

Preview Erika Of Harod – 9 Pages

The King's Children

-Those born in Hebron-

1. Amnon, son of Ahinoam
2. Chileab, son of Abigail widow of Nabal of Carmel.
3. Absalom, son of the Princess Maacah, the daughter of Talmi, King of Geshur.
4. Adonijah, son of Haggith.
5. Shephatiah, son of Abital.
6. Ithream, son of Eglah.

-Those born in Jerusalem-

7. Shammuah or Shimea, the son of Bathsheba the widow of Uriah the Hittite whom David ordered killed in battle. The baby died at birth by the judgment of God.
8. Solomon, son of Bathsheba.
9. Shobab, son of Bathsheba.
10. Nathan, son of Bathsheba.

11. Eliphelet, who died in infancy.
12. Eliphelet II
13. Ibhar

14. Elishua

15. Nepheg

16. Japhia

17. Elishama

18. Eliada or Beeliada

19. Nogah

20. Tamar, a daughter of the Princess Maacah, the daughter of Talmi, King of Geshur

ALEPH – THE KING’S MIGHTY MEN

I, Erika of Harod, joined David Ben Jesse in the hills of Ziph when the second group went out to him. I did not go with the first 400 because, at that time, I thought them to be rascals. I went with the 200, we thought we were better, but he soon taught us otherwise. I was with him as he fled from King Saul. I stayed with him in the wilderness. I was there when he began to reign over Judah at Hebron. I was there seven and a half years later when all Israel came to make him King over them; what a glorious day that was. I went out with him during Absalom's rebellion and returned with him after the boy was killed. I stood with Nathan the prophet and the warriors when Adonijah tried for the throne and that with my Lord David on his deathbed; I stood although my joints cried out with pain as I got from my own bed to stand the last time for his will. Now Solomon reigns and I am old. He does not favor me; I shall probably be forgotten.

I record here my personal remembrances of this great King and soul. I also record some instances concerning others who

surrounded us. I do not bring hearsay to these pages. I set down as fact only those things told to me by trustworthy witnesses; such as Sarah, the wife of my youth, the lady Abigail and a few of my fellow warriors. Much information came to me, I pass on only a portion. However, the reader will probably view this largely as the scribal wanderings of a tired old man. Perhaps I have become a frustrated cleric in my dotage.

I remember the first time that I met the King. He was young and powerful and graceful. He had, as he always did, a ruddy head and beard. You could always find him in the masses with that redness in his hair. He greeted me with a smile that day, me a dissident debtor in search for a leader I could believe in. His smile was sincere, disarming and almost innocent. I knew from this first encounter that I would follow this man all of my life. At first I wondered if he had really been anointed by Samuel. By the time I was sure of this I no longer cared.

ZAIN - DESTINY

We all knew that a change was about to come. It was in the very air we breathed. At first we had been an army of fugitives. But we had never acted like outlaws. Our leader was not an outlaw. He was an anointed King. It was just that there had been two anointed Kings of Israel for some years now. Our leader had always conducted himself as a prince except in the matter of Nabal. And there Abigail had reminded him of his destiny. Our leader was a prince indeed and that fool Nabal did not recognize him as such. No fool did. But she did. And the fool had died of fear and that gracious lady became our prince's lady. She fed us well that first day that she came to us with all that food. And it had always been good to see her in the camp. Her presence had always reminded us of David's destiny. Any one of us would have

died in her defense as quickly as for David himself.

This day was special. We were an army, a royal army by now though still in exile. We camped at Zikiag and waited for news of the battle between Saul and Philistines. Our camp looked good. The tents were in order and arranged around David's own. Our banners were posted around his tent and the officers meeting tent. A brisk wind kept the banners spread and the sun was bright across the sky. There were a few high clouds that dimmed the sun from time to time but still it was a bright day. It was not the sun that made this day special. We could feel a change very near.

When the Amalekite was first seen approaching we let the junior officers respond to the sentry's call. We saw them escort the foreigner into the camp and begin to question him. He was very short of breath and had obviously been running for some time. David motioned for the man to be brought forth. The man fell on the ground before David.

"Where are you from?" David asked.

"From the camp of Israel, I escaped," he responded still gasping for breath.

"How did it go? Speak man!"

"It's lost, terribly lost, my lord. Most of the army of Israel has run away. And....and King Saul and his son Jonathan are dead."

"Dead? How do you know?" His voice was very soft and earnest.

"I know from firsthand experience my lord," he responded as he pulled a King's crown and bracelet from a filthy bag tucked under his belt.

"I put the King of Israel out of his misery. He was in great agony, sorely wounded. On Mount Gilboa I found him leaning on his

spear. He had been struck and would surely have died, a gaping wound in his side. He had removed his armor and bound himself tightly with his belt. The bleeding had stopped but he had the gray pallor of death. He begged me to kill him because his life would not depart. So I stood over him with my sword and he lay down as if preparing for sleep. Then I killed him, my lord. One clean stroke through the heart. He did not suffer at my hand, my lord. And,... and I bring you his crown and bracelet."

He extended a thin brown arm with the booty.

The King looked at him for a long time. He did not take the crown or the bracelet. Finally I took them and set them aside.

David finally let out a great groan of agony and tore his tunic. We all did the same. We had the man held until our prince would decide what to do with him.

We all mourned and fasted that day. It was a bittersweet victory. What we had been waiting for had finally happened. Now the greatest desire of each and every one of us could be filled. The way was now clear for our David to be King. He had steadfastly and repeatedly refused to lift a hand against Saul. Now it was done for him. We were excited and sad at the same time. Why this way? Why could it not have been done peacefully? Jonathan had already agreed that David and not himself would be King after Saul. And Jonathan would have been at David's side. But now Jonathan was also dead. It was what we had all wanted but it was not as we had wanted it. Our greatest grief, however, was the grief of David. We would recover faster and be ready to move ahead. But he always felt these things so deeply. We wondered about the will of Jehovah.

Late in the afternoon I talked to Eliahba in whispers against his tent. We sat where we could see David's tent in case he emerged.

The sun was low and a cool breeze had come up. We covered our feet with our skirts.

"They were both anointed," I said. "Yes," Eliahba answered, "but Saul did not follow the Lord." "Then why did the anointing remain upon him? Or did it?"

"You know that it did, or at least it would return from time to time. You know that he prophesied. We said, 'Is Saul among the prophets?'"

"Yes, we did," I answered. "But he became so evil. Then Samuel anointed David and there were two Kings and we have waited for this day. And yet, I am not completely happy."

"But this is the way we have it, so let's accept it as it is," Eliahba said. "Look he's coming out!"

David emerged from his tent in his armor. We looked at each other in wonder. Would we go to battle now so late in the day? And against whom?

He ordered the Amalekite brought as we assembled. The man came cheerfully obviously expecting a reward.

"Why were you not afraid to strike the Lord's anointed?" David asked.

"Why, my lord, as I told you, he suffered." Fear covered his face now.

"He,...he asked me to. To put him out of his misery. I did it quickly and well. He was,...yes, he was actually grateful. Yes, my lord David, he was grateful, If you had been there you would have seen that clearly for yourself. I am your servant, my lord."

The man looked anxiously at David. We

waited. David glanced at Benaiah and said,"
Cut him down."

We had always said that Benaiah was quick with the sword. The man's head was gone in an instant. Even I flinched. Benaiah wiped the blade on the man's own tunic and sheathed his sword. Then I thought that it was just a normal reaction of grief on David's part. After all Jonathan was dead in the prime and beauty of his young manhood and what was another Amalekite? They were mostly trash anyhow.

Later it became very clear to me just how seriously David took being anointed. I wondered how that felt. The power and the responsibility of it all. Did it leave a man like a normal man? This was surely why he had the Amalekite struck down. He had time to reflect. The others agreed.

Then he grieved some more for Jonathan. He wrote a lament that all were to learn.

"How have the mighty fallen. Tell it not in Gath. Do not proclaim it in the heathen capitals. Saul and Jonathan loved and beautiful in life. Now struck down. The love of Jonathan was more beautiful than that of women."

If ever I doubted that a man could love a man that strongly and remain pure in it, I knew now that it was possible. David was a man sought after by women and admired and loved by men. Yet he loved Jonathan above women. It was a pure love. There was none of the Sodomite there. Maybe it was part of the anointing. I loved Shammah of Harod, my cousin, and Eliphelet and others, but not like David had loved Jonathan. Perhaps it was a prince's bond.

CHETH - GLORY

When the King decided to secure his borders toward the great river Euphrates we did not expect much resistance from Hadadezer King of Zobah, although we knew of the great deposits of brass and gold in that land. We were, however, surprised by the army that he was able to amass. No doubt he also had spies in Jerusalem. Benaiah had special squads of agents all over the city to find foreign spies but many got past them. Obviously, when they reported the greatness of David's Kingdom, neighboring Kings began to strengthen their forces. We dealt with him forcefully but obviously not well enough as we had to do it again.

It was at the battle of Helam with the Syrians that I saw the Mogen David for the second time. The first time was on the dining cloth at the palace. I asked Eliphelet who was sitting next to me, what this star of six points was and he told me that it was the King's new standard designed by the King himself.

The King's chariot had advanced with the main column but had turned aside after the first charge to watch the battle from a small hill to the South. I was with the reserve and I knew that the King's charioteer would want to pull the King from the thick combat that follows the first charge. Usually the King resisted this safety, but we continually enjoined him to accept it as we always said that he was worth ten thousand in Israel. And in this campaign against Hanun the Ammonite and his allied Syrians Joab had already prevailed much before the King came down. His driver must have pressed hard as the King allowed himself to be pulled aside. Following that the battle did not go well. Wave after wave of reserves were committed and the enemy just seemed to grow stronger. I was commanding the final reserve and only two units stood between us and the battle. I was anxious to fight. My horses, veteran animals, strained at their bits. I understood them well. I remember thinking that I would rather die near the King than to survive here with the reserves.

All were prepared to die, but none expected to win that day. I began to plan our rescue of the King and the race away from the battle. Then a spear shaft appeared fixed to the side of the Kings chariot. But instead of a spearhead on the shaft there was that bronze star of six points. As soon as it was fixed securely his chariot reeled to the right and raced toward our hastily formed and desperate front line.

"The King is withdrawing", my driver said.

I watched. As the King neared the far end of the line, he trooped the line in a flash and reeled again to rush directly toward the enemy who had already begun to rejoice in their supposed victory. The Kings own sword of Goliath was raised in his right hand and with a mighty roar from the depths of his belly, he prepared to hew down the enemy single-handedly if necessary. I remember that as his chariot turned the dust rose from the wheels and the sun flashed on that star. When the army saw this they raised a shout of triumph and followed David without thought of safety or defeat. And what a great victory it was that day. We slew seven thousand charioteers and four thousand horsemen on that bloody field and the Ammonites sued for peace.