

David's Accomplishments

2 Samuel 21

Lesson Outline

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Gibeonites Recompensed

2 Samuel 21:1-14

Time for Repentance: 2 Samuel 21:1-9

David Called for the Gibeonites

A famine of great length covered the land. Eventually David understood the hardship was for a reason, so he went to the LORD.

1. *David looked to the LORD* – he recognized God's authority. Many believe all is due to weather patterns or cycles and wickedness is never considered. Why? Because we do not want to acknowledge God's authority, our sinful deeds, or both (Psalm 8).
2. *David looked for direction* – he believed God would provide a remedy for the problem. In seeking the LORD he displayed a heart of humility (Proverbs 3:5-6).
3. *David looked after the trial became great* – he waited before seeking the LORD. That's how it often happens; we do not look to God until we are under extreme troubles. It would be best to look to the LORD before the trial becomes great (1 Peter 5:6-7).

David discovered that the famine was due to Saul's mistreatment of the Gibeonites. When Israel entered the land, they made a covenant with the Gibeonites (Joshua 9:15-20). It was a result of deception, and as much as they may have disliked the arrangement, the Israelites were required to keep their word. To break the treaty would dishonor God. Apparently, the Gibeonites maintained their part, never staging a revolt.

1. *Saul's actions were despicable* – it was a cruel attack against a defenseless people. They were already slaves yet Saul viciously attacked them.

2. *Saul's actions were disobedient* – he slew those he was bound to protect. Disobedience to God is a terrible sin (1 Samuel 15:23; Colossians 3:6).
3. *Saul's actions were deceptive* – he did this to please and impress the leaders of the nation, which implies he knew what he was doing when he broke the covenant.
4. *Saul's actions were dangerous* – he led the people against the LORD. The nation suffered the consequences of his terrible sin (Galatians 6:7-8).

The actual account of Saul's mistreatment of the Gibeonites is not recorded in the Bible. The entire event seems to have been forgotten, or ignored, by all except the LORD. Nothing is hidden from God. He will hold sinners accountable for sin (Numbers 32:23; Revelation 20:11-15). It is best to avoid sin but when a mistake is made we should immediately seek forgiveness (1 John 1:9).

David Conceded to the Gibeonites

David humbly met with the Gibeonites and asked for their demands. He was willing to do what was necessary so the land would be blessed.

1. *David respected the servants* – he met with those he ruled over.
2. *David recognized the treaty* – he honestly looked to do what was correct.
3. *David requested their terms* – he allowed the Gibeonites the choice in the matter.

The Gibeonites had no interest in monetary reward. Contrary to popular opinion money does not solve all problems. In fact, there is not enough money in the world to equal the value of a soul (Mark 8:36). The Gibeonite servants also displayed no desire for land or freedom. Evidently they planned to keep their end of the covenant. Requesting Saul's family suffer the same fate as theirs, the Gibeonites wanted blood to be shed for blood (Numbers 35:31-33; Genesis 9:6). It was a matter of judgment for sin, not revenge (Romans 12:19). Had they sought to avenge their loss, the Gibeonites would have acted earlier. Instead they waited and the Israelites discovered that deals made with the world are burdensome (2 Corinthians 6:14-18). It is clear that a man is accountable for his sin and nobody else's (Deuteronomy 24:16). Saul's offspring and the nation were not judged for Saul's sin but suffered the results of his foolish decision (Exodus 34:5-7).

David spared Mephibosheth because of the oath made with Jonathan (1 Samuel 20:12-17). He then delivered seven of Saul's relation to the Gibeonites – two sons of Rizpah the daughter of Aiah and five sons of Merab, whom Michal raised. These men were not innocent bystanders accidentally caught up in the situation. Nothing is said of their devotion to God and they likely enjoyed the benefits gained from Saul's wickedness against the Gibeonites. Saul once boasted about the ability to give fields and vineyards, perhaps these estates were taken from the Gibeonites (1 Samuel 22:7). The men were executed by the Gibeonites.

1. *Executed before the LORD* – this symbolized the curse of their sin (Deuteronomy 21:23).
2. *Executed in Gibeah of Saul* – this was a disgrace to Saul and his family.
3. *Executed in judgment for sin* – the LORD remembered the blood of the poor Gibeonites (Psalm 9:12).
4. *Executed at the beginning of harvest* – this reminded nation of the connection between the sin and the punishment of drought.

Their execution may seem cruel from our standpoint where capital punishment is frowned upon and in some cases illegal. In David's time treaties were considered binding and offenders were punished. It was a matter of justice; since the treaty was broken punishment was required. Keep in mind Saul broke the covenant in a violent and bloody manner. Saul's seven men were no comparison to the many Gibeonites that were slain.

Time for Remembrance: 2 Samuel 21:10-14

Remembering the Slain

Two of the bodies hanging in Gibeah were Rizpah's sons, whom she loved and missed. Rizpah did not interfere with justice but protected the bodies, like a loving mother would. In doing so, she displayed her grief and love for her children. Rizpah spread sackcloth upon the rock where the bodies hung, meaning a tent was placed there so she could protect the bodies. She drove away the birds during the daytime and wild animals at night. This emotional display of grief continued until the rain came.

David was told of Rizpah's conduct. This selfless act probably tugged at his heart, because he himself had greatly grieved when Absalom was slain. The king said nothing to the mourning mother but was inspired to honor Saul and his family. This was not planned but came about because of Rizpah's actions. Though David possessed judicial power as king, he also displayed consideration for the people (Hebrews 10:24).

Remembering Saul and His Family

David retrieved the bones of all involved – Saul, Jonathan, and the seven men given to the Gibeonites. The former king and his son were buried in a private grave in Jabeshgilead, which was about fifty miles from Jerusalem (1 Samuel 31:12-13). This occurred shortly after the Philistines defeated them in battle.

The bodies were taken to Zelah in Benjamin for a proper burial. Saul and Jonathan's bones were placed in a sepulcher belonging to Saul's father Kish. This considerate act provided closure for Rizpah and others that mourned for Saul's family. It is evident David did not despise Saul or anyone associated with him.

Philistines Routed

2 Samuel 21:15-22

Situation: 2 Samuel 21:15

Israel's Authority

During his reign, David successfully defeated the Philistines and kept them in submission (2 Samuel 5:19-25, 8:1). With disunion weakening Israel, the Philistines may have seen an opportunity to gain a victory. Whenever there is inner strife other problems will follow. David, with the help of the LORD, was able to withstand the Philistine attacks. Be aware, trials may come at any time (Ephesians 5:15-16; 1 Peter 5:8-9).

Israel's Adversaries

The Philistine giants were legendary descendants of the Anakims (Numbers 13:33; Joshua 11:22). The Hebrew word translated into giant is "rapha", which refers to the Rephaims. These large men were present during Abraham's lifetime (Genesis 14). They were driven from the land by Joshua but remained in the Philistine territories (Joshua 11:22-23).

Success: 2 Samuel 21:16-22

First Conflict

The Philistines met the Israelites in battle. Ishbibenob, one of the giants, led the Philistine forces. His spear weighed three hundred shekels of brass in weight. Apparently the fighting was fierce, at some point in the struggle David waxed faint. The king became tired and might have been wounded. This was something new for David but he remained courageous even when weakened. Aware of David's predicament Ishbibenob believed he had an opportunity to slay the king. Had he been successful, this would have been a great victory for the Philistines.

Abishai, apparently noticing the situation, quickly assisted David. Abishai surrounded the king so that he would be spared. He risked his life for the king and Ishbibenob the giant was slain. Some believe Abishai slew the giant, others that David slew the giant with Abishai's encouragement. Either way, David led his men to victory. Afterwards, David was encouraged to refrain from fighting so that his life would be spared. He wisely listened to his men, showing that with age came wisdom (Proverbs 20:29).

Second Conflict

This battle took place at Gob. Either the city had two names or there were two cities in the area (1 Chronicles 20:4). Saph or Sippai the giant led the Philistine forces. In this fight Sibbechai the Hushathite, one of David's valiant men, defeated the Philistine giant (1 Chronicles 11:29).

Third Conflict

This battle also occurred at Gob. Lahmi the giant led the Philistine forces. His spear was like a weaver's beam. Elhanan the son of Jaareoregim, a Bethlehemite, slew the giant.

Fourth Conflict

This battle occurred in Gath. The name of the Philistine giant is not given but we know he was a large man with six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot. David's nephew Jonathan slew the Philistine giant. Shimea had one son known for subtlety, Jonadab, and one for bravery, Jonathan (2 Samuel 13:3).

Years earlier, David took five stones to face Goliath. Apparently it was not due to a lack of faith but because he was prepared to face the other giants. They did not attack him on that day but David had to deal with them eventually. The LORD blessed David with good men and the giants were defeated. Because of the LORD, David was again allowed to be successful (Psalm 144:9-10).