**David's Heir: Saul's Next Attempt to Kill David: Make Him Commander of a Battalion & Deploy Him into Battle; David Prospers while Saul's Fear Increases to Dread, 1 Sam 18:15–17; David's OER Is Enhanced as His Approval Rating Increases among the People of Israel; Saul Offers His Daughter Merab to David if He Will Fight the Philistines; David Was Owed Saul's Daughter, Great Riches, & a Tax Exemption for Killing Goliath, 1 Sam 17:25; Saul Wants David Dead**

**1 Samuel 18:13** -       Therefore Saul removed him from his presence and appointed him as his commander of a thousand; and he went out and came in before the people.

1. Saul threw his javelin at David twice but missed his mark.  Now he simply wants David out of his headquarters.  Saul as king decided to promote David as a commander of a battalion which would in our army make him a Colonel.

2. Saul's strategy was to consistently deploy David's battalion in the most hazardous engagements possible in hopes he would be killed in action.

3. Again David rises to the occasion.  On each encounter he returns from the battlefield victorious in full view of the people: "he went out (to battle) and came in (from battle) before the people" (v. 13).

4. When a transition of power is underway, God will prosper His anointed one while at the same time diminish the one out of favor.

5. The more Saul attacks David, the more favorable he appears in the opinion of the people.

**1 Samuel 18:14** -       David was prospering **[ שָׂכַל (*sachal*: to act with wisdom, insight, and prudence ]** in all his ways for the Lord was with him.

6. When a person has maximum doctrine circulating in his soul, he is able to make decisions under pressure that less informed others could do.

7. Thus every time David went out to battle he enhanced his OER: Officer Evaluation Report to the consternation of Saul.

**1 Samuel 18:15** -       When Saul saw that he was prospering greatly, he **(7)** dreaded **[ Qal imperfect of the verb גּוּר (*ghur*) ]** him.

8. The seventh of Saul's sins is dread, defined as:

   **Dread: great fear especially in the face of impending evil; extreme uneasiness in the face of a disagreeable prospect; one causing fear or awe.[1]**

9. Saul is seeing the proverbial handwriting on the wall which is amplified by the peoples' love for David:

**1 Samuel 18:16** -       But all Israel and Judah loved David, and he went out and came in before them.

10. With every engagement with the enemy, David prevailed.  As he continued to go out to do battle and come in to the city victorious, the love of the people increased accordingly.

11. Saul's rationale for sending David out on engagements is revealed in the next verse.  The king had a daughter named Merab \mē'-răb\ which was supposed to have been offered to him after he killed Goliath.

12. Here Saul hedges his bet by telling David that he can have her hand in marriage if he will "fight the Lord's battles" for him.

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[1] *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, 11th ed., s.v. "dread."

13.    Propagandists and schemers often use coded messages in order to manipulate people into doing their bidding.  David told Goliath right before he killed him that "the battle is the Lord's."

**1 Samuel 18:17** -          Then Saul said to David, "Here is my older daughter Merab; I will give her to you as a wife, only be a valiant man for me and fight the Lord's battles."  For Saul thought, **(8)** "My hand shall not be against him but let the hand of the Philistines be against him."

14.    In our wars in Iraq and Afghanistan our nation's leaders have sent our military personnel on multiple deployments to each theater and many to both.  Each time these people have been put into harm's way.

15.    Saul has already promoted David to the rank of colonel and put him in command of a 1,000-man battalion.  He has deployed him on numerous occasions with the intent of using David's leadership attributes against him.

16.    Saul knows that David is fearless, aggressive, and leads the charge.  He therefore concludes that if David is constantly placed in harm's way, then eventually he will be killed by an enemy eliminating him as a threat.  This is Saul's eighth sin directed toward David.

17.    By prospering in all his engagements, David acquired the adulation of the people and the consternation of Saul.

18.    Saul's strategy was to revisit the reward he posted at Elah:

**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 free in Israel."  (NASB)

19.    The reward had three provisions: **(1)** great riches, **(2)** Saul's daughter, and **(3)** Jesse house made free of taxation.

20.    To date, none of these have been forthcoming to David.  But the offer was made and Saul decides to activate part 2, not outright, but with stipulations: to win Merab's hand, he must go fight the Philistines.

21.    The offer of Merab to David turns out to be a rhetorical veil that conceals while advancing Saul's hidden agenda:  David will be so taken by the offer of a wife that he will willingly ride into combat and the Philistines will kill him.

22.    Saul appeals to David's honor and the core of his motivation, "be a valiant man for me and fight the Lord's battles."

23.    The phrase "be a valiant man for me" is a key clause in Saul's propaganda.  Here's why.

24.    The verb "to be" is the Qal imperative of הָיָה (**hayah**): "be."  The imperative mood indicates that Saul is talking down to David.  David is a valiant man, but Saul implies through the imperative mood that he is not.

25.    The words "a valiant man" look like this in the Hebrew text: לְ־בֶן־חַיִל (**le-ben-chayil**): "a valiant man."  The word "valiant" is *chayil* preceded by the word for man, *ben*:

Persons with "Power."  The military overtones can be observed in the passages where *chayil* is combined with individualizing words.  First we may note its use with *ben* to represent the concept "possessor of power."  This phrase appears 16 times, including 9 passages that refer to military prowess, including such individuals as David (1 Samuel 18:17).[2]

26.  Then Saul adds, "for me."  Be a valiant man for me.  You have done it for Israel and for the Lord, now do it for me.  In 1 Samuel 16:38, David is prepared to depart the king's headquarters and proceed to the wadi and acquire ordinance.

27.  Saul has him dressed in his own armor which David politely allowed, then refused:

**1 Samuel 17:38 -** Then Saul clothed David with his garments and put a bronze helmet on his head, and he clothed him with armor.

**1 Samuel 17:39 -** David girded his sword over his armor and tried to walk, for he had not tested them.  So David said to Saul, "I cannot go with these, for I have not tested them."  And David took them off.

28.  Saul was playing both ends against the middle: **(1)** If Goliath won, David could be blamed because he did not utilize Saul's panoply expertly or was too weak to do so.  **(2)** If David won, Saul would give credit for his victory to the use of his panoply.

29.  David disallowed this by taking off the panoply and going sans armor into the valley.  His proclamation to Goliath rang in Saul's ears:

**1 Samuel 17:45***b* **-** I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have taunted.

**v. 46***a* **-** This day the Lord will deliver you up into my hands.

30.  Now time has passed.  David is in his twenties, he has numerous battle ribbons on his standard, and he has won the admiration of the people of Israel.

31.  Saul wants to inspire David to deploy once again and his orders include two commands: **(1)** "Be a valiant man for me and **(2)** fight the Lord's battles."

32.  The verb *hayah*: "to be," is Qal imperative; the verb "to fight" is the Niphal imperative of לָחַם (*lacham*): "to do battle, to fight, to wage war."

33.  The Niphal stem is reflexive so that what Saul wants David to do now is to go out and do battle with the Philistines "for me."

34.  "Fight the Lord's battles" is used by Saul as a rallying cry to get David's blood up.  If Saul can inspire David to take on the Philistines "for me," then he can't lose.

35.  Again he plays both ends against the middle:

**(1)** If David defeats the Philistines then he did it for Saul so he can say, "I killed King Achish" when it was David who would have done the deed.

**(2)** If Achish or his troops kills David, then Saul will have accomplished his primary objective.

36.  These are the things Saul is thinking; the offer of Merab is a lure to which David responds in:

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[2] H. Eising, "חַיִל," in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, eds. G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren, trans. David E. Green (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1980), 4:349–50.

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