

~MERAB (164)

(Me'rab) [from a root meaning become many abundant]

.. Merab's Sister Rears Her Sons

- The older of King Saul's two daughters.
- And the sons of Saul came to be Jonathan and Ishvi and Malchishua, and, as for the names of his two daughters, the name of the one born first was **Merab** and the name of the younger one Michal. (**1 Samuel 14:49**)
- Saul had evidently promised to give one of them in marriage to the man who would defeat Goliath.
- And the men of Israel began to say; Have you seen this man that is coming up? For it is to taunt Israel that he is coming up. And it must occur that, the man who strikes him down, the king will enrich him with great riches, and his own daughter he will give him, and the house of his father he will set free in Israel. (**1 Samuel 17:25**)
- And it may have been for that reason that he offered **Merab** to David. After his encounter with Goliath, David proved to be a prudent and successful fighter against the Philistines, so much so that Saul was scared of him, while the people of Israel and Judah loved him.
- And Saul kept seeing that he was acting very prudently, so that he was scared of him. (**1 Samuel 18:15**)
- And all Israel and Judah were lovers of David, because he was going out and coming in before them. (**1 Samuel 18:16**)
- In offering **Merab** to David as a wife, Saul urged him on to continued valor, while thinking to himself; Do not let my hand come to be upon him, but let the hand of the Philistines come to be upon him, hoping for David's death in battle.
- David, in humility, hesitated to accept the offer to become the son-in-law of the king. As matters turned out, Saul did not keep his promise, and Merab never became David's wife. The account states that the younger daughter, Michal, was in love with David, which may imply that **Merab** was not.

- At any rate, it came about that at the time for giving Merab, Saul's daughter, to David, she herself had already been given to Adriel the Meholathite as a wife.
- Finally Saul said to David; Here is my oldest daughter **Merab**. She is the one that I shall give you as a wife. Only prove yourself a valiant person to me and fight the wars of Yehowah. But as for Saul, he said to himself; Do not let my hand come to be upon him, but let the hand of the Philistines come to be upon him. (**1 Samuel 18:17**)
- At this David said to Saul; Who am I and who are my kinsfolk, my father's family, in Israel, so that I should become son-in-law to the king? (**1 Samuel 18:18**)
- However, it came about that at the time for giving **Merab**, Saul's daughter, to David, she herself had already been given to Adriel the Meholathite as a wife. (**1 Samuel 18:19**)
- Now Michal, Saul's daughter, was in love with David, and they went reporting it to Saul, and the matter was to his liking. (**1 Samuel 18:20**)
- **Merab** bore five sons to Adriel. However, David later gave these sons and two other members of Saul's household to the Gibeonites, who put all seven to death. This was done to atone for Saul's having tried to annihilate the Gibeonites.
- Now there came to be a famine in the days of David for three years, year after year, and David proceeded to consult the face of Yehowah. Then Yehowah said; Upon Saul and upon his house there is bloodguilt, because he put the Gibeonites to death. (**2 Samuel 21:1**)
- And David went on to say to the Gibeonites; What shall I do to you, and with what shall I make atonement, that you may certainly bless the inheritance of Yehowah? (**2 Samuel 21:3**)
- So the Gibeonites said to him; It is not a matter of silver or gold for us in connection with Saul and his household, neither is it ours to put a man to death in Israel. At that he said; Whatever you are saying I shall do for you. (**2 Samuel 21:4**)

- At this they said to the king; The man that exterminated us and that schemed to annihilate us from subsisting in any of the territory of Israel. (2 Samuel 21:5)
- Let there be given to us seven men of his sons, and we must expose them to Yehowah in Gibeah of Saul, the chosen one of Yehowah. Accordingly the king said; I myself shall give them. (2 Samuel 21:6)
- However, the king felt compassion upon Mephibosheth the son of Jonathan the son of Saul on account of the oath of Yehowah that was between them, between David and Jonathan the son of Saul. (2 Samuel 21:7)
- Consequently the king took the two sons of Rizpah the daughter of Aiah whom she bore to Saul, Armoni and Mephibosheth, and the five sons of Michal the daughter of Saul whom she bore to Adriel the son of Barzillai the Meholathite. (2 Samuel 21:8)
- Then he gave them into the hand of the Gibeonites and they proceeded to expose them on the mountain before Yehowah, so that the seven of them fell together, and they themselves were put to death in the first days of harvest, at the start of the barley harvest. (2 Samuel 21:9)
- However, Rizpah the daughter of Aiah took sackcloth and spread it for herself upon the rock from the start of harvest until water poured down upon them from the heavens, and she did not allow the fowls of the heavens to rest upon them by day nor the wild beasts of the field by night. (2 Samuel 21:10)
- At length it was reported to David what Rizpah the daughter of Aiah, Saul's concubine, had done. (2 Samuel 21:11)

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- According to the Masoretic text,
- Consequently the king took the two sons of Rizpah the daughter of Aiah whom she bore to Saul, Armoni and Mephibosheth, and the five sons of Michal the daughter of Saul whom she bore to Adriel the son of Barzillai the Meholathite. (2 Samuel 21:8)

- Speaks of the five sons of Michal the daughter of Saul whom she bore to Adriel. Yet;
- So, as regards Michal, Saul's daughter, she came to have no child down to the day of her death. (2 Samuel 6:23)
- Says that Michal died childless. It appears that some scribes have tried to resolve this difficulty by substituting the name of **Merab** for Michal at 2 Samuel 21:8) This seems apparent from the fact that the Greek Septuagint Lagardian edition and two Hebrew manuscripts read, **Merab** in this verse. However, a traditional explanation of;
- Michal's sister **Merab** was the wife of Adriel and bore him the five sons in question. But **Merab** died early, and her sister Michal, rejected by David and childless, undertook the rearing, or bringing up, of the five boys. Hence, they were spoken of as Michal's children instead of those of **Merab**. In harmony with this view of;
- The Bible translation by Isaac Leeser speaks of the five sons of Michal the daughter of Saul, whom she had brought up for Adriel, and a footnote thereon states: As Michal was David's wife, but the children were those of **Merab**, the oldest daughter of Saul, who were probably educated by her sister.
- The Targums read: The five sons of Merab, which Michal, Saul's daughter, brought up which she bare. Other factors, not revealed in the Scriptures, may have a bearing on the way the text was set down.