

Adam Clarke:

Introduction

Jonathan pleads for David before Saul, who is for the present reconciled, 1 Samuel 19:1-7. David defeats the Philistines; and Saul becomes again envious, and endeavors to slay him, but he escapes, 1 Samuel 19:8-10. Saul sends men to David's house, to lie in wait for him; but Michal saves him by a stratagem, 1 Samuel 19:11-17. David flees to Samuel, at Ramah, 1 Samuel 19:18. Saul, hearing of it, sends messengers three several times to take him; but the Spirit of coming upon them, they prophesy, 1 Samuel 19:19-21. Saul, hearing of this, goes after David himself, and falls under the same influence, 1 Samuel 19:22-24.

Verse 1

That they should kill David - Nothing less than the especial interposition of God could have saved David's life, when every officer about the king's person, and every soldier, had got positive orders to despatch him.

Verse 2

Take heed to thyself until the morning - Perhaps the order was given to slay him the next day; and therefore Jonathan charges him to be particularly on his guard at that time, and to hide himself.

Verse 4

Jonathan spake good of David - It is evident that Jonathan was satisfied that David was an innocent man; and that his father was most unjustly incensed against him.

Verse 5

For he did put his life in his hand - The pleadings in this verse, though short, are exceedingly cogent; and the argument is such as could not be resisted.

Verse 6

He shall not be slain - In consequence of this oath, we may suppose he issued orders contrary to those which he had given the preceding day.

Verse 7

He was in his presence, as in times past - By Jonathan's advice he had secreted himself on that day on which he was to have been assassinated: the king having sworn that he should not be slain, David resumes his place in the palace of Saul.

Verse 9

And the evil spirit from the Lord - His envy and jealousy again returned, producing distraction of mind, which was exacerbated by diabolic influence. See on 1 Samuel 16:14 (note).

Verse 10

But he slipped away - He found he could not trust Saul; and therefore was continually on his watch. His agility of body was the means of his preservation at this time.

Verse 11

To slay him in the morning - When they might be able to distinguish between him and Michal his wife; for, had they attempted his life in the night season, there would have been some danger to Michal's life. Besides, Saul wished to represent him as a traitor; and consequently an attack upon him was justifiable at any time, even in the fullest daylight.

Verse 12

Let David down through a window - As Saul's messengers were sent to David's house to watch him, they would naturally guard the gate, or lie in wait in that place by which David would come out. Michal, seeing this let him down to the ground through a window probably at the back part of the house; and there being neither entrance nor issue that way, the liars in wait were easily eluded.

Verse 13

Michal took an image - תְּרָפִים (eth hatteraphim), the teraphim. The Hebrew word appears to mean any kind of image, in any kind of form, as a representative of some reality. Here it must have been something in the human form; because it was intended to represent a man lying in bed indisposed.

A pillow of goats' hair - Perhaps she formed the appearance of a sick man's head muffled up by this pillow or bag of goats' hair. So I think the original might be understood. The goats' hair was merely accidental; unless we could suppose that it was designed to represent the hair of David's head, which is not improbable.

Verse 17

Let me go; why should I kill thee? - That is, If thou do not let me go, I will kill thee. This she said to excuse herself to her father: as a wife she could do not less than favor the escape of her husband, being perfectly satisfied that there was no guilt in him. It is supposed that it was on this occasion that David wrote the fifty-ninth Psalm, Deliver me from mine enemies, etc.

Verse 18

David fled, and escaped - to Samuel - He, no doubt, came to this holy man to ask advice; and Samuel thought it best to retain him for the present, with himself at Naioth, where it is supposed he had a school of prophets.

Verse 20

The company of the prophets prophesying - Employed in religious exercises.

Samuel - appointed over them - Being head or president of the school at this place.

The Spirit of God was upon the messengers - They partook of the same influence, and joined in the same exercise; and thus were prevented from seizing David.

Verse 23

He went on, and prophesied - The Divine Spirit seemed to have seized him at the well of Sechu; and he went on from that prophesying - praying, singing praises, etc.; till he came to Naioth.

Verse 24

He stripped off his clothes - Threw off his royal robes or military dress, retaining only his tunic; and continued so all that day and all that night, uniting with the sons of the prophets in prayers, singing praises, and other religious exercises, which were unusual to kings and warriors; and this gave rise to the saying, Is Saul also among the prophets? By bringing both him and his men thus under a Divine influence, God prevented them from injuring the person of David. See the notes on 1 Samuel 10:6 (note), etc.; and see my sermon on The Christian Prophet and his Work.