

CHAPTER 18

INTRODUCTION TO FIRST SAMUEL 18

This chapter gives an account of the respect shown to David by Saul and Jonathan, by the servants of Saul, and all the people, and of what was said in his praise in the songs of the women, (^{Q1801}1 Samuel 18:1-7); which latter gave Saul a great offence, and upon which he envied him, and eyed him, and indeed sought his life, and removed him from him; and yet still he continued the darling of the people, behaving wisely among them, which greatly embarrassed Saul, that he knew not what to do, (^{Q1808}1 Samuel 18:8-16); he proposed his eldest daughter to him in marriage, which he had a claim to by killing the Philistine, and then he cheated him by giving her to another, (^{Q1817}1 Samuel 18:17-19); and then he offered his youngest daughter to him, on condition that he would bring him an hundred foreskins of the Philistines, execution of which he thought his life would be exposed to danger, which yet he performed, (^{Q1820}1 Samuel 18:20-27); and having the affection of his wife, and the good esteem of the servants of Saul, Saul was more afraid of him, and became his enemy, (^{Q1828}1 Samuel 18:28-30).

Ver. 1. *And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul,* etc.] In answer to his questions about his descent and family, and doubtless more things were talked of than are recorded:

that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David: he won his heart, made a conquest of his affections, these went out towards him, and cleaved unto him; such were the comeliness of his person, his graceful mien and deportment, his freedom and fluency of expression, his courage and undauntedness, joined with prudence, modesty, and integrity, that they strongly attached him to him:

and Jonathan loved him as his own soul; not only according to the excellency of David's soul, and the greatness of it, as that deserved respect and love, as Abarbinel suggests, but he loved him as he loved himself. There was a similarity in their persons, in their age, in the dispositions of their minds, in their wisdom, courage, modesty, faithfulness, and openness

of soul, that attracted them to each other, that they became as another self; as one soul, as Aristotle speaks ^{f384} of true friends: instances of very cordial friendship are given by Plutarch ^{f385}, as in Theseus and Pirithous, Achilles and Patroclus, Orestes and Pylades, Pythias and Damon, Epaminondas and Pelopidas; but none equal to this.

Ver. 2. *And Saul took him that day*, etc.] Not only into his favour, and into his service, but into his court; even on that very day he slew the Philistine, or however as soon as it could be done:

and would let him go no more home to his father's house; as he used to do before; when he only served as a musician to him, then he was only at court when Saul was in a melancholy disposition, and wanted him, and so was going and returning, and in the intervals kept his father's sheep, (⁴⁹⁷⁵⁻¹ Samuel 17:15); but now he would not suffer him to attend such business any longer, since he was not only to become a courtier, and be made a prince or noble, but to marry his daughter, according to the declaration he had made, with respect to any man that should kill Goliath.

Ver. 3. *Then Jonathan and David made a covenant*, etc.] A covenant of friendship; entered into a solemn agreement to keep up and maintain a cordial respect to each other, and to support each other's interest both in life and after death, whoever was the survivor; and in consequence of this David had a friend at court, when Saul fell out with him, and who pleaded his cause, and discovered his father's plots, and was the means of preserving David's life:

because he loved him as his own soul; so that this covenant was not founded in mere words, but in sincere and cordial affection, and was lasting and inviolable.

Ver. 4. *And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that [was] upon him*, etc.] As a token of his hearty love and true friendship, and that David might appear at court not in the habit of a shepherd, but in that of a prince:

and gave it to David, and his garments; his other garments besides his robe, and so clothed him from tip to toe, and which fitted him; for as there was a similarity in their souls, and the disposition of them, so in the make and hulk of their bodies, and in the stature of them:

even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle; these he gave him to accoutre himself with, that he might appear as a soldier, as well as like a

prince, and as another Jonathan, or rather the same; that they might seem as one, as alike in body, so in garb and habit.

Ver. 5. *And David went out whithersoever Saul sent him*, etc.] About any business whatsoever, especially about martial affairs, for which he was abundantly qualified:

[and] behaved himself wisely; in the management of them, using great prudence and discretion, and so failed not of success, and of recommending himself; the Targum renders it “prospering”; he was prosperous and successful in whatsoever he engaged, for the Lord was with him, and blessed him:

and Saul set him over the men of war; that is, of some of them, gave him the command of a troop; for Abner was captain or general of the army, and continued so:

and he was accepted in the sight of all the people; of all the people in the land in general, of all that knew or heard of him; being looked upon as a wise, valiant, and successful commander, and which gained him the esteem and affection of the people:

and also in the sight of Saul's servants; which was very much, and a rare thing, for servants are too apt to envy such as are rising in their credit and reputation; though this must not be understood of all, without exception; but of the generality of them; nor is the word “all” used of them, as is of the people; for some of them took the part of Saul afterwards against David, and were secretly his enemies, (see ¹⁰⁸²²1 Samuel 18:22-26).

Ver. 6. *And it came to pass, as they came*, etc.] The armies of Israel, with their commanders at the head of them:

when David was returned from the slaughter of the Philistine; either from the slaughter of Goliath, with his head in his hand, going to Jerusalem, and Saul accompanying him; or rather from the slaughter of the Philistines at some other time, the singular being put for the plural; since, according to the order of the history, this seems to be done after David was brought to court, and had been made a captain, and had been sent out on military expeditions, and had been successful therein, and from one of which he now returned:

that the women came out of all the cities of Israel; through which they passed:

singing and dancing; as were usual after great victories obtained, and deliverances wrought, the female sex being generally greatly affected with such things; since when things go otherwise they suffer much, and their fears rise high in time of battle; and when victory goes on their side, it gives them great joy, and which they used to express in this way:

to meet King Saul; the commander-in-chief, with his other officers, and David among the rest:

with tabrets, with joy, and with instruments of music; with pipes or flutes, which they both blew with their mouths, and played on with their hands, and other musical instruments exciting joy; the last word is, by the Targum, rendered,

“with cymbals;”

and so the Septuagint version; it signifies a musical instrument of three cords, according to Kimchi; and others, as Ben Gersom, understand it of principal songs, in which things wonderful, excellent, and honourable, were spoken of: (see ^{<0150>}Exodus 15:20 ^{<0134>}Judges 11:34). Such sort of women were among the Romans called Cymballariae and Tympanistriae ^{f386}, who shook the cymbals, and beat upon tabrets and drums at times of rejoicing.

Ver. 7. *And the women answered [one another] as they played*, etc.] They sung vocally to their instruments, and that by turns, one rehearsing one line or verse in the song, and then the other another:

and said, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands; which, if to be referred to the battle in the preceding chapter, as it commonly is, must be understood thus, that though Saul, in pursuit of the Philistines, slew many thousands of them, and David but one, even Goliath; yet the slaying of him was the occasion of slaying ten thousands, and therefore it is ascribed to him: but it seems rather that in some after battles David had been more prosperous and victorious than Saul, and therefore superior commendations are given him by the author of the song the women sung; which, however just it might be to give them, was not wise, since it served to irritate their king, as follows.

Ver. 8. *And Saul was very wroth, and the saying displeased him,* etc.] Partly because they called him plain Saul, and not King Saul; did not give him his royal title, which might serve to strengthen his suspicion, after suggested; and chiefly because they attributed a greater number of slain to David than to him, as follows:

and he said, they have ascribed unto David ten thousands, and to me they ascribed [but] thousands; and so had given more honour to an inferior officer than to the commander-in-chief, more to a subject than to a sovereign:

and [what can] he have more but the kingdom? there is nothing left out of their song, and nothing remains to be given him but that; some think that Saul knew, by the prudent behaviour of David, and the favour he was in with God and men, and by these commendations of the women, that the kingdom would be his; and that the words of Samuel were true, and would be confirmed, that the kingdom would be rent from him, and given to his neighbour better than he. This clause, with (^{ORB}1 Samuel 18:9-11), is left out of the Greek version, according to the Vatican copy.

Ver. 9. *And Saul eyed David from that day and forward.*] Instead of looking pleasantly, and with a smile, upon him, as a courtier and favourite, he was justly entitled to by his gallant behaviour, he looked at him with a sour, ill natured look; he looked at him with an evil, spiteful, malicious, and envious eye; or he diligently watched and observed all his motions and actions, whether they tended to disloyalty and treason, to dethrone him, and take the kingdom to himself, which he was suspicious of; he laid wait for him, as the Targum, and laid snares too, as the following history shows.

Ver. 10. *And it came to pass on the morrow,* etc.] After the women had met him with their music and dancing, and when returned home:

that the evil spirit from God came upon Saul; thinking on the above things that had passed, he became melancholy:

and he prophesied in the midst of the house; either really, delivering out divine songs, as the prophets did; according to Abarbinel, he foretold that David would be king, and the kingdom would be taken from him, and given to him; or he feigned himself a prophet, mimicking their motions and gestures; or, as the Targum, acted like a mad man, or a fool, uttering foolish words, and using ridiculous gestures, which seems most agreeable to the evil spirit in him:

and David played with his hand as at other times; upon his harp, to remove the evil spirit, or melancholy disposition from Saul; for though he was now advanced at court, and an officer in the army, and high in the affections and applause of the people: yet he did not think it below him to act as a musician, to do service to his prince; of such an humble, kind, and ingenuous disposition was he:

and [there was] a javelin in Saul's hand; a kind of spear, or half pike, which he had taken into his hand on purpose to kill David while playing; for persons in such circumstances as his, as they are very mischievous, so very subtle at contriving.

Ver. 11. *And Saul cast the javelin*, etc.] Out of his hand at David:

for he said; in his heart, determining in his mind:

I will smite David even to the wall [with it]; he determined to cast it with such force and violence, that it should pierce through David, and enter into the very wall, by the side of which David was:

and David avoided out of his presence twice; to escape the javelin cast at him; either he went out at the first time of its being thrown, and then came in again, when he threw it a second time at him, upon which he also withdrew; or this was one of the times, and the other some time after, of which (see ¹⁹¹⁰1 Samuel 19:9). Abarbinel thinks, that David, while he was playing, his eyes were so fixed upon his own hands, that he was not aware of the javelin, and turned himself from Saul without intention both times, and so escaped without knowledge of it; such was the good providence of God towards him, and which, when Saul perceived, it wrought upon him, as follows.

Ver. 12. *And Saul was afraid of David, because the Lord was with him*, etc.] Protecting and preserving him, prospering and succeeding him, giving him victory over his enemies, and favour among the people; the Targum is,

“the Word of the Lord was for his help.”

Procopius Gazaeus interprets it of the Holy Ghost, whose grace was vouchsafed unto him: he might be afraid in his melancholy fits, that as he had attempted to take away the life of David, that David would contrive and seek an opportunity, and take away his life, and seize the kingdom which God had given him, and his being with him strengthened these fears:

and was departed from Saul; so that he was destitute of courage, and greatness of mind, and of wisdom and prudence, and became mean and abject, and exposed himself to the contempt of his subjects.

Ver. 13. *Therefore Saul removed him from him*, etc.] From court, partly that he might be out of his sight, having such an hatred of his person that he could not bear to see him, and partly that he might be safer from any designs of his upon his life, which he might fear, because of his treatment of him:

and made him his captain over a thousand; not out of respect to him, and in honour of him, but partly to cover his malice, and please the people, and partly in hope that he might be slain by the enemy at the head of his troop:

and he went out and came in before the people; or at the head of them, as the Targum; he led them out to war, and returned with them in safety, with victory and in triumph, with great honour, and highly respected by them; quite contrary to the intention and hope of Saul.

Ver. 14. *And David behaved himself wisely in all his ways*, etc.] Both in the court and in the camp, in whatsoever service he was employed; or “prospered”^{f387}, as the word also signifies; for, generally speaking, those that behave wisely succeed well; in this he was a type of Christ, (²⁵¹³Isaiah 52:13); the reason of it follows,

and the Lord [was] with him; from whom he had his wisdom and success; the Targum is,

“the Word of the Lord was for his help.”

Ver. 15. *Wherefore when Saul saw that he behaved himself very wisely*, etc.] So that he could get no advantage against him, and he succeeded and was prosperous in all his enterprises, and was more and more in favour with the people:

he was afraid of him; lest the time was drawing near that the kingdom should be rent from him, and given to David.

Ver. 16. *And all Israel and Judah loved David*, etc.] The verb is singular, and denotes that everyone of them loved him in all the tribes of Israel, as well as in Judah his own tribe; in such general esteem was he, and so much had he got the hearts and affections of the people:

because he went out and came in before them; the people, as in (^{<09183>}1 Samuel 18:13); so the Septuagint version, in which, according to the Vatican copy, the verses (^{<09187>}1 Samuel 18:17-19) are wanting.

Ver. 17. *And Saul said to David*, etc.] Not in friendship and good will to him, but designing to lay a snare for him:

behold, my eldest daughter Merab, her will I give thee to wife; most interpreters understand it, that he was obliged to this by promise, on account of David's slaying Goliath, (^{<09175>}1 Samuel 17:25); but Abarbanel is of another mind, and he rightly observes, that the words referred to are not the words of Saul, but of the men of Israel, who might suppose what the king would do; or if they heard anything like it spoken by Saul, it was only in a hyperbolical way, signifying he did not care what he gave, and what he parted with, to the man that killed the Philistine, but was not strictly bound to this particular thereby; nor did David ever claim such promise, nor did Saul think himself bound to do it, but proposes it as an instance of his great kindness and favour, as he pretended, and therefore expected great returns for it, as follows:

only be thou valiant for me, and fight the Lord's battles: he knew he was a valiant man, and ready enough to fight; but he expected that in consideration of such a favour, and such high honour as this, that he would exert himself in an extraordinary manner, and engage in hazardous attempts, and show himself worthy to be the son of a king, in the defence of him and of his country, and for the glory of the God of Israel; all this he suggests, when his view was, that he should expose his life to such danger, that it might be hoped it would be taken away:

for Saul said; not openly and verbally, but in his heart; he thought within himself,

let not mine hand be upon him; he had attempted to lay hands on him, or to kill him with his own hands, but now he thought better, and consulted his credit among the people:

but let the hand of the Philistines be upon him; he hoped by these means that he would fall by their hands at the head of his troop, while he was displaying his valour, and hazarding his life for the good of his king and country; what Saul contrived proved his own case, he died in battle with the Philistines, (^{<09104>}1 Samuel 31:4).

Ver. 18. *And David said unto Saul*, etc.] Surprised at the offer Saul made him, yet not refusing it, but expressing himself with great modesty and humility:

who [am] I? as to his person, parentage, and employment, mean and despicable, at least in his own eyes, a type of the lowly Jesus, (⁴⁰¹²Matthew 11:29);

and what [is] my life? keeping sheep, for from thence was he taken and advanced; though some think his meaning is, that to hazard his life, as Saul proposed, was not equivalent to such an honour he meant to confer upon him, and that he was ready to do it at all times:

[or] my father's family in Israel; though in an honourable tribe, and was an honourable family, yet it seems not to be very great, at least was not in David's esteem worthy of such high advancement, as that one of it should be so nearly related to the king; Ben Gersom thinks David has reference to the original of his family, Ruth the Moabitess:

that I should be son in law to the king? as he would be by marrying his daughter.

Ver. 19. *But it came to pass, at the time when Merab, Saul's daughter, should have been given to David*, etc.] Either when the giving of her to him was talked of, or when the time fixed for her marriage was come:

that she was given to Adriel the Meholathite to wife: Saul either having in reality never designed she should be given to David, only proposed it to please the people, or to affront David, and expose him to shame and confusion by the step he meant to take, or however he soon changed his mind; though Abarbinel's notion is, that the young lady had disposed of herself to this person without her father's knowledge, which seems not likely; the person she was given to was the son of Barzillai the Meholathite, (⁴²⁰³2 Samuel 21:8); and some have observed, as the curse of God on this match, that all her sons were delivered to the Gibeonites, and hanged up, as related in the same place; for though these sons are said to be brought up by Michal, they were bore by Merab to him.

Ver. 20. *And Michal, Saul's daughter, loved David*, etc.] His youngest daughter fell in love with him, because of the comeliness of his person, his gallant behaviour, his wise conduct, and the general esteem and reputation he was had in, as may be supposed:

and they told Saul, and the thing pleased him; not that his daughter loved David, or that he should be his son-in-law, but that he should have an opportunity, as he hoped, of destroying David, which he had lost by giving his elder daughter to another; as also of retrieving his credit with the people, which was greatly sunk by using David in the manner he did, who had become the darling of the people.

Ver. 21. *And Saul said, I will give him her, that she may be a snare to him*, etc.] The cause and occasion of his fall and ruin, by means of what he should propose to him as the condition of marriage; but instead of proving a snare to him, as he hoped, she was the means of his deliverance, when Saul sent messengers to slay him, (¹⁰⁹¹1 Samuel 19:11-17),

and that the hand of the Philistines may be against him; provoked by what he should put him upon doing to them. The scheme he had in his head after appears, and what he now said was not openly said before his servants and courtiers, whom he did not trust with his secrets, but this he said within himself, conceived and contrived it in his own mind:

wherefore Saul said to David; who was as yet at court, or whom he sent for on this occasion:

thou shalt this day be my son in law in [the one of] the twain; by marrying one of his two daughters; signifying, that he would not defer the marriage, or put it off to a longer time, as he had done before, but that he should be married immediately to one or other of his daughters; and seeing he could not have the eldest, she being disposed of, he should have the youngest, and so be equally his son-in-law. If we read the words without the supplement, “shalt be my son-in-law in the two”, or in both, the sense is, that he should have them both; and so the Jews say ^{f388}, that he married them both, first Merab, and after her death Michal; or that he should be his son-in-law on two accounts, one by betrothing Merab, though he was not married to her, and the other by being married to Michal, so that he would be doubly his son in law; but the sense, according to the supplement, is best.

Ver. 22. *And Saul commanded his servants, [saying], commune with David secretly*, etc.] And persuade him to marry Michal, and assure him of Saul’s real regard to him, and good intention towards him; for it seems that David being ill used in the affair of his eldest daughter, did not listen to the

proposals of Saul as to the youngest, and therefore Saul took this method to bring him into them:

and say, behold, the king hath a delight in thee; bore a good will towards him, had an high opinion of him, and it would be a pleasure to him that he should be his son-in-law:

and all his servants love thee; which might be true in general, excepting some few; which was no small mortification to Saul, though he here pleads it, and puts his servants on making use of it to gain his present purpose:

now therefore be the king's son in law; accept of the proposal he has made, and marry his youngest daughter.

Ver. 23. *And Saul's servants spake these words in the ears of David,* etc.] Those before related, which Saul commanded them to speak, which they delivered exactly according to their orders, with an audible voice, clearly, plainly, and distinctly, so that David might hear and understand them:

and David said, seemeth it to you [a] light [thing] to be a king's son in law; a small a trifling matter, an easy thing to come into, every thing requisite to it:

seeing that I [am] a poor man; and not able to give a dowry suitable to the daughter of a king; it being usual in those times for a man to give a dowry to, and not receive a portion with a wife; and which also was the custom of the Germans, as Tacitus^{f389} relates; and this was to be according to the rank and quality of the person married, and which in this case David was not equal to:

and lightly esteemed? not by the people of Israel and Judah, who loved him, as he was loved even by the servants of Saul, at least in profession; but by Saul himself, who had slighted him in giving his elder daughter to another man, when he had promised her to him, which was discouraging to David, and resented by him.

Ver. 24. *And the servants of Saul told him, saying, on this manner spake David.*] Such and such words were spoken by him, to this purpose; the sum and substance of them were expressive of his unworthiness to be a king's son-in-law, and of his inability to bring a dowry suitable to her quality.

Ver. 25. *And Saul said, thus shall ye say to David*, etc.] In answer to his objections, and in order to remove them, and especially what concerned the dowry:

the king desireth not any dowry, but an hundred foreskins of the Philistines, to be avenged of the king's enemies; that is, he required or desired no other dowry of David, but that he would slay an hundred Philistines, and bring their foreskins to him; by which he would be able to know that they were Philistines he slew, not Israelites who were circumcised; though it cannot well be thought that Saul should have any suspicion of that, or take such a method to prevent it; but as those were almost, if not altogether, the only uncircumcised persons that were their neighbours, since the Arabians, Edomites, Midianites, etc. received circumcision from their ancestors, it would be a clear case to him that these were the men he slew; and whom he the rather pitched upon, because they were his enemies, and the enemies of Israel, and abhorred of the Lord; which carried in it a show of zeal for the glory of God, and the good of his people, and because he hoped David would fall by them in the enterprise, or however render himself very odious to them, and they would bear him ill will, and seek his ruin. Strabo^{f390} reports of the people in Carmania, that no man among them marries a wife before he cuts off the head of an enemy, and brings it to the king; and the king lays up the skulls in a treasury, and he is the most famous that has the most heads brought unto him. Saul chose not heads, but foreskins, for the reasons before given:

but Saul thought to make David fall by the hand of the Philistines; he hoped in the enterprise the Philistines would be too powerful for him, and kill him.

Ver. 26. *And when his servants told David these words*, etc.] That the king desired no other dowry than an hundred foreskins of the Philistines:

it pleased David well to be the king's son in law; on such conditions; partly because of the honour of it, and partly because of his love to Michal; and chiefly because it would give him an opportunity of destroying the enemies of God, and of his people, as well as such a match would lead the way, and be a step in Providence to ascend the throne designed for him in due time:

and the days were not expired; neither for the bringing in of the foreskins, nor for the consummation of the marriage.

Ver. 27. *Wherefore David arose and went, he and his men, and slew of the Philistines two hundred men,* etc.] This he did himself, for the verb is singular, and which were an hundred more than required; this he did to show his regard to the orders of Saul, and his obedience to him, and to testify the sincerity of his afflictions to his daughter, for whose sake he risked his life in this expedition, as well as to express his zeal for God, and his country, against their avowed enemies; the Greek version has only one hundred men, (see ^{<10184>}2 Samuel 3:14);

and David brought their foreskins; along with him to Saul's court, having taken them off when slain. Josephus says ^{f391} he cut off their heads, and brought them to him, and he makes the number to be six hundred; neither are according to the text, but to make his history more agreeable to the Gentiles, (see ^{<10182>}1 Samuel 18:21); an Arabic writer ^{f392} makes mention of a people, that cut off the genital parts of men, and gave them to their wives for their dowry:

and they gave them in full tale to the king; the messengers David sent in with them, even the full tale of two hundred, which were as many more as were demanded:

that he might be the king's son in law; being now as desirous of it as the king was:

and Saul gave him Michal his daughter to wife; which he could not in honour refuse to do, seeing he had performed the condition he had required. David's marriage of the younger sister, when upon various considerations it might have been expected that he should have married the elder, may be an emblem of Christ's espousing the Gentile church, when the Jewish church, her elder sister, is neglected by him, she having rejected him.

Ver. 28. *And Saul saw and knew that the Lord [was] with David,* etc.] This he perceived by the favour he gave him among men, by overruling all the steps Saul took to do him hurt, for his good, and in giving him success in all that he engaged in; the Targum is,

“that the Word of the Lord was for the help of David:”

and [that] Michal, Saul's daughter, loved him; and therefore could entertain no hope of making use of her as an instrument of his ruin, but, on

the contrary, would, out of her great affection to her husband, betray the designs of her father against him, and do all she could to preserve him.

Ver. 29. *And Saul was yet the more afraid of David*, etc.] Because the Lord was with him, and his wife loved him; so that he feared he should never be able to accomplish his designs, and that this marriage, which he intended as the means of his ruin, would pave the way for his ascending the throne:

and Saul became David's enemy continually; was every day giving fresh evidence of his enmity against him; before it was by fits, and at certain times, there were some intervals; but now enmity was rooted and habituated, and was constant and continually showing itself.

Ver. 30. *Then the princes of the Philistines went forth*, etc.] Out of their cities in troops, to revenge and spoil the land of Israel, being enraged at their defeat when Goliath their champion was slain, and at the injury and dishonour done them by David very lately in slaying two hundred of them, and taking off their foreskins; and, as the Jews say^{f393}, having heard of the marriage of David, and understanding the Israelites had a law, that a newly married man might not go to the war the first year, took this opportunity of invading and spoiling them; whereas David understood that law better than they, and knew it referred not to a voluntary war, but to that which was the command of God against the seven nations; and even in that case, as some think, it did not oblige such persons to remain at home, but left it to their choice to do as they pleased:

and it came to pass after they went forth; and were met and opposed by the Israelites, by the troops of Saul, under different commanders:

[that] David behaved himself more wisely than all the servants of Saul; showed himself to be more expert in the art of war, and formed designs with great wisdom and prudence, and which he as wisely executed, as well as with great courage and valour, to the annoyance and defeat of the enemy, and to the advantage, defence, and safety of the people of Israel; or he was more “prosperous” than they, as the Targum, and so others interpret it; he was more successful in his attacks on the Philistines, and in his skirmishes with them:

so that his name was much set by; he was in high esteem with the people; his name was “precious”^{f394} to them, as the word signifies; they made mention of it, as, Ben Gersom interprets it, with great honour and glory; so

that Saul failed much, and was greatly disappointed in the scheme he had formed against him,