

Exegetical Notes – 2 Samuel 1:17-27

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2 Samuel 1:17-27

Verses 17-18

¹⁷ David took up this lament concerning Saul and his son Jonathan, ¹⁸ and he ordered that the people of Judah be taught this lament of the bow (it is written in the Book of Jashar):

- After hearing of the death of Saul and his son, Jonathan, David, who had suffered greatly because of Saul, wrote a song of lament for Saul and Jonathan. David ordered that the men of Judah be taught this song so that they might sing it to mourn the deaths of Saul and Jonathan.
- The words of this song are recorded in the Book of Jashar. This book, which contained accounts of the kings of Israel, is lost to us today. We do not have this book.

Verse 19

¹⁹ “A gazelle lies slain on your heights, Israel.

How the mighty have fallen!

- “A gazelle lies slain.” The gazelle is King Saul, the anointed King of Israel.
- Saul and his sons are the mighty who have fallen.
- The chorus of the song is “how the mighty have fallen.” It will be repeated throughout the song.

Verse 20

²⁰ “Tell it not in Gath,

proclaim it not in the streets of Ashkelon,

lest the daughters of the Philistines be glad,

lest the daughters of the uncircumcised rejoice.

- The news that Saul and his sons were dead would bring joy in Gath and Ashkelon. These are major Philistine cities. The Philistines were Israel’s enemies who would rejoice at this news. So this news should not be shared with them.

Verse 21

²¹ **“Mountains of Gilboa,
may you have neither dew nor rain,
may no showers fall on your terraced fields.
For there the shield of the mighty was despised,
the shield of Saul—no longer rubbed with oil.**

- Saul died on Mount Gilboa. Therefore, the mountain itself is cursed. No rain should fall on it.
- There, Saul’s shield lies uncared for.

Verses 22-23

²² **“From the blood of the slain,
from the flesh of the mighty,
the bow of Jonathan did not turn back,
the sword of Saul did not return unsatisfied.**

²³ **Saul and Jonathan—
in life they were loved and admired,
and in death they were not parted.**

**They were swifter than eagles,
they were stronger than lions.**

- Both Jonathan and Saul were mighty warriors. They did not turn back from the enemy.
- In life, they were both loved and admired.
- They died together in battle, so even in death, they were not parted.
- They were swift and strong.

Verse 24

²⁴ **“Daughters of Israel,
weep for Saul,
who clothed you in scarlet and finery,
who adorned your garments with ornaments of gold.**

- In verse 17, the men of Israel are called to learned this lament and sing it. The women of Israel are here called to add their part to this lamentation. They are to weep for Saul because his victories over Israel’s enemies brought security and wealth.

Verses 25-27

²⁵ “How the mighty have fallen in battle!

Jonathan lies slain on your heights.

²⁶ I grieve for you, Jonathan my brother;

you were very dear to me.

Your love for me was wonderful,

more wonderful than that of women.

²⁷ “How the mighty have fallen!

The weapons of war have perished!”

- David and Jonathan had a very special friendship. David loved Jonathan with a special love. They were brothers. Jonathan was totally devoted to David (see 1 Samuel 20).
- The phrase, “The weapons of war have perished,” is a reference to Saul and Jonathan. They were the “weapons of war” and they “have perished.

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