

# CHAPTER 20

## INTRODUCTION TO FIRST SAMUEL 20

David fleeing from Naioth came to Jonathan, and acquainted him with his circumstances, and entreated his favour, (~~1~~1 Samuel 20:1-8); which Jonathan promised, and renewed the covenant with him, (~~1~~1 Samuel 20:9-17); a scheme was formed between them, by which David might know whether Saul was reconciled to him, and he might come to court, (~~1~~1 Samuel 20:18-23); which being tried, Jonathan found it was not safe for him to appear, (~~1~~1 Samuel 20:24-34); of which he gave notice by the signals agreed on, (~~1~~1 Samuel 20:35-40); and they took their leave of one another with strong expressions of affection and attachment to each other, (~~1~~1 Samuel 20:41,42).

**Ver. 1.** *And David fled from Naioth in Ramah*, etc.] While Saul was prophesying, or lay in a trance there:

*and came*; to Gibeah, where Saul dwelt, and had his palace, and kept his court:

*and said before Jonathan*; whom he found there, and for whose sake he thither fled to have his advice, and to use his interest with his father, and be his friend at court:

*what have I done? what [is] mine iniquity? and what [is] my sin before thy father, that he seeketh my life?* surely, as if he should say, I must have been guilty of some very great crime, and yet I am not sensible of it; canst thou tell me what it is that has so provoked thy father, that nothing will satisfy him but the taking away of my life, which he seeks to do?

**Ver. 2.** *And he said unto him, God forbid, thou shalt not die*, etc.] He could not believe his father had any such intention; and that if he discovered anything of that kind, it was only when he was in a frenzy, and a melancholy disorder had seized him; and that David had nothing to fear on that head, and that he would secure him from all danger in that respect; the thing was too gross and detestable to be credited:

*behold, my father will do nothing, either great or small, but that he will show it me*; such an interest had he in him, and in his favour, being his son and heir to his crown, and having done many warlike exploits, which had the more endeared him to him, that he made him privy to all his secret designs, and took his opinion in all matters of moment and importance:

*and why should my father hide this thing from me?* his design of taking away the life of David, if he had really formed one:

*it [is] not [so]*; Jonathan concluded, from his ignorance of it, there was nothing in it, and that it was only a surmise of David's; and yet it is strange that Jonathan should know nothing of the messengers being sent to David's house to take him, and of others sent to Naioth after him, and of Saul's going there himself with such a design; and if he did know anything of the matter, he made the best of it to David, partly to allay his fears, and partly that his father might not appear so black and vile as he really was.

**Ver. 3.** *And David sware moreover, and said*, etc.] To assure Jonathan of the truth of it, that he did most certainly seek after his life, of which, as he had no doubt himself, by an oath he endeavoured to remove any that might be in Jonathan, who was not willing to believe his father could be guilty of so foul a crime:

*thy father certainly knoweth that I have found grace in thine eyes*: that he was high in his favour, that he had a great value for him, and he had a large share in his love and friendship, and that was the reason why he hid from him his base intentions:

*and he saith, let not Jonathan know this, lest he be grieved*; as he would be, both for the evil his father would be guilty of, and the danger David, his beloved friend, would be in:

*but truly, [as] the Lord liveth, and [as] thy soul liveth, [there is] but a step between me and death*; as appeared by his casting a javelin at him, (<sup><0981></sup>1 Samuel 18:11), sending messengers to his own house to slay him, (<sup><0991></sup>1 Samuel 19:11), and others to Naioth to seize him, (<sup><0992></sup>1 Samuel 19:20), and coming himself thither with an intention to kill him, (<sup><0992></sup>1 Samuel 19:22,23), and in each of these instances he had a narrow escape for his life; and this he declared in the most solemn manner by an oath, for the confirmation of the truth of it to Jonathan.

**Ver. 4.** *Then said Jonathan unto David*, etc.] Now giving credit to what he had said, and in order to comfort and support him under the apprehensions he had of danger:

*whatsoever thy soul desireth, I will even do [it] for thee*; for the preservation of his life, by speaking to his father on his behalf, endeavouring to dissuade him from his evil intentions, or by hiding and concealing him in some obscure place, that he might not execute his evil designs upon him, or by any method he could point out to him.

**Ver. 5.** *And David said unto Jonathan*, etc.] Moved that the following method might be taken as a trial of the disposition of Saul's mind towards David:

*behold, tomorrow [is] the new moon*; the first day of the month, which was kept solemnly with burnt offerings and peace offerings, (see <sup>4000</sup>Numbers 10:10 28:11). Some say <sup>f408</sup>this feast was not kept for the new moon, but because it was the day of the feast of trumpets or the first day of the new year, which fell together on that day; the calends, or first day of the month, was with the Heathens sacred to deity <sup>f409</sup>, in imitation of the Jews:

*and I should not fail to sit with the king at meat*; it had been usual for him at such a time to sit at table with the king; next to him, as Jarchi interprets it, either as his son-in-law, or as one of his princes; the custom being for the king, and his family and nobles, to eat together on that day upon the peace offerings; and it was the duty of David to attend at that time, and it might be expected he would:

*but let me go*; he asked [leave] of Jonathan, who had power in his father's absence to grant it, he not being yet returned from Naioth:

*that I may hide myself in the fields, unto the third [day] at even*; or until the time of the evening of the third day, as the Targum, which was the evening of the second day of the month; for that was the third from that evening they were discoursing together, as Ben Gersom observes; the fields he proposed to hide himself in were near to Gibeah, and he doubtless meant some cave in those fields, where he might be, and not be seen by men; though it cannot be thought that he remained, or proposed to remain, in such a place during that time, where he would be in want of food, but that he would abide incognito among his friends somewhere or another, until the festival was over.

**Ver. 6.** *If thy father at all miss me*, etc.] Or diligently inquires after me:

*then say, David earnestly asked leave of me, that he might run to Bethlehem his city*: the place of his birth, called the city of David, where he was born and had lived, (~~4004~~Luke 2:4 ~~4072~~John 7:42), which was not far from Gibeah, and whither he could soon run; and which shows the haste he proposed to make, and his eager desire to be there, and which also is signified by his earnest and importunate request; for all this might be true, and no lie of David, framed for an excuse; and after he had hid himself some time in the field, until it was evening, he might go to Bethlehem, and return soon enough to meet Jonathan in the field at the time fixed by them on the third day:

*for [there] is a yearly sacrifice there for all the family*; it was customary for the family of Jesse one day in a year, and as it should seem on a first day of the month, and perhaps the first day of the first month, or New Year's Day, to have an anniversary feast by way of gratitude and thankfulness for the mercies of the year past, and for the continuance of them for time to come; in which the family rejoiced together at the great goodness of God unto them, (~~4092~~1 Samuel 9:12).

**Ver. 7.** *If he say thus, [it is] well*, etc.] It is very well, it is very good and right in him to do so:

*thy servant shall have peace*; it will be a token that the wrath of the king was removed, and that his mind was well disposed towards David, and things had taken an happy turn, and would issue in his peace and prosperity:

*but if he be very wroth*; with Jonathan for giving leave, and with David for going away:

*[then] be sure that evil is determined by him*; that he has a settled obstinate malice in his heart, which is become implacable and inveterate, and confirmed in him; and that it is a determined point with him to slay David if possible, which he hoped to have an opportunity of doing at that time in which he was disappointed, and caused such wrath in him.

**Ver. 8.** *Therefore thou shall deal kindly with thy servant*, etc.] By informing him how his father's mind stood affected to him, that he might conduct himself accordingly, either by appearing at court, or by providing for his safety by flight:

*for thou hast brought thy servant into a covenant of the Lord with thee*; a covenant of friendship between Jonathan and David, of which Jonathan was the first mover, and so is said to bring or persuade him into it; called the covenant of the Lord, because made in his name and fear, and before him as a witness of it; and this David pleads as an argument with Jonathan, to deal kindly and faithfully by him in the present case:

*notwithstanding, if there be in me iniquity, slay me thyself*: or pass sentence upon him to be slain; which, if guilty, he might have power to do in his father's absence, and which David desires might be done, notwithstanding the covenant of friendship between them, should he appear to deserve it by any action of his, of which he was not conscious; this expresses the strong sense he had of his own integrity, and served to confirm Jonathan in his opinion of it;

*for why shouldest thou bring me to thy father?* deliver him up into his hands to be put to a cruel death by him, or give him the trouble of doing it, when he might as well dispatch him at once.

**Ver. 9.** *And Jonathan said, far be it from thee*, etc.] To entertain such a thought of me, or to have the least suspicion of me, that I should conceal my father's ill intentions against thee, if known to me;

*for if I knew certainly that evil were determined by my father to come upon thee, then would I not tell it thee?* certainly I would; canst thou doubt of my kindness and fidelity? surely thou hast no reason, when such a covenant of friendship subsists between us, and there has not been the least breach of it on either side.

**Ver. 10.** *Then said David to Jonathan, who shall tell me?* etc.] The disposition of Saul's mind towards him, whether he gave a kind answer to the report of Jonathan concerning him:

*or what [if] thy father answer thee roughly?* or hard words, as the Targum, whether he answers in a kind, loving, and smooth manner, or whether in a rough and angry one: the question is here, how he should be informed of this, since especially, if in the latter, it would not be safe for Jonathan to come himself to him, nor could he well trust the message with any other. Abarbanel thinks, that the first of these expressions is by way of question, who should declare to him his father's will and intention, whether good or bad: and the latter by way of outcry, woe unto me, if thy father should answer thee roughly; I greatly fear he will chide thee for my sake; my heart

will be filled with sorrow if thou shouldst suffer reproach and rebuke on my account.

**Ver. 11.** *And Jonathan said unto David, come, and let us go out into the field,* etc.] That they might more fully, and freely, and familiarly talk of this affair between them, without any danger of being overheard by the servants of Saul, as they were in his palace, where they now were:

*and they went out both of them into the field;* which belonged to Gibeah.

**Ver. 12.** *And Jonathan said unto David, O Lord God of Israel,* etc.] Or by the Lord God of Israel, I swear unto thee; for this is the form of the oath, as Jarchi and Kimchi observe:

*when I have sounded my father about tomorrow any time, [or] the third [day];* searched, inquired, and found out how his disposition is:

*and, behold, [if there be] good toward David;* if he is well disposed to him, as may appear by speaking respectfully of him, or kindly inquiring after him, and by being satisfied with the account given him:

*and I then send not unto thee, and show it thee;* then let the vengeance of God fall upon me in some remarkable manner or another, as follows; or “shall I not then send unto thee, and show it thee”<sup>f410</sup>? certainly I will; that is, I will send a messenger to thee to acquaint thee with it, who shall tell it, and cause thee to hear it, as from myself.

**Ver. 13.** *The Lord do so and much more to Jonathan,* etc.] Recompense evil more than can be thought of and expressed, should he neglect to inform David of the good disposition of Saul unto him:

*but if it please my father [to do] thee evil;* if he seems determined upon it to take away thy life:

*then I will show it thee;* not by a messenger, by whom it would not be safe to communicate it, lest by that means Saul would know where he was, and come and slay him; but Jonathan would come himself, and acquaint him with it:

*and send thee away, that thou mayest go in peace;* give him leave, and advise him to depart, and provide for his own safety, adding his blessing on him, and prayer for him:

*and the Lord be with thee, as he hath been with my father*; in the beginning of his reign, giving him counsel and advice in all things, and victory over his enemies, succeeding and prospering him in whatsoever he engaged in; the Targum is,

“the Word of the Lord be for thy help, etc.”

Jonathan seemed to be fully apprized that David was to succeed in the kingdom.

**Ver. 14.** *And thou shalt not only, while yet I live, show me the kindness of the Lord*, etc.] Such kindness as is well pleasing in the sight of God, and imitate what he shows to men, and which was covenanted, promised, and agreed to in the presence of the Lord, when David and Jonathan entered into covenant with each other; this Jonathan did not doubt of, and therefore did not make this a request:

*that I die not*; he had no fear nor dread on his mind, should David come to the throne while he was alive, that he would take away his life; which was usually done by tyrants and usurpers, when there were any that had a fairer title, and better claim to the throne than they.

**Ver. 15.** *But also thou shalt not cut off thy kindness from my house for ever*, etc.] His family should partake of it as well as himself:

*no, not when the Lord hath cut off the enemies of David, everyone from the face of the earth*; Saul and his sons, and everyone that should oppose his settlement in the kingdom: Jonathan’s meaning is, that the covenant between them should not be only between them personally, but include their posterity, as follows.

**Ver. 16.** *So Jonathan made [a covenant] with the house of David*, etc.] Not with David himself only, which was now renewed, but with his family also:

*[saying], let the Lord even require [it] at the hand of David’s enemies*; take vengeance on Jonathan, or on any of his posterity, should they break this covenant, by showing themselves enemies to David, and his crown; and, on the other hand, also on David, and his posterity, should they not show kindness to Jonathan and his seed, according to the tenor of this covenant.

**Ver. 17.** *And Jonathan caused David to swear again*, etc.] Or Jonathan added to make David swear<sup>f411</sup>; having sworn himself to make a covenant of friendship with David and his family, he moved and insisted on it, that David should swear to keep covenant with him, and his family:

*because he loved him*; it was not so much for the good and safety of his offspring that he made this motion, and was so desirous of renewing and enlarging his covenant with David, as it was his strong love and affection for him; being on that account desirous that there might be the strictest friendship imaginable retained between the two families; or he made him swear by his love to him, as some understand it, which is not so likely; the former sense is better, for he himself swore by the Lord, (~~Q12~~ 1 Samuel 20:12,13);

*for he loved him as his own soul*; or “with the love of his soul”<sup>f412</sup>; with the most cordial affection, with a truly hearty and sincere love, (see ~~Q15~~ 1 Samuel 18:1).

**Ver. 18.** *Then Jonathan said to David, tomorrow [is] the new moon*, etc.] The first day of the month, as David had before observed, (~~Q15~~ 1 Samuel 20:5);

*and thou shalt be missed, because thy seat will be empty*; or be inquired after, because not in his usual place at mealtime.

**Ver. 19.** *And [when] thou hast stayed three days*, etc.] From court, either at Bethlehem, which seems most probable, or in some other place incognito; however, not in the field he proposed to hide himself in, where he could not continue so long for want of food:

*[then] thou shalt go down quickly, and come to the place where thou didst hide thyself*; which makes it clear that he did not continue there during that time, but went elsewhere; from whence he was to come in haste at the expiration of three days, to the place he first hid himself in, and which was fixed upon to meet at:

*when the business was [in hand]*; when the affair was discoursed of, about getting knowledge how Saul was affected to David, and of informing him of it; or “on the day of work”<sup>f413</sup>; or business, on a working day, as the Septuagint; and so the Targum, on a common day; when, as the Vulgate Latin, it was lawful to work on it; and such was the day when Jonathan and David conversed together about the above affair; it being the day before



the new moon, or first day of the month, on which day they used not to work: Some render it, “thou shalt three times go down”<sup>f414</sup> to that place; and the sense is, that he should come on the morrow, and if he found not Jonathan there, he might conclude that as yet he knew nothing of his father’s mind, and therefore should come the day following that; and if he found him not then, to come on the third day, that so he might be on the spot, let him come on which day he would:

*and shalt remain by the stone Ezel*; which, because it signifies “going”, the Jewish commentators generally understand it as a sign to direct travellers which way to go; but one would think this should be an improper place for David to be near, since it must be where two or more ways met, and so a public frequented place; others think therefore it had its name from David and Jonathan often going thither, to discourse with each other; the Septuagint calls it Ergab; and so the place where Jonathan, the son of Saul, exercised himself by shooting darts, is called by Jerom<sup>f415</sup>; it is said by Josephus<sup>f416</sup> to be an hundred fifty furlongs (about nineteen miles), from Jerusalem, and from Jordan sixty, (about eight miles).

**Ver. 20.** *And I will shoot three arrows on the side [thereof]*, etc.] On the side of the stone Ezel; three are pitched upon, according to the number of the days David was missing:

*as though I shot at a mark*; as if he made the stone the mark he shot at; so that his shooting would not be taken notice of.

**Ver. 21.** *And, behold, I will send a lad*, etc.] That attended on him, and carried his bow and arrows, and fetched his arrows when he had shot them:

*[saying], go, find out the arrows*; where they are fallen, and return them:

*if I expressly say unto the lad, behold, the arrows [are] on this side of thee, take them*; on one side of him, whether the one or the other, which he would bid him take up, and bring them to him:

*then come thou*; David, out of the place where he hid himself:

*for [there is] peace to thee, and no hurt, [as] the Lord liveth*; he might appear, and not be afraid of being seen by any, since by this sign he might be assured that Saul was well affected to him, and would show him favour, and do him no injury; and that he might promise himself prosperity and safety, and be assured of it for the present.

**Ver. 22.** *But if I say thus unto the young man, behold, the arrows [are] beyond thee,* etc.] Being shot to a greater distance than where the young man was:

*go thy way, for the Lord hath sent thee away;* then he was to depart directly, without staying to have any conversation with Jonathan, which would not be safe for either of them, and so make the best of his way into the country, and escape for his life; for so it was ordered by the providence of God, that he must not stay, but be gone immediately: the signals were these, that if things were favourable, then he would shoot his arrows on one side of the lad, and David might come out and show himself at once; but if not, he would shoot them beyond him, by which he might know that he must flee for his life.

**Ver. 23.** *And [as touching] the matter which thou and I have spoken of,* etc.] The covenant they had made between them and their families:

*behold, the Lord [be] between me and thee for ever:* as a witness of the covenant, and a revenger of those that should break it; so the Targum,

“behold, the Word of the Lord be between me and thee a witness for ever.”

**Ver. 24.** *So David hid himself in the field,* etc.] Not directly, but at the time appointed; for he went to Bethlehem, and returned from thence before that time:

*and when the new moon was come;* the first day of the month, which was a solemn festival:

*the king sat him down to eat meat;* Saul sat down at his table to eat of the provisions that were set upon it; which it is very probable were the peace offerings for that day, which he, his family, and nobles, feasted on together; it is in the Hebrew, “he sat down at the bread”<sup>f417</sup>, which is put for all the food on the table, and the provisions of it.

**Ver. 25.** *And the king sat upon his seat as at other times,* etc.] Upon the seat he usually sat on:

*[even] upon a seat by the wall;* on a couch by the side of the wall; or, as Jarchi and R. Isaiah say, at the head of the couch by the wall, which was the most honourable place; and Kimchi observes, it was the custom in

those days to eat meat sitting on beds or couches, (see <sup><0823></sup>1 Samuel 28:23-25);

*and Jonathan arose*; either in reverence to his father, when he came in and took his seat, or in respect to Abner upon his coming in, being the son of Saul's uncle, and general of the army; for though he arose, he did not depart, it is plain he sat down again, (<sup><0828></sup>1 Samuel 20:34). Kimchi thinks, that after Jonathan had sat down at the side of his father, he arose and placed Abner there, because he would not be near his father, that if he should be wroth with him on account of David, he might not be near him to smite him:

*and Abner sat by Saul's side*; according to Josephus <sup>f418</sup> Jonathan sat at his right hand and Abner on the left, and it was usual for the master, or principal person, to sit in the middle; so Dido in Virgil <sup>f419</sup>. Abarbinel places them thus, Saul was at the head of the table, and David was used to sit by him, and Jonathan by David, and Abner by Jonathan; and now the king sat in his place, and Jonathan in his place, and Abner after him; and David's place being empty, Jonathan was left next to his father, without any between; wherefore he now arose from his place, and Abner sat on that side where Saul was, so that Abner was between Jonathan and Saul:

*and David's place was empty*; where he used to sit at table, he not being there, and no one taking it.

**Ver. 26.** *Nevertheless, Saul spake not anything that day*, etc.] About David's absence, took no notice of it, said nothing about it:

*for he thought something had befallen him*; some impurity, some nocturnal pollution, (see <sup><0856></sup>Leviticus 15:16);

*he [is] not clean, surely he [is] not clean*; which he repeated in his mind for the confirmation of it, and in contempt, and to the reproach of David; and in this way he accounted for his absence the first day, and so was easy, it not being lawful and fitting for an unclean person in a ceremonial sense to eat of the peace offerings, which Saul and his family were now partaking of.

**Ver. 27.** *And it came to pass on the morrow, [which was] the second [day] of the month*, etc.] The Targum is,

“and it was on the day after it, which was the intercalation of the second month;”

when the beginning of the month was judged of by the appearance of the moon, and there was a difficulty about that, what day it appeared on, two days were kept for it; and Abarbinel<sup>f420</sup> is clear for it, that two days were kept in this month; but if this was not the case, since the remainder of peace offerings might be eaten the next day, (<sup>48076</sup>Leviticus 7:16). Saul and his guests might meet on the second day for that purpose:

*that David's place was empty*: on that day also:

*and Saul said to Jonathan his son*; who he knew was David's friend and confident, and could give the best account of him:

*wherefore cometh not the son of Jesse to meat, neither yesterday nor today*; he accounted for his not coming yesterday, because he supposed he might be under some ceremonial uncleanness; but then that only lasted to the evening of that day; but not coming the second day when he was clean, he inquires after him; and not owning him for his son-in-law, by way of contempt, and to lessen him in the esteem of all at table, he calls him the son of Jesse.

**Ver. 28.** *And Jonathan answered Saul*, etc.] In reply to Saul's question, and to excuse David, he said,

*David earnestly asked [leave] of me [to go] to Bethlehem*; his own city, his native place, where his family lived, whom he was desirous to see, and yet chose not to go without asking leave; and as Saul was not at home, he asked leave of Jonathan, who was next to him, and acted for him; and he was very pressing and importunate in his suit, and therefore Jonathan could not well deny him it; and he hoped this would be sufficient excuse for his absence, especially when what follows should be observed.

**Ver. 29.** *And he said, let me go, I pray thee, for our family hath a sacrifice in the city*, etc.] In the city of Bethlehem where they lived, a peace offering on account of the new moon, and as an anniversary thanksgiving for the mercies of the year, (<sup>49216</sup>1 Samuel 20:6); and seeing, though he was not at the feast in one place, he observed it in another, his absence at court was the more excusable; and the rather, since it was kept by him with his own family, in his own city: besides, it is added,

*and my brother he hath commanded me [to be there];* his elder brother Eliab, whose commands, as a younger brother, he judged he ought to obey; it is probable his father was now dead, since no mention is made of him, and his elder brother took upon him the command of the family:

*and now, if I have found favour in thine eyes, let me get away, I pray thee, see my brethren:* he should take it as a favour to have leave to depart, and be free for the present from waiting upon the king at court, and so have an opportunity of seeing his brethren, for which he had a great desire; having not seen them a long time, not even since he saw them in the camp, when he slew Goliath:

*therefore he cometh not to the king's table:* this was the reason of it, at least one reason of it, and Jonathan was not obliged to tell the whole.

**Ver. 30.** *Then Saul's anger was kindled against Jonathan,* etc.] For giving David leave to go, and for excusing him in this manner:

*and he said unto him, thou son of the perverse and rebellious [woman];* most of the Jewish commentators supply it as we do, but the supplement of woman may as well be left out, and be read, "thou son of perverse rebellion"<sup>f421</sup>; thou perverse and rebellious wretch, perverse in thy temper, and rebellious in thy conduct; for the design of the expression is not to reproach his mother, for which there seems no provocation, but Jonathan only; and the next clause confirms it, which expresses a concern for his mother's honour and credit; the Targum is,

"an obstinate son, whose rebellion is hard,"

or intolerable; according to which, Abarbinel says, it may refer to David:

*do not I know that thou hast chosen the son of Jesse to thine own confusion, and unto the confusion of thy mother's nakedness?* The above writer observes, that he does not say to his own confusion, because David would not reign in his lifetime, only after his death, but to the shame of Jonathan and his mother; to Jonathan's shame, who would be reckoned by men an arrant fool, to be so friendly to a rival, and who in all probability would jostle him out of the throne; and what would men say of him? that either he was not fit to reign, or had no right to the throne, that a son-in-law took place before him; and that his mother had played the whore, and he was no son of Saul, having nothing of his genius, temper, and disposition in him, as appeared by loving such his father hated; and besides,

his mother would not have the honour she expected, to be the mother of a king.

**Ver. 31.** *For as long as the son of Jesse liveth upon the ground, thou shalt not be established, nor thy kingdom,* etc.] He would not, though heir to the crown, be sure of it; it would be precarious to him, he would be in great danger of being deprived of it on the death of his father; and therefore it would be his highest wisdom to deliver David up to be slain, as it was his greatest folly to protect him, and provide for his satiety:

*wherefore now send and fetch him unto me;* send to Bethlehem for him to come to court directly:

*for he shall surely die;* or he is “the son of death”<sup>f422</sup>; guilty of death, as the Targum, deserves to die, and Saul was determined upon his death if possible.

**Ver. 32.** *And Jonathan answered Saul his, father, and said unto him,* etc.] Making no answer to the charges of perverseness, rebellion, and folly brought against himself, which he bore with patience, but could not bear to hear his dear friend spoken against, and as worthy of death; and therefore in answer to that says,

*wherefore shall he be slain? what hath he done?* has he attempted to take away thy life? to deprive thee of thy crown? to settle himself upon the throne? what overt act of treason has he been guilty of; that he should die? on the contrary, has he not done many things worthy of immortal honour, for the good of the nation, and the glory of thy reign? and if God has determined the kingdom for him, and anointed him to it, what blame can be laid upon him? nay, should he not be the rather respected and honoured?

**Ver. 33.** *And Saul cast a javelin at him to smite him,* etc.] So provoked to wrath was he by what he said. It seems by this that Saul always had a javelin or spear in his hand, which is to be accounted for by the custom of those times; in other countries, as well as in this, the kings used to carry spears in their hands instead of sceptres, and which they used as such; so Justin<sup>f423</sup>, speaking of the times of Romulus, says, that kings in those times had spears, as an ensign of royalty, which the Greeks call sceptres; and so the Greeks called sceptres spears<sup>f424</sup>:

*whereby Jonathan knew that it was determined of his father to slay David;* for since he attempted to smite him, his own son, for speaking on his

behalf, it might be well concluded, that such was his settled wrath and malice, that he would if possible kill David, could he get him into his hands.

**Ver. 34.** *So Jonathan arose from the table in fierce anger*, etc.] Resenting his father's attempt to smite him, and his resolution to slay David:

*and did eat no meat the second day of the month*; not then at that meal he was just sat down to, nor at another time that day, his stomach was so full through indignation at his father, and grief for his friend David; and besides, being a mourner on the above accounts, he might not eat of the sacrifices:

*for he was grieved for David*; that his death should be determined upon by his father, and he in so much danger of it; as also that he himself must be parted from and lose so dear a friend, which was one reason he ate no meat that day: and another follows,

*because his father had done him shame*; the copulative "and" being wanting; and this he did by calling him a perverse and rebellious son, and representing him as an arrant fool, and particularly by casting a javelin at him to smite him.

**Ver. 35.** *And it came to pass in the morning*:, etc.] The next morning, the morning of the third day of the month:

*that Jonathan went out into the field at the time appointed with David*; he went to the place in the field, or near it, where David hid himself, and at the time agreed between them; which, Abarbinel says, was the time the nobles agreed on for walking, and motion, and for hunting, and casting of arrows, so that Jonathan could go forth without suspicion:

*and a little lad with him*; to carry his bow and arrows, and fetch his arrows when cast.

**Ver. 36.** *And he said unto his lad, run, find out now the arrows which I shoot*, etc.] He no doubt told him the mark which he should shoot at, the stone Ezel, and bid him look out about that for them:

*[and] as the lad ran*; before he had got to the mark:

*he shot an arrow beyond him*: or it; beyond the lad, or beyond the mark he shot at; purposely shooting with great strength, that he might exceed, and

thereby give notice to David how things stood, which was the sign agreed on.

**Ver. 37.** *And when the lad was come to the place of the arrow which Jonathan had shot*, etc.] To the mark which he told him he should shoot at, and whereabouts he might expect to find the arrow:

*Jonathan cried after the lad, and said, [is] not the arrow beyond thee?* he cried with a loud voice and said this, not so much that the lad might hear him, but that David, who lay hid near the place, might hear him; so that if they had no opportunity of seeing and conversing with each other through any person going by at that time, David might know by this sign that evil was determined against him, and must flee for his life; the Syriac and Vulgate Latin versions read, “behold, the arrow is beyond thee”; so Noldius<sup>f425</sup>.

**Ver. 38.** *And Jonathan cried after the lad, make speed, haste, stay not*, etc.] But bring the arrows to him directly, that he might dismiss him; for, observing that no man was passing by, he was desirous of embracing the opportunity for a few minutes to have an interview with David alone before he fled:

*and Jonathan’s lad gathered up the arrows*; for though the textual reading is singular, the marginal is plural, to show, as Kimchi observes, that he cast three arrows, as he said he would, (<sup><0911></sup>1 Samuel 20:20);

*and came to his master*; with them.

**Ver. 39.** *But the lad knew not anything*, etc.] What was meant by shooting the arrows, and by shooting them beyond where he was, and by bidding him make haste to bring them:

*only Jonathan and David knew the matter*; what was signified by them, those being signs agreed upon between them.

**Ver. 40.** *And Jonathan gave his artillery unto his lad*, etc.] “His vessels”<sup>f426</sup> or instruments; his arms, as the Targum, his quiver, bow, and arrows:

*and said unto him, go, carry [them] to the city*; to Gibeah, to Jonathan’s house, or to his apartments at court there.

**Ver. 41.** *[And] as soon as the lad was gone*, etc.] Which David could observe from his lurking place:



*David arose out of [a place] toward the south*; to the south of the field in which he was hid, or to the south of the stone Ezel, near which he was; and so the Targum,

“and David arose from the side of the stone Atha, which was towards the south;”

Jonathan shooting his arrows to the north of it, lest the lad should have discovered David when he ran for them: and fell on his face to the ground; in reverence of Jonathan, as the son of a king, and in respect to him as his friend, who had so faithfully served him, and was so concerned to save his life:

*and bowed himself three times*: this was before he fell prostrate on the ground. Abarbinel observes, that bowing three; times was fit and proper to be done to a king; once at the place from whence they first see him, the second time in the middle of the way to him, and the third time when come to him; but though this may have been a custom in more modern times, it is a question whether it obtained so early; however it is certain bowing was as ancient, and therefore Xenophon<sup>f427</sup> is mistaken in ascribing it to Cyrus as the first introducer of this custom; and be it that he was the first that began it among the Persians, it was in use with others before, as this behaviour of David shows:

*and they kissed one another*; as friends about to part:

*and wept one with another*: as not knowing whether they should ever see each other's face any more:

*until David exceeded*; in weeping more than Jonathan; he having more to part with, not only him his dear friend, but his wife and family, and other dear friends and people of God, and especially the sanctuary and service of God, which of all things lay nearest his heart, and most distressed him; (see ~~1~~ 1 Samuel 26:19); and many of his psalms on this occasion. Ben Gersom suggests that he wept more than was meet, through too much fear of Saul; but that seems not to be the case.

**Ver. 42.** *And Jonathan said to David, go in peace*, etc.] In peace of mind, committing himself, his family, and affairs, to the providence of God, who would take care of him, and keep him in safety from the evil designs of Saul; and particularly he would have him be easy with respect to what had

passed between them two, not doubting but it would be faithfully observed on both sides:

*forasmuch as we have sworn both of us in the name of the Lord:* had made a covenant with each other by an oath, in the name and presence of God as a witness to it:

*saying, the Lord be between me and thee, and between my seed and thy seed for ever;* as a witness of the agreement between them, including them and their offspring, and as a revenger of such that should break it. The Targum is,

“the Word of the Lord be between thee and me, etc.”

*and he arose and departed;* that is, David arose from the ground, and took his leave of Jonathan, and departed into the country for the safety of his person and life:

*and Jonathan went into the city;* into the city of Gibeah, where Saul dwelt and had his court.