedness committed at Gibeah, which was the cause of it, to which reference is had, (~~300~~) Hosea

9:9) this is an observation of the writer of this book, Samuel; but what follows are the words either of those the Levite sent, who were bid to deliver them to those to whom the pieces were sent, or else of the persons present at the time of the delivery of the pieces to them, or whom they got together to disclose the matter to:

consider of it, take advice, and speak your minds; well weigh and think of the matter within yourselves, consult with one another what is proper to be done, and give your opinion freely without any reserve.

CHAPTER 20

INTRODUCTION TO JUDGES 20

This chapter relates, how that there was an assembly of the children of Israel at Mizpeh, upon what had happened to the concubine of the Levite, where he appeared and related the whole affair to them, (^{<0710>}Judges 20:1-7) upon which they unanimously agreed to chastise the inhabitants of Gibeah for what they had done, (^{<0718>}Judges 20:8-11), and in order to do that sent to the tribe of Benjamin to deliver the guilty, but instead of that they took to their arms, and prepared for battle in defence of them, (^{<0712>}Judges 20:12-17) and two battles ensued on this, in which the Israelites, who were on the right side of the question, were worsted, (^{<0718>}Judges 20:18-25) but upon their seeking the Lord again, and their humiliation before him, they engaged a third time in battle, and got an entire victory over the Benjaminites, and destroyed them all excepting six hundred men, (^{<0716>}Judges 20:26-48).

Ver. 1. *Then all the children of Israel went out*, etc.] Of their tribes, cities, habitations, not every individual of them, but some of the chief of them, with a select company with them:

and the congregation was gathered together as one man; with as much unanimity and ease met together in one place, at the same time, as if only one man had been pitched upon and deputed for that purpose:

from Dan even to Beersheba, from the city Dan, lately built, which was in the most northern parts of the land of Canaan, to Beersheba, a city in the most southern part, which included all the tribes in the land of Canaan, who all, excepting Benjamin, assembled:

with the land of Gilead; which lay on the other side Jordan, inhabited by the two tribes of Reuben and Dan, and the half tribe of Manasseh, who also came on this occasion:

unto the Lord in Mizpeh; a city which lay upon the borders of Judah and Benjamin, and is therefore assigned to them both, (^{<0658>}Joshua 15:38 18:26) for this was not Mizpeh in the land of Gilead, but a city near to Shiloh; and,

according to Fuller^{f409}, eight miles from Gibeah, and so was a convenient place to meet at: it is not to be thought the tribes met here, by a secret impulse upon their minds, but by a summons of some principal persons in one of the tribes, very probably in the tribe of Ephraim, where the Levite dwelt, and in which was the tabernacle of the Lord, and of which the last supreme magistrate was, namely, Joshua; and all having notice of the occasion of it, met very readily; and because they assembled in the name and fear of God, and it was in the cause of God, and as a solemn assembly, a judicial one, in which God was usually present, they are said to be gathered unto him, and the rather, as they sought for direction and counsel from him in the affair before them.

Ver. 2. *And the chief of all the people*, etc.] The princes of the tribes and heads of families, rulers of thousands, and hundreds, and fifties, and tens; or the “corners”^{f410}, who were like the corner stones in a building, which are not only the most valuable and ornamental, but the strength of the building, which cement it, and support it, and hold it together; though Abarbinel thinks this intends the division and separation of each tribe, which encamped in a separate corner and side by itself: but the former sense seems best, and the meaning is, that the principal men of them, *even of all the tribes of Israel*; excepting the tribe of Benjamin:

presented themselves in the assembly of the people of God; now gathered together: which assembly consisted, besides the heads of them, of

four hundred thousand footmen that drew sword; or were armed men; there were 600,000 or more in Israel able to bear arms; but as now the wars in Canaan were pretty much at an end, the militia of the nation was not so regularly kept up, and many were employed in tilling the ground, and dressing the vines, and the like; and besides, as there were none of the tribe of Benjamin present, it need not be wondered at there should be no more, but rather that so many should be gathered together on such an occasion.

Ver. 3. *Now the children of Benjamin heard that the children of Israel were gone up to Mizpeh*, etc.] Having no doubt the same notice the rest of the tribes had; but the thing complained of being done in their tribe, and by some of it, they might be willing to screen the delinquents, or were careless about and indifferent to the case, and secure and easy, as imagining their

brethren would never go to war with them about it; or were proud and haughty, and would pay no regard to the summons given them:

then said the children of Israel, tell us, how was this wickedness?

proclamation was made in the assembly, that if any person there knew anything of this shocking affair, and horrid iniquity, which was the occasion of their meeting together, that they would rise up and declare what was the cause of it, how it came about, and by whom it was done; or they addressed themselves particularly to the Levite, and his host, and his servant, who might all be upon the spot to bear witness in this case, as it is certain the former of them was, who upon this stood up, and spoke as follows.

Ver. 4. *And the Levite, the husband of the woman that was slain, answered, and said,* etc.] He rose up, and, in answer to their request, declared the whole affair as follows: and none so proper as he, who was upon the spot when it was done, and so near a relation of the deceased, and had a right to demand justice to be done; for from hence it appears that she was his lawful wife, though called a concubine:

I came into Gibeah, that belongeth to Benjamin; which he so particularly describes, to distinguish it from another of the same name in the tribe of Judah, lest any mistake should be made, and an innocent people should suffer in their reputation, or otherwise; and which also would account for the tribe of Benjamin not being present at this convention:

I and my concubine, to lodge; thither they came, not with an intention to stay, to sojourn there, and much less to do them any injury, or to infringe any of their rights and privileges; nor in the least to be burdensome to them, having brought all necessary provisions with them for themselves, servants, and cattle, only to get a night's lodging with them.

Ver. 5. *And the men of Gibeah rose against me,* etc.] Not all of them, but some that dwelt in that city; he forbears giving them the character they justly deserved, sons of Belial. These came in a tumultuous and violent manner,

and beset the house round about upon me by night; that he might not make his escape, resolving if possible to get him into their hands, and do with him according to their will:

and thought to have slain me; their first intention was to commit the unnatural sin on him, and, if he resisted, to slay him; but this he modestly conceals, as being a sin not to be named in an assembly of saints; and besides he might say this, because he himself chose rather to be slain than to submit to their lust, which he knew must be the case upon his refusal and resistance; and even if he had yielded, being overpowered, this would have been the consequence, that he should have been abused even unto death, as his wife was:

and my concubine have they forced, that she is dead; or “afflicted”, or “humbled”^{f411} her; which is a modest expression for carnal knowledge of her, and which they had to such excess that she died through it.

Ver. 6. *And I took my concubine, and cut her in pieces*, etc.] Lest it should be thought that these barbarous creatures, after they had used her in such a manner that occasioned her death, that they had committed this fact also; the Levite takes it to himself, and owns that he did that:

and sent her throughout all the country of the inheritance of Israel; to alarm them, and excite their attention to what had passed, and to raise their indignation against it:

for they have committed lewdness and folly in Israel; being guilty of adultery and murder, and would have committed the unnatural crime, if they could have had an opportunity of doing it.

Ver. 7. *Behold, ye are all children of Israel*, etc.] The descendants of one man that feared the Lord; were of one nation, and of one religion, men professing godliness, and therefore ought to bear testimony against sin and wickedness of every sort, and especially such crying abominations as these:

give your advice and counsel: in this place, being assembled together on this occasion; consult what is best to be done, and let every man speak his mind freely what step he thinks should be taken for the glory of God, and honour of religion, and to bring such persons to justice who had committed so foul a fact.

Ver. 8. *And all the people arose as one man*, etc.] Either the heads of the people assembled in council, all agreed unanimously in one vote or resolution, or all the 400,000 men were of the same mind, when the case was reported to them:

saying, we will not any of us go to his tent, neither will we any of us turn into his house; that is, they would not return home, to take one night's rest in their houses, or attend to the business of their callings or to any affair of life, however urgent, till satisfaction was made for the evil committed.

Ver. 9. *But now this shall be the thing which we will do to Gibeah*, etc.] Where the fact was done; what follows was proposed by some, and unanimously agreed to by all:

we will go up by lot against it; cast lots who shall go up to it and demand satisfaction for the offence committed; and if denied, to act in an hostile manner against it.

Ver. 10. *And we will take ten men of an hundred, throughout all the tribes of Israel*, etc.] Excepting that of Benjamin which was not with them, not any of them:

and a hundred out of a thousand, and a thousand out of ten thousand; in all 40,000, out of the 400,000:

to fetch victual for the people; ten men were to provide food for ninety, and one hundred men for nine hundred, and 1000 men for 9000, in all 40,000, for 360,000; these were either to go to their own tribes and habitations, or to the towns and cities adjacent, to procure food for this large army; for they came from their homes without any provision, not knowing that the affair would keep them long; but perceiving that it would require time before it could be determined, they judged it the wisest method for some to be appointed to take care of provision for the army, that it might not be scattered about on that account, but pursue the war with vigour till satisfaction was obtained:

that they might do, when they came to Gibeah of Benjamin, according to all the folly that they have wrought in Israel; punish with death the delinquents, and chastise the inhabitants, and especially the magistrates, for their connivance at such wicked persons among them, and negligence of doing their duty.

Ver. 11. *So all the men of Israel were gathered against the city*, etc.] Of Gibeah, even 360,000 men:

knit together as one man; went heart and hand together, united in their sentiments and resolutions, determining to have justice done, or lose their

lives in this cause: according to the Jews ^{f412}, this was on the twenty third of Shebet, which answers to part of January and part of February, on which day a fast was kept on this account.

Ver. 12. *And the tribes of Israel sent men through all the tribes of Benjamin,* etc.] Meaning the families of Benjamin; for as sometimes a tribe is called a family, (^{<0177>}Joshua 7:17) so a family is called a tribe; and there were ten families in the tribe of Benjamin, according to the number of his sons, the fathers of these families. (^{<0421>}Genesis 46:21), which being numerous and powerful, and consisting of men of courage, and expert in war, thought themselves a match for the ten tribes of Israel now assembled, who sent one out of each tribe, very probably ten in all, upon this errand; for they judged it most advisable, before they went to war with them, to try to get the offenders, delivered up to justice, and so prevent the shedding of blood of either side; and the rather, as there were none of the tribe of Benjamin at this assembly, and which indeed might give them reason to suspect they meant not to join with them in an amicable manner in this affair: however, they were willing to try peaceable methods first:

saying, what wickedness is this that is done among you? not that they were sent to inquire what the crime was that was committed, that was fully known; but by putting the question in this manner, their design was to aggravate it, and to put the men of Benjamin on considering how great it was, what an enormous sin it was that was committed, and that among them; and therefore it lay upon them, either to punish the perpetrators of it themselves or deliver them up to them to be punished according to the common law of Israel.

Ver. 13. *Now, therefore, deliver us the men, the children of Belial, which are in Gibeah,* etc.] Those wicked men that were the authors of that abominable wickedness there committed:

that we may put them to death; as they deserved, since they were guilty both of adultery and murder; their meaning is, that they in conjunction with the tribe of Benjamin might condemn them to death and punish them with it, as their crime deserved:

and put away evil from Israel; prevent both the spread of such a sinful evil in the nation, encouraged by such examples, and the evil of punishment coming upon them from God, should they let such wickedness pass with impunity:

but the children of Benjamin would not hearken to the voice of their brethren the children of Israel; they refused to give up the men of Gibeah, that had been guilty of such great wickedness; reckoning it a reproach, as Josephus ^{f413} says, to obey the commands of others, for fear of war, and unwilling to yield to any in arms, neither on account of multitude nor courage.

Ver. 14. *But the children of Benjamin gathered themselves together out of the cities unto Gibeah*, etc.] To protect and defend it against the other tribes, being a city of theirs and where the persons charged with the crime lived; these got together thither out of the several cities of the tribe of Benjamin, as many as could bear arms:

to go out to battle against the children of Israel; they neither denied the fact, nor attempted to palliate and excuse it, nor sought for peace but at once betook themselves to arms; which showed not only want of prudence but pride, passion and self-confidence, and that they were sadly depraved in their morals to rise up in defence of such wicked men; and a strange infatuation to expect success against such vastly superior numbers, and in so bad a cause.

Ver. 15. *And the children of Benjamin were numbered at that time out of the cities*, etc.] All that they could muster up, and gather together out of their several cities, were no more man than

twenty and six thousand men that drew the sword able bodied men fit for war, and expert in it:

beside the inhabitants of Gibeah, which were numbered seven hundred chosen men young, stout, and strong, and in all but 26,700; and what are these to an army of 400,000 men, or however 360,000 that came up against Gibeah, while 40,000 were employed in getting provisions for them? Josephus ^{f414} makes the number of the Benjaminites still less, no more than 25,600, led thereunto by an later account, that 25,000 Benjaminites were slain in the third and last battle, and only six hundred escaped to a rock for safety, not considering that 1000 men may well be supposed to be lost in the two first battles; for it would be strange indeed that they should lose none in two engagement with so large an army; the same error is committed in the Vulgate Latin version, which makes them no more than 25,000; with which agrees the Alexandrian copy of the

Septuagint version: though that, according to the Vatican exemplar, has but 23,000. The numbers in the Hebrew text are no doubt the right.

Ver. 16. *Among all this people there were seven hundred chosen men lefthanded*, etc.] According to Ben Gersom, these were the seven hundred men of Gibeah; but this does not appear from the text, but, on the contrary, that these were among all the people; or there were so many to be selected out of them all, who were lefthanded men; nor is it likely that all the inhabitants of one place should be such. Benjamin signifies a son of the right hand, yet this tribe had a great number of lefthanded men in it, (see ~~(7719)~~Judges 3:15). Josephus ^{f415} wrongly reduces the number to five hundred:

everyone could sling stones at an hair's breadth, and not miss: the mark they slung the stone at, so very expert were they at it; and perhaps their having such a number of skilful men in this art made them more confident of success, and emboldened them in this daring undertaking, to point to which this circumstance seems to be mentioned. There were a people that inhabited the islands, now called Majorca and Minorca, anciently Baleares, from their skilfulness in slinging stones, to which they brought up from their childhood, as it is related various writers, Strabo ^{f416}, Diodorus Siculus ^{f417}, Floras ^{f418} and others ^{f419}; that their mothers used to set their breakfast on a beam or post, or some such thing, at a distance, which they were not to have, unless they could strike it off; and the first of these writers says, that they exercised this art from the time that the Phoenicians held these islands; and, according to Pliny ^{f420}, the Phoenicians, the old inhabitants of Canaan, were the first inventors of slings, and from these the Benjaminites might learn it. The Indians are said ^{f421} to be very expert in slinging stones to an hair's breadth.

Ver. 17. *And the men of Israel, beside Benjamin*, etc.] Who did not join them in this affair, but opposed them,

were numbered four hundred thousand men that drew sword: see (~~(7719)~~Judges 20:9)

all these were men of war; inured to it, skilful and courageous.

Ver. 18. *And the children of Israel arose*, etc.] From Mizpeh, where they were assembled, having heard that the Benjaminites were gathered together to defend the men of Gibeah:

and went up to the house of God; to the tabernacle which was in Shiloh, (^{<0783>}Judges 18:31), (see ^{<0681>}Joshua 18:1) though the Targum takes Bethel for the name of a place so called; and so do Ben Gersom and Josephus^{f422}, which was near Shiloh, for Shiloh is said to be on the north side of Bethel, (^{<0719>}Judges 21:19) but as there is no reason to believe the tabernacle was now removed from Shiloh thither, so it is not likely they would go to any other place but where the tabernacle ark, and high priest were:

and asked counsel of God; before Phinehas the high priest, according to the judgment of Urim and Thummim, (^{<0723>}Judges 20:28)

and said which of us shall go up first to the battle against the children of Benjamin? there being no supreme magistrate, judge, or general, to lead them; they did not ask whether they should go to war or no with their brethren; they made no doubt of that, taking it for granted they had sufficient reason for so doing, and that it was according to the will of God; nor did they inquire whether they should be victorious or not, they made no doubt of being victorious, both from their superior numbers, and the justness of their cause; they only inquire who should lead them on, having no general; and this they might do, to prevent any contentions among them about being precedence:

and the Lord said, Judah shall go up first: which tribe pitched their standard first about the tabernacle, and marched first in their journeys in the wilderness, and was ordered to go up first and fight the Canaanites, being a powerful and warlike tribe.

Ver. 19. *And the children of Israel rose up in the morning*, etc.] After they had had counsel at Shiloh, and which perhaps was by a deputation sent thither:

and encamped against Gibeah: formed a camp near Gibeah of 360,000 men, enough to have stormed and taken that city at once, one would think.

Ver. 20. *And the men of Israel went out to battle against Benjamin*, etc.] From the place where they were encamped:

and the men of Israel put themselves in array to fight against them at Gibeah; not only against the inhabitants of Gibeah, but the children of Benjamin, that came to the defence of them; they formed, themselves in a line of battle, and prepared for an action.

Ver. 21. *And the children of Benjamin came forth out of Gibeah, etc.]* Which was their place of rendezvous, and which they came to defend; and in and about which they had stationed their whole army of 26,000 men:

and destroyed down to the ground: killed dead upon the spot:

of the Israelites that day twenty and two thousand men; wanting but 4000 of their whole number, excepting the men of Gibeah, which was such a rebuff the Israelites did not expect, being engaged in so just a cause, and having such a numerous army. Several Jewish writers^{f423} think this was on account of their idolatry, that though they were very zealous to revenge corporeal adultery in the case of the Levite's concubine, and to remove such iniquity from Israel; yet were not zealous to revenge and put away spiritual adultery or idolatry in the case of the Danites, who had set up the image of Micah, and so had spread idolatry not only in their own tribe, but throughout Israel; and therefore God took this opportunity to avenge his own quarrel, and rebuke them for their sin; and now did Benjamin raven as a wolf, according to Jacob's prophecy, (⁽⁻⁰¹⁴²⁷⁾Genesis 49:27).

Ver. 22. *And the people, the men of Israel, encouraged themselves, etc.]* That though they had lost a great number of men, yet still their forces were large and greatly superior to those of Benjamin, and above all their cause was good:

and set their battle again in array formed a line of battle again facing their enemy, inviting to another battle, and bidding defiance:

and in the place where they put themselves in array the first day; by which it seems they kept the field of battle; though they lost so many men, they did not flee before the children of Benjamin, but stood their ground; nor were they so superstitious as to fancy the place unlucky; nor was it a bad situation they were in, to which their want of success was owing, for then they would have changed it.

Ver. 23. *And the children of Israel went up and wept before the Lord until even, etc.]* The evening of the day in which the battle was fought; not that the whole army went up to Shiloh to the house of God there, but a deputation of them, who lamented their defeat, and the loss of so many lives, but not their sins and transgressions, and particularly the idolatry they had been guilty of:

and asked counsel of the Lord, saying, shall we go up again to battle against the children of Benjamin my brother? they seemed to have some doubt, by the loss they sustained, whether they were right in going to war with Benjamin, especially as he was their brother; and therefore the question now is, not who should go up first, which was already determined, but whether they should go at all; and still they do not ask any help of God in battle, nor success, but were depending on their numbers, and the justness of their cause, and therefore neither is promised to them, only they have an answer to their question:

and the Lord said, go up against him; for Benjamin was certainly in the wrong, and therefore the Israelites are directed to go against him, and they also were not sufficiently chastised, nor thoroughly humbled.

Ver. 24. *And the children of Israel came near,* etc.] To the city of Gibeah, drew nigh to battle:

against the children of Benjamin the second day; for the two battles were fought two days successively.

Ver. 25. *And Benjamin went forth against them out of Gibeah the second day,* etc.] Flushed with the victory they had obtained the day before:

and destroyed down to the ground of the children of Israel again eighteen thousand men, all these drew the sword, were armed men; this, with the 22,000 slain the day preceding, made 40,000; the same number singled out from among them by lot to provide food for them, and is thought by some to be the case Deborah refers to, (^{QRB}Judges 5:8) and is what is certainly intended in (³⁰⁰Hosea 10:9).

Ver. 26. *Then all the children of Israel and all the people went up, and came unto the house of God,* etc.] This looks as if the whole body of the army, with other people from parts adjacent, went up to the tabernacle of God in Shiloh:

and wept and sat there before the Lord; not only wept, but continued weeping, and that not merely for their defeat, but for their sins, since it follows:

and fasted that day until even; afflicted their bodies with fasting, which was a token of the humiliation of their souls for their sins:

and offered burnt offering's and peace offerings before the Lord, to make atonement for their sins, and to implore success on their arms.

Ver. 27. *And the children of Israel inquired of the Lord*, etc.] By the Word of the Lord, as the Targum, and which has the same expression in (⁴²¹⁸Judges 20:18,23) for the ark of the covenant of God was there in those days; in Shiloh, where the tabernacle was.

Ver. 28. *And Phinehas the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, stood before it in those days*, etc.] Before the ark, ministering before the Lord, which shows that this affair was long before the times of Samson, though placed after them; or otherwise Phinehas must have been more than three hundred years of age, which is not probable^{f424}. Phinehas's standing before the ark was the posture of the priest when he inquired of the Lord for any by Urim and Thummim; the person that inquired stood before him that was inquired of, as Kimchi observes, and he that was inquired of stood before the Shechinah, or the presence of the divine Majesty, of which the ark was a symbol:

saying, shall I yet again go out to battle against the children of Benjamin my brother, or shall I cease? in which the question is put in somewhat different manner than before, not only desiring to know whether it was the will of God they should renew the battle or not, since Benjamin was their brother, but whether they should have success or not; intimating, that if the Lord would bless and help them, they were willing to go up, but if not they chose to desist; for they were fully convinced now they were wrong in depending on their numbers, or the justness of their cause; whereas success depended wholly on the will and pleasure of God, to which they desired to submit:

and the Lord said, go up, for tomorrow I will deliver them into thine hand; now they are not only directed to go up to the battle, but are promised victory.

Ver. 29. *And Israel set liers in wait round about Gibeah.*] For though they were assured of success and victory, yet they thought proper to make use of means: and though their numbers were very great, they had recourse to art and stratagem, and set an ambush in divers places, much in like manner as Israel did for the men of Ai; the two cases being pretty much similar; this ambush was set in the night, as Josephus says^{f425},

Ver. 30. *And the children of Israel went up against the children of Benjamin on the third day,* etc.] Not the day following the second battle, since it would take more time to go to Shiloh, and fast and offer sacrifices there, but on the third day from the second battle:

and put themselves in array against Gibeah, as at other times; as they had done on the first and second days of battle.

Ver. 31. *And the children of Benjamin went out against the people,* etc.] Sallied out of Gibeah upon them, where they had put themselves in array against them:

and were drawn away from the city; the Israelites retreating, and dissembling a flight, which drew the Benjaminites to pursue after them, by which means they were drawn off to a greater distance from the city of Gibeah:

and they began to smite the people, and kill as at other times; at the other two battles;

in the highways; where it seems two ways met:

of which one goeth up to the house of God; to Bethel, as the Targum^{f426}; or rather to Shiloh, where the house or tabernacle of God was, and was two miles from Gibeah, as Bunting^{f427} says:

and the other to Gibeah in the field; so called, to distinguish it from the other Gibeah situated on an hill:

about thirty men of Israel; which were killed in this running fight; and it seems as if one part of the army of Israel took one road, and the other the other road, and so divided the army of the Benjaminites that pursued after them.

Ver. 32. *And the children of Benjamin said, they are smitten down before us, as at first,* etc.] At the first battle, which gave them great spirit, and they concluded they should have victory, as before:

but the children of Israel said, let us flee, and draw them from the city unto the highways; pretending to be afraid of them, and not able to face them, and therefore made as if they fled through fear and cowardice, which inspired the Benjaminites with fresh ardour to pursue them closely, and so

were drawn from the city to the highways, as expressed in the preceding verse.

Ver. 33. *And all the men of Israel rose up out of their place*, etc.] The main body of the army, which fled before Benjamin, when they were come to a proper place, stopped, and rose up out of it, and stood in their own defence:

and put themselves in array at Baaltamar; drew up in a line of battle at that place, facing their enemies, in order to engage with them: this place the Targum calls the plains of Jericho, that being the city of palm trees, which Tamar signifies; and so Jarchi interprets it; but these are too far off; it must be some place near Gibeah. Jerom^{f428} speaks of a little village in his time in those parts, called Bethamari, and may be thought to be this same place; perhaps in the times of the old Canaanites here was a grove of palm trees, in which Baal was worshipped, from whence it had its name:

and the liers in wait of Israel came forth out of their places, even out of the meadows of Gibeah; or plain of Gibeah, as the Targum; for as the city was built on a hill, at the bottom of it were a plain and fine meadows of grass, and here an ambush was placed at some little distance from the city; and when the army of the Benjaminites were drawn off from it, in pursuit of Israel, these came forth and placed themselves between them and the city.

Ver. 34. *And there came against Gibeah ten thousand chosen men out of all Israel*, etc.] Which, according to Ben Gersom, were the liers in wait; and came from the south, as the Targum says:

and the battle was sore; not between those liers in wait, and the Benjaminites, but between those at Baaltamar, and them who set themselves in battle array against them, and they fought stoutly on both sides:

but they knew not that evil was near them; that there was an ambush laid, by which they were in great danger; they knew nothing of the 10,000 men that were now come out against Gibeah, and were between them and that.

Ver. 35. *And the Lord smote Benjamin before Israel*, etc.] Gave Israel the victory over them at Baaltamar; for notwithstanding all the art and stratagem they used, their numbers and their valour, victory was of the Lord, and to him it is ascribed; for until now Benjamin, though fewer in

number, had been always victorious; and the children of Israel destroyed of the Benjaminites that day 25,100; which is the total sum of all that were slain of them that day, the particulars of which are afterwards given:

all these drew the sword; were armed men.

Ver. 36. *So the children of Benjamin saw that they were smitten*, etc.] Their forces broken and worsted, many being killed:

for the men of Israel gave place to the Benjaminites; at first, and made as if they were afraid of them, and so fled before them, which was only to decoy them to a greater distance from the city Gibeah:

because they trusted unto the liers in wait, which they had set beside Gibeah; that these would not only enter the city, and burn it, but meet the Benjaminites fleeing back to it, when they should turn upon them and smite them, and so cut off all that remained of them.

Ver. 37. *And the liers in wait hasted*, etc.] When the time was come agreed upon for them to rise out of their ambush:

and rushed upon Gibeah; at unawares, with great force and violence entered the city, and took possession of it; or “extended”^{f429}, or spread themselves unto it; before they lay close in a narrow compass, but now they put themselves in a regular order, and marched rank and file, and reached from the meadows in which they were, (^(QZRS)Judges 20:33), to the city:

and the liers in wait drew themselves along; along the city, in every part of it, spread themselves all over it, and made themselves masters of every corner of it; or “made a long sound”^{f430} with a trumpet, protracted that to a great length, which was done to terrify the inhabitants, or to let the Israelites know they were possessed of the city:

and smote all the city with the edge of the sword; old men, women, and children, who were not able to bear arms.

Ver. 38. *Now there was an appointed sign between the men of Israel and the liers in wait*, etc.] Or an appointed time^{f431} as the Targum; so Kimchi and Abarbinel. There was a time fixed, at which the men of Israel proposed to be at Baaltamar, exactly when the Benjaminites would be drawn at a proper distance from the city, and then the liers in wait were to break forth, and rush upon it, and enter it:

and that they should make a great flame with smoke to rise up out of the city; set it on fire, and cause the fire to burn fiercely, that there might be a large ascent of flame and smoke to be seen afar off; which, when the men of Israel saw, they would know the city was taken.

Ver. 39. *And when the men of Israel retired in the battle,* etc.] Which is before expressed by their fleeing, and giving place to the Benjaminites, and was only an artifice of theirs, to draw them off from the city:

Benjamin began to smite and kill of the men of Israel about thirty persons; which was done in the highways leading to Shiloh and Gibeah in the field, (^{<02B>}Judges 20:31)

for they said, surely they are smitten down before us as in the first battle; when the greater number of the Israelites were slain by them.

Ver. 40. *But when the flame began to arise up out of the city with a pillar of smoke,* etc.] Fire being set to it by the liers in wait, who had entered it, and who made a large fire, which caused a vast pillar of flame and smoke to arise, which might be seen a great way off:

the Benjaminites looked behind them; perhaps at hearing the blowing of the trumpet, and the long sound of that:

and, behold, the flame of the city ascended up to heaven; went upwards, and reached to a great height.

Ver. 41. *And when the men of Israel turned again,* etc.] Turned their faces to the Benjaminites, on whom they had turned their backs; and which they did on hearing the sound of the trumpet, or seeing the flame of the city, or both, and that in order to fight the Benjaminites, and smite them, as now was their opportunity:

the men of Benjamin were amazed; at this strange and sudden change of things, at the sight of the flame of their city behind them, and at the Israelites turning back to fight them, when they thought themselves sure of victory, as at other times:

for they saw that evil was come upon them; that they were in the utmost danger, between two fires, as we usually say, liers in wait behind them, which had seized their city and burnt it, and the army of Israel turning upon them with great spirit and resolution.

Ver. 42. *Therefore they turned their backs before the men of Israel, etc.]*
And fled from them:

unto the way of the wilderness; what wilderness is not certain, perhaps the wilderness of Judah; they did not turn directly back towards Gibeah, perceiving that was taken, and in the hands of a body of men that would meet them, and therefore they turned on one side towards the wilderness, if happily they could make their escape thither, and shelter themselves:

but the battle overtook them; that is, they that made war, as the Targum, the Israelites that were engaged in battle with them pursued them, and overtook them:

and them which came out of the cities they destroyed in the midst of them; either the Israelites that came out of their cities to assist their brethren destroyed the Benjaminites as they fled, or the Benjaminites who came out of other cities to Gibeah, these were destroyed in the midst of it with the inhabitants, by the liers in wait, when they entered it.

Ver. 43. *Thus they enclosed the Benjaminites round about, etc.]*
Surrounded them on all sides, the army of Israel being posted in different places, and people coming out of all the cities to their assistance. Josephus ^{f432} says, they were forced into, and cooped up, in a hollow place in a valley, so that they could not escape:

and chased them; or “caused to pursue” ^{f433}; calling after them a pursuit, crying to one another as they went along, saying, pursue them, pursue them; so Jarchi and Kimchi; which cry, as it inspired the pursuers with zeal, so they pursued with terror:

and trod them down with ease; they making no resistance, being quite dispirited; the Targim is,

“from the house of their rest,”

where they took up their rest, and designed to rest that night, but could not, being so closely pursued, and diligently sought after. Some take “menuchah”, rendered “ease”, to be the name of a place, from or unto which they were pursued and trodden down, (see ^{<432>}1 Chronicles 2:52 *marg) and so the Septuagint seems to take it for the name of a place, rendering it, “from Noua”:

over against Gibeah, towards the sunrising; that is, as Jarchi interprets it, to the east of Gibeah, there was this overthrow and slaughter made.

Ver. 44. *And there fell of Benjamin eighteen thousand men*, etc.] Just the number they had slain of Israel in the second battle. This is the number of them that were slain when Israel turned upon them, and by that time they got to the east of Gibeah; afterwards 5000 more were slain on the highways, and 2000 near Gidom, as after related:

all these were men of valour; as appears by three times facing and engaging with the army of Israel, so vastly superior to them, and twice beating them.

Ver. 45. *And they turned and fled toward the wilderness, unto the rock of Rimmon*, etc.] Which signifies pomegranate; perhaps it was in the form of one, and may be the same as in (^{494D}1 Samuel 14:2) where Saul is said to be under a pomegranate tree, or under Rimmon, the rock Rimmon, for that is said to be near Gibeah, as this was. There was a village in the times of Jerom called Remmon, fifteen miles from Jerusalem to the north^{f434}, but could not be near this rock to have its name from thence; hither the rest of the army fled for shelter:

and they gleaned of them in the highways five thousand men; who were scattered one from another, and as they were found in the highways, and picked up, they were slain one after another, just as ears of corn are gleaned one by one, after the harvest is got in, or as grapes in single berries, after the vintage is over:

and pursued hard after them unto Gidom; which perhaps had its name from the cutting off of the Benjaminites there:

and slew two thousand men of them; that is, 2000 more besides the 5000 before mentioned.

Ver. 46. *So that all which fell that day of Benjamin were twenty and thousand men*, etc.] It is before said 25,100 (^{472B}Judges 20:35) here the one hundred are omitted, and the round number of thousands given, which is no unusual way of speaking and writing; the whole army of Benjamin consisted of 26,700 of which 18,000 were slain in the field of battle, 5000 in the highways, and 2000 at Gidom, in all 25,000; and we may suppose one hundred as they were straggling in the road, or found in by places, or are not mentioned with either of the thousands for the sake of a round

number, and six hundred fled to the rock Rimmon; as for the other 1000, it is highly probable, they fell in the two first battles, as Ben Gersom and Abarbinel rightly suppose; for it is not credible, that though they got such amazing victories, it was without the loss of men, and these are as few as well can be imagined. Jarchi thinks these thousand fled to the cities of Benjamin, and were slain when the Israelites entered them, as after related, (⁽¹⁷¹⁸⁾Judges 20:48) which is much more probable than a tradition they have, that they went into the land of Romania, and dwelt there. Now all those that were slain were men

that drew the sword; soldiers, not husbandmen, artificers, etc. but armed men:

all these were men of valour; even those that fled, who chose rather to lose their lives than ask for quarter.

Ver. 47. *But six hundred men*, etc.] Who were all that were left of 26,700

turned and fled to the wilderness; turned out of the highway or common road, and being swift of foot, got to a wilderness; what wilderness is not certain:

unto the rock Rimmon, and abode in the rock Rimmon four months; very probably in a cave of that rock, which might be large enough to hold such a number; Saul is said to have just the same number under it, and David had also a like number in a cave at Engedi, (⁽⁹⁴²⁾1 Samuel 14:2 23:13 24:3), and from hence these men might send out of their number to fetch in provision for them from parts adjacent, after the heat of the action was over, and the rage and fury of the Israelites subsided.

Ver. 48. *And the men of Israel turned again upon the children of Benjamin*, etc.] After they had destroyed their army, the city of Gibeah, and the inhabitants of it: not content with this, in their wrath and fury, turned and went,

and smote them with the edge of the sword, as well the men of every city; even men, women, and children, in every city of Benjamin, at least all that lay in their way; and which they might do to be avenged on them, for sending out their militia against them, which had made such a slaughter among them to the loss of 40,000 men, or to fulfil their oath, that such who came not to Mizpeh should be put to death; for which reason also the inhabitants of Jabeshgilead, as well as of the cities of Benjamin, were put to

death, men, women, and children, dealing in the same severity with them as with the Canaanitish nations, or as with a city given to idolatry:

as the beast, and all that came to hand; spared no living creature, herds and flocks:

also they set on fire all the cities that they came unto; which belonged to the tribe of Benjamin, so exceedingly wroth were they with them, for protecting such that had been the authors of such abominable wickedness, and for the loss of the lives of so many valuable men.

CHAPTER 21

INTRODUCTION TO JUDGES 21

This chapter relates how that when the Israelites calmed down, and seriously to reflect on what had passed, they were sore grieved, and much lamented the case of Benjamin, and were particularly concerned what they should do for wives for those few men that remained, that the tribe might be built up again, (^{<0720>}Judges 21:1-7) and for these they provided wives, partly out of Jabeshgilead, the inhabitants of which came not up to the convention at Mizpeh, and therefore they smote them, men, women, and children, only reserved four hundred virgins, whom they gave to the men of Benjamin, (^{<0720>}Judges 21:8-15), and partly from among the daughters of Shiloh, taken at a yearly feast there, the taking of whom was connived at, the other number not being sufficient, (^{<0721>}Judges 21:16-25).

Ver. 1. *Now the men of Israel had sworn in Mizpeh*, etc.] Where they were there convened, before the war began; after they had heard the account the Levite gave of the affair, which brought them thither; and after they had sent messengers to Benjamin to deliver up the men of Gibeah, that had committed the wickedness; and after they perceived that Benjamin did not hearken to their demand, but prepared to make war with them; then, as they resolved on the destruction of Gibeah, and of all the cities that sent out men against them, even all the inhabitants of them, men, women, and children, entered into an oath, that they would use those men that remained as Heathens, and not intermarry with them, as follows:

saying, there shall not any of us give his daughter unto Benjamin to wife; seeing those that used the wife of the Levite in such a base manner, and those that protected and defended them, deserved to have no wives.

Ver. 2. *And the people came to the house of God*, etc.] Not to the city Bethel, as the Targum, Septuagint, and other versions, but to Shiloh, where were the tabernacle and ark; and this is to be understood of the army after they had utterly destroyed the Benjaminites: hence we read of the camp in Shiloh, (^{<0721>}Judges 21:12), here they came not so much to rejoice, and be glad, and to return thanks for the victory they had at last obtained,

as to lament the unhappy case of the tribe of Benjamin, and to have counsel and advice, and consider of ways and means to repair their loss:

and abode there till even before God; fasting and praying, instead of feasting and rejoicing:

and lifted up their voices, and wept sore; not so much, or at least not only for the 40,000 Israelites that were slain, but for the tribe of Benjamin, in danger of being lost, as follows.

Ver. 3. *And said, O Lord God of Israel*, etc.] Jehovah, the only living and true God, the Being of beings, eternal, immutable, omnipotent and omnipresent, the God of all Israel, of the twelve tribes of Israel, their covenant God and Father; who had shown favour to them in such a peculiar and gracious manner, as he had not to other nations, and therefore hoped he would still have a kind regard unto them, and suffer them to expostulate with him in the following manner:

why is this come to pass in Israel; expressing, as Abarbinel thinks, a concern for the 40,000 men of Israel which fell in the two first battles; but it manifestly refers to the case in the next words:

that there should be today one tribe lacking in Israel; meaning the tribe of Benjamin, which was all destroyed, excepting six hundred men, and these had no wives to propagate the tribe; and therefore, unless some provision could be made for that, it must in a short time be totally extinct; for which they express great concern, it not being their intention when they made the above oath to extirpate them; but such were now the circumstances of things in Providence, that it must perish unless some way could be found to relieve it, and which their oath seemed to preclude; and this threw them into great perplexity.

Ver. 4. *And it came to pass on the morrow, that the people rose early*, etc.] The day after their fasting and prayer, and a sense of their present case and circumstances being deeply impressed upon their minds, they rose early in the morning to acts of devotion, and exercises of religion, hoping that being in the way of their duty, the difficulties with which they were perplexed would be removed:

and built there an altar; if this place was Bethel, as Kimchi reasons, there Jacob had built an altar; but that in such a course of years might have been demolished: and if it was Shiloh, there was the tabernacle, and so the altar

of the Lord there; wherefore this either signifies the repairing of that, being in ruins, which is not likely, since it was but lately used, (^{<0216>}Judges 20:26) or the building of a new one, which to do in the tabernacle was not unlawful, especially when the number of sacrifices required it, which it is highly probable was the case now, as it was at the dedication of the temple, (^{<1086>}1 Kings 8:64) though the above mentioned writer thinks, that building an altar signifies, as in many places, only seeking the Lord; but the use for which it was built is expressed:

and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings; both to atone for the sins they had been guilty of in the prosecution of the war, and to return thanks for victory given, and to implore fresh favours to be bestowed upon them.

Ver. 5. *And the children of Israel said*, etc.] One to another, after they had offered their sacrifices, and while they were together in Shiloh:

who is there among all the tribes of Israel, that came not up with the congregation unto the Lord? when they were summoned to come to Mizpeh, to consult together about the affair of the Levite's concubine, as appears by what follows:

for they had made a great oath; in a very awful and solemn manner, with a curse annexed to it, as that about not giving a wife to Benjamin, (^{<0218>}Judges 21:18)

concerning him that came not up to the Lord to Mizpeh: not about him who did not go out to battle against Benjamin, nor about every individual that did not come to consult about it; but every city that did not send their proper representatives or quota to assist in that affair:

he shall surely be put to death; this was sent along with the summons, in order to quicken their attention to them.

Ver. 6. *And the children of Israel repented them for Benjamin their brother*, etc.] Not that they went to war with them, as if their cause was not good; but for the severity they had exercised towards them, especially in destroying their women and children, and for the fatal consequences like to follow here after, particularly the dissolution of the whole tribe:

and said, there is one tribe cut off from Israel this day; that is, there is a likelihood or great danger of it.

Ver. 7. *How shall we do for wives for them that remain*, etc.] By which it seems, as well as by what is after related, that they knew of the six hundred men hid in the rock Rimmon:

seeing we have sworn by the Lord; by the Word of the Lord, as the Targum; and such an oath with them was a sacred thing, and to be kept inviolable, even to their own hurt:

that we will not give them of our daughters to wives; as in (^{<07201>}Judges 21:1) and therefore they must either marry among the Heathens, which was forbidden, or they must make void their oath, or the tribe in a little time would be extinct; these were difficulties they knew not how to surmount, and this was the object of their inquiry.

Ver. 8. *And they said, what one is there of the tribes of Israel that came not up to Mizpeh to the Lord?* etc.] This is asked not only to bring them to justice, and put them to death, according to their oath, who should be found guilty, (^{<07205>}Judges 21:5) but as an expedient to find wives for the surviving Benjaminites; since these, as they came not to Mizpeh, so consequently swore not that they would not give their daughters to Benjaminites; wherefore from among them wives might be given to them, without the violation of an oath:

and, behold, there came none to the camp from Jabeshgilead to the assembly; this was observed by some upon the question put, which caused an inquiry to be made as after related. This city was in the land of Gilead, from whence it had its name, on the other side Jordan, and is placed by Adrichomius ^{f435} in the half tribe of Manasseh; and Jerom ^{f436} says it was a village in his time six miles from the city Pella, upon a mountain, as you go to Gerasa.

Ver. 9. *For the people were numbered*, etc.] To know who did come up, and who did not, and particularly to know whether the inhabitants of Jabeshgilead did or not, against whom an information was brought:

and, behold, there were none of the inhabitants of Jabeshgilead there; for as yet none that came had returned home; all came to Shiloh first, to pay their devotion to the Lord; and as none were found among the living, it did not appear they were among the slain; and very probably the muster roll was taken before they went to battle, and they were not on that.

Ver. 10. *And the congregation sent thither twelve thousand men of the valiantest*, etc.] That were in their army; in the Vulgate Latin version it is only 10,000; but the Targum, Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, and Josephus ^{f437}, agree with the Hebrew text. This place, according to Bunting, to which this army was sent, was fifty two miles from Shiloh ^{f438}:

and commanded them, saying; these were the orders they gave them, when they marched out:

go and smite the inhabitants of Jabeshgilead with the edge of the sword, with the women and the children; which it seems was according to the oath they had made, (^{<07205>}Judges 21:5).

Ver. 11. *And this is the thing that ye shall do*, etc.] Which they gave them in charge to execute:

ye shall utterly destroy every male; without any reserve, young or old, married or unmarried:

and every woman that hath lain by man; whether lawfully or unlawfully, in a married or unmarried state.

Ver. 12. *And they found among the inhabitants of Jabeshgilead four hundred young virgins*, etc.] Or damsel virgins ^{f439}; damsels that were virgins: that had known no man by lying with any male: which was judged of by their age, and by their unmarried state, and by common report, unless it can be thought they were examined by matrons; but how it was that they were not obliged, or did not think themselves obliged by their oath to put these to death, as well as others, is not easy to say; whether they thought the necessity of the case would excuse it, or they had a dispensation from the Lord for it, on consulting him; however, so it was:

and they brought them unto the camp to Shiloh, which is in the land of Canaan; this is observed because that Jabeshgilead was not in the land of Canaan, from whence they were brought, but in the land of Og king of Bashan; only what was on this side Jordan was the land of Canaan, and in that Shiloh was, to which they were brought; and this shows that not the city Bethel, but Shiloh, was the place whither the people or army of Israel came to offer sacrifice after the war was ended.

Ver. 13. *And the whole congregation sent some to speak to the children of Benjamin*, etc.] Sent some messengers to them, to call them, and desire them to come to them:

that were in the rock Rimmon; the six hundred men who had hid themselves in a cave in it, of which the people of Israel were informed:

and to call peaceably unto them; to proclaim peace to them, and assure them of it, and to let them know that they had no ill design against them, that they might come safely to them, and would be kindly received and protected by them.

Ver. 14. *And Benjamin came again at that time*, etc.] The six hundred Benjaminites returned with the messengers at the same time to the people of Israel, putting confidence in the assurances they had given them of peace and safety:

and they gave them wives which they had saved alive of the women of Jabeshgilead; in doing which they supposed they had not violated their oath, since though they had sworn that they would not give their own daughters, they had not sworn they would not give the daughters of others; and besides, as the men of Jabeshgilead were not at Mizpeh when the oaths were made, they had taken none, and so their daughters might be given in marriage to the Benjaminites, notwithstanding that oath:

and yet so they sufficed them not; there were not wives enough for them all; for they were six hundred men, whereas the daughters of the inhabitants of Jabeshgilead were but four hundred, so that there were two hundred more wanting. Abarbinel interprets the word we render “so” in a different manner, by “right”, as in (⁴⁰²⁷Numbers 27:7) and gives the sense thus, that it was not a point of justice and judgment to do this to the daughters of Jabeshgilead, namely, to save and give them in marriage; but they did this because the people repented for Benjamin, as follows.

Ver. 15. *And the people repented them for Benjamin*, etc.] That they had destroyed all their women, and that they had saved no more of the daughters of Jabeshgilead, not a sufficient number to be wives to the Benjaminites:

because the Lord had made a breach in the tribes of Israel; by almost destroying one of them; for though this was done by the Israelites, yet by

the permission and according to the will of God, and through his overruling providence.

Ver. 16. *Then the elders of the congregation said* etc.] This being the case, that there were not wives enough for them, they were obliged to consult again, and consider of another expedient to provide for them; and this motion came from the elders of the people, not only in years, but in office:

how shall we do for wives for them that remain: the other two hundred, who had none:

seeing the women are destroyed out of Benjamin? and so no wives to be had there; and as for the Israelites which came to Mizpeh, who were of all the tribes of Israel, they had solemnly sworn that they would not give any of their daughters to them, and therefore it was a very difficult thing to provide wives for them.

Ver. 17. *And they said, there must be an inheritance for them that be escaped Benjamin,* etc.] The escaped are the six hundred men in the rock Rimmon; four hundred of them were supplied with wives, the other two wanted; and as there was an inheritance divided by lot to the tribe of Benjamin, to that tribe and to that only it belonged, and they must have it and no other; it now of right devolved on these six hundred men, and them only, and therefore provision must be made to increase their number, that they may occupy the inheritance they have a right to, rebuild their cities, till their land, cultivate their vineyards and oliveyards, and enjoy all the advantages of their possessions:

that a tribe be not destroyed out of Israel; but the full number of the tribes be preserved, and their inheritances belonging to them, according to the predictions of Jacob and Moses, and the assignment of them by lot unto them by Joshua.

Ver. 18. *Howbeit, we may not give them wives of our daughters,* etc.] Though their case was so very necessitous and desperate:

for the children of Israel have sworn, saying, cursed be he that giveth a wife to Benjamin, (^{<072008>}Judges 21:1) and therefore without the violation of their oath could not give any of their daughters in marriage to them: wherefore some other way must be devised to help them.

Ver. 19. *Then they said*, etc.] Some of the elders that sat in council debating this matter, and considering of ways and means to assist their brethren the Benjaminites, and preserve their tribe from being lost:

behold, there is a feast of the Lord in Shiloh yearly; where the tabernacle then was, and before which the males of Israel were obliged to appear three times of the year; and this was one of them, as is clear by its being called a feast of the Lord; and therefore cannot design any civil festival or fair kept for trade and commerce. Some have thought of the feast of the passover, but it is most likely to be the feast of tabernacles, as Abarbinel takes it to be; which in Jewish writings is emphatically called “the feast”; and the time of year when that was kept was a time of great rejoicing, on account of the fruits of the earth being gathered in, and the reading of the law and especially at the tithe of drawing of water at this feast; insomuch that it is said ^{f440} that he who never saw the rejoicing at drawing of water never saw rejoicing in his life, which was attended with piping, and dancing, and singing. It is pretty strange what Kimchi notes, that this may be either one of the above feasts, or the day of atonement, at which, he says, the daughters of Israel used to go and dance in the vineyards, according to the words of the Rabbins; when though that is reckoned among the feasts, (^{<R20>}Leviticus 23:1-44) it was properly a fast, as it is called, (^{<420>}Acts 27:9) and all tokens of festivity and joy were forbidden on it; and where these words of their Rabbins are to be met with, he says not: in a place

which is on the north side of Bethel; we rightly supply “in a place”: for the intention is not to describe the situation of Shiloh, which was well known, but a place not far from it, where at this festival the daughters of Shiloh used to dance:

on the east side of the highway that goeth up from Bethel to Shechem; this place lay to the east of a public road, that led from Bethel to Shechem:

and on the south of Lebonah; which Mr. Maundrell ^{f441} takes to be a place now called Kane Leban, which stands on the east side of a delightful vale, having a village of the same name standing opposite to it on the other side of the vale; one of these places, either that Kane or the village, is supposed to be the Lebonah mentioned (^{<0719>}Judges 21:19) to which both the name and situation seem to agree.

Ver. 20. *Therefore they commanded the children of Benjamin,* etc.] The two hundred men of the tribe that wanted wives; they ordered them as follows, and which they spake with authority, being the elders of the congregation, (⁽⁰⁷²¹⁶⁾Judges 21:16)

saying, go and lie in wait in the vineyards; which might belong to Shiloh, or it may be to Lebonah, which perhaps is the same with Bethlaban, famous for its wine with the Misnic writers; who say ^{f442} the second places for wine are Bethrimah and Bethlaban; and I suspect that Bethrimah is the same with Bethrimmon, near which was the rock Rimmon these men were in; now this being the time of year when the vintage was just over, the vines were full of branches and leaves, under which the men might the better hide themselves; and the grapes being gathered, there were no men in the vineyards, and so might lie in wait safely, and under cover.

Ver. 21. *And see, and, behold, if the daughters of Shiloh come out to dance in dances,* etc.] As they used to do at this festival, not along with men, but by themselves; and so might the more easily be taken and carried off; and though only males were obliged to appear from all parts at this feast, yet females might come if they would; and, no doubt, from neighbouring places, at least many did; however, the daughters of Shiloh, who dwelt where the tabernacle was, these always attended the feast with demonstrations of joy, and among the rest with dancing, and that as expressive of spiritual and religious joy, as in the case of Miriam, and the Israelitish women, (⁽⁰¹⁵⁰⁾Exodus 15:20) and as in latter times the most religious men used to express their joy at this feast; now the two hundred men in the vineyards, which lay near the field where these virgins used to dance at this time, were to watch and observe when they came out of the city thither, and were engaged in such an exercise:

then come ye out of the yards, and catch you every man his wife of the daughters of Shiloh, and go to the land of Benjamin; they are directed to rush out at once upon them, as they were dancing, secure, as they thought, from molestation and danger; and they were to take everyone one, not more, and go off directly with them to their own tribe.

Ver. 22. *And it shall be, when their fathers or their brethren come unto us to complain,* etc.] Of this rape of their daughters or sisters, or to bring an action against them, and desire they might be summoned before them, the elders of the people, and be tried and judged according to law for what

they had done; or to put them upon going to war with them again for such treatment of them:

that we will say unto them, be favourable unto them for our sakes; for the sake of the elders, who advised them to do what they did; or for the sake of us Israelites, your sake and ours, who were too severe upon them, and prosecuted the war with too much vigour, which made what they have done necessary, or otherwise a tribe must have been lost in Israel:

because we reserved not to each man his wife in the war; either in the war with Benjamin, which they carried on with such wrath and fury as to destroy all the women, so that there were no wives left for the men that remained, which they now repented of; or in the war with Jabeshgilead, they did not reserve enough of the women taken, only four hundred virgins, whereas there were six hundred men: but the first seems best:

for ye did not give unto them at this time, that you should be guilty; the meaning is, that if they had any uneasiness upon their minds about the oath which they had taken, not to give any of their daughters in marriage to Benjamin, they need not be disturbed at that, since they did not “give” them to them, but these “took” them by force; which was the scheme these elders contrived to secure from the violation of the oath. This they proposed to say to quiet them, and make them easy, to which other things might have been added as that these were their brethren, and not strangers they were married to, and not to mean men, but to men of large estates, having the whole inheritance of the tribe of Benjamin devolved upon them; and their daughters would be the original mothers of the posterity of that tribe in succeeding ages.

Ver. 23. *And the children of Benjamin did so*, etc.] Went and laid wait in the vineyards, and when the daughters of Shiloh came out to dance, they rushed upon them:

and took them wives according to their number; two hundred of them, each man a wife, and no more; for though polygamy was in use in those times, and if at any time necessary, and could be excused, it might seem now; yet it was not indulged to, neither by the elders, nor by the children of Benjamin:

of them that danced whom they caught; the rape of the Sabine virgins by Romulus, at the arena plays and shows, mentioned by various authors^{f443}, and the carrying off of fifteen Spartan virgins from the dances by

Aristomenes the Messenian^{f444}, are sometimes observed as parallel cases to this, and justified by it, particularly that of Romulus^{f445}:

and they went and returned unto their inheritance; the six hundred Benjaminites, with their wives, returned to their own tribe, which was their inheritance by lot; and these, being the only survivors, had a right to the whole:

and repaired the cities, and dwelt in them: in process of time they rebuilt the cities the Israelites had burnt in the late war, and reseeded them as their posterity increased. And the Jewish writers say, that in later times they were allowed to marry with other tribes as before, since the oath only bound those present at Mizpeh; for they observe, that it ran only,

there shall not any of us, etc. not any of our sons; they might give wives to Benjamin, and so in time they became numerous again.

Ver. 24. *And the children of Israel departed thence at that time, every man to his tribe and to his family*, etc.] The war being ended, and things settled as well as circumstances would admit of, for the preservation of the tribe of Benjamin, who were the cause of it, and had suffered so much in it; the Israelites that had met at Mizpeh, and who had not fallen in the war, returned to their respective countries, to their wives and children, and the business of their callings:

and they went out from thence every man to his inheritance; divided by lot to them, to their estates and possessions, which each had a right unto.

Ver. 25. *In those days there was no king in Israel*, etc.] No supreme magistrate, Joshua being dead, and as yet no judge in Israel had risen up; for all related in the five last chapters of this book were done between the death of Joshua and the time of the judges:

every man did that which was right in his own eyes; there being none to restrain him from it, or punish him for it; and this accounts for the many evil things related, as the idolatry of Micah and the Danites, the base usage of the Levite's concubine, the extreme rigour and severity with which the Israelites treated their brethren the Benjaminites, the slaughter of the inhabitants of Jabeshgilead, and the rape of the daughters of Shiloh.

FOOTNOTES

- ft1 -- T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 14. 2.
- ft2 -- De Mensur. & Ponder. c. 13.
- ft3 -- Apud Hottinger. Smegma, p. 522.
- ft4 -- De loc. Heb. fol. 89. H.
- ft5 -- Travels, p. 142. Ed. 5th.
- ft6 -- Valerius Maximus, l. 9. c. 2. Aelian, Var. Hist. l. 2. c. 9. Cicero de Officiis, l. 3. c. 11.
- ft7 -- Antiqu. l. 5. c. 2. sect. 2.
- ft8 -- Such dogs are called **τραπεζηες κυνες**, in Homer. Iliad. 23. ver. 173. & Odys. 17. ver. 227.
- ft9 -- Antiqu. l. 5. c. 2. sect. 2.
- ft10 -- Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 5. c. 2. sect. 2.)
- ft11 -- “Est mihi sitque precor”, etc. l. 9. ep. 16.
- ft12 -- Justin. e Trogo, l. 36. c. 3.
- ft13 -- Geograph. l. 16. p. 525.
- ft14 -- Praeferat Herodis. Palmetis Pinguibus----De Arte Poet. ver. 184.
- ft15 -- Juchasin, fol. 68. 1.
- ft16 -- Travels, p. 118. Ed. 5.
- ft17 -- **μυρμηχ** “custodes”, Pagninus, Montanus; “observatores”, Vatablus, Drusius, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.
- ft18 -- Antiqu. l. 14. c. 1. sect. 4.
- ft19 -- Geograph. l. 5. c. 17.
- ft20 -- De loc. Heb. fol. 92. M.
- ft21 -- Journey from Aleppo, p. 54.

- ft22 -- **dy dbkty** “et aggravata est manus”, V. L. Pagninus Montanus.
- ft23 -- So Maimonides, Moreh Nevochim, par. 1. c. 15. & par. 2. c. 6.
- ft24 -- The Rabbins in Maimon. Moreh Nevochim, par. 2. c. 42.
- ft25 -- Schulchan Aruch, par. 1. c. 580. sect. 2.
- ft26 -- Ad Autolyc. l. 3. p. 138, 139. Vid. Lactant. de fals. Relig. l. 1. c. 23.
- ft27 -- Servius in Virgil. Aeneid. 1. prope finem.
- ft28 -- De Dea Syria.
- ft29 -- Sanchoniatho apud Euseb. Evangel. Praepar. l. 1. p. 38.
- ft30 -- Suidas in voce **ασταρτη**.
- ft31 -- In Octavio, p. 6.
- ft32 -- Apolog. c. 24.
- ft33 -- Vid. Owen. Theologoumen, l. 3. c. 4. p. 192.
- ft34 -- lb. c. 11. p. 244.
- ft35 -- Seder Olam Rabba, c. 12. p. 34.
- ft36 -- **wl yph al** “non Cadere faciebant”, Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Drusius.
- ft37 -- **hçqh µkrdm** “de via sua dura”, Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Drusius.
- ft38 -- “Lucus in urbe fuit media”, etc. Virgil. Aeneid. l. 1.
- ft39 -- Animadv. ad Claudian. de raptu Proserp. l. 1. v. 205.
- ft40 -- De mor. German. c. 9. Vid. Plin. l. 12. 1.
- ft41 -- In Virgil. Georgic. l. 3. col. 295.
- ft42 -- “Est nemus et piceis”, etc. Ep. 12. v. 67. Vid. Metamorph. l. 11. Fab. 9. v. 560.
- ft43 -- In Virgil. Aeneid. l. 1. col. 481. & in l. 3. col. 721.

- ft44 -- Antiqu. l. 5. c. 2. & 3.
- ft45 -- Antiqu. l. 5. c. 3. sect. 2.
- ft46 -- T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 105. I.
- ft47 -- Scripture Chronology, p. 507.
- ft48 -- Onomastic. p. 154, 155.
- ft49 -- Geograph. l. 5. c. 18.
- ft50 -- Annal. Vet. Test. p. 42.
- ft51 -- Annual. Vet. Test. p. 42.
- ft52 -- Evangel. Praepar. l. 10. c. 14. p. 502.
- ft53 -- Antiqu. l. 5. c. 4. sect. 1.
- ft54 -- Works, vol. 1. p. 46.
- ft55 -- **wnymy dy rj a** “obturatum manu dextera sua”, Montanus; “habens manum dexterum obturatum”, Munsterus; “erat clausa manu dextera”, Tigurine version; “clausum manu dextera”, Drusius; “perclusum”, Junius & Tremellius; “praeclusum”, Piscator.
- ft56 -- Ut supra, (Antiqu. l. 5. c. 4.) sect. 2.
- ft57 -- Ibid. (Antiqu. l. 5. c. 4. sect. 2.)
- ft58 -- Vid. Valtrinum de re militar. Roman. l. 3. c. 13.
- ft59 -- In voce **μανδύας**.
- ft60 -- Antiqu. l. 5. c. 4. sect. 2.
- ft61 -- Antiqu. l. 5. c. 4. sect. 2.
- ft62 -- Antiqu. l. 5. c. 4. sect. 2.
- ft63 -- **rgsyw** “quum occlusisset”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.
- ft64 -- Ebr. Concord. part. p. 47. No. 237.
- ft65 -- Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 5. c. 4. sect. 2.)
- ft66 -- Misn. Yoma, c. 3. sect. 2.

- ft67 -- κληιδ ευκαμπεα, Homer. Odyss. 21. ver. 6. & Eustathius in ib.
- ft68 -- Apud Calmet's Dictionary, on the word "Key".
- ft69 -- Marsham. Chronicon, p. 39. Vossius de 70 Interpret. p. 271.
- ft70 -- Antiqu. l. 1. c. 2. sect. 3.
- ft71 -- Origines Sacrae, l. 1. c. 2.
- ft72 -- Annal. Vet. Test. p. 42.
- ft73 -- Marsham. Canon. Chron. p. 306, 307. Patrick in loc. Vid. Lampe Eccl. Hist. l. 1. c. 5. p. 21, 22.
- ft74 -- βουπληγι, Homer. Iliad. 6. ver. 135.
- ft75 -- Hieozoic. par. 1. l. 2. c. 39. col. 385. & Canaan. l. 1. c. 18. col. 446.
- ft76 -- Journey to Aleppo, etc. p. 110, 111.
- ft77 -- *dw*haw "enim, vel quia Ehad", Bonfrerius; so Patrick.
- ft78 -- Concord. Ebr. part. p. 285, 295.
- ft79 -- Geograph. l. 16. p. 525.
- ft80 -- Vid. Suidam in voce δρεπανηφορα.
- ft81 -- Curtius, l. 4. c. 9, 12, 15. Liv. Hist. l. 37. c. 41.
- ft82 -- Xenophon. Cyropaedia, l. 6. c. 13.
- ft83 -- Antiqu. l. 5. c. 5. sect. 1.
- ft84 -- De Bello Jud. l. 4. c. 1. sect. 8.
- ft85 -- Journey from Aleppo, etc. p. 115.
- ft86 -- Ib. p. 57.
- ft87 -- Travels, l. 3. p. 158. Ed. 5.
- ft88 -- Geograph. l. 5. c. 15.
- ft89 -- Antiqu. l. 5. c. 5. sect. 1.
- ft90 -- Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 5. c. 5. sect. 1.)

- ft91 -- Ut supra, (Antiqu. l. 5. c. 5. sect. 1.) sect. 4.
- ft92 -- Vid. Iliad. 5. & 20.
- ft93 -- dj a d[“usque ad unum”, Montanus.
- ft94 -- Tzemaeh David, fol. 216. 3.
- ft95 -- Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 5. c. 5. sect. 1.)
- ft96 -- Antiqu. l. 5. c. 5. sect. 4.
- ft97 -- *τρεμε δ ουρεα μακρα και υλη*, Iliad. 13. v. 18, 34, 44.
- ft98 -- Descriptio Africae, l. 5. p. 574.
- ft99 -- Plutarch. de Iside.
- ft100 -- Cartwright’s Preacher’s Travels, p. 106.
- ft101 -- Ludolph. Ethiop. Hist. l. 1. c. 10. Vid. Philostorg. Eccles. Hist. l. 3. c. 11.
- ft102 -- Vid. David de Pomis Lexic. fol. 19. 3.
- ft103 -- So Cocceius, Noldius, p. 561. No. 1992.
- ft104 -- *ἄρβ ἕκ ρκῆς* “sicut Issachar sic Barach”, Concord. Ebr. part. p. 305. No. 1214. So Belg.
- ft105 -- *wyxrpm l [%* “in portubus”, V. L. “ad sinus suos”, some in Vatablus.
- ft106 -- *Prj %* “probris affecit”, Pagninus; so the Targum.
- ft107 -- Journey from Aleppo, etc. p. 57.
- ft108 -- Egmont and Heyman’s Travels, par. 2. p. 2.
- ft109 -- Onomastic. Sacr. p. 186, 405, 865.
- ft110 -- Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 19.
- ft111 -- Bab. Moed Katon, fol. 16. 1.
- ft112 -- De loc. Heb. fol. 93. D.
- ft113 -- *rwra wra %* “maledictie maledicendo”, Pagninus, Montanus.

- ft114 -- **μyrwbgb%**“cum fortibus”, Pagninus, Tigurine version; so Patrick.
- ft115 -- Nat. Hist. 1. 35. c. 12.
- ft116 -- **waxmy al h%**“nonne invenient”, Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Vatablus
- ft117 -- **μytmj r μj r%**“vulvam vulvas duas”, Piscator.
- ft118 -- Vid. R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 59. 1.
- ft119 -- Julian. Opera, par. 1. crat. 2. p. 94. Vid. Homer. Iliad. 6. ver. 289, 290.
- ft120 -- Nat. Hist. 1. 8. c. 48.
- ft121 -- So David de Pomis Lexic. fol. 90. 3. or “because men flowed and flocked to them for safety”; so Buxtorf.
- ft122 -- Antiqu. 1. 5. c. 6. sect. 1.
- ft123 -- **hbra ydk** “tanquam locustae”, Pagninus, V. L. Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.
- ft124 -- Descriptio Africae, l. 9. p. 745.
- ft125 -- Clio, sive, l. 1. c. 17.
- ft126 -- **aybn çya** “virum prophetam”, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.
- ft127 -- Seder Olam Rabba, c. 20. p. 53.
- ft128 -- Antiqu. 1. 5. c. 6. sect. 5, 7.
- ft129 -- De loc. Heb. fol. 90. K.
- ft130 -- Vid. Homer. Iliad. 20. ver. 495, 496, 497.
- ft131 -- **ypl a** “chilias, mea”, Montanus, Drusius; “mea millenaria”, Tigurine version; “mille meum”, Piscator.
- ft132 -- “Pater meus”, Pagninus; so some in Drusius.
- ft133 -- De Antiqu. mensuris Heb. 1. 2. c. 5. sect. 9.

- ft134 -- **rwçj rp** “juvencum bovem”, Drusius; “juvencum adultiorem”, Junius & Tremellius.
- ft135 -- Opera & dies, l. 2. ver. 54. 55.
- ft136 -- Iliad. 2. ver. 403. & Iliad. 7. ver. 35.
- ft137 -- **rpw** “et juvencum alium”, Tigurine version; “et alterum taurum”, V. L. “et juvencum secundum”, Pagninus, Montanus.
- ft138 -- **wyl [επ αντο**, Sept. “super illud”, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius.
- ft139 -- T. Bab. Temurah, fol. 28. 2. & 29. 1.
- ft140 -- Apud Euseb. Evangel Praepar. l. 1. p. 31.
- ft141 -- Moreh Nevochim, par. 2. c. 45.
- ft142 -- **j çbl** “induit”, Pagninus, Montanus, etc. Vid. Maimon. ut supra. (T. Bab. Temurah, fol. 28. 2. & 29. 1.) So Homer often represents his heroes as clothed with fortitude and courage; see Iliad. 17.
- ft143 -- See Weemse’s Christian Synagogue, l. 1. c. 6. sect. 5.
- ft144 -- **wnprxa** “defaecabo”, Drusius; “eliquabo, seu purgabo”, Piscator.
- ft145 -- Var. Hist. l. 1. c. 4.
- ft146 -- Hist. Animal. l. 8. c. 6.
- ft147 -- Achilles Tattius, l. 4.
- ft148 -- Strabo. Geograph. l. 16. p. 532.
- ft149 -- Antiqu. l. 5. c. 6. sect. 3.
- ft150 -- Homer. Iliad. 10. ver. 222, etc.
- ft151 -- Nat. Hist. l. 18. c. 7.
- ft152 -- **l wl x** “umbra”, vid. Gussetium, p. 715. “strepitus”, Tigurine version; so Kimchi & Ben Gersom; “subcineritius”, V. L. “tostus”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.
- ft153 -- **l hah**

ft154 -- Antiqu. l. 5. c. 6. sect. 4.

ft155 -- **hl [ml** “desuper”, Pagninus, Montanus; “superne”, Tigurine version.

ft156 -- Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 5. c. 6. sect. 4.)

ft157 -- **wrbç** “fractionem ejus”, Vatablus, Drusius; “fracturam ejus”, Piscator.

ft158 -- Liv. Hist. l. 36. c. 24. “Suidas in. voce” **προφνλακη**, “et in voce” **φνλακη**

ft159 -- **μyrmçh ta wmyqh μqh** “suscitando suscitaverunt custodes”, Pagninus, Montanus.

ft160 -- “At tuba terribilem sonitum”, etc. Virgil Aeneid. 9.

ft161 -- **✚** “confracta”, Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus.

ft162 -- Antiqu. l. 5. c. 6. sect. 5.

ft163 -- De loc. Heb. fol. 88. M.

ft164 -- “Nempe Jordanis aquas”, Junius & Tremellius; “nempe Jordanem”, Piscator.

ft165 -- Odyss. 13. “prope finem”.

ft166 -- Hist. l. 36. c. 30.

ft167 -- De vera Sap. l. 4. c. 17.

ft168 -- Paradise Lost, l. 1. ver. 7.

ft169 -- **μj l twrkk** “buccellas panis”, Vatablus; “tractas panis”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; so the Targum.

ft170 -- De loc. Heb. fol. 90. B.

ft171 -- Antiqu. l. 5. c. 6. sect. 5.

ft172 -- Travels of the Patriarchs, etc. p. 109.

ft173 -- **wyl a btkyw** “et scripsit ad eum”, Montanus, Piscator; “et scripsit sibi”, Pagninus, Munster; so some in Drusius.

- ft174 -- [dyw “et cognoscere fecit”, Montanus; so some in Vatablus; “notificavit”, Piscator.
- ft175 -- Sabbat, c. 14. sect. 4.
- ft176 -- Virg. Aeneid. l. 7. v. 278.
- ft177 -- Nat. Hist. l. 11. c. 37.
- ft178 -- [^]tn [^]wtn “dando dabimus”, Pagninus, Montanus.
- ft179 -- Physica Sacra, vol. 3. p. 468.
- ft180 -- Tubal Cain, p. 15.
- ft181 -- De Numis. Heb. l. 2. c. 10.
- ft182 -- Geograph. l. 16. p. 539.
- ft183 -- De leg. Heb. l. 3. c. 3. Dissert. 7. sect. 5.
- ft184 -- wyrj a “post ipsum”, Vatablus.
- ft185 -- So Junius & Tremellius, Noldius, p. 280. No. 1205.
- ft186 -- Annal. Vet. Test. p. 43.
- ft187 -- Antiqu. l. 5. c. 7. sect. 1.
- ft188 -- Gerard. Voss Chronolog. Sacr. Dissert. 1. p. 4.
- ft189 -- De Situ Orbis, l. 1. c. 12.
- ft190 -- Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 20.
- ft191 -- Eunapius in Vita Proaeresii, p. 117.
- ft192 -- Apud Euseb. Evangel. Praepar. l. 1. p. 38.
- ft193 -- Apud Euseb. Evangel. Praepar. l. 1. p. 36.
- ft194 -- Servius in Virgil. Aeneid. l. 12. “Latoniaeque genus”, etc. Vid. Liv. Hist. l. 8. c. 5, 6.
- ft195 -- Vid. Kipping. Antiqu. Roman. l. 1. c. 1. p. 48.
- ft196 -- Pausan. Eliac. 1. sive. l. 5. p. 336. Sophocles in Philoctete, prope finem.

- ft197 -- Travels of the Patriarchs, etc. p. 111.
- ft198 -- **abj n εκρυβη** Sept. “absconditus est”, V. L. “qui absconditus fuit”, Tigurine version; so the Targum.
- ft199 -- Antiqu. 1. 5. c. 7. sect. 2.
- ft200 -- Opera, par. 2. ep. 24. Sarapioni, p. 142.
- ft201 -- **dgnm wçpn ta Æl çyw** “et projecit animam suam a louge”, Pagninus; “vel eminus”, Montanus; so Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.
- ft202 -- De loc. Heb. fol. 89. I
- ft203 -- Journey from Aleppo, etc. p. 64, 66.
- ft204 -- Antiqu. 1. 5. c. 7. sect. 2.
- ft205 -- **μyρx** “obsident”, Pagninus, Munster, Drusius; “obsidere cogitant”, Piscator.
- ft206 -- **μyl l j wl pn** “et ceciderant vulnerati multi”, Pagninus, Montanus.
- ft207 -- De loc. Heb. fol. 94. B.
- ft208 -- Antiqu. 1. 5. c. 7. sect. 4.
- ft209 -- **μyçarhw** “et capita”, Pagninus, Montanus, Drusius; “et principes”, Vatablus.
- ft210 -- Sigonius de regn. Ital. 1. 13, & 14.
- ft211 -- Antiqu. 1. 5. c. 7. sect. 4.
- ft212 -- Theatrum Terrae Sanct. p. 70.
- ft213 -- De loc. Heb. 95. D.
- ft214 -- **wtl gl g ta Btw** “et confregit cranium ejus”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; so Tigurine version.
- ft215 -- “O turpe fatum! foemina Herculeae, necis Auctor feretur ----”
Seneca Oetaeo.
- ft216 -- Juchasin, fol. 136. 1.
- ft217 -- Antiqu. 1. 5. c. 7. sect. 6.

- ft218 -- De loc. Heb. fol. 90. B.
- ft219 -- Palestina Illustr. tom. 2. p. 679.
- ft220 -- Hist. l. 5.
- ft221 -- Geograph. l. 16. p. 528.
- ft222 -- Bibliothec. l. 3. p. 176.
- ft223 -- Moreh Nevochim, par. 1. c. 41.
- ft224 -- Antiqu. l. 5. c. 7. sect. 7.
- ft225 -- Apud Selden. de Success. ad leg. Ebr. c. 3. p. 32.
- ft226 -- **trj a hçā** “mulieris alterius”, Pagninus, Montanus; “exterae”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; so Tigurine version.
- ft227 -- “Pro uxore hanc peregrinam”, Terent. Audria, act 1, scen. 1. l. 118.
- ft228 -- De loc. Heb. fol. 25. A.
- ft229 -- Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 5. c. 7. sect. 7.)
- ft230 -- Aelian. Var. Hist. l. 6. c. 10. l. 13. c. 24. “Suidas in voce” **δημοποιητος**.
- ft231 -- **χψαμαλος αιγυπτος** Theocrit. Idyll. 17. ver. 79.
- ft232 -- Seder Olam Rabba, c. 12. Vid. Jarchium & Kimchium in loc.
- ft233 -- Tzemach David, fol. 81. 3.
- ft234 -- De loc. Heb. fol. 93. E.
- ft235 -- Antiqu. l. 5. c. 7. sect. 10.
- ft236 -- Geograph. l. 5. c. 17.
- ft237 -- De loc. Heb. fol. 88. K.
- ft238 -- **hnmm** Targum apud Kimchi. Vid. Masoram in loc. “ex ea”, so some in Vatablus.
- ft239 -- **wnmm** “ex se”, Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius; so Noldius, p. 614. No. 1641.

- ft240 -- **μyrrhh l [ytdryw** “et descendam super montes”, Pagninus, Montanus; “descendamque ad montes”, Tigurine version.
- ft241 -- Tanchuma.
- ft242 -- Antiqu. l. 5. c. 7. sect. 10.
- ft243 -- Bereshit Rabba, sect. 60, fol. 52. 3. Vajikra Rabba, sect. 37. fol. 176. 4.
- ft244 -- De Voto Jephthae, sect. 12.
- ft245 -- Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 3. c. 22. Servius in Virgil. Aeneid. l. 3. col. 693. in l. 11. col. 1634.
- ft246 -- Bereshit Rabba & Vajikra, ut supra. ({}); Midrash Kohelet, fol. 81. 3.
- ft247 -- **twntl** “ad alloquendum”, Pagninus, Montanus; “ut dissererent”, Tigurine version; “ut colloquerentur”, Vatablus; “ad confabulandum”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.
- ft248 -- Contr. Haeres. l. 2. Haeres. 55.
- ft249 -- **q[xy εβονσεν**, Sept. “clamatus”, i.e. “clamando convocatus”, Piscator. “mnellius”, Pimcator.
- ft250 -- **rb[y** “transivit”, Pagninus, Montanus; “transiverunt”, Junius et Tremellius, Piscator.
- ft251 -- **ˆk** “sic”, Pagninus, Montanus.
- ft252 -- **ˆwkn al** “non dirigebat”, Montanus.
- ft253 -- Antiqu. l. 5. c. 7. sect. 12.
- ft254 -- Antiqu. l. 5. c. 7. sect. 13.
- ft255 -- T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 91. 1.
- ft256 -- Juchasin, fol. 136. 1.
- ft257 -- Gerard. Vossii Isagoge Chron. dissert. 1. p. 4.
- ft258 -- Juchasin, ut supra. (fol. 136. 1.)

- ft259 -- Evangel. Praepar. l. 10. c. 11. p. 484.
- ft260 -- Evangel. Praepar. l. 10. c. 11. p. 503.
- ft261 -- Ut supra, (Antiqu. l. 5. c. 7.) sect. 15.
- ft262 -- Ibid. (Antiqu. l. 5.) c. 8. sect. 1.
- ft263 -- Antique. l. 5. c. 8. sect. 2.
- ft264 -- T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 61. 1.
- ft265 -- T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 91. 1. Juchasin, fol. 10. 8.
- ft266 -- Antiqu. l. 5. c. 8. sect. 2.
- ft267 -- Ut supra, (Antiqu. l. 5. c. 8.) sect. 3.
- ft268 -- Antiqu. l. 5. c. 8. sect. 3.
- ft269 -- **μαω** “si autem”, V. L. “quod si”, Tigurine version; “sin autem”, Junius & Tremellius; “si vero”, Piscator.
- ft270 -- Antiqu. l. 5. c. 8. sect. 3.
- ft271 -- **yal p ψαυμαστον**, Sept. “mirabile”, V. L. Montanus; “mirificus”, Junius & Tremellius.
- ft272 -- Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 5. c. 8. sect. 3.)
- ft273 -- Ibid. (Antiqu. l. 5. c. 8. sect. 3.)
- ft274 -- Ut supra, (Antiqu. l. 5. c. 8.) sect. 4.
- ft275 -- T. Bab. Sotah, fol. 10. 1.
- ft276 -- Hierozoic. par. 1. l. 3. c. 4. col. 763, 764.
- ft277 -- Travels, etc. p. 115.
- ft278 -- **yny[b hrçy** “recta in oculis meis”, Montanus, Junius et Tremellius.
- ft279 -- Strabo. Geograph. l. 16. p. 514. Curtius, l. 8. sect. 1. Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 16.
- ft280 -- Geograph, l. 16. p. 520.

- ft281 -- Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 20.
- ft282 -- Antiqu l. 5. c. 8. sect. 5.
- ft283 -- **μymym** “a diebus”, Montanus; “post dies”, Vatablus.
- ft284 -- Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 5. c. 8. sect. 5.)
- ft285 -- Aristot. Hist. Animal. l. 9. c. 40. Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 11. c. 21.
- ft286 -- Ut supra, (Antiqu. l. 5. c. 8.) sect. 6.
- ft287 -- Terpsichore, sive, l. 5. c. 114.
- ft288 -- “----quoquo modo caesis”, etc. Georgic. l. 4. ver. 284, etc.
“Liguefacta boum per viscera”, etc. Ib ver. 555.
- ft289 -- Apud Ovid. Melamorph. l. 15. fab. 4. ver. 365, 366.
- ft290 -- Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 5. c. 8. sect. 6.)
- ft291 -- Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 5. c. 8. sect. 6.)
- ft292 -- Antiqu. l. 5. c. 8. sect. 6.
- ft293 -- Opera, par. 9. epist. 24.
- ft294 -- Odyss. 4. ver. 336.
- ft295 -- Vid. Horat. Carmin, l. 2. ode 5. Graja. “Juvenca venit”. Ovid. ep.
5. ver. 117.
- ft296 -- Vid. Bochart. Hierozoic par. 1. l. 2. c. 41. col. 406.
- ft297 -- Travels of the Patriarchs, etc. p. 116.
- ft298 -- Origin. l. 12. c. 1. p. 101.
- ft299 -- **ytrma rma** “dicendo dixi”, Pagninus, Montanus, Piscator.
- ft300 -- **htanç anç** “odiendo odires eam”, Pagninus, Montanus; so
Piscator.
- ft301 -- Morrison’s Voyage, l. 2. c. 31. apud Calmet in the word “Fox”.
- ft302 -- L. 2. c. 11. apud Scheuchzer. Physic. Sacr. vol. 3. p. 476.

- ft303 -- *Observ. Halens. apud Stockium in voc. I [Ç, p. 1126. & Hardtius apud Marck. Dissertat. Philolog. Exercitat. 5. sect. 7. p. 196.*
- ft304 -- *Fasti, l. 4. Vid. Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 5. c. 26.*
- ft305 -- *Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 16.*
- ft306 -- *Vopiscus in Vita Probi.*
- ft307 -- *Ib. in "Vita ejus".*
- ft308 -- *Antiqu. l. 5. c. 8. sect. 7.*
- ft309 -- *Ibid. (Antiqu. l. 5. c. 8.) sect. 8.*
- ft310 -- *Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 5. c. 8. sect. 8.)*
- ft311 -- *wdryw, "et descenderunt", Pagninus, Montanus; "descenderunt ergo", V. L. Tigurine version.*
- ft312 -- *Tzemach David, fol. 112. 3.*
- ft313 -- *Vid. Plin Nat. Hist. l. 19. 1.*
- ft314 -- *Travels, p. 116.*
- ft315 -- *wsmly "diffuxerunt", Tigurine version; "liquefacta sunt", Piscator.*
- ft316 -- *Antiqu. l. 5. c. 8. sect. 9.*
- ft317 -- *Antiqu. l. 5. c. 8. sect. 9.*
- ft318 -- *Ibid. (Antiqu. l. 5. c. 8. sect. 9.)*
- ft319 -- *Annal. par. 2. p. 164. apud Reland. Palestin. Illustrat. p. 872.*
- ft320 -- *Travels, l. 3. p. 118.*
- ft321 -- *Travels, l. 3. p. 116.*
- ft322 -- *Ut supra. (Travels, l. 3. p. 118.)*
- ft323 -- *"Theatrum Terrae Sanet". p. 133.*
- ft324 -- *Ut supra, (Travels l. 3.) p. 117.*
- ft325 -- *"_____ sacris in postibus arma: _____ & portarum ingentia claustra." Virgil. Aeneid. 7. ver. 185.*

- ft326 -- T. Bab. Sotah, fol. 10. 1.
- ft327 -- Ut supra, (Theatrum Terra Sanct.) p. 24.
- ft328 -- De loc. Heb. fol. 94. L.
- ft329 -- Travels, p. 116, 117.
- ft330 -- Ut supra, (Antiqu. l. 5. c. 8.) sect. 11.
- ft331 -- T. Bab. Sotah, fol. 9. 2.
- ft332 -- De Antiquis Numis, l. 2. c. 5.
- ft333 -- Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 5. c. 8. sect. 9.)
- ft334 -- Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 5. c. 8. sect. 9.)
- ft335 -- Ibid.
- ft336 -- Antiqu. l. 5. c. 8. sect. 11.
- ft337 -- Antiqu. l. 5. c. 8. sect. 11.
- ft338 -- **wj yrhb** “cum olfecerit”, Drusius, so Piscator.
- ft339 -- “Arguto conjux”, etc. Virgil. Georgie. l. 1. v. 294. So Penelope in Homer, Minerva & Arachne in Ovid. Metamorph. l. 6. fab. 1. v. 55, etc. Vid. Pignorium de servis, p. 418. Braunium de Vest. Sacerd. Hebr. l. 1. c. 17. sect. 33.
- ft340 -- “De Vest”. Sacerd. Hebr. l. 1. c. 16. sect. 8.
- ft341 -- **rxqt** “abbreviata est”, Montanus, Drusius. So Munster.
- ft342 -- Aelian. Var. Hist. l. 2. c. 24.
- ft343 -- Vid. Pausan. Eliac. 2. sive. l. 6. p. 309.
- ft344 -- Vid. Pignorium de servis, p. 89, 90, 91. & Popma de servis, p. 57, 58.
- ft345 -- See Lightfoot. Hor. Heb. in Mark iv. 1. Vid. Sterringae Animadv. Philolog. Sacr. p. 248.
- ft346 -- Pausaniae Attica, sive, l. 1. p. 33. Ovid Metamorph. l. 8. Fab. 1.

- ft347 -- **wrqny** “effoderant”, Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Junius & Tremelius, Piscator
- ft348 -- Misn. Sotah. c. sect. 8.
- ft349 -- De Situ Orbis, l. 1. c. 11.
- ft350 -- T. Bab. Sotah, fol. 10. 1.
- ft351 -- **j l g rçak** “ut rasmus fuerat”, Tigurine version, Vatablus; “ut quum abraderetur”, Junius & Tremellius.
- ft352 -- Hicron. in Isa. xvii. fol. 39. K.
- ft353 -- So David de Pomis Lexic. fol. 18. 3. & Milton in his Paradise Lost, l. 1. v. 462, 463. “Dagon his name; sea monster! upward man, And downward fish.”
- ft354 -- Bibliothec. l. 2. p. 92. & Ovid Metamorph. l. 4. Fab. 1. v. 44, etc.
- ft355 -- De Natura Deorum, l. 3.
- ft356 -- De Abstinencia, l. 2. sect. 6.
- ft357 -- Apud Euseb. Evangel. Praepar. l. 1. p. 36, 37.
- ft358 -- Antiqu. l. 5. c. 8. sect. 12.
- ft359 -- Vid. Rivinum de Majumis, etc. c. 6. sect. 13.
- ft360 -- Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 5. c. 8. sect. 12.)
- ft361 -- Nat. Hist. l. 36. c. 15.
- ft362 -- Rapin’s History of England, vol. 1. p. 188.
- ft363 -- Baumgarten. Perogrinationo, l. 2. c. 3. p. 27. Vid. Adrichom. Theatrum Terrae S. p. 134.
- ft364 -- Sandy’s Travels, l. 3. p. 116.
- ft365 -- T. Hieros. Sotah, fol. 17. 2.
- ft366 -- T. Bab. Sotah, fol. 10. 1.
- ft367 -- Antiqu. l. 5. c. 2. sect. 8, etc.
- ft368 -- Seder Olam Rabba, c. 12. p. 33.

- ft369 -- Works, vol. 1. p. 46.
- ft370 -- Works, vol. 1. p. 45.
- ft371 -- **Æl j ql** “captum est tibi”, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius.
- ft372 -- **dy ta al myw** “et implevit manum”, Montanus, V. L.
- ft373 -- Apud Hottinger. Smegma Orient. p. 522.
- ft374 -- **μydg b Ær [** “irdinem vestimentorum”, Pagninus, Montanus, Muuster, Vatablus; “demensum vestimentorum”, Tigurine version.
- ft375 -- Travels of the Patriarchs, etc. p. 112.
- ft376 -- Ut supra. (Travels of the Patriarchs, etc. p. 112.)
- ft377 -- De loc. Heb. fol. 90. H.
- ft378 -- Adrichom. Theatrum Terrae Sanct. p. 105.
- ft379 -- Antiqu. 1. 5. c. 3. sect. 1.
- ft380 -- Ut supra. (Antiqu. 1. 5. c. 3. sect. 1.)
- ft381 -- Ut supra. (Antiqu. 1. 5. c. 3. sect. 1.)
- ft382 -- **μyçj m pta** “vos autem desidetis”, Tigurine version; “et vos quiescitis”, Munster.
- ft383 -- Ut supra. (Travels of the Patriarchs, etc. p. 112.)
- ft384 -- Ibid. (Travels of the Patriarchs, etc. p. 112.)
- ft385 -- T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 109. 2.
- ft386 -- Shiloh, l. 4. c. 28. p. 334.
- ft387 -- See Dr. Kennicott’s Dissertation 2. p. 51, etc.
- ft388 -- Apud Glassium in Philolog. Sacr. 1. 1. tract. 1. sect. 2.
- ft389 -- Maimon. in Misn. Zebachim, c. 14. sect. 6. & Bartenora in ib. sect. 7.
- ft390 -- So Pagninus, Tigurine version, Drusius.

- ft391 -- **wyl** [“apud eum”, Pagninus, Piscator; “cum eo”, Junius & Tremellius.
- ft392 -- “Conspectu ejus”, Vatablus; “coram eo”, Drusius.
- ft393 -- **hbl** **l** [“ad cor”, Pagninus.
- ft394 -- **μwyh twj n d** [“usque ad declinare diem”, Montanus; to the same purpose Pagninus, Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.
- ft395 -- **hpr** “debilitata est”, Pagninus, Vatablus; “remissus est”, Junius & Tremellius.
- ft396 -- **μwyh twnh** “castrametatio diei”, Drusius.
- ft397 -- Hieron. de loc. Heb. fol. 89. E.
- ft398 -- **dam dr** “descenderat valde”, Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version.
- ft399 -- De Bello Jud. l. 5. c. 2. sect. 1.
- ft400 -- De loc. Heb. fol. 94. B.
- ft401 -- Aelian. Var. Hist. l. 4. c. 1.
- ft402 -- Antiqu. l. 5. c. 2. sect. 8.
- ft403 -- Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 5. c. 2. sect. 8.)
- ft404 -- Herodot. Urania, sive, l. 8. c. 33.
- ft405 -- Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 5. c. 2. sect. 8.)
- ft406 -- Justia. e Trogo, l. 38. c. 8.
- ft407 -- Apud Quistorp. in loc.
- ft408 -- Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 5. c. 2. sect. 8.)
- ft409 -- Pisah-Sight, B. 2. c. 12. p. 259.
- ft410 -- **twnp** “anguli”, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Munster, Vatablus, Drusius, Tigurine version.
- ft411 -- **wn** [“afflixerunt”, Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus.

- ft412 -- Schulchan Aruch, par. 1. c. 580. sect. 2.
- ft413 -- Antiqu. 1. 5. c. 2. sect. 9.
- ft414 -- Antiqu. 1. 5. c. 2. sect. 10.
- ft415 -- Antiqu. 1. 5. c. 2. sect. 10.
- ft416 -- Geograph 1. 3. p. 116.
- ft417 -- Bibliothec. 1. 5. p. 298.
- ft418 -- Roman Cost. 1. 3. c. 8.
- ft419 -- Vid. Barthii Ammadv. ad Claudian. in 3 Consul. Honor. ver. 50.
- ft420 -- Nat. Hist. 1. 7. c. 56.
- ft421 -- Philoetrat. Vit. Apollon. 1. 2. c. 12.
- ft422 -- Ut supra. (Antiqu. 1. 5. c. 2. sect. 10.)
- ft423 -- T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 103. 2. Pirke Eliezer, c. 28. Jarchi & Kimchi in loc.
- ft424 -- Vid. Rainold. de lib. Apocryph. Praelect. 149, 150. p. 345, 353, 354.
- ft425 -- Ut supra, (Antiqu. 1. 5. c. 2.) sect. 11.
- ft426 -- So the Septuagint, and Noldius, p. 69. No. 345.
- ft427 -- Travels, etc. p. 121.
- ft428 -- De loc. Heb. fol. 89. I.
- ft429 -- **wj çpy** “extenderunt se”, Tigurine version.
- ft430 -- **Æçmy** “pertraxerunt buccinae sonitum”, Paguninus; so Jarchi and Limchi.
- ft431 -- **d[wmh** “tempus constitutum”, Panginus, Montanus, Junius et Tremellius, Piscator.
- ft432 -- Ut supra. (Antiqu. 1. 5. c. 2. sect. 10.)

- ft433 -- **whpydrh** “persequi fecerunt eum”, Pagninus, Montanus, Drusius; “vel eos”, Vatablus.
- ft434 -- De loc. Heb. fol. 94. B.
- ft435 -- Theatrum Terrae S. p. 90.
- ft436 -- De loc. Heb. fol. 88. K. & fol. 93. L.
- ft437 -- Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 5. c. 2. sect. 10.)
- ft438 -- Travels, etc. p. 121.
- ft439 -- **hl wtb hr[n]** “puellam viginem”, Montanus; “puellas virgines”, Pagninus, Tigurine version, Drusius, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.
- ft440 -- Misn. Succah, c. 5. sect. 1, 4. Vid. Maimon. Hilchot Lulab, c. 8. sect. 13.
- ft441 -- Journey from Aleppo, p. 63.
- ft442 -- Misn. Menachot, c. 8. sect. 6.
- ft443 -- Liv. Hist. l. 1. p. 7, 8. Flor Hist. Rom. l. 1. c. 1. Aurel. Victor. de Vir Illustr. c. 2. Valer. Maxim. l. 1. c. 4.
- ft444 -- Hierop adv. Jovinian. l. 1. fol. 17. B, C.
- ft445 -- Vid. Albericum Gentil. de armis Roman l. 2. p. 114.