

1 Samuel (Sh'mu'el Alef)

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Chapter 18

1 And it came to pass when he had finished speaking unto Saul that the soul of Jonathan (Y'honatan) was knit with the soul of David,¹ and Jonathan loved him as his own soul.²

2 And Saul (Sha'ul) took him that day and would not let him return to his father's house.³

¹ Jonathan was revived after witnessing David's bold faith and the attending results. I think that he knew that this boy was the person whom God had chosen to be the next king of Israel, and that it would be good for Israel to have David as its king. Jonathan truly loved the Lord, he loved Israel, and God gave David favour with Jonathan to make things a bit easier for him in the journey to his destiny.

When souls are knit together, that which pains the one, also pains the other, and when one receives a blessing, the other rejoices.

Honesty is a hallmark of this type of friendship, but it is kindly honesty, not harsh criticism or cruel revelations. That does not mean that such friends have to tell each other EVERYTHING. Jonathan would not tell David about intimacies he shared with his wife, nor would he tell David things that would hurt him, if he didn't need to know. These kinds of friends do not try to manipulate each other. There is no jealousy, nor competition (except if it is constructive), nor guile.

² This is the kind of love that will endure great hardships for the other person's sake. Jonathan continued to support David, even in spite of it alienating him from his father. He was an admirable mentor to David, both in instructing him about the protocols and politics of the court, and he was an exemplary role model. It was a great privilege for David that he was befriended by such a noble man.

Jonathan was old enough to be David's father, and he was a prince when David was only an officer, but he treated David as an equal. I suspect that Jonathan had an enthusiasm for life, a freshness in his faith, and a willingness to be transparent that made him a young soul, and younger people felt comfortable talking to him as an equal, if he gave them that liberty.

The integrity of each man bound them together. Only a perverted, evil mind would perceive their friendship as one of sexual attraction and activity, which is surmised by such because of the phrase that their love exceeded the love of women. Such people, lacking in the type of faith-filled character that Jonathan and David had, in their darkened minds cannot understand how strong a bond can be created between two men because of an intense, shared love for a holy God.

In his commentary, Ellicott remarks: "We read of this friendship as dating from the morrow of the first striking deed of arms performed by David when he slew the giant. It is clear, however, that it was not the personal bravery of the boy hero, or the rare skill he showed in the encounter, which so singularly attracted Prince Jonathan. These things no one would have admired and honoured more than the son of Saul, but it needed more than splendid gallantry and rare skill to attract that great love of which we read. What won Jonathan's heart was the shepherd boy's sublime faith, his perfect childlike trust in the "Glorious Arm" of the Lord. Jonathan and David possessed one thing in common—an intense, unswerving belief in the power of Jehovah of Israel to keep and to save all who trusted in Him."

³ Saul was always on the lookout for mighty men to add to his army. This young boy was useful to him as a warrior, and for raising the morale of the people.

3 Then Jonathan and David made a covenant because he loved him as his own soul.⁴

4 And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him and gave it to David and his garments, even to his sword and to his bow and to his girdle.⁵

5 And David went out wherever Saul sent him⁶ and behaved himself prudently,⁷ and Saul set him over the men of war,⁸ and he was accepted in the sight of all the people⁹ and also in the sight of Saul's slaves.¹⁰

6 ¶ And it came to pass as they came, when David was returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, that the women came out of all cities of Israel, singing and dancing,¹¹ to meet King Saul, with tambourines, with joy, and with instruments of music.

⁴ When a person loves another as their own soul, it means that they would go to Hell for them, if it was required for their salvation, such as how Paul said he would have dared to venture for the sake of his people. A person who loves another as their own soul will brave great dangers and discomforts, risking their life, to rescue the other.

⁵ Jonathan pledged to help David with his need for support in righteous causes, for provision, and for protection, and David reciprocated that commitment.

What a high honour Jonathan showed towards David. Everyone could see that David had the crown prince's favour. Nobody would lightly snub David or do him any other kind of wrong, knowing that it would draw the anger of the crown prince, if they did so.

Prior to David's exploit against the giant, Jonathan had not taken much notice of David. He was just a boy, maybe only ten, twelve, or fourteen years old when he served Saul as a minstrel and a page. Adults usually don't take much notice of kids. They are busy engaging with their peers.

This was borne home to me when I spoke to a young man in church, who had been just a boy when I first became acquainted with his family. I was a young, married woman, interested in socializing with other young couples. This young man, who now attracted my notice because of his zeal for the Lord, mentioned that he always loved going to church when he was a kid. How rare is that? A lot of kids have to be bullied to go to church, but not this one. There was a little treasure with curly, red hair walking around under my nose, but I barely noticed him because he was just a kid. Jonathan must have marvelled when he realized the same thing later, in regards to David.

⁶ David was a willing servant, even if the training or the assignment was especially hard. He probably participated in elite commando training, and this would help serve him later when he was on the run from Saul.

⁷ David conducted himself with intelligence, discretion, courage, kindness, and modesty.

⁸ David was soon made an officer, though very young for an officer. Regardless of age, what Israeli soldier would not want to have as his officer a young man who was full of faith and had slain a fearsome giant that nobody else had dared to tackle?

⁹ David was popular with the masses. He brought them hope through his exploit against the Philistine giant.

¹⁰ Influential people, who were better acquainted with him than the general public, saw that his character was solid and dependable.

¹¹ One can well understand the women's joy. For weeks, they had been tense over the Philistine situation. Their army had been at an impasse and did not seem capable of defeating the Philistines for fear of their champion, and the Israelites in nearby towns and villages may have been making preparations to flee, scouting hiding places, stocking them with water and food and other necessities, if such hiding places were near at hand.

7 And the women sang as they played and said, Saul has slain his thousands¹² and David his ten thousands.¹³

8 And Saul was very wroth, and the saying displeased him, and he said, They have ascribed unto David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed but thousands; and what can he have more but the kingdom?¹⁴

9 And Saul eyed David from that day and forward.¹⁵

Most were likely to be caught, having no such places of refuge, raped, possibly mutilated, possibly murdered, as well. Their children would have been sport, also, for the marauders, and their old parents killed, as being considered of no use. Survivors among the women and children would be made slaves.

To their great relief, their own army won a decisive victory; the Philistines were barred up in their cities, terrified now of Israel and subdued for the time being. Proud wives heralded the return of beloved husbands and sons; excited, young girls cavorted with joy, singing and whirling, while flashing admiring eyes at the returning heroes, especially at the amazing youth who had led them to victory and rode beside the king, holding the gruesome head of the giant in his hand.

Pipes, tabrets, and drums were employed, perhaps flowers were tossed towards the returning army. Old men and women would have leaned upon their staffs, or capered about, if they could, raising shouts of commendation. Children, no doubt, joined the dancing, dogs frisked about, caught up with the excitement, and poultry scurried out of the way. What a happy day for each town and village that the army passed through, bearing the spoils, settling down at various points for meal times along the journey home to be eagerly fed, entertained, honoured, and given gifts by the ecstatic population.

¹² This would be a leading line sung by one side, and followed up with David's praise by the women on the other side of the chorus.

¹³ This was a prophetic song. David, so far, had killed a giant and some Philistines in one battle, but they supposed (rightly) that, since he could do this at such a young age, he had enormous potential as a leader and would eventually surpass Saul as a warrior. Of course he would. Saul had never shown the degree of faith that David had, nor had any of his exploits, however commendable, involved killing a giant.

The song also reflects that, though David had not actually killed ten thousands of enemies, yet, in pursuit of the Philistines after he killed Goliath, he must have wielded the giant's sword with superhuman strength, rapidly cutting down Philistines like wheat stalks at harvest time.

What a picture and inspiration that must have been to the Israeli soldiers who pursued the Philistines to see such a youth, one short of stature at that, whirling that big sword so mightily like Samson of old.

The women, though, threw David into hot water by exalting him above Saul, but I think that God was in it. The adversities that David suffered from Saul's jealousy refined his faith further, and his response to Saul showed his strength of character. I don't think that it is right to refrain from giving someone their due out of a fear of making others jealous. Saul was responsible for his soul before the Lord, to keep it clear of envy and jealousy.

¹⁴ His paranoia spread to David, a young boy. It was true that David would be the next king, but David would not seize the throne; it would be God who removed Saul. It was at this point that Saul should have accepted the Lord's choice and helped prepare David for the job of being king. Things would have worked out much better for Saul spiritually, and David would have always honoured him and his family, as much as possible.

¹⁵ Saul probably sent David on dangerous missions out of malice before he set before him his daughter as a prize for 100 foreskins of the Philistines.

10 And it came to pass on the next day that the evil spirit from God came upon Saul, and he prophesied in the midst of the house,¹⁶ and David played with his hand as at other times,¹⁷ and there was a spear in Saul's hand.

11 And Saul cast the spear, saying, I will smite David to the wall with it.¹⁸ And David avoided out of his presence twice.¹⁹

12 ¶ But Saul was afraid of David because the LORD was with him²⁰ and had departed from Saul.

13 Therefore, Saul removed him from him and made him captain over a thousand,²¹ and he went out and came in before the people.

14 And David behaved himself prudently in all his ways, and the LORD was with him.²²

15 Therefore, when Saul saw that he behaved himself very prudently, he was afraid of him.²³

¹⁶ If there was an evil spirit operating in Saul, then his prophecies may have been off and put everyone with any spiritual discernment on edge. His words might even have been so bizarre that everyone knew Saul was dangerous to everyone in his vicinity.

I think that it was the former case, that Saul was imitating true ecstatic prophecies to put David off guard, extolling God, perhaps calling down wrath on God's enemies, but really meaning his own, according to his perceptions. David sensed in his spirit that something was wrong and was ready to run, if need be, and had already scoped out an exit route.

¹⁷ David, seeing the danger, unobtrusively picked up his harp and softly started to play some music to calm Saul down, but Saul was having none of it. It was because he was jealous of David that David could not soothe him this time.

¹⁸ Saul's jealousy and malice was so out of control that he actually stated his intentions aloud. Simultaneously, it was the demon in him talking, as it knew that David was a dangerous opponent to satan's plans and power.

¹⁹ David was a faithful servant, but he wasn't stupid. He was keeping an eye on Saul, while playing his music, and he moved fast to avoid that spear, then got out of the room and stayed out of sight until Saul calmed down and seemed rational again.

In my imagination, I see Saul rolling on the floor and frothing at the mouth in fury over having failed at killing David, the demon in him throwing a tantrum. At this point, Saul's physician would have come forward to administer a sedative and Saul probably needed to be carried away by his servants and restrained until he came into his right mind again. A powerful ruler doesn't attempt to murder an innocent man and then suddenly calm down when he has been denied success.

All this time, Michal was observing David, though I think she was quite a bit older than him, admiring him, longing for him, and anxious about his safety because of her father's jealousy of him. Some of Saul's courtiers probably noted the look of anxiety on her face when Saul was getting agitated over David.

²⁰ It was unnerving to Saul to see that everything David was involved with was blessed with success, no matter how difficult the assignment.

²¹ Saul hated David because of jealousy, but he couldn't kill him openly because he was Israel's hero. Hence, he got him out of his sight by giving him a promotion that would take him out of the palace. Promotions aren't always due to sincere recognition of great deeds; sometimes it is because the other person is too well-supported by the public to be gotten rid of immediately. The promotion will contain great potential for death.

²² By making David a captain of a thousand, Saul was also endeavouring to put David at risk of being killed in battle, but David always managed to escape danger.

16 But all Israel and Judah loved David because he went out and came in before them.²⁴

17 And Saul said to David, Behold I will give thee my elder daughter Merab to wife;²⁵ only be thou valiant for me, and fight the LORD's battles. For Saul said to himself, My hand shall not be against him, but the hand of the Philistines shall be against him.²⁶

18 And David said unto Saul, Who am I, and what is my life or my father's family in Israel that I should be son-in-law to the king?

19 And it came to pass at the time when Merab,²⁷ Saul's daughter, should have been given to David²⁸ that she was given unto Adriel,²⁹ the Meholathite, to wife.

²³ Saul fretted about David because David did not give him any reason to accuse him and arrest him.

²⁴ Wherever he went, when called upon to arbitrate a dispute or lend military support, David acted justly, with integrity, and kept his men in line. They were protectors of the people; not bullies.

²⁵ Saul used the demon that sent him into fits as his excuse for his attempts to kill David. He supposedly did not know what he was doing, so that was how he could pretend that he wanted David to be his son-in-law, but he was responsible for keeping that demon in him. It would have had to leave, if Saul had repented of his sins and abdicated his throne to David. Saul could have had a lovely, peaceful life under the favour of King David.

²⁶ Saul could see that God would not let him kill David by his own hand, and if he kept attempting it, he might be struck down by the hand of God. So he reasoned that, if he put David in great danger of being killed, God would overlook it, as long as David was killed fighting God's enemies. The result, of course, of seeing how God continually protected David, regardless of how acute the danger, increased Saul's fear of David all the more.

²⁷ Merab is a tragic figure. She died before she could finish raising her children and Michal raised them for her, and then all those sons were put to death to satisfy the Gibeonites because of Saul's murders. I wonder if she had any say in who she married. If she was promised to David, she should have married him, even if she had to run away from her father to do it, but it could be that she did not make any commitment herself to marry David.

²⁸ Saul received a blot on his reputation when he did not carry out his promise to David. What good were his promises to his soldiers, if he did not keep them? It undermined morale and motivation among the troops and among civilians.

Also, giving Merab to another man, after he had promised her to David, was a deliberate insult to David, a slap across the face, so to speak, in front of the whole court. Saul probably wanted to provoke David to anger, to get him to act rashly, therefore giving him a reason to arrest him.

Saul even waited until the very day that David should have married Merab. David may have been getting dressed in his wedding clothes when he learned that the ceremony had been moved up and another man had stepped into his place. Saul could very well have done such a thing to cause David embarrassment, and if David complained to him, Saul may have anticipated disdainfully setting him down in front of the court, asking him, "Who are you to marry the king's daughter?" He likely had hopes that David would lose his temper and attack him, or, at least, insult him, so that he could have him arrested.

The plot backfired. David behaved wisely. He would have insisted, "Who was I, anyway, to marry a king's daughter?" though everyone knew he had a right because of the promise that Saul made concerning whoever killed Goliath. Saul ended up looking like a jerk and losing the respect of some of his officers, soldiers, and the public. He had to offer Michal to David to repair his reputation.

It does not seem that Merab had any particular affection for David. She may not have paid him any particular notice when he was a minstrel and a page at court. She likely considered him too young to interest her.

20 But Michal, Saul's other daughter, loved David,³⁰ and they told Saul, and the thing pleased him.

It seems to me that Saul's daughters were quite a bit older than normal when they married, that Saul was very reluctant to marry off any of his children because of the use he could make of them in regards to strategic alliances, and he was waiting to see who the best choices would turn out to be. Adriel made the grade because of amassing or inheriting great wealth, and being firmly on Saul's side in regards to politics.

²⁹ Adriel was another tragic figure. Adriel should have refused to marry Merab because she was promised to another. He was a proud man who was proud to marry the king's daughter and proud to have sired five sons with her.

Adriel paid for his treachery through the loss of all his children by Merab. Even so, this man was David's brother-in-law at one time, and it probably grieved David deeply to have to put his nephews to death on the Lord's orders, both for Adriel's sake and the boys' sake. He probably went away and wept in private afterwards.

The stories in the Bible are not cut and dry. The people in these stories were all as human as we are in our modern times, with the same emotions, the same agonies and passions. Human nature does not change along with clothing fashions and technology. An evil man would have had no reservations about killing his relatives, especially such young ones, even if they hated their uncle and were a threat to his throne, but David was not an evil man.

David probably sent spiritual counsellors to Merab's children and Rizpah's sons before their execution, to give them the opportunity to lay aside all their bitterness and be received into Paradise, so that their deaths were only physical, rather than both physical and spiritual.

How strange it must have been for David to later reflect back on this time in his life when he was in Saul's court, a young man who may not have even been twenty yet, seeing Merab and Adriel, newly married, angry that the king was playing games with him, but perhaps not too angry because he wasn't in love with Merab, and he would have fought for Israel anyway. At that time, he had no idea that some day he would be called upon to put their children to death.

Nobody thinks of future tragedies when they see a happy young couple with a throng of children. Adriel's thoughts about his future were probably that, some day, he would sit in the courtyard of his beautiful home, drink wine and snack on pastries while talking to his friends, with a toddler grandchild on his lap and other grandchildren running around on his estate, hooting with laughter as they played with their cousins. I wish it could have happened for him, and it might have, if he had not married a woman who had a treacherous father, a king who broke promises and treaties.

³⁰ Michal probably confided to her maids about her crush. David was just a young teen when Michal first saw him. If she noticed him at court before he slew Goliath, she probably thought he was a cute kid, admired his talent, and approved of his respect and courtesies for her as a royal princess. She may have sent him on errands. Perhaps he played music for her and her friends.

After he killed Goliath, Michal's interest in him would have increased. In his mid-teens, she probably would not consider him as a suitor, but she would certainly admire him for his courage and daring, and further observe him at court for his diplomacy and integrity.

When David started to have a beard and put on more muscle, though he was likely quite a bit younger than her, the princess would start to notice that he was no longer a boy, but a man, and a man of sharp intellect, great charm, and many talents. He was short in stature, but well-built and handsome, nonetheless.

21 And Saul said, I will give her to him that she may be a snare to him and that the hand of the Philistines may be against him. Therefore, Saul said to David, Thou shalt this day be my son-in-law with the other one.³¹

22 And Saul commanded his slaves, saying, Speak with David secretly and say, Behold, the king has delight in thee, and all his slaves love thee; now, therefore, be the king's son-in-law.³²

23 And Saul's slaves spoke those words in the ears of David.³³ And David said, Does it seem to you a light thing to be a king's son-in-law, seeing that I am a poor man³⁴ and lightly esteemed?³⁵

24 And the slaves of Saul told him, saying, David spoke these words.

25 And Saul said, Thus shall ye say to David, The desire of the king is not in any dowry, but one hundred foreskins of the Philistines,³⁶ to be avenged of the king's enemies.³⁷ For Saul thought to make David fall by the hand of the Philistines.

³¹ David didn't take Saul seriously when he made this statement about marrying one of his daughters.

³² It sounds like, though Michal had a crush on him, David did not reciprocate the feeling. He needed to be urged to consider marriage to her. According to my calculations of their ages, which are by no means precise, it seems that Michal was maybe about ten years older. Even so, the possibility of marrying a princess is by no means lightly dismissed.

³³ It appears that this persuasion was necessary because David did not believe Saul when he said he could marry Michal, seeing as he had married Merab off to another man, instead of keeping his promise and rewarding him for his increased diligence. When Saul proposed it to David, David probably smiled and nodded and then carried on with his duties close at hand, instead of venturing off to make raids on the Philistines. He probably figured that his fellow officers would think he was an idiot, if he took Saul seriously, seeing as what happened before.

³⁴ There is a suggestion here that Adriel was wealthy and gave Saul very rich gifts for the privilege of marrying Merab. David's family is comfortably well off, and he had some prizes for killing Goliath, but he was not as wealthy as a prince.

A king may say that a subject can have something, but that does not necessarily mean that it is free. A coat of arms may be granted, but the subject has to pay the designers for the design, and possibly other fees. The king's word apparently only granted the right to have the coat of arms, not the cost. Likewise, Saul may have only granted David the right to marry Merab, but David was expected to come up with money for the wedding and a bride price.

³⁵ Evidently Saul did not give David the riches that were promised to whoever killed Goliath, and David seems to be reminding Saul's servants that Saul has not treated him with respect. The two incidents of Saul throwing his spear at David have not been forgotten, either. This is how he answered their assertions that Saul "delighted" in him.

³⁶ Demanding 100 foreskins would ensure that David had to kill them in a small time frame in order to bring the full amount to Saul before the foreskins became too decayed to tell what they were, or before they got terribly stinking. If David had to kill that many men in a short time, there was greater risk to him.

It would seem that a condition of the price was that David had to kill these Philistines by his own hand. He was in command of a thousand men, so it was no great challenge for him to go forth with a raiding party and ambush a Philistine contingent. He was doing that kind of thing all along.

This task probably required him to sneak into camps and cities to ambush Philistines. He may have been allowed to have backup, to help him get in and out, but he was probably the one who had to wield the knife, sword, or whatever weapon he used to kill them, then remove the foreskin, or the penis if there was not time or enough light to do it, and then remove the foreskin when he returned to camp. Ick!

26 And when his slaves told David these words, it pleased David well to be the king's son-in-law,³⁸ and the days were not expired.³⁹

Saul probably sent his own officers to oversee that the operation was being carried out according to his specifications. If they came upon a group of Philistines and captured them, then David was probably required to fight them by sword one by one in order to obtain their foreskins.

If these requirements were not attached to the demand, and David was allowed to take credit for his men killing Philistines, then it wasn't that big of a deal to ask this of him, nor did it put him in excessive danger.

Saul may also have given David a list of specific Philistines whom he wanted David to kill, both to rid Israel of those who were particularly menacing, as well as to increase the danger to David.

Some commentators think that Saul demanded foreskins, rather than heads, to ensure that David did not take the heads of Israelites who fell in battle and presented them to him as belonging to Philistines. That seems unlikely. Saul knew that David was a person of integrity and it was one of the reasons he feared him, as he could not bring any accusations against him that others would believe, especially a crime so heinous as to chop off the head of a fellow Israelite, a fellow soldier, who had died in battle, thus desecrating his comrades' bodies and preventing the families from giving them a proper burial.

Saul had the additional motive, besides limiting the time frame, of demanding foreskins because he knew how David felt about those who were not in covenant with God, as Matthew Poole notes in his commentary. In his speech about Goliath, David referred to him as an uncircumcised Philistine. Saul appealed to David's religious zeal by setting this bait before him.

Matthew Poole also points out that requiring David to mutilate the bodies in this matter would increase the Philistines' outrage against him. It would increase the price that they had put on his head for having killed Goliath and all the other sorties he had made against them since then. This makes a lot of sense.

³⁷ This statement about avenging the king of his enemies seems to bear out the possibility that Saul gave David a list of specific people whom he wanted eliminated. Later, when David looked for refuge among the Philistines, he may have contended that he killed those people at Saul's insistence, in order to obtain his daughter for a wife, but Saul had stolen his wife from him and given her to another man, so he was now on the side of the Philistines.

³⁸ This requirement of the foreskins is something that David can hold Saul accountable for. If he brings the foreskins (and he intends to give Saul twice what he asked for), Saul can no longer save face if he denies David the prestigious reward of taking him into the royal family. Additionally, killing Philistines was something that he knew he was well able to do, with the Lord's help. He could accomplish it soon, whereas it might have taken many years to become as wealthy as a prince.

Also, since Saul ordered the slaughter of some Philistines to fulfill the price, he can't come back on David and blame him for unauthorized aggression when the Philistines seek revenge against Israel for those deaths. David probably had some trouble-making Philistines in mind, in addition to those whom Saul wanted killed, when he accepted the challenge. This probably was a pinpoint operation of assassinations, rather than just going out and finding the easiest band of Philistines to attack.

Doing battle with all those Philistines made David feel that he earned the right to marry Michal, though, really, he had earned that right when he killed Goliath, because of Saul's promise. He could now marry Michal without feeling like he was a poor man who was done a favour. He would remember the risks he took, the energy he expended to fight those Philistines and that raised him to having, not just equality with his wife, but showed his ability to be the protector of her life and virtue, if needed. It would have also helped increase his confidence in being the decision maker regarding his wife and children, though he was married to a royal princess.

27 Therefore David arose and went, he and his men, and slew of the Philistines two hundred men,⁴⁰ and David brought their foreskins,⁴¹ and they gave them all to the king that he might be the king's son-in-law. And Saul gave him Michal, his daughter, to wife.

28 But Saul, seeing and knowing that the LORD was with David and that his daughter Michal loved him,⁴²

Michal is never described as having any particular beauty. Her appeal was her rank. It doesn't seem as if David had any particular passion for her due to her looks or her character, but he liked the idea of being the king's son-in-law, which normally would not be one of his privileges, and he admitted it. Later, his marriage to Michal gave him more claim to the throne of Israel, though at the time he married Michal, he still may not have realized that God had chosen him to be the next king.

Though the Bible tells us what went on between Saul and Samuel, and Jonathan may have known of it, that does not mean that it was common knowledge. I think that David did not know of this until after he fled Saul and spent some time with Samuel when he was in hiding.

³⁹ Confirmation that there was a time limit on how long it took David to perform this deed, both for the sake of endangering David, as well as to supposedly not make Michal wait an unduly long time. Saul probably gave the latter explanation to Michal to allay suspicions from her that he truly wanted David dead, that his previous attacks on David with his javelin were not just his actions when he was out of his mind.

⁴⁰ David was pleased to do twice as much as the king asked, as he had a real zeal for killing those who were enemies of God and His people. Also, it was a compliment to Michal that he did twice as much as her father asked of him, demonstrating to her that David valued her at a VERY high worth. He felt honoured that she loved him, when she could have married someone who was wealthier and regarded more highly by her father and his friends.

⁴¹ Ew. That must have been an ugly sight, as well as a stinking, bloody pile of flesh. Ick! This is where having a vivid imagination when reading the Scriptures is a bit of a drawback, but the benefits far outweigh the drawbacks.

If these were assassinations, one can imagine the terror the Philistines must have felt to come upon the bodies of their officers, within their cities, with their skirts thrown up and foreskins missing. I can't say that I feel too sorry for them, as these men likely led many terror raids on Israel. They would be comparable to the ISIS leaders of today. Assuming, of course, that my guess of these being assassinations, rather than an open fight in the field, is correct.

Alternately, David may have targeted certain bands of Philistines who were rampaging about, and that would have been disconcerting, as well, for the Philistines would have thought these groups to be heroic and indomitable.

⁴² David was Michal's hero more than ever. He had risked his life to become her husband and brought her father twice what he asked for. She would take that as a mark of his value of her, but it is more likely that David's main motive was his fervent hatred of the Philistines for their crimes against his people, and, secondly, he wanted to have a firmer hold on Saul in regards to his promise. Honouring Michal likely came third in line as his reason for doubling the price.

Nonetheless, Michal loved him and Saul could not use Michal to do harm to David, for she resisted his attempts to set David up. She probably warned him of others whom he should be wary of, and of consequences for certain actions that could have brought charges against him, if her father would not back him up, after having hinted to Michal about what he would like David to do that would lead him into a trap. Some people are subtle like snakes. They put the suggestion out there and let their subordinates figure out how to get the results the ruler wants, and then the leader backs off and avows no knowledge of the plan, if it is found out.

29 was yet the more afraid of David;⁴³ and Saul became David's enemy continually.⁴⁴

30 Then the princes of the Philistines went forth,⁴⁵ and it came to pass after they went forth that David behaved himself more prudently than all the slaves of Saul so that his name was much set by.⁴⁶

I don't detect any real passion in David for Michal, though he may have been flattered that she favoured him. She probably was only passingly pretty, but a princess can get away with not being physically beautiful, having jewels and rich garments and dignity to adorn her. Other women will copy a princess's fashions anyway, in their aspirations for beauty, even if she is homely, as long as she knows how to dress well and move gracefully, for her rank makes up for what she lacks in her face and figure when a person esteems rank.

Saul's family was new royalty, but they were probably studying the habits of established royalty in other lands and setting the standard for Israel of what it meant to be "upper class" beyond the habits of Israel's princely families, inventing new styles of etiquette. Saul's daughters were both probably very classy, even if they were not outstandingly beautiful.

⁴³ Saul reluctantly gave Michal to David to be his wife, and found, to his frustration, that Michal was not easily steered into doing things that were detrimental to her husband.

⁴⁴ Saul was always hatching up schemes to try to trap David, so that he could arrest him or have him killed by another hand. David was walking a tightrope. The king's vipers were on every side, looking for ways to ingratiate themselves with Saul, but David had favour with others who watched out for him, and sometimes he just wasn't where he was expected to be, having been delayed by the Lord.

So, Saul's plan to use Michael backfired. David was now a part of the royal family. His upgraded rank gave him more authority and influence, as well as a possible claim to the throne, if all of Saul's sons and grandsons were to die. And that is what happened, with the exception of Jonathan's son, who wasn't suitable to be a king as he was physically crippled and weak of character.

⁴⁵ Yes, indeed, there were repercussions from the Philistines because of David's bride price. Saul had been willing to stir up war with the Philistines, if it meant David getting killed, but now he had to contend with war and David being alive, healthy, strong, and getting more famous and respected with every battle.

Ellicott notes in his commentary that the Philistines may have thought that they would not have to contend with David for a whole year, because that is how long men were exempted from war to "cheer up" their wives. This law of Moses allowed a man to establish his relationship with his wife, as well as gave him the possibility of siring a son who would carry on his name, if he should be killed in battle. It was not a mandatory law. A man could waive his rights, but if he did not, nobody blamed him for it.

⁴⁶ David handled the battles with the Philistines very well. He must have become famous as a brilliant strategist, as well as a bold warrior, all the more remarkable because of his youth. The Israelis were very happy that he married into the royal family and became one of their princes.