

2 Samuel Chapter 21

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.

Verse 1 – 3 year famine after all of this. Every year putting up with lack. David asks God, because this shouldn't be normal in the Kingdom. Do we need to be inquiring of God for any famines we might be experiencing? God gives him an answer. It was because of Saul. Saul wasn't around, they didn't do it...Saul did. But they were suffering from the sins and mistakes of Saul. Sometimes we have to deal with and suffer through the mistakes that others have made. We may suffer a famine due to someone else's actions.

- We might continue to suffer if we don't ask. Wonder why he waited 3 years to ask?
 - Is there an application here for you?
- Some commentaries state the people may have been accessories to the acts of Saul.
- They are dealing with sin from 40 years ago.
- We need to start looking for the spiritual aspect, those things that we experience in the natural. If David had brought this to the Lord earlier, they could have been delivered sooner.

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.)

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 Gibeah of Saul, whom the LORD did choose. And the king said, I will give them.

Verse 2 – He reaches out to the party that was abused by Saul. Israel had promised to protect and not kill them and Saul tried to kill them off. Saul wasn't led by the Spirit or the Word but by his zeal. Zeal = jealous, envious of.

- See story of the covenant with Gibeonites in Joshua Chapter 9.
- Joshua didn't kill the people of Gibeon during their conquest for the Promised Land because they made an agreement with them. They didn't want to be cursed if they violated the agreement so they let them live (Joshua 9:20).
- Saul slew many of them contrary to the agreement.
- God must have expected them to honor the agreement since he is punishing them now through the famine.

If your zeal for something is not powered by the Spirit, you could be setting yourself up for judgment. Just because you are passionate about something doesn't mean the execution of it will bring God glory.

Verse 3 – David reaches out to the people who were offended and asks what they wanted for payback. They want the sin of Saul to be paid back upon his descendants. Saul's previous sins are now impacting his future generations. That still happens today.

The request of the Gibeonites to have seven of Saul's relatives executed seems harsh. Several of my favorite commentaries reference Galatians 3:13 by comparing this to the sacrifice of Christ to remove the curse from us for our own sins. Personally, I have no greater revelation beyond what I see in the scriptures here. Those observations are:

- They are not looking to profit from these actions from a financial perspective.
- They are not asking anyone else to do it, they are taking responsibility themselves.
- They are doing this before God for his approval. In fact, as we read further, this sacrifice causes God to reverse the curse and end the famine.

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.

David spared Mephibosheth to continue to honor his oath and delivers up seven other relatives/sons instead. This is the last time Mephibosheth is mentioned by name. Interesting that Mephibosheth who was willing to give up the property as long as the King was again on the throne, receives mercy and life in the face of judgement. Application: I would rather have life with the King than the stuff of the earth.

It seems the theme of this story and chapter is around the importance of keeping your word and oath as it pertains to God. He must consider keeping oaths as important to the Kingdom and believers. If he stresses this among believers, the Lord must be just as serious about keeping His own promises.

Application for Today: You can stand on the promises of God. He is faithful to complete it.

- See Ecc 5:4-5
- See Deu 23:21-22
- 2 Peter 3:9

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.

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 sepulchre of Kish his father: and they performed all that the king commanded. And after that God was intreated for the land.

The bodies are left unburied until rains came. This happened at the beginning of the barley harvest and not the end of the harvest to perhaps imply there was more that needed to be done. The beginning of the barley harvest would have been around the time of the first two feasts (Passover and Unleavened Bread). One could see a symbolic pattern here where sacrifice and repentance leads to resurrection and recovery for the land.

Rizpah protects the unburied bodies in her grief. David hears about this and gives them a proper burial along with the bodies of Saul and Jonathan. It is only after the bodies are properly buried that God healed the land. The word intreated indicates God heard their prayers concerning the land.

God hears the prayers only after things are made right. Application for Today: I'm pretty sure you can figure this one out. God may not hear our prayers until we have completed all required steps in obedience. It doesn't mean He won't bless and encourage along the way. Notice, God brings the rains during the harvest before he intreated the land. So there was evidence of God blessing while He was waiting for the rest of the work to be done. Just because you see evidence of God blessing doesn't mean the work is done on our part. God may still be waiting for us to follow particular steps before He completely heals.

- Compare the steps the priests had to take before getting to the Golden Altar to offer incense and prayers.

The Rizpah Effect

As I was teaching this lesson, the concept of the Feasts came upon me hard. It provided a different revelation and application for this story. Here are some observations:

- The scripture is clear the deaths of Saul's seven sons takes place during the time of the Spring Feasts. So this would be around the time of Passover.
- This is significant since Passover is the time when the innocent Passover lamb is/was slain for the sins of the people.
- Likewise, Jesus was the innocent Lamb of God who paid the price for our sins. This also happened and was fulfilled during the Spring Feasts and specifically Passover.

- Making the same connection, Saul's sons were also innocent of the actual crime, but they will pay the price for someone else's sin....again, during the same Spring Feasts.

Next, we see the response Rizpah had to this significant loss and tragedy in her life. To me it seems she follows the Feast steps or process of recovery. Notice:

- Took sackcloth, the first step showing humility (Passover).
- Spread it out for herself upon "the rock". This second step shows repentance (Feast of Unleavened Bread).
 - This is important. The scripture doesn't say "a" rock but "the" rock. This finally caught my attention and reminded me of Moses in Numbers Chapter 20 striking the Rock.
- **Application:** Regardless of my situation, regardless of what I may have lost, regardless of my tough times or disappointments, I want to always be found standing on the Rock and that Rock for me is Jesus, Yeshua the Christ.
 - And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. (I Cor 10:4)
 - Instead of giving up, she humbly pours out her heart on the rock. Our response in the spiritual must be the same. We must repent of complaining and turning from God, to turning to God for our hope.
- From the beginning of the harvest until water dropped on them, Rizpah protected the dead bodies day and night. Now I don't know for sure how long she continued doing this. One commentary I read said several months. It could have been far less. However, my thoughts on the matter returns to the example of the Feasts. Since I can see evidence of her going through the first three steps or Feasts, the next Feast in line is Pentecost and this is 50 days after the third Feast (First Fruits). As a result, I'm thinking she must have waited until these seasonal rains arrived around the Feast of Pentecost. So I think she practiced this faithfulness for a considerable period of time.
 - **Application:** The practice of faithfulness and Rizpah's example here is critical. We cannot fail to continue trusting in the Rock! When things don't move as quickly as we want, when the storm lasts longer than expected, we cannot lose hope. The power of knowing the Feasts is that it reveals God's plan for us and since I see Rizpah at level 3-4, it clearly indicates the plan of God for her life was not through yet.....there is more to come and relief is promised and on the way. Likewise, our continued faithfulness will bring us closer to the breakthrough God has promised.

The impact and results of Rizpah's actions are as follows:

- Her faithfulness attracted the attention of others.
- Her response to her loss attracted the attention of the King!
- Her actions drive the King into action.

- David collects and regathers the bones of Saul and gives them a proper burial in a proper place. This is where we would have expected Saul and his sons to be buried but his sin got in the way. So the family name is now restored because of Rizpah.
- She receives mercy and favor from the King (step 5, Feast of Trumpet where mercy follows).
- Others benefit from her response as God later removes the famine from the land. Something good comes out of her loss and sacrifice.

Application: Your proper spiritual response to tragedy will always get God's attention. There is a King who sees and hears what you are going through. Follow the steps and the spiritual process of Rizpah and see how what you are going through and how you remain in right standing with God will result in great fruit and significant value to the Kingdom and a legacy for your family.

Questions to Consider: What do you think would have happened if Rizpah had a different response? She could have been bitter and cursed the King. If she had, do you think she would have gotten the same results for her family? How will you respond to your next disappointment?

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 Ishbibenob, 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 swore unto him, saying, Thou shalt go no more out with us to battle, that thou quench not the light of Israel.

Philistines after this start to cause him trouble. Old enemies will try you again in the Kingdom. David was older now and got tired during the battle. A son of the giants thought he could take David but he gets help from Abishai. This particular giant fully expected it seems, to kill David, but Abishai steps in.

David is told not to fight those battles anymore just in case he is taken out since he was important to Israel. In fact, they tell David that he shouldn't go out to battle anymore so that "he" would not quench the light of Israel. It is as if to say they don't want David to make a prideful decision to go into battle which would not be wise for the Kingdom.

There comes a time in life perhaps, when you can't do what you used to be able to when you were younger. In fact, trying to perform such feats in the natural would not be wise. Instead, wisdom would be to pass these battles along to others you have mentored so they can continue a line of success. This

is perhaps the application for today. Our major objectives along with bringing glory to God should be to be mentored and then to mentor others to carry on.

- I learned many years ago from my own military experience, that a great leader is not the one who is always in front, but rather the one who has led in such a way that when they are not there leading the way, you cannot tell they are not there.
- I still received the credit and accolades for what my team accomplished under my leadership. I was more effective working with my teams than I ever was as a micro-manager trying to do everything on my own.
- I still love to play basketball. While in my mind (and sometimes on the court) I still have effective moments against much younger and stronger competition, I have learned to push away my pride and I pick and choose those people who I suit up against. I play against older players and different leagues suited better for my age. I have also found that I have scored more points and have many more victories now as an older participant in the sport than I ever did when I was playing in my prime.....I coach much younger players and I get rewarded from what they achieve. I still have a light in the Kingdom.

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 Shimeah 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.

Three more giants and/or sons of giants rise up against him. Goliath's brother is one of them, in fact, he uses a weapon similar to what Goliath had. Four different people from David's army killed these four Philistines. David gets credit for taking them out along with his servants. Any application?



David kills more giants now than when he was younger and fighting one giant by himself. This is the greatness and wisdom of spiritual experience. David couldn't do what he was able to do before, but he was achieving greater results. You get full rewards for what you do as part of the team in the Kingdom. Reference John 4:36-37.

David shows great leadership and he gets credit for what his men have achieved through his work. What a team!