

Chrysis, a priestess of Juno at Argus, was by her negligence the cause of the goddess' temple being burned to the ground. She had placed a lamp too near the sacred ornaments. They caught fire; and as she was so deeply asleep that she did not wake up soon enough to prevent the consequences of this accident, the fire burned down the entire temple. Some say that she herself perished in the midst of the flames (A); but others assert that she escaped that same night to Phlius. She had reason to fear the resentment of the Argives, for instead of recalling her they selected another priestess. This post was quite important for them since it was the priestess who regulated their dates and their chronology. This conflagration occurred in the ninth year of the Peloponnesian War.

St. Jerome in his first book against Jovinian has observed that our *Chrysis*, the priestess of Juno, was a virgin. Marianus Victorius errs in asserting, in his notes on this passage, that this Church Father was speaking of *Chrysëis* whom Agememnon abducted.

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A. (Some say that she . . . perished in the midst of the flames.)

Not only does Arnobius assert this, but he uses this to construct an argument against the pagans. "Where was Queen Juno when the same flames destroyed her celebrated temple and burned her priestess, *Chrysis*, at Argos?" Clement of Alexandria had provided him with all this, both the fact and the conclusion. It was poor judgment to make use of such a proof against the pagan gods; for, besides the fact that Lucretius makes use of the very same argument to destroy the worship of the gods in general, could not the question be thrown back on Arnobius himself? Could not one ask him where the God of Israel was when the king of Babylon pillaged and burned down the temple of Solomon? I do not know what the Church Fathers were thinking about in some of their arguments against the gentiles.

Pierre Bayle

Historical & Critical
Dictionary

David,* King of the Jews, was one of the greatest men in the world and a man after God's own heart, even if he is not considered a royal prophet. The first time Scripture has him appear on the stage, it is in order to tell us that Samuel appointed him king and performed the ceremony of anointing him. David was then only a simple shepherd. He was the youngest of the eight sons of Jesse the Bethlehemite (A). After this, Scripture tells us that he was sent to King Saul to

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A. (*He was the youngest of the sons of Jesse.*) Jesse was descended in direct line from Judah, one of the twelve children of Jacob, and dwelt in Bethlehem, a small city of the tribe of Judah. Some modern rabbis say that when David was conceived, Jesse believed that he enjoyed not his wife but his maidservant, and it is in

* [After the first appearance of Bayle's *Dictionary* there was so much opposition to the "scandalous" character of the article "David" that Bayle agreed, in discussions with the Consistory of the French Reformed Church of Rotterdam, to which he belonged, to amend the article and remove the objectionable parts. As a result, a much emasculated article "David" appeared in the second edition. Both the body of the article was cut, as well as several of the major notes. The text presented here is that of the original 1697 version, except for the additional portion of remark A. In the revised article, besides deletions and changes in the body of the article and notes, remarks D, E, H, and I were suppressed.

[This is the only article so affected by criticism. With many articles Bayle merely expanded the text in the second edition; and in the cases of the others definitely singled out as objectionable by the Consistory, namely, articles "Manicheans," "Paulicians," and "Pyrrho," he added appendices to clarify his claims.

[A most illuminating and interesting discussion of the background of this article appears in the recent two-part article by Walter Rex, "Pierre Bayle: The Theology and Politics of the Article on David," *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance*, XXIV (1962), 168-189; XXV (1963), 366-403.]

cure the latter of his fits of frenzy by the sound of musical instruments. A service of such importance made him so beloved by Saul that that prince kept him in his house and made him his

this way that they explain the fifth verse of Psalm 51, where David declares, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." This, they say, signifies that Jesse, "his father, committed an adultery when he was begotten, because, although he begot him on his wife, he thought he begot him on a maidservant, whose chastity he had tried to corrupt."¹ This explanation does not conform much to the doctrine of original sin, and it is for this reason that Father Bartolucci,² having reported this view of the modern rabbis, felt that the occasion obliged him to examine whether the ancient Jews acknowledged the truth of this doctrine. If the supposition of these rabbis were true, they would be quite right in saying that Jesse had committed adultery; but, on the other hand, it would have to be said that he would not have committed a sin if he had gotten his maid with child when he sincerely believed he was enjoying his wife. This rabbinical supposition is very far from the tradition that St. Jerome mentions. He says that it was believed that Jesse, David's father, never committed any actual sin, and that there was no spot in him but the one he brought from his mother's womb. "It is a wonderful thing that St. Jerome relates of the life of Jesse, David's father, that he was never guilty of any other sin than what he had originally contracted. For the passage wherein we read that 'Amasa went in to Abigail, the daughter of Nahash, sister to Zeruah,' is thus expounded by St. Jerome: 'Nahash signifies a serpent; for they say he was guilty of no deadly sin but the one he originally contracted from the ancient serpent. Now Nahash is the same with Jesse, the father of David.' Abulensis mentions the same tradition and observes that Nahash is the same with Jesse or Isai, the father of David, which de Lyra had likewise taught before."³ Those who would like to adopt the impertinence of these rabbis concerning the conception of David might

¹ See the *Journal des Savans* for July 14, 1692.

² In *Bibliotheca magna rabbinica*, Part II, cited in the same *Journal des Savans*.

³ These words and the citations that accompany them are from Father Camart, *De rebus gestis Eliae*, pp. 126-127.

armor-bearer. Scripture then says that he returned from time to time to his father's house to take care of the flocks, and that one day his father sent him to Saul's camp with some provisions, which he intended for his three sons who bore arms. David, in executing the order, heard that a Philistine named Goliath,

easily proceed to another impertinence, which would be placing David among the illustrious bastards. The physical reason that is given why bastards are so frequently born with so many natural talents should apply here with respect to the father's part.

[In the revised article "David," Bayle added the following to remark A.]

I have just read an Italian book⁴ in which this story of the rabbis is reported in this way. David's father was in love with his maidservant, and after having cajoled her many times, he told her finally that she should prepare herself to go to bed with him that night. She, being no less virtuous than beautiful, complained to her mistress that Jesse would give her no rest from his solicitations. . . . "Promise to please him tonight," her mistress told her, "and I will go and put myself in your place." The project was put into execution two or three nights in a row. When Jesse found that his wife, with whom he had not been to bed for a long time, was nevertheless pregnant, he accused her of adultery and would not believe her tale of the bargain she had made with the servant. Neither he nor his sons cared to lay eyes on the child that she brought into the world. They considered him a bastard. He treated her with the utmost contempt and arranged to have the child brought up in the country among the shepherds. He did not tell his neighbors his secret. He hid this domestic shame for love of his children. Things remained in this state until the prophet Samuel came to seek a king in Jesse's family. Since his choice did not fix on any of the sons he was shown, it was necessary to fetch David. They sent for him with repugnance because they were afraid that the shameful secret would be discovered. But when they saw that this supposed

⁴ This book is entitled *Precetti da esser imparati dalle donne Ebreë* [Precepts to Be Learned by Hebrew Women]. See article "Arodon," remark A [p. 23].

proud of his strength and his gigantic stature, came every day to offer a challenge to the Israelites, without any of them daring to accept it. David had an earnest desire to go and fight the giant, whereupon he was brought to the king and assured him that he would triumph over the Philistine. Saul gave him his armor; but, since David found himself encumbered by it, he put it aside and resolved to use only his sling. He was so successful with it that he knocked down the bully with one shot of a stone, and then he killed him with Goliath's own sword and cut off his head, which he presented to Saul. This prince had asked his general, when he saw David march against Goliath, "Whose

bastard was the person whom the prophet sought, they soon changed their minds. Nothing was heard but fine hymns. David began with a *Te Deum*; he praised God who had heard his prayers and had delivered him from the mark of bastardy. Jesse continued and said, "The stone that the builders refused has become the headstone of the corner that shall support the whole house." His other sons, Samuel, and everyone also spoke sentences of praise. The rabbi adds that Jesse's intention was good. His wife was old, his maid was young, and he wished to beget more children. . . . Oh, what a fine apology! If such excuses sufficed, what a multitude of lewd people might be protected from criticism. Have there ever been doctrines concerning the direction of intention more convenient than this?*

* [Bayle could assume that the literate reading public of his day was familiar with the "direction of intention" as taught by the Jesuit casuists, because Pascal had ridiculed their doctrine in his widely-read *Provincial Letters*. Generally speaking, directing the intention amounted to living according to the principle that the end (in Jesse's case, having an heir) justifies the means (adultery). In his seventh letter Pascal applied the doctrine as he found it in several Jesuit works and came to the conclusion that Jesuits could kill Jansenists who successfully criticized the Society.]

son is this youth?" (C) The general answered that he did not know and received orders from Saul to find out. But Saul learned the answer himself from the mouth of the young man, for when

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/ how bible should be read?

C. (Saul had asked his general . . . "Whose son is this youth?")

It is a little strange that Saul did not know David that day since the young man had played on musical instruments several times in his presence to calm the dark vapors that disturbed him. If a narration like this were found in Thucydides or Titus Livy, all the critics would unanimously conclude that the copyists had transposed the pages, forgotten something in one place, repeated something in another, or inserted additional passages into the author's work. But it is necessary to be careful not to have such suspicions when it is a question of the Bible. Nevertheless, there have been some people bold enough to claim that all the chapters or all the verses of the first book of Samuel are not placed in their original order. The Abbé de Choisi, it seems to me, nicely eliminates the difficulty. "David was brought to Saul," he says, "at first he did not recognize him, although he had seen him several times during the period when he had had him brought in to play the harp. But, since it had been several years back—for David was quite young when he was brought to court as a musician, and he was then seen dressed as a shepherd—one should not be amazed that a king, overwhelmed by his affairs, and whose mind was not well, had forgotten the facial characteristics of a young man who was not important." I would only wish that he had not said: (1) that "it had been several years back" since Saul had seen David, and (2) that "David was quite young" when he came to Saul's court as a musician. There is no indication that he was much older when he killed Goliath than when he came for the first time to Saul's Court; for at the time of this first arrival he was "a mighty valiant man, and a man of war, and prudent in matters" (I Samuel 16:18). He was only thirty years old when he was elected king after Saul's death; and it must necessarily be the case that many years passed from the death of Goliath until that of Saul. . . .

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he was brought to him after the victory, he asked him, "Whose son art thou?" and David answered that he was the son of Jesse. Saul then retained him in his service without allowing him to return to his father's home any more. But since the songs that were sung throughout all the cities about the defeat of the Philistines gave ten times more honor to David than to Saul, the king developed a violent jealousy, which increased more and more, because the posts that he gave David to keep him away from the court served only to make him more illustrious and to gain for him the affection and admiration of the Jews. As a political maneuver Saul desired to have him for his son-in-law. He hoped that the condition on which he would give him his second daughter would get rid of this object of aversion, but he was thwarted by his own ruse. He demanded for his daughter's dowry one hundred foreskins of the Philistines. David brought him two hundred all told, so that, instead of perishing in this enterprise, as Saul had hoped, David returned with a new burst of glory. He married Saul's daughter and thereby became all the more formidable to the king. All his expeditions against the Philistines were very successful. His name grew famous and he was held in very high esteem; so much so that Saul, who knew much less of his son-in-law's virtue than of the attitude of his people, thought that the death of David was the only way that could prevent his being dethroned. He therefore resolved to get rid of him once and for all. He confided his plan to his eldest son, who, very far from being as jealous as his father, warned David of this dark plot. David took flight and was pursued from place to place, until he had given incontestable proofs of his probity and his loyalty to his father-in-law, to whom he did not do the least harm on two favorable occasions when he could have killed him if he so wished. This made Saul resolve to leave him in peace. But because David feared that this prince might resume his wicked plans, he took care not to relax his precautions. On the contrary, he provided himself a safer refuge than before, in the land of the Philistines. He asked the king of Gath for a city to dwell in, from which he made frequent incursions into the

neighboring countries (D); and it was not his fault that he did not fight against the Israelites (E),* under the banner of that Philistine prince, in the unhappy war in which Saul perished.

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D. (*He asked the king of Gath for a city . . . , from which he made frequent incursions into the neighboring countries.*) David, having stayed some time in the capital of King Achish, with his little band of six hundred bold adventurers, was afraid of being burdensome to that prince and begged that he would assign him another dwelling place. Achish assigned him the city of Ziklag. David moved there with his followers and did not allow their swords to rust in their scabbards. He often led them out on sorties and killed man and woman without mercy; he left only the cattle alive, which was all the booty he returned with. He was afraid that the prisoners would reveal this secret to King Achish, for which reason he took none along with him but put both sexes to the sword. The secret that he did not want to have discovered was that these ravages were committed not on the lands of the Israelites, as he made the king of Gath believe, but on the lands of the ancient inhabitants of Palestine. To tell the truth, this conduct was very bad. To hide one fault he committed a greater one. He deceived a king to whom he had obligations; and to conceal this deceit he exercised extreme cruelty. If David had been asked, "By what authority do you do those things?" what could he have answered? Has a private person such as he was, a fugitive, who finds shelter in the territories of a neighboring prince, a right to engage in hostilities on his own account and without a commission from the ruler of the country? Had David any such commission? On the contrary, did he not act in opposition to the intentions and interests of the king of Gath? It is certain that if a private person, no matter how great his birth may be, should behave nowadays the way David did on this occasion, he could not avoid having very dishonorable epithets applied to him. I know very well that the most famous heroes and the most famous prophets of the Old Testament have sometimes approved of putting everything alive to the sword, and thus I should

* [Remark E appears on p. 53.]

He returned to Judea after the death of Saul and was there declared king by the tribe of Judah. However, the other tribes submitted to Ish-bosheth, the son of Saul; the fidelity of Abner

be very far from calling what David did cruelty if he had been authorized to do it by the orders of any prophet, or if God himself had commanded him to do so by inspiration. But it clearly appears from the silence of the Scripture that he did this all of his own accord.

A Reflection on David's conduct toward Nabal. I shall add a word about what he had decided to do with [Nabal.] While that man, who was very rich, was shearing his sheep, David asked him very civilly for some gratuity. His messengers did not fail to say that Nabal's shepherds had never been harmed by David's people. Since Nabal was very surly, he rudely asked who David was and reproached him for having thrown off his master's yoke. In a word, he declared that he was not such a fool as to give to strangers and vagabonds what he had provided for his own servants. David, enraged at this answer, armed four hundred of his soldiers, put himself at their head, and firmly resolved not to allow a single soul to escape being slain by the sword. He even bound himself to this by an oath; and if he did not execute this bloody plan, it was because Abigail came and appeased him with fair words and presents. Beautiful and intelligent, Abigail was Nabal's wife and a woman of great merit; she pleased David so much that he married her as soon as she became a widow. Let us speak frankly. Is it not indisputable that David was going to commit an extremely criminal action? He had no right to Nabal's goods, nor any authority to punish him for his surliness. He ranged up and down the land with a band of trusty friends. Indeed he might have been allowed to ask for some payment from people who could afford it; but if they refused, he ought to have accepted this patiently; he could not compel them to it by military action without plunging the world again into the terrible confusion called the "state of nature," in which no other law is recognized except that of the strongest. What would we say today about a prince of the blood royal of France, who, being out of favor at court, should take refuge where he could with such friends as should be willing to follow his fortune? What judgment, I say, should we make of him, if he got the idea of raising contributions in the lands where he should station himself, and he put to the sword all those in the villages who should

was the reason for this. This man, who had been general of the army under King Saul, placed Ish-bosheth on the throne and kept him there against all of David's efforts; but, unable to bear

refuse to pay him taxes? What should we say if this Prince should fit out vessels and cruise at sea to take all the merchant ships he could light upon? Frankly, did David have a better authority to exact contributions from Nabal, and to massacre all the men and women in the country of the Amalekites, and others, and to take all the cattle he found there? I agree that I may be answered that we are nowadays better acquainted with the Law of Nations, the *Jus belli et pacis*, about which such fine systems have been written; and therefore such behavior was more excusable in those times than it would be now. But the profound respect we ought to have for this great king, this great prophet, ought not to prevent us from disapproving the blemishes that are to be found in his life; otherwise we should give the profane occasion to reproach us and to say that to make an action just it suffices that it be committed by certain persons whom we revere. Nothing could be more fatal to Christian morality. It is of great concern to true religion that the lives of the orthodox be judged by the general concepts of right and order.



E. (It was not his fault that he did not fight against the Israelites.) While David with his small roving band was exterminating all the infidel countries wherever he could penetrate, the Philistines in their dominions were making preparations for war against the Israelites. They assembled all their forces; and David and his bold adventurers joined the army of Achish and would have fought like lions against their brethren had the suspicious Philistines not led Achish to dismiss them. It was feared that in the heat of battle they would fall on the Philistines in order to make their peace with Saul. When David was informed that because of these suspicions he was obliged to quit the army, he became angry. He resolved therefore to contribute with all his might to the victory of the uncircumcised Philistines over his own brethren, the people of God, and the professors of the true religion. I leave it to nice casuists to judge whether these views were worthy of a true Israelite.]