

Exegetical Notes – 1 Samuel 18:17-30

Prepared by Charles H. Jensen for Cornerstone Fellowship
101 Kylies Road, Coatesville, PA 19320
610-384-1375
charleshjensen@aol.com

1 Samuel 18:17-30

Verse 17

Saul said to David, “Here is my older daughter Merab. I will give her to you in marriage; only serve me bravely and fight the battles of the LORD.” For Saul said to himself, “I will not raise a hand against him. Let the Philistines do that!”

- (See 1 Samuel 18:1-16) Saul had become jealous of David’s success. Twice he had attempted to kill David, but each time David evaded Saul’s spear. Saul’s jealousy of David caused him to fear David.
- Saul allowed David to marry his daughter, Merab. This was part of the reward Saul had promised to the man who would kill Goliath. On the surface, Saul appeared to be supportive of David. His secret plan was to send David out to fight the Philistines. He hoped David would be killed in battle.

Verses 18-19

¹⁸ But David said to Saul, “Who am I, and what is my family or my clan in Israel, that I should become the king’s son-in-law?” ¹⁹ So when the time came for Merab, Saul’s daughter, to be given to David, she was given in marriage to Adriel of Meholah.

- David refused the king’s offer of Merab, and she was given to someone else in marriage.

Verses 20-22

²⁰ Now Saul’s daughter Michal was in love with David, and when they told Saul about it, he was pleased. ²¹ “I will give her to him,” he thought, “so that she may be a snare to him and so that the hand of the Philistines may be against him.” So Saul said to David, “Now you have a second opportunity to become my son-in-law.”

²² Then Saul ordered his attendants: “Speak to David privately and say, ‘Look, the king likes you, and his attendants all love you; now become his son-in-law.’”

- But Saul’s daughter, Michal, was in love with David. When news of this attachment reached King Saul, he saw a second opportunity to work his plan. Saul spoke to David, offering Michal to him in marriage and encouraged his attendants to speak to David about accepting the offer.

Verses 23-26a

²³ They repeated these words to David. But David said, “Do you think it is a small matter to become the king’s son-in-law? I’m only a poor man and little known.”

²⁴ When Saul’s servants told him what David had said, ²⁵ Saul replied, “Say to David, ‘The king wants no other price for the bride than a hundred Philistine foreskins, to take revenge on his enemies.’” Saul’s plan was to have David fall by the hands of the Philistines.

²⁶ When the attendants told David these things, he was pleased to become the king’s son-in-law.

- At first, David declined the king’s offer claiming that he was too poor to pay the bride’s dowry that the king would want for his daughter.
- Saul’s servants reported David’s concern to the king. Saul replied to David, through his servants, that he would waive the traditional dowry. All he wanted for Michal was 100 Philistine foreskins. This meant that David would need to kill 100 Philistines to pay the dowry. Saul’s reasoning was that in one of these battles, David would be killed and he would be free of him.
- David accepted the king’s offer.

Verse 26b-27

So before the allotted time elapsed, ²⁷ David took his men with him and went out and killed two hundred Philistines and brought back their foreskins. They counted out the full number to the king so that David might become the king’s son-in-law. Then Saul gave him his daughter Michal in marriage.

- David took the men under his command with him and killed 200 Philistines. They brought 200 foreskins back to Saul and counted them out before him. David paid Saul 100% more for Michal than Saul had requested.
- Saul gave Michal to David in marriage.

Verses 28-30

²⁸ When Saul realized that the LORD was with David and that his daughter Michal loved David, ²⁹ Saul became still more afraid of him, and he remained his enemy the rest of his days.

³⁰ The Philistine commanders continued to go out to battle, and as often as they did, David met with more success than the rest of Saul's officers, and his name became well known.

- Saul's plan to be rid of David failed.
- Saul realized that YHWH's blessing was on David.
- His jealousy of David's success turned to fear of David. In Saul's eyes, David was his enemy and not his loyal subject.
- David's success as a commander in Saul's army should have shown Saul that he was loyal and could be trusted, but Saul's eyes were blinded. His jealousy and fear of David consumed him.

(These exegetical notes are the foundational study for the sermon based on 1 Samuel 18:17-30. They have been prepared by the Reverend Doctor Charles H. Jensen. All rights are reserved by Cornerstone Fellowship & The Reverend Doctor Charles H. Jensen. They are used here by permission.)