

Dauids Lamentation for Saul, and Jonathan, 2 Sam. 1.19

By Anne Bradstreet

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1 Alas, slaine is the head of Israel,
2 Illustrious Saul, whose beauty did excell
3 Upon thy places, mountan'ous and high,
4 How did the mighty fall and falling dye?
5 In Gath, ⁿ⁰⁰², let not this thing be spoken on,
6 Nor published in the streets of Askelon,
7 Lest Daughters of the Philistins, ⁿ⁰⁰³ rejoyce,
8 Lest the uncircumcis'd lift up their voyce, ⁿ⁰⁰⁴:
9 O! Gilbo Mounts, ⁿ⁰⁰⁵, let never pearled dew,
10 Nor fruitfull showres your barren tops bestrew,
11 Nor fields of offerings e're on you grow,
12 Nor any pleasant thing e're may you show;
13 For the mighty ones did soone decay,
14 The Shield of Saul was vilely cast away;
15 There had his dignity so sore a foyle, ⁿ⁰⁰⁶,
16 As if his head ne're felt the sacred Oyle, ⁿ⁰⁰⁷:
17 Sometimes from crimson, blood of gastly slaine,
18 The bow of Jonathon, ⁿ⁰⁰⁸ ne're turned in vaine,
19 Nor from the fat, and spoyles, of mighty men,
20 Did Saul with bloodlesse Sword turne back agen, ⁿ⁰⁰⁹.
21 Pleasant and lovely were they both in life,
22 And in their deaths was found no parting strife, ⁿ⁰¹⁰;
23 Swifter than swiftest Eagles, so were they,
24 Stronger than Lions, ramping for their prey.
25 O Israels Dames, o're-flow your beauteous eyes,
26 For valiant Saul, who on Mount Gilbo lyes;
27 Who cloathed you in cloath of richest dye,
28 And choyce delights, full of variety.
29 On your array put ornaments of gold, ⁿ⁰¹¹,
30 Which made you yet more beauteous to behold.
31 O! how in battell did the mighty fall,
32 In mid'st of strength not succoured, ⁿ⁰¹² at all:
33 O! lovely Jonathan, how wert thou slaine,
34 In places high, full low thou dost remaine;
35 Distrest I am, for thee, dear Jonathan,
36 Thy love was wonderfull, passing a man;

37 Exceeding all the Love that's Feminine, ⁿ⁰¹³,
38 So pleasant hast thou been, dear brother mine:
39 How are the mighty falne into decay,
40 And war-like weapons perished away.

Footnotes

- n001 In this passage from the Bible, David mourns the loss of King Saul of Israel and his son, Jonathan, who died during the battle of Mount Gilboa against the Philistines. Source: King James Bible
- n002 Gath and Ashkelon were two of the five major cities of the Philistines. Source: Encyclopedia Britannica
- n003 The Philistines were a non-Semitic people that resided in Canaan and posed a significant threat to the Israelites. Source: Encyclopedia Britannica
- n004 David does not want word of the Israelites' defeat at Mount Gilboa to reach the Philistines, who will revel in the death of Judah's king.
- n005 Mount Gilboa is a range of mountains located in the Jezreel Valley in modern-day northern Israel. Source: Encyclopedia Britannica
- n006 A repulse, defeat in an onset or enterprise; a baffling check. Source: Oxford English Dictionary
- n007 "Then Samuel took the flask of oil, poured it on his [Saul's] head, kissed him and said, 'Has not the LORED anointed you ruler over his inheritance?'" Source: 1 Sam. 10:1
- n008 Jonathan was the son of Saul and a close friend of David, who made a loyalty pact with him in 1 Sam. 1:42 Source: King James Bible
- n009 Both Saul and Jonathan were mighty warriors; while they used different weapons, they both wielded them successfully in battle.
- n010 Despite Jonathan's loyalty to David and Saul's jealousy, Saul and Jonathan were united at the battle and united in death.
- n011 David reflects on only the positive qualities of Saul, including the prosperity of Judah under his reign.
- n012 To help, assist, or aid. Source: Oxford English Dictionary
- n013 David compares the closeness of his friendship with Johnathan to the intimacy and loyalty experienced within marriage. Johnathan accepted David's destiny to become king, and remained loyal to him even after the reproach of his father.