

CHAPTER 25

INTRODUCTION TO FIRST SAMUEL 25

This chapter gives an account of the death of Samuel, and of the ill treatment David met with from Nabal; it begins with the death of Samuel, which was greatly lamented in Israel, (^{<0250>}1 Samuel 25:1); it draws the character of Nabal, and his wife, (^{<0252>}1 Samuel 25:2,3); records a message of David to him, by his young men, desiring he would send him some of his provisions made for his sheep shearers, (^{<0254>}1 Samuel 25:4-9); and Nabal's ill-natured answer to him reported by the young men, which provoked David to arm against him, (^{<0256>}1 Samuel 25:10-13,21,22); and this being told Abigail, the wife of Nabal, and a good character given of David and his men, and of the advantage Nabal's shepherds had received from them, and the danger his family was in through his ingratitude, (^{<0254>}1 Samuel 25:14-17); she prepared a present to pacify David, went with it herself, and addressed him in a very handsome, affectionate, and prudent manner, (^{<0258>}1 Samuel 25:18-31); and met with a kind reception, (^{<0252>}1 Samuel 25:32-35); and the chapter is closed with an account of the death of Nabal, and of the marriage of Abigail to David, (^{<0252>}1 Samuel 25:32-44).

Ver. 1. *And Samuel died*, etc.] In the interval, when Saul and David were parted, and before they saw each other again; according to the Jewish chronology ^{f483}, Samuel died four months before Saul; but other Jewish writers say ^{f484} he died seven months before; Abarbinel thinks it was a year or two before; which is most likely and indeed certain, since David was in the country of the Philistines after this a full year and four months, if the true sense of the phrase is expressed in (^{<0270>}1 Samuel 27:7); and Saul was not then dead; and so another Jewish chronologer ^{f485} says, that Saul died two years after Samuel, to which agrees Clemens of Alexandria ^{f486}; and according to the Jews ^{f487}, he died the twentieth of Ijar, for which a fast was kept on that day:

and all the Israelites were gathered together, and lamented him; his death being a public loss, not only to the college of the prophets, over which he presided, but to the whole nation; and they had reason to lament his death, when they called to mind, the many good offices he had done them from

his youth upwards; and when the government was in his hands, which was administered in the most prudent and faithful manner; and after that they had his wise counsel and advice, his good wishes and prayers for them; and the rather they had reason to lament him, since Saul their king proved so bad as he did, and at this time a difference was subsisting between David and him:

and buried him in his house at Ramah; where he lived and died; not that he was buried in his house, properly so called, or within the walls of that building wherein he dwelt; though the Greeks ^{f488} and Romans ^{f489} used to bury in their own dwelling houses; hence sprung the idolatrous worship of the Lares, or household gods; but not the Hebrews, which their laws about uncleanness by graves would not admit of, (see ⁻⁰⁴⁹⁵Numbers 19:15,18); but the meaning is, that they buried him in the place where his house was, as Ben Gersom interprets it, at Ramah, in some field or garden belonging to it. The author of the Cippi Hebraici says ^{f490}, that here his father Elkanah, and his mother Hannah, and her two sons, were buried in a vault shut up, with, monuments over it; and here, some say ^{f491}, Samuel's bones remained, until removed by Arcadius the emperor into Thrace; Benjamin of Tudela reports ^{f492}, that when the Christians took Ramlah, which is Ramah, from the Mahometans, they found the grave of Samuel at Ramah by a synagogue of the Jews, and they took him out of the grave, and carried him to Shiloh, and there built a large temple, which is called the Samuel of Shiloh to this day:

and David arose and went down to the wilderness of Paran; on hearing of the death of Samuel, there to indulge his mourning for him; or rather that he might be in greater safety from Saul, being further off, this wilderness lying on the south of the tribe of Judah, and inhabited by Arabs, and these called Kedarenes; and now it was that he dwelt in the tents of Kedar, (⁻⁴⁹⁰⁵Psalms 120:5).

Ver. 2. *And [there was] a man in Maon*, etc.] A city of the tribe of Judah, from whence the wilderness had its name before mentioned; of which place, (see ⁻⁰¹⁵⁵Joshua 15:55); though Ben Gersom takes it to signify a dwelling place; and that this is observed to show, that he did not dwell in a city, but had his habitation where his business lay, which was in Carmel, where his fields, gardens, and vineyards were: wherefore it follows,

whose possessions [were] in Carmel; not Carmel in the tribe of Issachar, but in the tribe of Judah, not far from Maon, and are mentioned together,

(see Gill on “~~0655~~ Joshua 15:55”); his cattle were there, his sheep particularly, for they are afterwards said to be shorn there; or “his work”^{f493}; his agriculture, his farming, where he was employed, or employed others in sowing seed, and planting trees:

and the man [was] very great; in worldly substance, though not in natural wisdom and knowledge, and especially in true religion and piety:

and he had three thousand sheep, and a thousand goats; so the substance of men in those times was generally described by the cattle they had, whether of the herd or flock, in which it chiefly lay:

and he was shearing his sheep in Carmel; which was the custom in Judea and Syria, and was a very ancient one, as early as the times of Judah, yea, of Laban, (see ~~0319~~ Genesis 31:19 38:12,13); though the old Romans used to pluck off the wool from the sheep’s backs; hence a fleece of wool was called “vellus [a] vellendo”, from the plucking it off; and Pliny says^{f494}, in his time, that sheep were not shorn everywhere, but in some places the custom of plucking off the wool continued; and who elsewhere observes^{f495}, that the time of shearing was in June or July, or thereabouts; at which times a feast was made, and it is for the sake of that this is observed.

Ver. 3. *Now the name of the man [was] Nabal*, etc.] Which signifies a “fool”; one would think his parents should not give him this name, though it is a name proper enough to men in common; and Kimchi thinks this was a nickname, which men gave him agreeably to his genius and conduct, and which is not improbable:

and the name of his wife Abigail; which signifies “my father’s joy”, he delighting in her for her wit and beauty, as follows:

and [she was] a woman of good understanding, and of a beautiful countenance; she was not only of a good understanding in things natural, civil, and domestic, but in things spiritual, as her speech to David shows, and which, with her external form, completed her character, and greatly recommended her; which is the character Aelianus^{f486} gives of Aspasia, wise and fair:

but the man [was] churlish and evil in his doings; morose and ill natured in the temper and disposition of his mind, and wicked in his conversation, and fraudulent and oppressive in his dealings with men:

and he [was] of the house of Caleb; or he was a Calebite ^{f497}, a descendant of that great and good man Caleb the son of Jephunneh; which was an aggravation of his wickedness, that he should be the degenerate plant of such a noble vine: some interpret it, he was as his heart, as his heart was bad, so was he; some men, their outside is better than their inside; but this man was no hypocrite, he was as bad outwardly as he was inwardly: the word “Caleb” sometimes signifies a dog; hence the Septuagint version renders it, a doggish man, a cynic; and to the same purpose are the Syriac and Arabic versions; and so some Jewish writers interpret it; but the Targum, Jarchi, and Kimchi, supply it as we do, that he was of the house or family of Caleb, and so of the tribe of Judah, as David was.

Ver. 4. *And David heard in the wilderness*, etc.] In the wilderness of Paran, where he was, and a wilderness it was to him, being in want of food, as the following relation shows:

that Nabal did shear his sheep; when there was generally good living, and so a proper person, and a proper time, for David to apply for the relief of his wants.

Ver. 5. *And David sent out ten young men*, etc.] Such persons, and such a number of them, he sent to show honour and reverence to Nabal:

and David said, unto the young men, get ye up to Carmel; which lay higher than the wilderness, in which he was:

and go to Nabal, and greet him in my name; ask him of his peace and welfare, as the Targum; wish all health and happiness in my name, present my service and best respects to him.

Ver. 6. *And thus shall ye say to him that liveth [in prosperity]*, etc.] That lives, while others, as David and his men, might be rather said to starve than live; they lived in great meanness, but he in great abundance, and therefore in a capacity to give to others, and particularly to relieve them: or the sense is, they should say to him, “thus” shall it be, or may it be “for life”: for the time of life, for the year to come; at this time next year, at next sheep shearing, mayest thou be in as great prosperity then as now, and even all the days of thy life:

peace [be] both to thee, and peace [be] to thine house, and peace [be] unto all that thou hast; that is, all prosperity to thy person in soul and body, to thy family, wife, children and servants, and let the same attend thy

estate, cattle, farms, fields, vineyards, and all that belong to thee; and wish for a blessing on him, and his, and all that were his, or he had; a more extensive one could not well be made.

Ver. 7. *And now I have heard that thou hast shearers*, etc.] Men employed in shearing his sheep, which was a time of feasting and gladness, and therefore David sent his young men to him at this time with his compliments upon it; and in order to obtain what he intended by this message to him, he observes the favours he and his men had done to his servants, and the advantages which they had received from them:

now thy shepherds which were with us; feeding their sheep near the wilderness of Paran, which was not far from Carmel and Maon:

we hurt them not; by taking any of their sheep and lambs from them, or by abusing, beating them, or giving them ill language; or “did not put them to shame”^{f498}, by denying them anything they asked of them, which was in their power to grant, nor mocked and scoffed at them, and jeered them on account of their occupation:

neither was there ought missing unto them; they did not steal a sheep or lamb from them, as was common for soldiers to do; nor did they suffer any of the Arabs, that dwelt in the wilderness of Paran, to rob them, who lived upon plunder, or any of the wild beasts to hurt them, as much as in them lay; so careful were they of them, and were a wall unto them by night and day, as Nabal’s servants owned, (~~02516~~-1 Samuel 25:16); and this was the case,

all the while they were in Carmel; or in the fields, (~~02515~~-1 Samuel 25:15); which were joining to the wilderness of Paran.

Ver. 8. *Ask thy young men, and they will show thee*, etc.] The shepherds before mentioned, who kept their flocks hard by them:

wherefore let the young men find favour in thine eyes; the ten young men David sent to Nabal:

for we are come in a good day; a day in which Nabal made a feast for his shearers, as was usual then, and still is, (see ~~01323~~-2 Samuel 13:23-28); and at such times as persons are generally cheerful and merry, so free and liberal, and as there were plenty of provisions, not only enough for the guests and shearers, but to spare, and there was no need for an increase of expense, it

might upon the whole be concluded it was a proper time for David to apply for accommodations for himself and his men:

give, I pray thee, whatsoever cometh to thine hand unto thy servants, and to thy son David; he did not request anything extraordinary of him, or to put him to any expense, but what was at hand, and he could spare, he prayed him to deliver to the young men he sent, for their use, and the use of other his servants, and particularly David, who stiled himself his son, being of the same tribe with Nabal, and Nabal his senior.

Ver. 9. *And when David's young men came,* etc.] To Carmel:

they spake to Nabal according to all those words in the name of David; they delivered their message punctually and exactly, in the very words, or however according to the purport of them, in David's name, as he enjoined them:

and ceased: from speaking, waiting for Nabal's answer; or "they rested"^{f499}, from the fatigues of their journey; which they did not until they had delivered their message to Nabal, and then they took the liberty to sit down and rest themselves; but the former sense seems best, and is preferred by Maimonides^{f500}.

Ver. 10. *And Nabal answered David's servants, and said,* etc.] In a very haughty manner, in great wrath, just as churlish covetous persons do, when they do not care to give what is asked of them:

who [is] David? and who [is] the son of Jesse; his two questions, which relate to the same person, do not well agree together, since by both he would suggest as if he knew not the person they came from, and whose name they made use of: had he stopped at the first question, it might have gone so, but his second question betrays him, and plainly shows he did know him, though he speaks with contempt of him, calling him "the son of Jesse", as Saul often did, (~~1~~ 1 Samuel 20:27,30,31 22:7,8,13). Abarbinel, of all interpreters, is of opinion only, that Nabal did not say this disrespectfully of David, and to his dishonour; he knew he was the Lord's anointed, and the king's son-in-law; but the sense, according to him, is, "who [is] David? and who [is] the son of Jesse?" are they not one man? but though he is the son of Jesse, and prides himself saying, I shall be king, I should not regard that, but would send him corn, and bread, and food, as much as is needful for his own use; but what can I do when there are so

many servants? for they are six hundred of them, and they are too many to relieve:

there be many servants nowadays that break away every man from his master; which words also the same writer thinks have no reference to David, only to his men; but they seem plainly to strike at David himself, and suggest that he had revolted from and rebelled against Saul his master, as well as received and protected fugitives and renegades, such as fled from their masters and from their creditors; (see ~~1~~1 Samuel 22:2).

Ver. 11. *Shall I then take my bread, and my water*, etc.] Which include all food and liquors, everything eatable and drinkable; and “water” may be particularly mentioned, because very scarce in the wilderness, and so precious; though the Septuagint version has “wine” instead of “water”:

and my flesh which I have killed for my shearers; whether oxen, or sheep, or lambs, as there might be of each sort, for an entertainment made on such an occasion:

and give [it] unto men whom I know not whence they [be]? which is another argument Abarbinel makes use of that he meant not David, but his men only, because he did not know who and from whence they were.

Ver. 12. *So David’s young men turned their way*, etc.] Their backs on him, without making any reply; and though they did not return railing for railing, they treated him with silent contempt; and though they did not offer to do any injury to his person, nor to take anything away by force, yet they were determined to report this usage to David, who they doubted not would avenge the affront put on him and them:

and went again; to the wilderness from whence they came:

and came and told him all these sayings; rude and reproachful ones, just as they were delivered.

Ver. 13. *And David said unto his men*, etc.] Provoked to the last degree to have such a rude churlish answer returned to such a civil and humble message as he had sent:

gird you on every man his sword; and prepare to march and chastise Nabal for his insolence:

and they girded on every man his sword; in obedience to David, and in vindication of his honour and their own:

and David also girded on his sword; in order to march at the head of them, fired with indignation at the affront given him:

and there went up after David about four hundred men; out of the six hundred he had with him, (⁴⁰²⁸³1 Samuel 23:13);

and two hundred abode by the stuff; the baggage in their camp; the Targum is, they

“were left to watch the vessels;”

the things necessary for their use, for the dressing of their food, their bedding, etc.

Ver. 14. *But one of the young men told Abigail, Nabal's wife*, etc.] Not one of David's young men, as what follows shows, but one of Nabal's young men or servants, one of those David directs him to for the truth of what he said, (⁴⁰²⁸³1 Samuel 25:8); this was one of those that had been employed in feeding sheep in the wilderness, where David was, and knew him, but was now at Carmel, and was present when David's messengers came to Nabal, and was privy to what passed:

saying, David sent messengers out of the wilderness to salute our master; in a very kind and handsome manner, to ask of his peace and welfare, and to wish him all happiness and prosperity; or “masters”^{f501} master and mistress, including both Nabal and Abigail:

and he railed on them; gave them very abusive language, represented David and his men as a parcel of scoundrels, fugitives, and runaway servants, (⁴⁰²⁵¹⁰1 Samuel 25:10,11); or “he flew at them”^{f502}; or “upon” them, in great wrath and fury, calling them hard names, bidding them begone about their business; the allusion is to a ravenous bird, which will fly at persons when it apprehends its young in any danger.

Ver. 15. *But the men [were] very good unto us*, etc.] Very kind and civil, yea, very useful and serviceable, even all the messengers David sent and Nabal railed on, yea, all David's men, and therefore deserved better treatment than they met with from Nabal:

and we were not hurt; neither by them nor others:

neither missed we anything: of our flocks, or anything belonging to us; they neither robbed us themselves, nor suffered others to rob us:

as long as we were conversant with them, when we were in the fields; feeding the sheep by them: thus he confirms everything that David said of himself and his men, (see Gill on “~~1~~ 1 Samuel 25:7”): and says even more of them to their commendation, as follows.

Ver. 16. *They were a wall unto us both by night and day*, etc.] Protecting and defending them against the Philistines, who, as they robbed the threshing floors of Keilah, would have plundered the flocks of Nabal; or it may be rather against the incursions of the Arabs in the wilderness of Paran, the posterity of Ishmael, who lived by plunder, and against the wild beasts of the desert, who otherwise would have carried off many of their sheep and lambs, by night or by day:

all the while we were with them keeping the sheep; all which showed how reasonable it was that Nabal should have used them well, and given them a portion of his entertainment at his sheep shearing; for had it not been for them, he would not have had so many sheep to shear as he had.

Ver. 17. *Now therefore know and consider what thou wilt do*, etc.] For the preservation of her family:

for evil is determined against our master, and against all his household; which he concluded, either from something that dropped from David’s messengers, as they turned away from Nabal; or from the martial spirit of David himself, who would never put up such an affront and indignity cast upon him; or from some intelligence he had of David’s arming his men, and marching to take vengeance:

for he [is such] a son of Belial, that [a man] cannot speak to him; meaning Nabal, who was such a worthless, passionate, and ill natured man, such a lawless and imperious one, that he would not suffer a man to speak to him about anything; and it was to no purpose to attempt it, which was a reason this servant did not choose to speak to him about this affair, but to Abigail; and suggests, that it would signify nothing for her to speak to him about it, but it would be most advisable for her to consider with herself what was to be done immediately, without consulting him: the words may be rendered, “for he is a son of Belial that speaks unto him”^{f503}; or when “he speaks unto him”, or it is told him; meaning not the servant that reported to David what Nabal said; for Abarbinel observes there were ten

of them, and therefore it could not be said of them, he is a son of Belial; but rather David himself, as he and Kimchi observe it may be interpreted of; that though he was so good and upright a man, yet when it should be told him how Nabal had treated him, he would be so provoked at it, that he would become and act like a son of Belial; storm and rage, and vow destruction to Nabal and his family, and come out with his whole army to destroy them; but the first sense is best.

Ver. 18. *Then Abigail made haste*, etc.] As the case required, her family being in imminent danger:

and took two hundred loaves; of bread; of what size or weight they were is not said; though it may be reasonably concluded they were pretty large, since they are not called cakes, but loaves, and since they were to be a present to David and his men, who were numerous:

and two bottles of wine; not such as ours are, which would have borne no proportion to the rest of the provision; but these were leathern bags which held a large quantity, in which they put and carried wine in those times and countries; the Septuagint version is, two vessels or casks of wine:

and five sheep ready dressed; killed and dressed by the butcher, or made ready by the cook, boiled or roasted; the word which the Targum uses, according to the interpretation of Jarchi, from one of their Rabbins, signifies such as were stuffed with small pieces of meat, and eggs in them, or, as it should seem, made into pastries:

and five measures of parched [corn]; or five seahs, a measure which held, according to Bishop Cumberland^{f504}, two wine gallons, four bottles, and a little more; of this parched corn, (see Gill on [“¹ Samuel 17:17”](#)); where mention is made of an ephah of it; and the Septuagint version has the same measure here, and calls them five ephahs of flour:

and an hundred clusters of raisins; or dried grapes, as the Targum; the Septuagint is, one omer of them, which was the tenth part of an ephah:

and two hundred cakes of figs; which were dried, and pressed, and made into lumps, and she took two hundred of these; or, as the Targum, two hundred pound weight of them:

and laid [them] on asses; one not being sufficient to carry all this provision.

Ver. 19. *And she said to her servants, go on before me,* etc.] With the present, the sight of which she wisely considered would in a great measure pacify David, and prepare him to hear patiently what she had to say to him:

behold, I come after you; signifying it would not be long before she came up to them, and overtook them:

but she told not her husband Nabal; neither the danger he and his family were in through his conduct, nor the preparations she had made to prevent it; knowing his perverse and obstinate disposition, that it would take up too much time to reason with him, and persuade him, and bring him into proper measures; and which may be observed to excuse the conduct of Abigail in doing what she did, and taking and disposing of her husband's goods, without his knowledge and leave; the case required haste, and it was done to preserve him and his family from imminent ruin; and besides, he might not be in a fit condition to be spoken to, being drunk with passion, or with wine, or both, (see ⁴⁹²³⁶1 Samuel 25:36); and no doubt she was directed by the Spirit of God to do what she did; and this being an extraordinary case, is not to be drawn into an example.

Ver. 20. *And it was [so, as] she rode on the ass,* etc.] After her servants:

that she came down, by the covert of the hill; by the side of it, which was covered with bushes, and she rode among them, in a way that led through them, and so was not seen by David and his men; or by the shadow of the hill, toward the bottom of it, where by reason of that, and the opposite hill, it was darkish, and they could not see each other:

and, behold, David and his men came down against her; came down a hill opposite to that she came down:

and she met them; in the valley between two hills.

Ver. 21. *Now David had said,* etc.] When the messengers returned and told him how they had been used by Nabal; or he "said" ^{f505}, or was saying within himself, or to his men, what follows, just as Abigail met him:

surely in vain have I kept all that this [fellow] hath in the wilderness; which shows that he was in a violent passion, and had Nabal in the utmost contempt and indignation, in that he mentions not his name, only says "this", this man or fellow; leaving a blank to be filled up with the most ignominious name and character that could be thought of; and repents that

he had taken so much care of his flocks when they were feeding by him in the wilderness:

so that nothing was missed of all that [pertained] unto him; and seems to have wished he had suffered his flocks to have been robbed by the Arabs, or worried by wild beasts, since he had been such an ungrateful wretch to him:

and he hath requited me evil for good; he had requited evil to him by denying to send him any of his provisions, and by abusing him and his men with opprobrious language; and this was done in return for the good deeds he had done in protecting his servants and his flocks in the wilderness, and for the good words and respectful message he had sent unto him.

Ver. 22. *So and more also do God unto the enemies of David,* etc.] Give them as much health and prosperity, as much wealth and riches, as Nabal has, and much more:

if I leave of all that [pertain] to him, by the morning light, any that pisseth against the wall; which is generally understood of a dog, that he, would not leave him so much as a dog; but it is better, with Ben Gersom, to interpret it of the males in his house, himself, his sons, and servants; and so the Targum paraphrases it of reasonable creatures, of such

“that know knowledge,”

or are knowing and understanding creatures; it seems to have been towards the evening; of the day when David was marching towards Nabal's house, designing to fall upon him and his, amidst their jollity that night, and cut them all off before morning. This must be imputed to the sudden and violent passion David was thrown into when off his guard, through the necessity he was in, the disappointment he met with, and the opprobrious language he was treated with; but in this his conduct was not as it used to be, and as it was towards Saul his enemy. Nor is his rage and passion to be vindicated, or the rash vow he made to destroy Nabal and his family; his crime, though great, yet not to be punished with death; his ingratitude and insolence deserved resentment, but were not capital crimes worthy of death, and especially of the destruction of his whole family; the Jews indeed make him to be guilty of treason, in that he knew that David was anointed king, and yet both abused him, and disobeyed his commands, and therefore being guilty of overt acts of treason, he and his were deserving of death; but David was not yet king.

Ver. 23. *And when Abigail saw David*, etc.] Whom she either knew personally, or rather supposed who he was by the number of men that followed him:

she hasted, and alighted off the ass; on which she rode:

and fell before David on her face, and bowed herself to the ground; in respect to, and reverence of, so great a person as David was.

Ver. 24. *And fell at his feet*, etc.] As an humble supplicant, having a favour to ask of him; it is very probable David was on foot:

and said, upon me, my lord, [upon] me [let] this iniquity [be]; which her husband had been guilty of; she desires it might be transferred from him to her, and be reckoned as if done by her; she would have it imputed to herself, and all the blame lie upon her, and the punishment for it be inflicted on her; for iniquity may be put for the punishment of iniquity: this was very artfully said, as well as expressed great affection for her husband, and care of his life; for she knew, if she could get the fault removed from him to her, she would be able to vindicate herself, and her innocence would soon appear; nor would this strong affection for her husband fail of answering some good purpose, as she full well knew:

and let thine handmaid, I pray thee, speak in thine audience and hear the words of thine handmaid: as it was but reasonable she should be heard, since she stood now as the criminal, taking all the blame of her husband's conduct on herself.

Ver. 25. *Let not my lord, I pray thee, regard this man of Belial, [even] Nabal*, etc.] He is a worthless man, it must be owned, a weak foolish man, rather to be despised than regarded by him; what either he says or does is unworthy of the notice of any, and much less of so great a person as David was:

for as his name [is], so [is] he; his natural disposition, genius, and conduct, agree with his name; when anyone knows his name, he may judge what is to be expected from him:

Nabal [is] his name: which signifies a fool:

and folly, in Hebrew, “Nebalah”,

[is] with him; attends all, his words and actions. This character of her husband, though no doubt a just one, yet it would not have been right in her to have given it, whose folly she should rather have concealed, but that it was his well known character; and she observes it not to reproach him with it, but to excuse his sin, his rudeness and ingratitude and preserve his life; and suggests that what he had done was not to be imputed to malice in his heart, but to his stupidity and folly, and so not to be regarded, and was not a peculiar single action of his, but what he was daily more or less guilty of; his folly was with him wherever he went and appeared in everything he said or did, and therefore to be overlooked and despised:

but I thine handmaid saw not the young men of my lord, whom thou didst send: as she had taken the blame upon herself, now she answers for herself, and pleads ignorance of his messengers, and their message; she had not so much as seen them with her eyes, and much less heard their message when reported; had she, she would have taken care, she intimates, that it should have been attended to; having so much interest in her husband, that she could have prevailed on him to have used them with civility, and granted their request.

Ver. 26. *Now therefore, my lord, [as] the Lord liveth, and [as] thy soul liveth,* etc.] Which is an oath, and respects either what goes before, that she never saw the young men that were sent to Nabal, or to what follows, the providence of God in preventing David from shedding blood, which she was sure of by an impulse on her own mind, and by observing a change in David's countenance:

seeing the Lord hath withholden thee from coming to [shed] blood, and from avenging thyself with thine own hand; she does not impute this to her prudence, and the provision she made to appease David, and prevent him from shedding the blood he intended, and taking the vengeance he had resolved on; but to the Lord, and the interposition of his providence, which she knew would have its weight on the mind of so good a man as David was; who upon reflection would be thankful that he had been prevented from shedding innocent blood, as the Targum calls it:

now let thine enemies, and they that seek evil to my lord, be as Nabal; meaning Saul and those with him, wishing they might be as inconsiderable as Nabal; as unable, as weak, and impotent as he to do him any hurt, and as short lived, and cut off by the hand God, as he would be; for, according to Jarchi, she prophesied under the direction of the Holy Spirit. It may be

observed that in (⁰²⁵⁴1 Samuel 25:24-31), she frequently gives David the title of “my lord”, in reverence of him, and to atone for the rudeness and insolence of her husband, in speaking of him as a runaway servant, (⁰²⁵⁰1 Samuel 25:10).

Ver. 27. *And now this blessing, which thine handmaid hath brought unto my lord*, etc.] The present, consisting of the things mentioned in (⁰²⁵⁸1 Samuel 25:18); which came as a blessing from God, and with good will from her:

let it even be given unto the young men that follow my lord; the servants of David: in the original it is, “that walk at the feet of my lord”: and which the Targum paraphrases, “who minister before my lord”; and so Abigail’s damsels are called “pedissequae”, or “that walked at her feet”, (⁰²⁵²1 Samuel 25:42); and with the Romans, in later times, servants were called a “pedibus” and “pedissequi”^{f506}. This also is very artfully said, as if the present was not good enough for David, and worthy of his acceptance; might be agreeable to his men, and of service to them.

Ver. 28. *I pray thee, forgive the trespass of thine handmaid*, etc.] The trespasses, as the Targum, either the sin of her husband, she had taken upon herself, or her boldness in troubling him with her petitions and solicitations, and even with the present she had brought:

for the Lord will certainly make my lord a sure house; or a firm kingdom, as the Targum; would raise him to the kingdom of Israel, and establish it in his posterity, that it should not be taken from him, as it would be from Saul:

because my lord fighteth the battles of the Lord; the battles of the people of the Lord, as the Targum, of the people of Israel against the Philistines; which he had often done with success, the Lord being with him, and prospering him and therefore would firmly settle him on the throne, and continue the kingdom in his posterity:

and evil hath not been found in thee [all] thy days; no unjust action had been committed by him against his king and country, however he had been reproached and calumniated; and she hoped that therefore none would be done by him now to stain so fair a character.

Ver. 29. *Yet a man is risen to pursue thee, and to seek thy soul*, etc.] His life, to take it away, meaning Saul, whom she chose not to name, because he was king:

but the soul of my lord shall be bound up in the bundle of life with the Lord thy God; should be dear unto the Lord, precious in his esteem, and be carefully preserved by him, among other his chosen ones, and should be safe with him, in his hands, and under his care and keeping; the Jews refer this to eternal life in the world to come, and the safety and security of his soul hereafter; so the Targum,

“the soul of my lord shall be treasured up in the treasury of eternal life, before the Lord thy God:”

hence they speak of the souls of the righteous being laid up under the throne of glory ^{f507}, in proof of which they produce this text; and so Maimonides ^{f508} understands it of what should be after death, (see ~~410B~~ Revelation 6:9 ~~508B~~ Colossians 3:3);

and the souls of thine enemies, them shall he sling out, [as out] of the middle of a sling; that is, remove them swiftly and suddenly, and with force, out of the world, as a stone is slung out of the middle of a sling; (see ~~240B~~ Jeremiah 10:18).

Ver. 30. *And it shall come to pass, when the Lord shall have done to my lord according to all the good that he hath spoken concerning thee*, etc.] Performed his promise, especially with respect to his kingdom, as follows:

and shall have appointed thee ruler over Israel; that is, actually raised him to be, and settled him as king upon the throne of Israel; for he was both appointed and anointed already; and this Abigail knew, and was now well known in Israel, and the common talk of the people.

Ver. 31. *This shall be no grief unto thee, nor offence of heart unto my lord*, etc.] It would give him no trouble, nor distress of mind, or sit uneasy on his conscience:

either that thou hast shed blood causeless, or that my lord hath avenged himself; which she suggests it might do, if he had shed the blood of Nabal's family, his children and servants, who were no ways concerned with him in his rudeness and ingratitude; or had avenged himself on him for the same, by taking away his life, which such crimes, however great and aggravated,

did not deserve; but, on the contrary, it would be a satisfaction and pleasure to him to reflect upon it, that he had passed over such an offence, and shed no blood on account of it:

but when the Lord shall have dealt well with my lord; by delivering him out of the hands of all his enemies, and have raised him to, and settled him on the throne of Israel, of which she made no doubt:

then remember thine handmaid; the advice she gave not to shed blood, and take vengeance, for which he would then be thankful, and gratefully remember: some, as Ben Gersom, think she said this under a spirit of prophecy, that Nabal should die quickly, and she should be David's wife; but rather her meaning is, that when he should be king, and she should apply to him on any account, to have justice done her, and to be assisted and relieved when oppressed, that he would then remember her, and show her favour.

Ver. 32. *And David said to Abigail*, etc.] Having heard her out, and being overcome with her rhetoric and powerful arguments:

blessed [be] the Lord God of Israel, which sent thee this day to meet me; who put it into her heart to come out and meet him, and endeavour to avert him from his bad design, which his heart was set upon; he saw plainly the hand of God in it, and in the first place acknowledges the goodness of divine Providence, in directing her to take the step she did.

Ver. 33. *And blessed [be] thy advice*, etc.] Thanks be to God, and to thee for it, being wise, good, and seasonable; or "thy taste"^{f509}, thy good sense, knowledge, as the Targum, discretion, prudence, and understanding:

and blessed [be] thou which hast kept me this day from coming to [shed] blood; he came out with a full resolution to shed the blood of Nabal, and of all the males in his house, but was stopped by Abigail; who by her arguments so prevailed upon him as to cause him to desist from his design, and thankful he was to God for it; for though he had vowed he would destroy Nabal and his family, yet being a rash sinful vow, he saw it was better to break it than to keep it:

and from avenging myself with mine own hand; which to do would have been sinful, vengeance only belonging to God; and now he leaves it to him, and is very thankful that he was prevented doing it himself.

Ver. 34. *For in very deed, [as] the Lord God of Israel liveth,* etc.] An oath for the confirmation of what he was about to say:

which hath kept me back from hurting thee: from doing any ill to her family, as he intended, though not to her person, his resolution being only to slay the males; but that would have been an hurt, an evil, an affliction to Abigail, from which the Lord in his providence restrained him, and that through her good advice:

except thou hadst hasted, and come to meet me: if she had not made quick dispatch in preparing her present, or had stayed to persuade her husband into her measures; if she had delayed a little longer, David would have been at Nabal's house, executing his vengeance on him and his:

surely there had not been left unto Nabal, by the morning light, any that pisseth against the wall: (see Gill on "^{<0252>}1 Samuel 25:22").

Ver. 35. *So David received of her hand [that] which she had brought him,* etc.] Her present, (^{<0258>}1 Samuel 25:18); and which he kindly took for his own use, as well as for his men; for it was a present for a prince:

and said to her, go up in peace to thine house; in peace of mind, having her request granted, and nothing to fear from David and his men, and so might return home with the greatest safety in her own person, with those that were with her, and be under no apprehensions of danger and destruction to Nabal and his family:

see, I have hearkened to thy voice; to her arguments and reasonings, which were powerful; to her petitions, which were granted; and to her good counsel and advice, which he took:

and have accepted thy person: done as she desired, forgave the offence, and so lifted her up, as the word signifies, and made her countenance cheerful; received her present kindly, and took well all she said and did; and promised to grant her, for the future, anything that lay in his power, whenever she should apply to him, (see ^{<1878>}Job 42:8,9).

Ver. 36. *And Abigail came to Nabal,* etc.] Having sped with David, and taken her leave of him, she returned home to her husband Nabal:

and, behold, he held a feast in his house like the feast of a king; both for the number of dishes on his table and of guests at it though only on the account of sheep shearing; but very probably there were others that were

invited to this entertainment besides the shearers; covetous men are generally very profuse when they make feasts:

and Nabal's heart [was] merry within him, for he [was] very drunken:

which was a very ill example for the master of the feast to set, and was one instance among others of his folly, and of his conduct answering to his name:

wherefore she told him nothing less or more until the morning light; where she had been, and what she had been about, the danger that he and the whole family were in through his rude and churlish behaviour towards David and his men, and how she had prevented it by a timely application to David, meeting him when in full march, and in a great passion, and with a firm resolution to destroy him and his; but finding Nabal in such a condition, bereaved of his reason, and incapable of attending to what she should say, said not one word about it till the next morning.

Ver. 37. *But it came to pass in the morning, when the wine was gone out of Nabal,* etc.] When he had slept, and was become sober, and so capable of attending to and understanding what might be related to him:

and his wife had told him these things; recorded in this chapter, before observed:

that his heart died within him, and he became [as] a stone; he swooned away, became as cold as a stone, and remained as senseless, spoke not a word, but lay in a stupor; the Jewish writers generally say this was occasioned by the distress and uneasiness the present his wife carried to David gave him; but it is more likely the sense of the danger that was impressed upon his mind, which he had been exposed to through his carriage to David and his men; who, he feared, notwithstanding all his wife said would return and take vengeance on him.

Ver. 38. *And it came to pass, about ten days [after],* etc.] After he had lain in this stupid and senseless manner for ten days:

that the Lord smote Nabal, that he died; with some disease or increased the grief of his heart, and the fears of his mind that he died therewith.

Ver. 39. *And when David heard that Nabal was dead,* etc.] As he soon might, Maon and Carmel not being far from the wilderness where David was:

he said, blessed [be] the Lord, that hath pleaded the cause of my reproach from the hand of Nabal; not that he rejoiced at the death of Nabal, simply considered, or from a private spirit of revenge; but because of the glory of divine justice, which he had shown to him in vindicating him from the reproach Nabal had cast upon him, and particularly was thankful for what follows;

and hath kept his servant from evil; from slaying Nabal with his own hand, and doing hurt to his family:

for the Lord hath returned the wickedness of Nabal upon his own head; and upon no other, none of his family suffered but himself, and which was another cause of thankfulness to David; had he been suffered to have done as he in his wrath determined, not only Nabal, but all the males in his house, had been cut off; but now, through the righteous judgment of God, only Nabal suffered, and not any of his family:

and David sent and communed with Abigail; by his messengers to her; or “concerning” her ^{f510}, about marrying her:

to take her to him to wife; for being both a beautiful and wise woman, he thought her a proper person to be his wife; which she might lawfully become, Nabal being dead, and Michal, David’s wife, being taken from him, and given to another man, with whom she lived in adultery; or as divorced by David, as the Jews say, David by the law of God was free from her. These messengers were sent by David at a convenient time, at a proper distance from the death of Nabal; and he chose rather to send messengers than to go himself, lest being denied he should be put to shame, she being a rich widow, and he a poor persecuted man, and that her answer might be entirely free and unawed by him, and that it might appear that she was not taken to him by force; and besides, such a method has been always reckoned most honourable with great personages.

Ver. 40. *And when the servants of David were come to Abigail to Carmel*, etc.] For though Nabal lived in Maon, yet having possessions in Camel, he had no doubt an house there also; and here Abigail was, and perhaps chose to be after his death, rather than at Maon:

they spake unto her; delivered the message to her they were sent with by David:

saying, David sent us unto thee, to take thee to him to wife; that is, to treat with her about his marriage to her, to propose it to her, and, if they could prevail upon her, to bring her with them, that David might espouse her.

Ver. 41. *And she arose, and bowed herself on [her] face to the earth*, etc.] As she did before David, (⁴⁰²⁷³1 Samuel 25:23); and did as she would have done had he been present, considering his messengers as representing him and therefore showed the same respect and reverence and did the same honour, as if he had been there in person:

and said; expressed herself in such language as if David had been before her:

behold, [let] thine handmaid [be] a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my lord; which she said through her great humility, this being one of the meanest services she could be put to; intimating, that she was so far from being worthy to be the wife of such a man that she was only fit and it would be honour enough to her to perform the meanest services to those that waited upon him; or her sense is that it would be enough for her to be the wife of one of David's servants, and not his; it being the business of a wife, as Ben Gersom observes to wash the feet of her husband.

Ver. 42. *And Abigail hasted and arose*, etc.] She had no objection nor hesitation in her mind about marrying David but at once consented, and immediately prepared for her journey, having as high an opinion, and as great an esteem of David, as he of her; and though she was rich and he peer this was no obstacle in the way, she knew and believed he would be king of Israel, (⁴⁰²³⁰1 Samuel 25:30,31); and though he could not support her, she had enough to support herself, and supply him, till he came to the throne: and

rode upon an ass, with five damsels of hers that went after her; whom she took with her, partly to wait upon her, and partly for her honour, and the honour of David, whom she was going to marry:

and she went after the messengers of David: not following them directly, but some time after they were gone; partly for the sake of decency, and partly that they going before might acquaint David with the success of their message, and he might prepare to receive Abigail when she came:

and became his wife; he espoused and married her according to the custom of the times.

Ver. 43. *And David also took Ahinoam of Jezreel, etc.*] A city in the tribe of Judah, (⁴⁶⁵⁵⁶Joshua 15:56); that is, he took her to wife, and as it seems before Abigail became his wife; (see ⁴⁰⁸²2 Samuel 3:2,3);

and they were also both of them his wives; polygamy, though not agreeably to the law of nature, nor the law of God, was a custom which prevailed in those times, which good men gave into, though not to be commended for it.

Ver. 44. *But Saul had given Michal his daughter, David's wife, to Phalti the son of Laish, etc.*] Or "for Saul", etc. ^{f511}; which is a reason for his marrying again, but no reason for marrying more wives than one. Michal was his first wife, and they lived lovingly together, until David was obliged to flee from Saul, and then he gave her to another; partly to vex David, and partly if he could to break the relation between him and David, that he might not be thought to be his son in law, and he to persecute one in such a relation to him; and that this might not give David any show of claim, or be the means of his rising to the throne. This Phalti, to whom he gave her, is called Phaltiel, (⁴⁰⁸⁵2 Samuel 3:15);

which [was] of Gallim; which very probably was a city in the tribe of Benjamin, since it is mentioned with several cities of that tribe, and as near Gibeah of Saul, (²³¹⁹Isaiah 10:29,30).