

“The Song of the Bow”: 2 Samuel 1.17-27

1

David intoned this lamentation over Saul and his son Jonathan.

He ordered that The Song of the **Bow** [*qesheth*, only 22.35 elsewhere in 2 Sam] be taught to the people of Judah; it is written in the Book of Jashar.

He said:

Your glory, O Israel, lies slain upon your high places!
How the **mighty** [*gibborim*, 22.26; 5x in 23.9-22] have fallen!

Tell it not in Gath,
proclaim it not in the streets of Ashkelon;
or the daughters² of the Philistines will rejoice,
the daughters of the uncircumcised will exult.

You mountains of **Gilboa** [only 21.12 after this in 2 Sam],
let there be no dew or rain upon you,
nor bounteous fields!

For there the **shield** [*magen*, only 22.3, 31, 36 elsewhere in Sam] of the **mighty** was de-
filed,
the **shield** of Saul, anointed with oil no more.

From the blood of the slain,
from the fat of the **mighty**,
the **bow** of Jonathan did not turn back,
nor the sword of Saul return empty.

Saul and Jonathan, beloved and lovely!
In life and in death they were not divided;
they were swifter than eagles,
they were stronger than lions.

O daughters of Israel, weep over Saul,
who clothed you with crimson, in luxury,
who put ornaments of gold on your apparel.

How the **mighty** have fallen in the midst of the battle!
Jonathan lies slain upon your high places.

I am distressed [*tsar*, only 24.14 elsewhere in 2 Sam] for you, my brother Jonathan;
greatly beloved were you to me;
your love to me was wonderful,
passing the love of women.

How the **mighty** have fallen,
and the weapons of war perished!

¹ Many rare/late Hebrew words, parallel to 2 Samuel 22.

² *Benoth*, 3x in this Song and 4x in 2 Samuel 21.8-11