

Adam Clarke:

Introduction

Jonathan and David commence a lasting friendship; and David acts prudently with respect to Saul, 1 Samuel 18:1-5. Saul becomes jealous of David, on account of the esteem in which he is held in Israel; and, in his fury endeavors to destroy him, 1 Samuel 18:6-12. David is made captain over a thousand; and the people love and respect him, 1 Samuel 18:13-16. Saul, in order to ensnare him, offers him his daughter in marriage, 1 Samuel 18:17-24; and requires a hundred foreskins of the Philistines for dowry; hoping that, in endeavoring to procure them, David might fall by the hands of the Philistines, 1 Samuel 18:25. David agrees to the conditions, fulfils them, and has Michal to wife, 1 Samuel 18:26-30.

Verse 1

When he had made an end of speaking - These first five verses are omitted by the Septuagint. See the notes on the preceding chapter, 1 Samuel 17 (note).

Jonathan loved him as his own soul - The most intimate friendship subsisted between them; and they loved each other with pure hearts fervently. No love was lost between them; each was worthy of the other. They had a friendship which could not be affected with changes or chances, and which exemplified all that the ancients have said on the subject;

Verse 4

Jonathan stripped himself - Presents of clothes or rich robes, in token of respect and friendship, are frequent in the East. And how frequently arms and clothing were presented by warriors to each other in token of friendship, may be seen in Homer and other ancient writers.

Verse 5

Set him over the men of war - Made him generalissimo; or what we would call field marshal.

Verse 6

When David was returned - This verse connects well with the 54th verse of the preceding chapter; and carries on the narration without any break or interruption. See the notes on 1 Samuel 17:54.

The women came out - It was the principal business of certain women to celebrate victories, sing at funerals, etc.

With instruments of music - The original word ($\text{x}\text{Ⓢ}\text{x}\text{Ⓢ}^{\text{TM}}\text{x}$) (shalishim)) signifies instruments with three strings; and is, I think, properly translated by the Vulgate, cum sistris, æwwith sistrums.æ• This instrument is well known as being used among the ancient Egyptians: it was made of brass, and had three, sometimes more, brass rods across; which, being loose in their holes, made a jingling noise when the instrument was shaken.

Verse 7

Saul hath slain his thousands - As it cannot literally be true that Saul had slain thousands, and David ten thousands; it would be well to translate the passage thus: Saul hath smitten or fought against thousands; David against tens of thousands. • Though Saul has been victorious in all his battles; yet he has not had such great odds against him as David has had; Saul, indeed, has been opposed by thousands; David, by ten thousands. • We may here remark that the Philistines had drawn out their whole forces at this time: and when Goliath was slain, they were totally discomfited by the Israelites, led on chiefly by David.

Verse 10

The evil spirit from God - See on 1 Samuel 16:14 (note), etc.

He prophesied in the midst of the house - He was beside himself; made prayers, supplications, and incoherent imprecations: "God preserve my life," "Destroy my enemies," or such like prayers, might frequently escape from him in his agitated state. The Arabic intimates that he was actually possessed by an evil spirit, and that through it he uttered a sort of demoniacal predictions.

But let us examine the original more closely: it is said that Saul prophesied in the midst of his house, that is, he prayed in his family, while David was playing on the harp; and then suddenly threw his javelin, intending to have killed David. Let it be observed that the word **x•xTMx•x x'•x** (vaiyithnabbe) is the third person singular of

the future hithpael; the sign of which is not only to do an action on or for one's self, but also to feign or pretend to do it. The meaning seems to be, Saul pretended to be praying in his family, the better to conceal his murderous intentions, and render David unsuspecting; who was, probably, at this time performing the musical part of the family worship. This view of the subject makes the whole case natural and plain.

Verse 11

Saul cast the javelin - The javelin or spear was the emblem of regal authority; kings always had it at hand, and in ancient monuments they are always represented with it.

In ancient times, says Justin, kings used a spear instead of a diadem: *Per ea tempora reges hastas pro diademate habebant*, Hist. lib. xliii. And as spears were the emblems of supreme power, hence they were reputed as attributes of the Divinity, and were worshipped as representatives of the gods. *Ab origine verum, pro Diis immortalibus veteres Hastas coluerunt, ob cuius religionis memoriam, adhuc deorum simulachris Hastae adduntur.* - Ibid.

Verse 13

Made him his captain - This was under pretense of doing him honor, when it was in effect only to rid himself of the object of his envy.

Verse 15

He was afraid of him - He saw that, by his prudent conduct, he was every day gaining increasing influence.

Verse 17

Fight the Lord's battles - Mr. Calmet properly remarks that the wars of the Hebrews, while conducted by the express orders of God, were truly the wars of the Lord; but when the spirit of worldly ambition and domination became mingled with them, they were no longer the wars of the Lord, but wars of lust and profanity.

Verse 21

That she may be a snare to him - Saul had already determined the condition on which he would give his daughter to David; viz., that he should slay one hundred Philistines: this he supposed he would undertake for the love of Michal, and that he must necessarily perish in the attempt; and thus Michal would become a snare to him.

Verse 25

But a hundred foreskins - That is, Thou shalt slay one hundred Philistines, and thou shalt produce their foreskins, as a proof, not only that thou hast killed one hundred men, but that these are of the uncircumcised. A custom similar to this still prevails among the Abyssinians, according to Bruce. See his Travels.

Verse 27

Slew - two hundred men - The Septuagint has only one hundred men. Saul covenanted with David for a hundred; and David himself says, 2 Samuel 3:14, that he espoused Michal for a hundred: hence it is likely that one hundred is the true reading.

Verse 30

Then the princes of the Philistines went forth - Probably to avenge themselves on David and the Israelites: but of this war we know no more than that David was more skillful and successful in it than any of the other officers of Saul. His military skill was greater, and his success was proportionate to his skill and courage; hence it is said, he behaved himself more wisely than all the servants of Saul.