

# THE SECOND BOOK OF SAMUEL

## David learns of Saul's death \*

1 S 30: 31-15  
1 S 4:12-17

1 Saul was dead and David, returning after his victory over the Amalekites, had been at Ziklag for two days. On the third day, a man arrived from Saul's camp with his clothes torn and earth on his head. When he came to David, he fell to the ground and prostrated himself. David asked him, 'Where have you come from?' 'I have escaped from the Israelite camp,' he said. David said, 'What has happened? Tell me.' He replied, 'The people fled from the battle, and many of them have fallen and are dead. Saul and his son Jonathan are dead too.'

2 K 11:12

Then David asked the young man who brought the news, 'How do you know that Saul and his son Jonathan are dead?' The young man replied, 'I happened to be on Mount Gilboa, and there was Saul, leaning on his spear, with the chariot and the cavalry bearing down on him. Glancing behind him and seeing me, he shouted to me. I replied, 'Here I am!'. He said, 'Who are you?' I replied, 'I am an Amalekite.'. He then said, 'Come here and kill me. My head is swimming, although I still have all my strength.'. So I went over to him and killed him, because I knew that once he fell he could not survive. I then took the crown which he had on his head and the bracelet on his arm, and have brought them here to my lord.'

1 S 31:13

David then took hold of his clothes and tore them, and all the men with him did the same. They mourned and wept and fasted until the evening for Saul and his son Jonathan, for the people of Yahweh and for the House of Israel, because they had fallen by the sword.

1 S 26:9  
Lv 24:9  
Jos 2:19

David said to the young man who had brought the news, 'Where are you from?' He replied, 'I am the son of a resident foreigner, an Amalekite.'. David said, 'How was it that you were not afraid to lift your hand to destroy Yahweh's anointed?'. Then David called one of the young men. 'Come here,' he said, 'strike him down.'. The man struck him and he died. David said, 'Your blood be on your own head. You convicted yourself out of your own mouth by saying, "I killed Yahweh's anointed."'

## David's elegy over Saul and Jonathan \*

Jos 10:13c

David sang the following lament over Saul and his son Jonathan - (it is for teaching archery to the children of Judah; it is written in the Book of the Just): \*

21 M 9:21

Does the splendour of Israel  
lie dead on your heights?  
How did the heroes fall?

Do not speak of it in Gath,  
nor broadcast it in the streets of Ashkelon,  
for fear the daughters of the Philistines rejoice,  
for fear the daughters of the uncircumcised gloat.

Gn 27:28  
Dt 33:13

Your mountains of Gilboa,  
no dew, no rain fall on you,  
O treacherous fields \*

Is 21:5

where the heroes' shield lies dishonoured!  
Not greased with oil, the shield of Saul,  
but with the blood of wounded men, the fat of warriors!

The bow of Jonathan never turned back,  
the sword of Saul never came home unsated!  
Saul and Jonathan, beloved and handsome,  
were divided neither in life, nor in death.  
Swifter than eagles were they,  
stronger than lions.

O daughters of Israel, weep for Saul  
who gave you scarlet and fine linen<sup>a</sup> to wear,  
who pinned golden jewellery  
on your dresses!

How did the heroes fall  
in the thick of the battle?  
Jonathan, by your dying I too am stricken,<sup>b</sup>  
I am desolate for you, Jonathan my brother.  
Very dear you were to me,  
your love more wonderful to me  
than the love of a woman.

How did the heroes fall  
and the weapons of war succumb!  
I: DAVID

## A: DAVID KING OF JUDAH

2 After this David consulted Yahweh, asking, 'Shall I go up to one of the towns of Judah?' Yahweh replied, 'Go up!'. 'Which one shall I go to?' David asked. 'To Hebron,' was the reply. 'So David went up, with his two wives Ahinoam of Jezreel and Abigail widow of Nabal of Carmel. In addition David brought up the men who were with him, each with his family, and they settled in the towns of Hebron. The men of Judah came, and there they anointed David as king of the House of Judah.'

## David's message to the people of Jabesh

They told David that the people of Jabesh in Gilead had given Saul burial, so David sent messengers to the people of Jabesh in Gilead. 'May you be blessed by Yahweh,' he said, 'for showing this faithful love to Saul your lord, and for burying him. And now may Yahweh show faithful love and constancy towards you! I too shall treat you well because you have done this. And now take courage and be strong!'

1 a. A second tradition concerning Saul's death. The narrative, following immediately on 1 S 30, is itself complete. According to one form of the tradition, a soldier brings news of the death of Saul and Jonathan, and David orders a young Amalekite to be killed. In the other form, a young Amalekite boasts of having killed Saul and whips the royal insignia, expecting a reward. David orders his execution. vv. 5-10 and 13-16.  
b. David addresses the dead man, the man's blood will not cry for vengeance (on David) because he has been justly executed. see 1 K 2:32.  
c. The poem is certainly authentic.  
d. An ancient collection now lost, but quoted also in the 10:13. The same accompanied archery exercises. see 1 S 22:33 and the same verb in Ps 144:1.  
e. 'treacherous fields' *sedat tamir* conl.; Hebr. *sedat tamir* and fields of offerings'.  
f. 'well because' conl.; this good which Hebr. *shel* 'and'.

2 a. Hebron was the most important city in Judah. At the time of the conquest it had been captured and occupied by the Calebites. Jos 15:13sq.; Jg 1:20; but these had soon been absorbed by the tribe of Judah.  
b. The villages dependent on Hebron.  
c. David had won supporters in Judah. 1 S 27:10-12; 30:26-31. He was later to be anointed by the elders of Israel. 5:3. This form of the tradition knows nothing of Samuel's anointing of the young David. 1 S 16:1-15.  
d. 'well because' conl.; this good which Hebr. *shel* 'and'.