

2 Samuel Chapter 21 Commentary

2Sa 21:1 ¶ "Then there was a famine in the days of David three years, year after year; and David enquired of the LORD. And the LORD answered, It is for Saul, and for his bloody house, because he slew the Gibeonites. **2** And the king called the Gibeonites, and said unto them; (now the Gibeonites were not of the children of Israel, but of the remnant of the Amorites; and the children of Israel had sworn unto them: and Saul sought to slay them in his zeal to the children of Israel and Judah.)"

There is a famine three consecutive years. King David inquires of God for the reason of the famine. God answers: it is punishment for Saul, and the house of Saul, who slew the Gibeonites, with whom the Israelites had made a covenant of peace, seen in: **Jos 9:15-16; 15 ¶** "And Joshua made peace with them, and made a league with them, to let them live: and the princes of the congregation sware unto them. **16** And it came to pass at the end of three days after they had made a league with them, that they heard that they were their neighbours, and that they dwelt among them." (Read the whole chapter to get the full picture.) We see that Saul, in his zeal at being king over Israel, and exercising his kingship to Israel, has killed the Gibeonites, who were Amorites, ignoring the covenant that Israel made with them.

Again, we iterate: the heresy of "*my sin does not affect anyone but me.*" As we see here, all Israel is suffering because of the sin of one man, Saul. It demonstrates that every sin, no matter how small, has far reaching consequences, here in this world in time.

Also, do not miss that the punishment for this sin was a long time coming to pass. It could easily have been 30 to 40 years since the death of Saul. A reminder to us that when we sin, the judicial judgment of God may not come speedily, but it will come surely. This is why we are to confess our sins as soon as we are aware of them, seeking the forgiveness of God, and hopefully we will be spared the judicial judgment of God against us.

3 "Wherefore David said unto the Gibeonites, What shall I do for you? and wherewith shall I make the atonement, that ye may bless the inheritance of the LORD? **4** And the Gibeonites said unto him, We will have no silver nor gold of Saul, nor of his house; neither for us shalt thou kill any man in Israel. And he said, What ye shall say, that will I do for you. **5** And they answered the king, The man that consumed us, and that devised against us that we should be destroyed from remaining in any of the coasts of Israel, **6** Let seven men of his sons be delivered unto us, and we will hang them up unto the LORD in Gibeath of Saul, whom the LORD did choose. **And the king said, I will give them.**"

David takes God's answer for the reason for the famine to the Gibeonites. He asks what reconciliation he can furnish so the famine might end. The Gibeonites ask not for money, nor for the king to kill any of the house of Saul for them. They ask that seven men of the sons of Saul be delivered to them, whom they will hang before the Lord in Gibeath of Saul, which David agrees to supply.

The Gibeonites may be Amorites, but they recognize the hand of God at work on their behalf. Therefore, they are not seeking personal vengeance, but only reconciliation for Israel's punishment. We believe that if they were seeking personal vengeance, they would have chosen who they wanted to hang. They had enough love for Israel to desire that they be freed from the vengeance of God being executed upon them. Remember, the Gibeonites have long been in Israel under this covenant, and they would have been taught the ways of Israel long ago. They are as part of the family of Israel, and they were suffering under the famine also.

They also understood that money would not pay the price of the blood which had been shed. They understand that it must be blood for blood for reconciliation to be made, as seen in: **Ge 9:5-6; 5** "And surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man; at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man. **6** Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man." Again, we point out: the sin of one man has far reaching consequences and in this case affects the whole nation of Israel, including the Gibeonites.

We notice they asked for seven sons of Saul. Why seven? Seven is the number of completeness, which would signify that the blood stain of Saul upon the Gibeonites would be completely removed, by their sacrificial offering of seven sons of Saul, which would pay the penalty of blood for blood.

7 "But the king spared Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan the son of Saul, because of the LORD'S oath that was between them, between David and Jonathan the son of Saul. 8 But the king took the two sons of Rizpah the daughter of Aiah, whom she bare unto Saul, Armoni and Mephibosheth; and the five sons of Michal the daughter of Saul, whom she brought up for Adriel the son of Barzillai the Meholathite: 9 And he delivered them into the hands of the Gibeonites, and they hanged them in the hill before the LORD: and they fell all seven together, and were put to death in the days of harvest, in the first days, in the beginning of barley harvest."

Unlike Saul who ignored the covenant Israel had made with the Gibeonites: King David remembers, and honors, the covenant he made with Jonathan, the son of Saul, and does not give any of Jonathan's descendants to pay this debt.

We are told in: ***1Sa 31:6 "So Saul died, and his three sons, and his armourbearer, and all his men, that same day together.*** Since these three sons of Saul were slain in battle, the two sons of Rizpah, a concubine of Saul, must have been too young to go to war. King David takes two of the sons of Rizpah, and five of the grandsons of Saul, who were born of Merab, Saul's daughter, and raised by Michal, Saul's daughter, and King David's wife, who was barren.

The sons and grandsons of Saul were delivered to the Gibeonites who hung them before the Lord. This would signify to God that the Gibeonites were satisfied that the blood debt was paid in full, and no further reproof to Israel would be necessary.

They were hanged in Gibeah, which was Saul's home, to show the origin of the sin was of Saul, and the recompence for Saul's sin was made before his family.

They were hung at the beginning of barley harvest. This must be significant since God mentions it. Hanging these men at the beginning of the barley harvest, indicates to us that Israel, and the Gibeonites, are seeking the return of fruitfulness to the land, because there had been very little barley to harvest the last three years. It was also to ask God, for the appeasement of his wrath by their sacrifice, and the return of bountifulness to the land. Whereby, Israel, and the Gibeonites, may no longer suffer for the sins of another.

There is a lesson here for us today: Sin always requires either payment by blood or death. Since, we are all unclean and sinners by nature; we are all under the law of death for sin. The blood required for the eternal remission of sins is that of Christ Jesus. If that blood is not shed for our sins, then the result is eternal death and banishment to the eternal lake of fire. Reminding us that we may suffer the judicial judgments of God for sin here on earth; yet we rejoice under the sufferings of judicial judgments, here, knowing that the eternal cost has already been paid by the blood of Christ, which has given us favor in the eyes of God. Thank God that this eternal sin debt has already been paid by Christ Jesus.

Some will say that not all sins had the death penalty under the law service of ordinances, which is true. However, we must remember what scripture says in: ***Jas 1:15; 13 ¶ "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: 14 But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. 15 Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.***" There is no specific sin given in this text: it takes in all sins. Further, Why is it that man must die naturally? Because God told Adam that if he ate of the forbidden fruit he would surely die, and he did. And all mankind from Adam until the end of time is under that penalty of death for sin.

10 ¶ "And Rizpah the daughter of Aiah took sackcloth, and spread it for her upon the rock, from the beginning of harvest until water dropped upon them out of heaven, and suffered neither the birds of the air to rest on them by day, nor the beasts of the field by night. 11 And it was told David what Rizpah the daughter of Aiah, the concubine of Saul, had done. 12 And David went and took the bones of Saul and the bones of Jonathan his son from the men of Jabeshgilead, which had stolen them from the street of Bethshan, where the Philistines had hanged them, when the Philistines had slain Saul in Gilboa: 13 And he brought up from thence the bones of Saul and the bones of Jonathan his son; and they gathered the bones of them that were hanged. 14 And the bones of Saul and Jonathan his son buried they in the country of Benjamin in Zelah, in the sepulcher of Kish his father: and they performed all that the king commanded. And after that God was intreated for the land."

Rizpah, concubine to Saul and mother of the two sons of Saul, guarded the bodies of these hanged men day and night, which were left hanging until God sent rain upon Israel. This was unusual in that Israel had been commanded to not let any body hang overnight, seen in: ***De 21:21-22; 22 "And if a man have committed a sin worthy of death, and he be to be put to death, and thou hang him on a tree: 23 His body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day; (for he that is hanged is accursed of God;) that thy land be not defiled, which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance.***" Why then were these bodies allowed to hang for so long? One; the hanging was not done by Israel; it was done by the Gibeonites, an intercessory sacrificial offering to appease the judicial wrath of God upon Israel, because Saul tried to wipe out the Gibeonites. Two, The land was already defiled by the sins of Saul, in breaking the covenant promise of Israel to the Gibeonites. I believe that they were left hanging until it rained, to demonstrate that God's wrath, as well as the Gibeonites, was satisfied, because they were taken down by Israel once God sent the rain.

When David learned of what Rizpah had done, he was moved to gather the bones of Saul and Jonathan and the ones who were hanged, and he buried them in the tomb of Saul's father Kish. We are not told in scripture but believe, since they gathered the bones of the men hanged, and they are of the family of Saul, they were all buried together in the same tomb. We are told that after they did this, God was intreated for the land.

What would the burial of Saul's, and his son's, bones in their proper tomb have to do with God's appeasement? Saul was anointed of the Lord, and thus he was seed royal. Therefore, he deserved to be buried properly as had not been done when he was slain in battle.

15 ¶ "Moreover the Philistines had yet war again with Israel; and David went down, and his servants with him, and fought against the Philistines: and David waxed faint. 16 And Ishbibilob, which was of the sons of the giant, the weight of whose spear weighed three hundred shekels of brass in weight, he being girded with a new sword, thought to have slain David. 17 But Abishai the son of Zeruiah succoured him, and smote the Philistine, and killed him. Then the men of David sware unto him, saying, Thou shalt go no more out with us to battle, that thou quench not the light of Israel."

Once again, the Philistines come to make war upon Israel. King David waxes faint during the battle and is near to being slain by one of the sons of the giant, whom we believe to be a son of Goliath of Gath, since Goliath of Gath is the only giant previously mentioned in scripture in King David's lifetime. Abishai comes to David's aid, and Abishai kills Ishbibilob. Succored means to *surround, protect, aid, or help*.

There seems to be a conflict in scripture between ***2Sa 21:17 "But Abishai the son of Zeruiah succoured him, and smote the Philistine, and killed him."*** and ***2Sa 21:22 "These four were born to the giant in Gath, and fell by the hand of David, and by the hand of his servants."*** ***"and fell by the hand of David."*** Infers that Ishbibilob was killed by King David, since this is the only son of the giant with which David is engaged in battle. However, according to some commentators, in this day and age in time; oftentimes, when an inferior aided a superior in battle, the superior was the one who got the credit. This would easily explain the phrase ***"and fell by the hand of David."*** David indeed fought Ishbibilob, but scripture plainly states that Abishai killed him. Thus, the appearance of a conflict of scripture is easily resolved.

Then the men of David said to David; you shall not go to battle with us any longer, lest you be killed, and the light of Israel be extinguished. David's men recognize that David is a light to Israel, in that he is God's chosen king to rule over Israel. David has had a long hard life, having to run for and fight for his life, and for Israel for many years. No doubt, the years have taken their toll upon his physical body, and it shows up in this battle when he becomes faint.

"that thou quench not the light of Israel." Good kings were often called the light of the nation they ruled over, because they, like David, would guide their people to live in fear of the Lord and trust fully in God. The definition of light in this text is to gleam or a lamp. David's life, and his kingship, was a reflection of the light of God shining upon and through him. David had long pointed Israel to remember their God, not himself. David's men recognized this, and they recognized that it was a needful thing for Israel to be guided to remember their God. This is why they tell their King, David: you shall no longer go to battle with us. This is one time when the people tell the king what to do, instead of the king telling the people what to do. Many times, Israel has told their leaders what they wanted, and it was the wrong thing. This time it is good council from the people, because these men are looking out for the good of Israel, and for the glory of God.

18 "And it came to pass after this, that there was again a battle with the Philistines at Gob: then Sibbechai the Hushathite slew Saph, which was of the sons of the giant. 19 And there was again a battle in Gob with the Philistines, where Elhanan the son of Jaareoregim, a Bethlehemite, slew the brother of Goliath the Gittite, the staff of whose spear was like a weaver's beam. 20 And there was yet a battle in Gath, where was a man of great stature, that had on every hand six fingers, and on every foot six toes, four and twenty in number; and he also was born to the giant. 21 And when he defied Israel, Jonathan the son of Shimea the brother of David slew him. 22 These four were born to the giant in Gath, and fell by the hand of David, and by the hand of his servants."

The giant of Gath, Goliath, which was slain by David in his youth, had these four sons, Ishbibenob, Saph, one unnamed here but identified as the brother of Goliath, whose name is Lahmi as seen in: **1Ch 20:5 "And there was war again with the Philistines; and Elhanan the son of Jair slew Lahmi the brother of Goliath the Gittite, whose spear staff was like a weaver's beam."** and another unnamed with six digits on his hands and feet, who would have to be Goliath, the son of Goliath, since we have names for the other three. We believe this because in verse 22 it says, "**these four sons of the giant in Gath.**" Wherefore, the one named as the brother of Goliath, could not be the brother of Goliath of Gath that David slew, but had to be a son of Goliath who was also named Goliath. These four sons of Goliath were slain by David's men.

Do you remember that when David faced Goliath as a youth, he took in his bag five smooth stones. David only used one on Goliath. The other four were a prophetic picture, that the sons of Goliath would eventually die under the reign of David as king over Israel.

There is a great prophetic picture, of the finished work of Jesus Christ, in David and his men slaying Goliath of Gath and his sons. Just as through King David, the giant Goliath and his four sons were overthrown: our King Jesus has overthrown Satan, and all his minions, by his death on the cross, burial in the tomb for three days and nights, his resurrection from the dead, and ascension back to heaven to sit upon the throne of God. This will be fully manifested in the resurrection of the dead in Christ, when Jesus shall call together all those, he saved by his shed and atoning blood, and he shall take them to the place he has gone to prepare for them. Then, Goliath and his sons, the devil and all his followers, will be sent to the place of eternal death, the eternal lake of fire.

Remember we were told of King David in: **2Sa 7:1 ¶ "And it came to pass, when the king sat in his house, and the LORD had given him rest round about from all his enemies;"** that he had rest from all his enemies. We sure have read about a lot of enemies rising up against King David and Israel since then. The Lord had subdued the enemies of Israel and King David, and had given him rule over them. This did not mean that they would not rise in insurrection against him as his reign continued.

Thus, we see the big picture of the life of a Child of God here on earth in time. God has overcome our enemies and given us rest in the surety of the salvation of God given to us by Christ. However, the new birth does not mean that the enemy will not rise up and fight against you. We will always have Goliaths, and his followers, to battle as long as we live on earth. The difference is that in the new birth, we are given Christ in us the Holy Spirit power. Just as David was given strength to continue to overcome those, who rose in rebellion to his authority; we are given the Holy Spirit power, to overcome the temptations of our inherited sin nature that arise in insurrection against our new nature in Christ.

We are in constant warfare with the devil and the temptations he places before us. However, if you have Christ in you, then you have the peace that passes all understanding, and you have no fear of losing the war, because of your faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ. This is the picture of what Jesus told his disciples in: **Joh 16:31-33; 31 "Jesus answered them, Do ye now believe? 32 Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me. 33 These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."** This is why, when we are in the midst of tribulation, we can have peace in our hearts, minds, and souls.

Like King David, we as Christians will face many giants in our lives. However, because we have the King of kings, Jesus Christ, as our shield and protector, these giants will be thrown down under the hand and power of our Sovereign King. What a great privilege we have of knowing the end of the story pertaining to our eternal

salvation. Glory and praise to our King, who has made this possible. It is through the light of King Jesus, who is the light of the world, that we see, and understand, the precious promises of God. Hallelujah! Amen!