

Brotherly murder among the houses of Saul and David

The allegorical story of Saul and the Amalekite lad (2 Sam 1)

THE AMALEKITE AS DAVID: "a man came from Saul's camp, with his clothes torn and dirt on his head." (v. 2)

"I knew that he could not live after he had fallen. I took the crown that was on his head" (v. 10)

"Then David took hold of his clothes and tore them" (v. 11)

THE AMALEKITE AT THE DEUTERONOMISTIC AUTHOR/NARRATOR: So I stood over him [i.e., the monarchy itself], and killed him, for I knew that he could not live after he had fallen [into exile]. I took the crown that was on his head and the armlet that was on his arm, and I have brought them here to my lord [i.e., YHWH]."

THE QUESTION TO BOTH DAVID AND THE NARRATOR: "Were you not afraid to lift your hand to destroy the Lord's anointed?" (v. 14)

The ritual by the pool of Gibeon and its aftermath (2 Sam 2:12-32)

The ritualized slaughter of Abner's (house of Saul) and Joab's (house of David) 12 men initiates and symbolizes the ensuing civil war among the tribes of YHWH.

Asahel, son of Zeruiah (i.e., Joab's brother), pursues Abner in deadly chase, only to be killed by Abner. Later, Joab kills Abner in the ritual of *ge`ulat-hadam*, "redemption of the blood; i.e., vendetta justice (3:27).

David at Abner's funeral: "Today I am powerless, even though anointed king; these men, the sons of Zeruiah, are too violent for me. The LORD pay back the one who does wickedly in accordance with his wickedness!" (3:39)

Benjaminite against Benjaminite (2 Sam 4)

Baanah and Rechab, sons of Rimmon, a Benjaminite, kill Saul's son, Ishbaal, a Benjaminite; David orders the death of Rechab and Baanah.

Absalom takes deadly revenge on his half-brother Amnon (2 Sam 13:23-33)

The (false) "news" reaches King David that "Absalom had killed all the king's sons" (13:30)

The rebellious Absalom is killed by Joab and his armor-bearers (2 Sam 18:10-17)

David laments the death of his son, rather than celebrate the death of his rival.

Joab, at David's order, kills Amasa, Absalom's commander (2 Sam 20:8-10)

Amasa was the son of a man named Ithra the Ishmaelite, who had married Abigail daughter of Nahash, sister of Zeruiah, Joab's mother. (17:25)

Joab said to Amasa, "Is it well with you, my brother?" (20:9)

The dying David orders Solomon to carry out the assassination of Joab (1 Kings 2:5-6) Solomon executes his brother, Adonijah (1 Kings 2:24-25)