

### Introduction

**WE SAW HOW DAVID ENQUIRED OF THE LORD REGARDING THE REASON FOR THIS THREE YEAR FAMINE. (21:1)**

God's answer was clear: **It was because of the sin of Saul and his bloody house, because he slew the Gibeonites thereby breaking a 400 year old Covenant that the Israelites had with the Gibeonites!** (Cf. Joshua 9)

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**NEXT WE SEE DAVID GOING ABOUT TO SET THINGS RIGHT WITH THE GIBEONITES. (21:2-9)**

A question one might ask is—**Why do we see David giving up Saul's sons and grandsons to be executed for the evil that Saul committed?** After all, the law of Moses forbade Israel to punish children for the sins of their fathers.

*Deuteronomy 24:16 The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin.*

Well, God's words to David seem to emphasize the fact that **Saul did not act alone in killing the Gibeonites.** He most likely would have needed help, and who would be more likely to help (and keep it quiet) than his own family?

**Whether any Gibeonite blood was shed by their hands or not, it is at least intimated that they were accomplices in some respect! (Vs 1)**

But *verse 2* of our text also tells us that Saul did this out of misguided patriotism. It says that he “*...sought to slay them in his zeal for the children of Israel and Judah*”. (i.e. He did the wrong thing with right intentions)

**All we really know is that Saul was a mess up when it came to the will of God! We've seen it in our studies on more than one occasion!**

1) **Saul offered sacrifices in Samuel's place when he should have waited.** *1 Samuel 13:13 And Samuel said to Saul, Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the LORD thy God, which he commanded thee: for now would the LORD have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever.*”

2) **Saul injured the people and troubled the land of Israel by foolishly uttering a curse that prevented them from eating anything until they finished fighting. It almost cost Jonathan his life!** *(1 Samuel 14:24-45)*

3) **Saul refused to completely annihilate the Amalekites and all they had, whom God commanded him to kill !** *(1 Samuel 15)*

4) **Saul let a boy do the job on Goliath that he and Israel should have done!** *(1 Samuel 16)*

5) **And now we come to understand that he secretly killed a number of Gibeonites, whom he was forbidden to put to death by covenant!**

Now Saul was thinking he was doing Israel and Judah a favor by killing the Gibeonites, but instead he brought a famine on the land!

David knew he must somehow **make atonement for Saul's sin and obtain the blessing of the Gibeonites to regain God's blessings and the removal of the famine.** *(verse 3)*

So, we see that David called the Gibeonites and asked what he should do to make this matter right. They responded in a very different way than we would expect. *(Verse 4-6)*

The Gibeonites made it clear that it wasn't money they wanted and they weren't expecting David to kill anyone!

I want you to note how the Gibeonites said they would hang Saul's sons “*before the LORD.*” It seems to me that they were viewing this matter as they should, seeing that **they were carrying out God's will in a way that satisfied (or propitiated) Him, and thus satisfied them as well.** They would carry out the execution before the city of Saul and before the Lord in Gibeah of Saul.

BOOK OF 2 SAMUEL  
PROMISES, PROMISES—PART 2  
2 SAMUEL 21:1-9

Verse 7-9

And so seven of Saul's "sons" are selected. **Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, is spared because of David's covenant with Jonathan.**

The two sons of Rizpah, Saul's concubine, are executed, along with the five sons brought up by Saul's daughter, Michal.

The Gibeonites took these seven men and "*hanged them in the hill before the LORD.*" (verse 9) The execution took place at the beginning of the barley harvest. That would be significant in that there probably wasn't much of one!

**WE SEE HERE THE IMPORTANCE OF COVENANTS!**

Throughout Old and New testament history, **God dealt with men covenantally!** We read in the Old Testament of God's covenants with Noah, with Abraham, with Moses and the Children of Israel, and with David!

In the New Testament, of course, there is the **New Covenant** brought forth by our Lord Jesus Christ through the shedding of His blood! (*Jeremiah 31:31-34*)

*Luke 22:20* Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, *This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.*

*2 Corinthians 3:6* Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.

*Hebrews 9:11-26*

**Our God is both a covenant making God and a covenant keeping God!**

David's dealings with the Gibeonites here, at its roots, was a matter of **restitution for having broken a covenant.** Israel had made a covenant with the Gibeonites. Even though this covenant was 400 years old, it was still to be honored.

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Saul **broke that covenant** by killing a number of them on purpose possibly trying to rid the land of them. No matter how good his intentions might have been, the **covenant** had to be kept! We see **the breaking of that covenant had some very serious consequences!**

**God deals with men in terms of covenants! Time does not weaken these covenants! Covenants are to be kept! And get this, even when men do not take their covenants seriously, God does! He keeps His covenants and He expects us to keep our covenants! (See Ecclesiastes 5:4-5)**

**Even when a covenant is entered into foolishly, as the Israelites were taken in by the Gibeonites, God expects us to keep our covenants!**

**Thank God that He is a covenant keeper!** Throughout Israel's history, His chosen people stiffened their necks and disobeyed the One who saved them from slavery in Egypt. How easy it would have been for God to wash His hands of this rebellious people! **But God kept His covenant!**

He kept it by bringing adversity on His people when they sinned (such as the famine which came on Israel in David's time), but He also provided a Savior, who perfectly kept the Mosaic Covenant and fulfilled the Abrahamic and Davidic Covenants.

He instituted **the New Covenant**, by which sinful men are saved through faith in Jesus Christ and His blood, which was shed to make an atonement for the sins of men!

Now this whole situation may sound strange to us. We may wonder why it was necessary to deliver up these seven descendants of Saul to be killed for something done years earlier by Saul and having to do with a covenant that was 400 years old.

**We can understand from this how that God takes covenants seriously! There is good news and bad news! The good news is that God takes His covenants seriously—the covenants that He makes! The bad news is that God takes man's covenants seriously—the covenants we make!**