

CHAPTER 13

INTRODUCTION TO SECOND SAMUEL 13

This chapter relates some of the evils that were to arise out of David's house, and which were similar to the evils committed by him; the deflowering of his daughter, and the murder of his eldest son: the story is this; Amnon falls in love with Tamar, his sister, and grew thin upon it, which being observed by a friend of his, inquires the reason of it, which having got out of him, forms a scheme for obtaining his desire, and which succeeded; for by it he had the opportunity of ravishing his sister, (~~10133~~ 2 Samuel 13:1-14); the consequences of which were extreme hatred of her, hurrying her out of doors, lamentation and mourning on her part, grief to David, and enmity in the heart of Absalom to Amnon, which put him upon meditating his death, (~~10135~~ 2 Samuel 13:15-22); and which was brought about after this manner. Absalom had a sheep shearing, to which he invited the king and all his sons, and to which they all came excepting the king, (~~10133~~ 2 Samuel 13:23-27); when Absalom gave orders to his servants to observe Amnon when he was merry, and at his word smite him and kill him, as they did, (~~10135~~ 2 Samuel 13:28,29); tidings of which soon came to the ears of David, and these aggravated, that all the king's sons were killed, which threw the king into an agony; but Jonadab endeavoured to pacify him, by assuring him that only Amnon was dead, the truth of which soon appeared by the coming of the king's sons, (~~10133~~ 2 Samuel 13:30-36); but Absalom fled to Geshur, where he remained three years, when David's heart began to be towards him, and to long for him, who was to bring more evil against him, (~~10137~~ 2 Samuel 13:37-39).

Ver. 1. *And it came to pass after this,* etc.] After the sin of David with Bathsheba, his repentance for it, and pardon of it, and the birth of Solomon as a token of reconciliation; yet after all this the divine threatenings must take place; they had begun already in the death of the child begotten in adultery, and others here follow:

that Absalom the son of David had a fair sister, whose name [was] Tamar; she was his sister both by father and mother's side; the mother o, f

them was Maacah, the daughter of Talmai king of Geshur; she was a very comely person, her name signifies a palm tree:

and Amnon the son of David loved her; not in an honourable way, to make her his wife, but in a lustful manner, to make an harlot of her; he was David's eldest son by Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, (~~1~~2 Samuel 3:2).

Ver. 2. *And Amnon was so vexed*, etc.] Distressed, straitened, and perplexed in his mind through unruly and unbridled lusts that raged in him:

that he fell sick for his sister Tamar; as Antiochus son of Seleucus did for his mother in law Stratonice, who, to cure him of it, was delivered to him by his father^{f211}:

for she [was] a virgin; and so kept very recluse from the company of men, that he could not come at her; so Philo^{f212}, speaking of the Jewish women, and particularly virgins, says, that they were shut up in their chambers, and through modesty shun the sight of men, even those of their own house; hence they are called **twml** [, from a word which signifies to hide; and Phocylides^{f213} the poet advises to the shutting of them up in like manner:

and Amnon thought it hard for him to do anything to her; that it was difficult to have access to her, almost impossible, what he despaired of, and what, if attained to, would be wonderful and amazing; he was at his wits' end how to contrive any scheme to get at her, and obtain his desire.

Ver. 3. *But Amnon had a friend*, etc.] Though in the issue his friendship proved his ruin:

whose name [was] Jonadab, the son of Shimeah, David's brother; so that they were own cousins, the same with Shammah, (~~1~~1 Samuel 16:9);

and Jonadab [was] a very subtle man; a very penetrating man into the dispositions of men, and could judge by their countenances what they were, and the affections of their minds, and had a talent in forming schemes; he was wise to do evil and was wickedly cunning.

Ver. 4. *And he said unto him, why [art] thou, [being] the king's son, lean from day today?* etc.] Or "morning by morning",^{f214}; he was the king's eldest son, heir to the crown, fed at his table, had everything to make him gay and cheerful, and yet pined away; his flesh wasted^{f215}, his countenance waxed wan and pale, and especially in the mornings; in the daytime he met with diversions which, in some measure, took off his thoughts from the

object his mind was impressed with, but in the night season they were continually employed about it; so that he could have no rest and sleep, which made him look ruefully in the morning; and this man had a suspicion of his case, and therefore put this and the following question to him:

wilt thou not tell me? who am so nearly related to thee, and who have such a particular value and affection for thee:

and Amnon said unto him, I love Tamar, my brother Absalom's sister; he does not call her his sister, but Absalom's sister, to lessen his sin of unlawful love to her, which, being thus closely pressed, and by a friend, he could not conceal.

Ver. 5. *And Jonadab said unto him,* etc.] Being a subtle man, he presently formed a scheme to relieve him, and open a way for the enjoyment of what he desired:

lay thee down on thy bed, and make thyself sick; feign thyself sick, pretend that thou art so, by lying down on the bed, and making complaints of one kind or another:

and when thy father cometh to see thee; as he quickly would, after hearing of his illness, being very affectionate to his children:

say unto him, I pray thee let, my sister Tamar come, and give me meat; here he is directed to call her not Absalom's sister, but his own, the more to cover his ill design upon her:

and dress the meat in my sight, that I may see [it], and eat [it] at her hand; pretending that his stomach was very weak and squeamish, that he could not eat anything which his servants dressed for him, and which he did not see done with his own eyes.

Ver. 6. *So Amnon lay down, and made himself sick,* etc.] Took the advice of his cousin Jonadab, and acted according to it:

and when the king was come to see him; as he quickly did, after he had heard of his illness:

Amnon said unto the king; who perhaps inquired of his appetite, whether he could eat anything, and what:

I pray thee let my sister Tamar come; he calls her sister, as Jonadab had directed, the more to blind his design; though it is much that so sagacious a

man as David was had not seen through it; but the notion he had of his being really ill, and the near relation between him and Tamar, forbid his entertaining the least suspicion of that kind:

and make me a couple of cakes in my sight; heart cakes, as the word may be thought to signify; called so either from the form of them, such as We have with us, or from the effect of them, comforting and refreshing the heart:

that I may eat at her hand; both what is made by her hand, and received from it.

Ver. 7. *Then David sent home to Tamar*, etc.] Who perhaps was not in the king's palace, but at her brother Absalom's house, (~~1033~~ 2 Samuel 13:20);

saying, go now to thy brother Amnon's house; who also had a separate house and equipage, being the king's son, and his eldest son:

and dress him meat; such as he may desire, and his stomach will bear.

Ver. 8. *So Tamar went to her brother Amnon's house*, etc.] In obedience to the king's commands, and in affection to her brother, with an innocent breast, having no suspicion of any design upon her chastity:

(and he was laid down); upon a couch or bed in his chamber, as being sick as was pretended, into which she was introduced:

and she took flour, and kneaded [it]; made it into a paste:

and made cakes in his sight; a kind of fritters of them, as in the Talmud ^{f216}.

and did bake the cakes: or fried them in a frying pan, in oil.

Ver. 9. *And she took a pan, and poured [them] out before him*, etc.] Out of the frying pan, in which they were, into another dish; and all this was done in his presence, that he might see and know of what, and in what manner it was made, that his stomach might not recoil at it:

but he refused to eat: for that was not what he wanted:

and Amnon said, have out all men from me; as if company was troublesome to him, and he wanted rest, etc.

and they went out every man from him; at his orders, that he might get some sleep, as he seemed desirous of it.

Ver. 10. *And Amnon said unto Tamar, bring the meat into the chamber,* etc.] An inner chamber, at a greater distance, where they might be more secret, and out of the reach of the hearing of any of his domestics:

that I may eat of thine hand; this he pretended, though his design was of another kind:

and Tamar took the cakes which she had made, and brought [them] into the chamber to Amnon her brother; being quite innocent herself, and having no suspicion of a brother having any ill design upon her, she made no scruple of going into an inner chamber alone with him.

Ver. 11. *And when she had brought [them] unto him to eat,* etc.] Not only into the chamber, but to the side of the bed or couch where he had laid himself, or sat, in a proper position to answer his purpose:

he took hold of her; by the arm, or threw his hands about her:

and said unto her, come, lie with me, my sister; one would think the relation he observes she stood in to him would have checked him from making so vile a motion.

Ver. 12. *And she answered him, nay, my brother,* etc.] Which carried in it a reason sufficient for her denial, that he was her brother, and she his sister, and therefore should not offer such an indignity to her:

do not force me; which was another forbidding expression, signifying she would never freely yield to his will; and to force her, to defile her against her will, to commit a rape upon her, would be very criminal indeed:

for no such thing ought to be done in Israel; among God's professing people, who were better taught and instructed; and to give into such impure practices would bring a dishonour upon them, and upon the religion they professed; she urges the honour of religion, and the reputation of Israel, and the glory of the God of Israel:

do not thou this folly: as all sin is, especially such an impure and indecent action as this.

Ver. 13. *And I, whither shall I cause my shame to go?* etc.] She desires him to consider her reputation, which would be lost; was she to go into a

corner, into a place the most private and retired, yet she would blush at the thought of the crime committed; and still less able would she be to lift up her face in any public company; nor could she ever expect to be admitted into the matrimonial state; in short, her character would be entirely ruined:

and as for thee, thou shalt be as one of the fools in Israel; as the vilest and basest and most abandoned in the nation; who ought of all men to be most careful of his reputation, being a prince in Israel, and heir apparent to the throne:

now therefore, I pray thee, speak unto the king: to give me to thee in marriage:

for he will not withhold me from thee; this she said, either as ignorant of the law, which forbids such marriages, or as supposing the king had a power to dispense with it, and, rather than he should die for love, would; though she seems to say this, and anything that occurred to her mind, to put him off of his wicked design for the present, holding then she should be delivered from him; besides, she was not his sister by the mother's side, and, as the Jews say, was born of a captive woman before she was proselyted and married to David, and so was free for Ammon^{f217}; and others say^{f218} she was the daughter of Maacah by a former husband, and not by David.

Ver. 14. *Howbeit, he would not hearken unto her voice*, etc.] His lust was so inflamed and enraged, that he could not attend to any arguments, though ever so forcible, that were offered to him:

but being stronger than she, forced her, and lay with her; whether she cried out or not, as the law directs in such cases, (^{f225}Deuteronomy 22:25-27); is not said; she might, and nobody hear her and come to her assistance; or she might not choose to expose her brother to his servants.

Ver. 15. *Then Amnon hated her exceedingly*, etc.] Having gratified his lust, his conscience stung him for it, that he could not bear the sight of the object that had been the instrument of it; and it may be the sharp words she had used, representing him as one of the fools in Israel, and perhaps she used sharper words still after he had abused her, filled him with hatred to her:

so that the hatred wherewith he hated her [was] greater than the love wherewith he had loved her; a like instance of love being changed into

hatred, after the gratification of lust, we have in Honorius towards his sister Placidia ^{f219}:

and Amnon said unto her, arise, be gone; without calling her by her name, or owning the relation she bore to him, using her as the basest and vilest of creatures. This conduct was very brutish, as well as imprudent, and foolish to the last degree; had he had any regard to his own reputation, he would never have turned her out of doors so soon, and in such a public manner; but so it was ordered by divine Providence, that his sin might be made known, and so the murder of him for it by Absalom was brought on, and both were suffered as a correction and chastisement to David for his sins of adultery and murder, (^{<1021>}2 Samuel 12:11).

Ver. 16. *And she said unto him, [there is] no cause*, etc.] For such treatment as this:

this evil in sending me away [is] greater than the other that thou didst unto me; not that this was a greater sin, but it was a greater evil or injury to her, that being done secretly, this openly; being turned out in that open manner, it might look as if she was the aggressor, and had drawn her brother into this sin, or however had consented to it; had it been kept a secret, she would not have been exposed to public shame and disgrace, and she might have been disposed of in marriage to another; it would not have been known to the grief of her father, to the revenge of Absalom, and to the dishonour of religion; besides, the sin of Amnon might have been more easily excused, if any excuse could be made for it, as that it arose from the force of lust, and a strong impure affection, but this from barbarity and inhumanity:

but he would not hearken unto her; but insisted upon her immediate departure.

Ver. 17. *Then he called his servants that ministered unto him*, etc.] His domestic servants that waited on him:

and said, put now this [woman] out from me; she not willing to depart at once, he ordered her to be put out immediately by force; using her and speaking of her in a very rude and scandalous manner, calling her this, leaving it to be supplied, as they would understand it, this base woman, this strumpet, etc.

and bolt the door after her; that she might not return; this was more disgraceful still.

Ver. 18. *And [she had] a garment of divers colours upon her*, etc.] Of embroidered work, which made her the more observable, and her shame the more manifest. Whether this was interwoven with threads of various colours, or embroidered with figures of flowers, animals, etc. and wrought with the needle, or was painted with different colours, or made up of pieces of various colours, is not certain. (See Gill on “^{Q137B}Genesis 37:3”); but according to Braunius ^{f220} it was neither, and so the coat of Joseph, but was a garment with sleeves, reaching down to the ankles, and pieced at the borders with fringe; and, indeed, garments of flowers and various colours were such as in other nations, as in Athens, harlots wore ^{f221} and not virgins, as follows:

for with such robes were the king’s daughters [that were] virgins apparelled; which they wore to distinguish them both from common people, and from married persons of the same quality:

then the servants brought her out, and bolted the door after her; laid hold on her, and brought her out by main force; thrust her out of doors, and turned the key upon her.

Ver. 19. *And Tamar put ashes on her head*, etc.] In token of sorrow and distress; (see ^{Q106B}Joshua 7:6);

and rent her garment of divers colours that [was] on her; signifying that her virginity was rent from her in a forcible manner, or that she was ravished:

and laid her hand on her head; through grief and shame; (see ^{Q425B}Jeremiah 2:37);

and went on crying; from Amnon’s house to her brother Absalom’s, as one abused and injured.

Ver. 20. *And Absalom her brother said unto her*, etc.] Either meeting her in the street, or rather when come to his house:

hath Amnon thy brother been with thee? been rude with thee, and lain with thee, which is the meaning of this modest expression; which he guessed at, having heard of her being sent to his house, and knowing his lustful disposition, and seeing her in such a forlorn condition: he calls him

Aminon, for so it is in the Hebrew text, and not Amnon, by way of contempt, as Kimchi observes:

but hold now thy peace, my sister; be silent, take no notice of this matter, say nothing of it to the king, nor any other, keep it in thine own breast, and make thyself easy:

he [is] thy brother, regard not this thing; it is thy brother that has done it, and not so disgraceful as a meaner person, done in the heat of lust, and a youthful one, and should be forgiven; besides, to divulge it would bring disgrace upon the whole family, and no recompence would be obtained by telling the king of it, since he was his son, his firstborn, and heir to the crown; this he said not out of love of Amnon, but as desirous of gratifying private revenge upon him for it when opportunity should serve.

So Tamar remained desolate in her brother Absalom's house; not seeing any company, being filled with grief and shame, and none applying to her as a suitor, knowing she was vitiated; how long she continued here, or lived after this, is not certain; no mention is made of her afterwards.

Ver. 21. *But when King David heard of all these things*, etc.] Of Amnon's ravishing Tamar, and turning her out of doors in that inhuman manner he did, and of her distress upon it:

he was very wroth; with Amnon; but we read not of any reproof he gave him, nor of any punishment inflicted on him by him. Abarbinel thinks the reason why he was not punished was because his sin was not cognizable by a court of judicature, nor was punishable by any way, or with any kind of death inflicted by the sanhedrim, as stoning, burning, etc. nor even by scourging, because there were no witnesses; but the punishment of it was cutting off, i.e. by the hand of God. The Jews say^{f222} a law was made on this, that virgins or unmarried persons should not be alone; for if this was done to the daughter of a king, much more might it be done to the daughter of a private man; and if to a modest person, much more to an impudent one.

Ver. 22. *And Absalom spake unto his brother Amnon neither good nor bad*, etc.] That is, said nothing at all to him about the rape of his sister; not that he was sulky with him, and would not converse with him at all; for then Amnon would have mistrusted that he was meditating revenge, and therefore would have been upon his guard; but on the contrary he talked

freely, and in appearance friendly, on other things, the better to conceal his hatred of him, and his design to avenge the injury of his sister:

for Absalom hated Amnon; or, “though” ^{f223} he hated him, yet he behaved in this manner towards him:

because he had forced his sister Tamar: who was so by father and mother’s side, and so near and dear unto him, and therefore resented the injury done her.

Ver. 23. *And it came to pass after two full years*, etc.] Two complete years after the rape was committed; so long Absalom kept it in his mind, and was contriving how to avenge it; he let it alone so long, that it might be thought by the king and Amnon, and all the family, that it was quite worn out of his mind, and entirely forgotten by him, and therefore might the more safely confide in him:

that Absalom had sheepshearers in Baalhazor, which [is] beside Ephraim; though a prince, the son of a king, he had his flocks, and attended to the care of them, and had shearers to shear them at the proper time of the year, which it now was. The Chinese shear their sheep three times a year, the spring, summer, and autumn; but the first time of shearing yields the best wool ^{f224}. The place of shearing them was, no doubt, near where they were kept in Baalhazor, in the plain of Hazor, as the Targum, and so some versions; which was a city in the tribe of Judah, (⁴⁶⁸⁵²Joshua 15:25); and near to Ephraim; not that it was a city in the tribe of Ephraim, as Josephus says ^{f225}; but it was near to another city called Ephraim, perhaps the same as in (⁴⁴³⁹2 Chronicles 13:19) and in (⁴⁶¹⁵⁴John 11:54); it lay to the northeast of Jerusalem, as you go to Jericho, and is thought by Reland ^{f226} to lie between Bethel and Jericho; and, according to Eusebius ^{f227}, it was eight miles from Jerusalem; though Jerom ^{f228}, through mistake, says twenty; and both these places, according to Bunting ^{f229}, were eight miles from Jerusalem; it seems to be the same place that was spoken of in the Misnah ^{f230}, called Ephraim in the valley, and which is said to be the second place in the land of Israel for fine flour, and might have its name from its fruitfulness:

and Absalom invited all the king’s sons; to the sheepshearing: that is, to the feast which was usually made at such times, and still is; (see ⁴⁶⁸²Genesis 38:12 ⁴⁹²¹1 Samuel 25:2,8,11,36).

Ver. 24. *And Absalom came to the king,* etc.] At Jerusalem, to invite him in person:

and said, behold now, thy servant hath sheepshearers; persons employed in shearing his sheep: and this being a time of entertainment and joy,

let the king, I beseech thee, and his servants, go with thy servant; he invited the king and the whole royal family to go with him to Baalhazor, and partake of the sheepshearing feast; for by “his servants” are not meant the king’s domestic servants, his guard and retinue, but his sons, as appears by what follows.

Ver. 25. *And the king said to Absalom, nay, my son, let us not all now go,* etc.] He did not object to the invitation entirely, he was willing some of the family should go, but not all; it seems probable that he particularly excepted himself and his eldest son, the heir to his crown, for the reason following:

lest we be chargeable unto thee; one or two persons more, supposing them to be private persons, would have added but little to the expense, if any; but as David was a king, he must have come with the retinue of a king, with a large number of servants and guards, and must be entertained as such; and Amnon, his eldest son, and heir apparent to the crown, must make a figure suitable to his quality, which would have considerably raised the expense; and perhaps Absalom’s estate he had to live upon might be but small, which David knew, and therefore chose not to be burdensome to him:

and he pressed him; urged him to go; not that he expected he would, or really desired he should, but this he did to hide his intention, that he might have no suspicion of his design against Amnon; or otherwise he might think he would not have been so pressing upon him to go with him:

howbeit he would not go, but blessed him; thanked him for the invitation he gave him, and wished him much happiness and pleasure at his entertainment with his friends.

Ver. 26. *Then said Absalom, if not,* etc.] If it is not thy pleasure to go with me, if I cannot have the honour of thy company:

I pray thee, let my brother Amnon go with us; let me have the next mark of honour that can be given me, the presence of the king’s eldest son, and heir

to the crown; he seems to express affection for him, and a particular desire of his company, as if all ill will towards him was removed from him, and this would be a public declaration of reconciliation between them:

and the king said unto him, why should he go with thee? he particularly, he more than any other; David seems to have suspected some design, and it is strange he should not; and yet if he had, it is much, notwithstanding the pressing arguments used, he should let him go; or he might think it would be more expensive to have him than the rest, and therefore asks why he should desire his company above all others.

Ver. 27. *But Absalom pressed him,* etc.] Which one would think would have increased his suspicion, if he had any, or have raised it in him; but his mind was blinded, that Amnon's incest might be punished and the threatening to David and his house be fulfilled on account of the affair of Uriah and Bathsheba:

that he let Amnon and all the king's sons go with him; if he had any suspicion at all, he might choose they should all go, that they might protect and defend him, if any attempt was made upon him; or, as others think, that no exceptions might be taken, as might be, if Amnon had gone alone.

Ver. 28. *Now Absalom had commanded his servants,* etc.] Before he and his guests were set down to the entertainment:

saying, mark ye now when Amnon's heart is merry with wine; as he was determined to make him if possible, and as he supposed he would be, knowing his inclination to drink:

and when I say unto you, smite Amnon, then kill him; smite him that he die, and be sure he is dead before you leave him:

fear not, have not I commanded you? who am your lord, the king's son, and will then be heir to the crown; fear not, I will protect you; let all the blame be laid to me, if any; I will be answerable for it, you have nothing to do but to obey my commands:

be courageous, and be valiant; show yourselves to be men of courage and valour, not fearing the king's sons, or any in company, or what will be the consequences of it; do your business effectually, and leave all with me; it is very reasonably supposed that Absalom had not only in view to revenge the rape of his sister, but to get himself next heir to the crown.

Ver. 29. *And the servants of Absalom did unto Amnon as Absalom had commanded*, etc.] They smote him, and killed him, when he gave the word:

then all the king's sons arose; from the feast, imagining they were all designed to be slain:

and every man gat him up upon his mule, and fled; creatures much used in Judea instead of horses, which, though they might not be bred, might be used^{f231}.

Ver. 30. *And it came to pass while they were in the way*, etc.] On their road homewards, before they got to Jerusalem:

that tidings came to David; perhaps brought by one who was at the entertainment, who upon seeing Amnon smitten, immediately rose up and fled with the news of it to David:

saying, Absalom hath slain all the king's sons, and there is not one of them left; which he might suppose was the design of Absalom, and was done before that time; however, so it was ordered in Providence, that David, that rejoiced at the news of the death of Uriah, might be terrified with the tidings of the death of all his sons; and for a while it was as if it was really so, which occasioned the following behaviour in him.

Ver. 31. *Then the king arose, and tore his garments*, etc.] In token of extreme grief and sorrow, as Jacob did when he was shown the coat of Joseph, supposing him to have been slain, as David thought all his sons were, (^{<01534>}Genesis 37:34);

and lay on the earth; on the bare ground, another token of mourning; so Job did on hearing the death of his sons, (^{<01020>}Job 1:20);

and all his servants stood by with their clothes rent: did as David did, in imitation of him, joining with him in expressions of sorrow; these were his courtiers, ministers of state, and principal officers in his household.

Ver. 32. *And Jonadab the son of Shimeah, David's brother*, etc.] The same that advised Amnon to feign himself sick, to get Tamar sent to him, that he might enjoy her, (^{<01038>}2 Samuel 13:3);

answered and said; said in answer to the report brought to the king, which threw him into such an agony:

let not my lord suppose [that] they have slain all the young men the king's sons; he did not believe it himself, and would not have the king entertain such a thought, and distress himself with it:

for Amnon only is dead; he is very positive, and speaks with great assurance; it looks as if he was in the secret, and knew of the plot against Amnon's life; and, if so, he must be a very wicked man, first to form a scheme whereby Amnon might come at Tamar to ravish her, and then be accessory to the murder of him, as he must, if he knew of the design against his life, and did not acquaint him and the king of it; and this seems to be confirmed by what follows:

for by the appointment of Absalom this hath been determined, from the day that he forced his sister Tamar; that is, the slaying of Amnon; the meaning is, either that Absalom had given orders to his servants to slay him, whenever they had an opportunity; or it was "in the mouth of Absalom"^{f232}, as it may be rendered; he used to declare it to his intimate friends, that it was the purpose and resolution of his heart to kill Amnon some time or another; and this he had taken up from the time of his sister Tamar's being forced, and because of that, of which Jonadab had intelligence by some means or another; and who speaks of this rape without any seeming emotion, as if he had no concern at all in it.

Ver. 33. *Now therefore let not my lord the king take the thing to his heart,* etc.] Neither suppose it, nor be troubled for it:

to think that all the king's sons are dead: which was not to be thought, nor could any good reason be given for such a supposition

for Amnon only is dead; he repeats it again with great assurance, which seems to confirm the suspicion of him before suggested; though some think he said this not from certain knowledge, but by conjecture.

Ver. 34. *But Absalom fled,* etc.] He who promised his servants protection could not protect himself, and who no doubt fled with him; he knew what he had done was death by law, and that there was no city of refuge for such sort of murder as this, and he had no reason to hope the king would suffer so foul a crime as this to pass unpunished:

and the young man that kept the watch lifted up his eyes, and looked: to the way that led from Absalom's house to Jerusalem, to see if he could spy any other messenger on the road from thence:

and, behold, there came much people by the way of the hill side behind him; that is, behind the watchman, who, looking round him, saw them; these people were the king's sons and their attendants, who, being at some distance, the young man could not discern who they were; they did not come the direct road from Absalom's house, but came a round about way, for fear, as R. Isaiah rightly conjectures, lest Absalom should pursue, or send pursuers after them, and slay them; though others, as Kimchi, think this refers to the hill, and that the sense is, that the watchman saw them coming from the way which was behind the hill, and began to see them when they came to the side of it, which was the way that led to the city, surrounded by mountains, (see ⁴⁹Psalm 125:2).

Ver. 35. *And Jonadab said to the king, behold, the king's sons come*, etc.] For as they came nearer, it was plainly discovered that they were the king's sons, seen on the side of the hill:

as thy servant said, so it is; he seems to applaud himself, and exult at his penetration and foresight.

Ver. 36. *And it came to pass, as soon as he had made an end of speaking*, etc.] As soon as the above words were out of his mouth:

that, behold, the king's sons came: into the palace, and into the apartment where the king was:

and lifted up their voice and wept; not being able to tell the sorrowful news with their mouths, but declared it by gestures:

and the king also and all his servants wept very sore; they joined the king's sons in weeping, and were the more moved to it by their weeping, and the rather, since hereby the news of Amnon's murder was confirmed.

Ver. 37. *But Absalom fled*, etc.] As before related, but here repeated for the sake of what follows:

and went to Talmi, the son of Ammihud, king of Geshur: his mother's father, (see ^{410B}2 Samuel 3:3), where he might hope for protection and safety:

and [David] mourned for his son every day; or "all the days"^{f233}, i.e. of the three years Absalom was in Geshur, about the end of which he was comforted concerning Amnon, as the following verses show. Some think it was for Absalom he mourned, but rather for Amnon. The reason why he

mourned for him, when he did not for his child by Bathsheba, who died, because that was an infant, this a grown man, and heir to his crown, and was slain by the sword of his brother, and so fulfilled a threatening to himself on account of his own sin, which, hereby no doubt, was brought fresh to his mind.

Ver. 38. *So Absalom fled*, etc.] This is the third time it is mentioned, and the reason of it here Abarbinel thinks is, that when he first fled to his grandfather, he used to stand openly in the court of his palace, and go with him wherever he went from place to place; but when he understood that his father mourned so for the death of Amnon, he was afraid he would send some person to lay hold on him, and take vengeance on him; and therefore he would go no more with the king from place to place, but went and abode in Geshur always, which was a fortified city, as it follows:

and went to Geshur, and was there three years: and never went out of it, until he was fetched by Joab, as (^{<10423>}2 Samuel 14:23) relates; nor is there anything in (^{<1037>}2 Samuel 13:37,38) disturbed and mutilated, as Spinosa ^{f234} intimates, but the whole is very expressive and emphatic.

Ver. 39. *And [the soul of] King David longed to go forth unto Absalom*, etc.] In like manner it is supplied and paraphrased in the Targum, because the word rendered “longed” is feminine; though it may be used to denote the effeminateness of David’s disposition and carriage on this occasion. Aben Ezra thinks the word “wife”, should be supplied, and then the sense is, that the wife of King David, the mother of Absalom, made supplication to him to send forth one of the young men to fetch Absalom, and that by her importunity to him she stirred up a longing desire in David after him. Abarbinel observes, from another writer of theirs, that all the three years David was mourning for his son, he went out continually to seek to take vengeance on Absalom; but after that time, the mother of Absalom, or Tamar his sister, or his daughter, was importunate with the king, and restrained him from going forth to seek vengeance on Absalom; and when he was comforted concerning Amnon, that woman found means to restrain him from going out, and he restrained his servants from going forth against Absalom; and so he observes the word is used for withholding or restraining in (^{<3900>}Psalm 40:10); and this agrees with several ancient versions, as the Vulgate Latin,

“King David ceased to persecute Absalom;”

and the Septuagint,

“King David ceased to go out to Absalom;”

and the Syriac version,

“and King David abstained from going out after Absalom:”

for he was comforted concerning Amnon, seeing he was dead; and could not be brought back from the grave, though Absalom might be from his exile, to which he had an inclination; but he knew not how to do it, consistent with justice and his own honour.