

2 Samuel 21:1-14 **The Gibeonites avenged for Saul's attempt to kill them**

Three years of famine – David inquired of Yahweh

¹ Now there was a famine in the days of David for three years, year after year; and David inquired of the Lord. And the Lord answered, "It is because of Saul and his bloodthirsty house, because he killed the Gibeonites."

David inquired of the Gibeonites

² So the king called the Gibeonites and spoke to them. Now the Gibeonites were not of the children of Israel, but of the remnant of the Amorites; the children of Israel had sworn protection to them, but Saul had sought to kill them in his zeal for the children of Israel and Judah.

³ Therefore David said to the Gibeonites, "What shall I do for you? And with what shall I make atonement, that you may bless the inheritance of the Lord?"

⁴ And the Gibeonites said to him, "We will have no silver or gold from Saul or from his house, nor shall you kill any man in Israel for us."

So he said, "Whatever you say, I will do for you."

⁵ Then they answered the king, "As for the man who consumed us and plotted against us, that we should be destroyed from remaining in any of the territories of Israel, ⁶ let seven men of his descendants be delivered to us, and we will hang them before the Lord in Gibeah of Saul, whom the Lord chose."

And the king said, "I will give them."

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 So the king took Armoni and Mephibosheth, the two sons of Rizpah the daughter of Aiah, whom she bore to Saul, 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 on the hill before the Lord. So 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.

¹⁰ Now Rizpah the daughter of Aiah took sackcloth and spread it for herself on the rock, from the beginning of harvest until the late rains poured on them from heaven. And she did not allow the birds of the air to rest on them by day nor the beasts of the field by night.

¹¹ And David was told what Rizpah the daughter of Aiah, the concubine of Saul, had done. ¹² Then David went and took the bones of Saul, and the bones of Jonathan his son, from the men of Jabesh Gilead who had stolen them from the street of Beth Shan, where the Philistines had hung them up, after the Philistines had struck down Saul in Gilboa. ¹³ So he brought up the bones of Saul and the bones of Jonathan his son from there; and they gathered the bones of those who had been hanged. ¹⁴ They buried the bones of Saul and Jonathan his son in the country of Benjamin in Zelah, in the tomb of Kish his father. So they performed all that the king commanded.

And after that God heeded the prayer for the land.

Facts Revealed:

Three years of famine – David inquired of Yahweh [2 Samuel 21:1]

- ✧ Now there was a famine in the days of David for three years, year after year; and David inquired of the Lord. And the Lord answered, **"It is because of Saul and his bloodthirsty house, because he killed the Gibeonites."** [2 Samuel 21:1]
- ✧ This is the only mention of the slaughter of the Gibeonites by Saul, so there is no scripture that would establish the time of the act by Saul.
- ✧ It is interesting that the famine is recorded in the reign of David after the rebellions of Absalom and Sheba.
- ✧ Saul reigned 40 years and died in the battle with the Philistines while David was a fugitive in the land of the Philistines. [1 Samuel 31:1-13, Acts 13:21]
- ✧ After David heard of the death of Saul, he inquired of Yahweh and returned to Judah where he became king in Hebron for seven years and six months before he became king in Jerusalem for thirty three years for a total of 40 years. [2 Samuel 1:1-27, 2:1-11, 2 Samuel 5:1-5]
- ✧ Absalom was born while David was king of Judah in Hebron. [2 Samuel 3:2-5]
- ✧ Absalom had set up a pillar for himself before his children were born. [2 Samuel 18:18]
- ✧ Absalom was grown and had three sons and one daughter before he died in his rebellion against David, though we do not know his age at the time of his death. [2 Samuel 14:27]
- ✧ Yahweh waited after Saul slaughtered the Gibeonites who had a peace agreement with Israel from the time of Joshua [Joshua 9:3-27], before he sent the famine during the reign of David. [2 Samuel 21:1]
- ✧ The Lord told David that the famine was sent because of the act of Saul against the Gibeonites. [2 Samuel 21:1]

David inquired of the Gibeonites what would be required to gain their blessing [2 Samuel 21:2-14]

- ✧ David said to the Gibeonites, "What shall I do for you? And with what shall I make atonement, that you may bless the inheritance of the Lord?" [2 Samuel 21:3]
- ✧ Seeking an end to the famine, David asked the Gibeonites what it would take for them to bless Israel after the violent injustice they had received at the hands of Saul. [2 Samuel 21:2-3]
- ✧ The Gibeonites were among the people of the Amorites of whom God told Abraham that Israel would spend 400 years in slavery so the iniquity of the Amorites would reach its fullness before they would be displaced and Israel would inherit the land. [Genesis 15:13-16]
- ✧ They were also among the nations named by God for destruction when Israel came into the land. [Exodus 23:23-24, 33:2, 34:11-16]
- ✧ However, when Joshua and Israel made a covenant with the people of Gibeon, the covenant prevailed over the command to destroy them, and God requires us to keep our word and honor our covenants.
- ✧ Saul had failed to destroy the Amalekites as commanded by God [1 Samuel 15:1-25], and so he turned against the Amorites of Gibeon on his own, apparently attempting to redeem his name.
- ✧ The Gibeonites answered the king, "We will have no silver or gold from Saul or from his house, nor shall you kill any man in Israel for us." "As for the man who consumed us and plotted against us, that we should be destroyed from remaining in any of the territories of Israel, let seven men of his descendants be delivered to us, and we will hang them before the Lord in Gibeah of Saul, whom the Lord chose."
David complied with their demand. [2 Samuel 21:4-6]

- ✧ But David 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. [1 Samuel 20:12-16]
- ✧ David delivered to the Gibeonites:
 - Armoni and Mephibosheth the sons of Saul by Rizpah the daughter of Aiah.
 - The five sons of Michal the daughter of Saul, whom she brought up for Adriel.
- ✧ Saul's daughter Merab, Michal's older sister was married to Adriel after she had been offered to David. [1 Samuel 18:19]
- ✧ Michal was married to David until her father gave her to Palti (Paltiel) when David became a fugitive. [1 Samuel 25:44]
- ✧ When David became king, he took his wife Michal away from Paltiel. [2 Samuel 3:13-16]
- ✧ Michal, Saul's daughter, David's wife had no children of her own. [2 Samuel 6:23]
- ✧ Apparently Michal was near enough to her sister Merab to have played a part in bring up her nephews as stated in the text of scripture though the word "yaladah" translated "brought up" is the same word that is translated "gave birth."
- ✧ The Gibeonites hanged them on the hill before the Lord. So 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. [2 Samuel 21:8-9]
- ✧ Rizpah the daughter of Aiah, Saul's concubine, mother of Armoni and Mephibosheth, made a bed of sackcloth for herself on the rock and stood guard over the bodies until fall rains began, driving away the birds and beasts both day and night. [2 Samuel 21:10]
- ✧ When David heard about the actions of Rizpah, he took the bones of Saul and Jonathan from the men of Jabesh Gilead and gathered the bones of those who had been hanged and gave them proper burial in the country of Benjamin in Zelah in the tomb of Kish Saul's father. [2 Samuel 21:11-14]
- ✧ The men of Jabesh Gilead had taken the bodies of Saul and Jonathan from the wall of Beth Shan where the Philistines had hung them up. [1 Samuel 31:8-13]
- ✧ After that God heeded the prayer for the land.
- ✧ In this sequence of events, God demonstrated His disapproval of Saul for breaking the covenant Israel had made with the Gibeonites, and approved of David's solution to the problem as he sought to right the wrong done by Saul toward the Gibeonites.