

David's Heir: David Subtly Reminds Saul He Hasn't Paid Him the Reward for Killing Goliath, Insists He Cannot Afford to Marry a Royal, 1 Sam 18:18; the Issue Is the Customary Dowry Paid to the Bride's Family; Saul Informs David the Dowry Is 100 Philistine Foreskins, Hoping He Will Die Trying, v. 25; David Returned with 200, vv. 26–27; Saul's Fear Increases to Trepidation & He Considers David His Enemy, vv. 28–29; David's Battlefield Victories Win Him High Esteem among the People, v. 30

1 Samuel 18:18 - But David said to Saul, "Who am I, and what is my life or my father's family [משפחה (*mishpachah*)] in Israel, that I should be the king's son-in-law?"

37. David is not snookered here. First of all, he may not want to marry this woman, but even if he does there are other things to consider. For example, can he afford to be married? Saul's reward includes "great riches" and the provision that Jesse's "house" would be "free" from taxes and public service.
38. When several Israeli soldiers were informing David about Goliath, they also related Saul's reward for killing him in:

1 Samuel 17:25 - The men of Israel said, "Have you seen this man who is coming up? Surely he is coming up to defy Israel. And it will be that the king will enrich the man who kills him with great riches and will give him his daughter and make his father's house [בית (*bayith*)] free in Israel." (NASB)

39. The word "family" in 1 Samuel 18:18 is the noun *mishpachah* and it refers to a clan. There are several terms that refer to family units:

Mishpachah: an extended family, a tribe, a clan. It is a group in which there is a close blood relationship. The inhabitants of an individual household were identified as a *bayit*, meaning house. Several households together constituted a *mishpachah*. Several families or clans together constituted a *sebet*, meaning tribe.¹

40. Jesses did have a house, but all the brothers and their families lived on the property. Note that the use of the word "house" (*bayith*) is a quote from a soldier. The use of the word *mishpachah* is from David and refers to the eight families plus himself.
41. David is subtly reminding Saul of his three-paragraph reward for killing Goliath which has now been reduced to marrying his daughter and that conditional upon David fighting Saul's battles for him.
42. David further implies that without the "great riches" he could not afford to be married since he does not have enough capital to afford the dowry.
43. Dowry needs to be explained so we can understand it in the context of our passage:

Dowry: The dowry took several forms. The bridegroom presented gifts to the bride. There was the *mohar*, בֹּהֶר, "dowry" as distinguished from *mattan*, מַתָּן, "gifts to the members of the family." The dowry would generally be according to the wealth and standing of the bride (cf 1 Samuel 18:23). It might consist of money, jewelry or other valuable effects; sometimes of service rendered, as in the case of Jacob (Genesis 29:18); deeds of valor might be accepted in place of dowry (Joshua 15:16; 1 Samuel 18:25; Judges 1:12).²

¹ Warren Baker and Eugene Carpenter, "משפחה," in *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament* (Chattanooga: AMG Publishers, 2003), 687.

² Edward Bagby Pollard, "Dowry," in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*, gen. ed. James Orr (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1956), 2:872.

44. In a stroke of gentlemanly savoir-faire, David, instead of telling Saul he has no interest in his daughter, takes the self-deprecation route and insists that a commoner is not qualified to marry a royal.
45. Saul then dips down in the daughter barrel and pulls out Michal, who was not shy to make it known that she was in love with David. Saul's offer of her hand follows in:
- 1 Samuel 18:21 -** Saul thought, "I will give her hand to him that she [Michal] may become a (9) snare [מִקְשָׁה (moqesh)] to him, and that the hand of the Philistines may be against him," Therefore Saul said to David, "For a second time you may be my son-in-law today."
46. The *moqesh* that Saul has in mind is the deal he will demand of David for Michal's hand. But first, he must get David to agree to the union. In his next attempt, Saul directs some of his staff to advocate Michal to David, which they do in:
- 1 Samuel 18:22 -** Then Saul commanded his servants, "Speak to David secretly, saying, 'Behold, the king (10) delights [Qal perfect of the verb חָפַץ (chaphes)] in you, and all his servants love you; now therefore, become the king's son-in-law.'"
47. The sins contained in the word *chaphes* are duplicity and deceit. Saul is setting David up for an assassination but cunningly covers his intent with the lie that he takes great pleasure and finds favor in David.
48. In verse 23, Saul's staff advocates Michal to David who reiterates his initial response in verse 18 stressing that as a commoner he does not have resources to provide a dowry for a royal.
49. This springs Saul's trap to ensnare David:
- 1 Samuel 18:25 -** Saul then said, "Thus you shall say to David, 'The king does not desire any dowry except (11) a hundred foreskins of the Philistines, to take vengeance on the king's enemies.'" Now Saul planned to make David fall by the hand of the Philistines.
50. Now full-grown, adult soldiers do not surrender their foreskins easily; there is a battle in store for those who arrive to perform the bris and Saul knows this. He anticipates two advantages if David agrees: (1) many Philistines will die in battle, and (2) hopefully David will also.
51. So again, for the fourth time, Saul conspires to have David killed. But when David heard of Saul's proposal he immediately accepted it. Free of a monetary dowry, the assignment to kill Philistines was right down his ally.
52. David had no lost love for the Philistines; on two occasions he referred to Goliath as an "uncircumcised Philistine" (1 Samuel 17:26, 36).
53. Circumcision to the Jews was a covenant with the God of Israel; those uncircumcised were considered unclean of soul and thus unworthy to participate in the rituals of Judaism.
54. So to assign the term **עָרֵל ('arel)**, "uncircumcised" to a person or group was to classify them as heathen. So David relished the challenge to perform postmortem brises on a hundred Philistines.
55. But why stop at one hundred? How about a double portion instead:

1 Samuel 18:26 - When his servants told David these words, it pleased David to become the king's son-in-law. Before the day expired,

v. 27 - David rose up and went, he and his men, and struck down two hundred men among the Philistines. Then David brought their foreskins, and they gave them in full number to the king, that he might become the king's son-in-law. So Saul gave him Michal his daughter for a wife.

56. Foiled again, Saul's fear of David was amplified as he became an even more resolved enemy of David's.

1 Samuel 18:28 - When Saul saw and knew that the Lord was with David, and that Michal, Saul's daughter, loved him,

v. 29 - then Saul was even **(12)** more afraid of David, thus Saul was David's **(13)** enemy continually.

57. Two more sins emerge in this verse. The first is intensified fear. The first time Saul's fear of David is noted is in 1 Samuel 18:12 when he realized that David had the endowment of the Holy Spirit and he did not.
58. In both cases, the word for "fear" is the verb יָרָא (*yare'*). In 18:12 it is the Qal imperfect indicating habitual action. Saul's fear of David is continuous.
59. In verse 29, the verb *yare'* is also in the Qal stem but accompanied by the Hiphil imperfect of the verb יָסַף (*yasaph*): "more; to be caused to increase the intensity of fear and to continue to do so."
60. Because David is now married to Saul's daughter, two things potentially could occur. Michal could have a son by David, David could be killed in battle, and Saul would have a grandson to carry on the royal line.
61. But, on the other hand, if David is killed in battle before issue, then Saul's three sons would be in line for the crown. Saul's fear of David ascending the throne of Israel confirmed him as David's perpetual enemy.
62. This is brought out by the Qal imperfect of the verb הָיָה (*hayah*): "was; something has occurred or come about." Saul's attitude toward David continued and he remained his "enemy." This is the Qal active participle of the verb אָוַיַּע (*'ayav*):
- The participle has a verbal function in 1 Samuel 18:29: "Saul was David's enemy continually."³**
63. While Saul is spiraling downward in an anfractuous nosedive through the stages of reversionism, David is prospering as a military commander and enjoying an ever increasing esteem from the people of Israel.
- 1 Samuel 18:30** - Then the commanders of the Philistines went out to battle, and it happened as often as they went out, that David behaved himself more wisely than all the servants of Saul. So his name was highly esteemed.
64. David's understanding and application of military strategy and tactics was so superior to all others that he was highly "esteemed," the Qal imperfect of the verb יָקַר (*yaqar*): "high evaluation assigned to someone by others."
65. In chapter 18, we have observed Saul commit thirteen sins toward David. There were ten mental-attitude, two verbal, and one overt sins either thought, expressed, or executed by Saul.

³ Helmer Ringgren, "אָוַיַּע," in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, rev. ed., eds. G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren, trans. John T. Willis (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1977), 1:214.

66. There are more to come as Saul's murder lust to eliminate David is amplified in chapter 19:

1 Samuel 19:1 - Now Saul told Jonathan his son and all his servants [עֲבָדָיו ('eveth): **servants, staff, commissioned officers**] to **(14)** put David to death. But Jonathan, Saul's son, greatly delighted in David.