

RECTIFYING THE PAST

Introduction:

1. David demonstrated kindness to the family of Saul by caring for Jonathan's son, Mephibosheth.
2. However, the many sins of Saul still plagued the nation of Israel.
3. Before true prosperity could be found in Israel, the mistakes of the past had to be rectified.

I. Saul's Sin

(2 Samuel 21:1)

- A. During the reign of David, Israel experienced a famine of crops that occurred in three consecutive years.
 1. This was after David's acquaintance with Mephibosheth (9:1; 21:7), but before Absalom's rebellion (16:7-8; 19:28).
 2. Other than that, the exact date cannot be determined.
- B. David sought the face of Jehovah to determine the reason for the famine.
- C. God informed him that it was due to Saul's sin in breaking covenant with the Gibeonites and seeking to destroy them.
 1. The word "bloody" refers to the bloodguilt of Saul's actions.
 2. The shedding of innocent blood defiled the land (cf. Num. 35:33-34; Deut. 21:1-9).
- D. The people of Gibeon had made a covenant of peace with Israel (Joshua 9).
 1. The Gibeonites were deceitful, pretending to have come from a distant land.
 2. Joshua and the Israelites failed to enquire of the Lord and were tricked by the people of Gibeon.
 3. Thus, they made a covenant with them that Israel would not kill the Gibeonites.
 4. So, the Gibeonites became servants of Israel – bondmen who cut wood and drew water.
- E. Sometime during his reign, Saul had sought to exterminate the Gibeonites – an innocent and defenseless people under covenant with Israel.
 1. The Bible does not record the details of this event (cf. 1 Sam. 22:6-8).
 2. However, it is not out of character for Saul (cf. 1 Sam. 22:17-19).
- G. David sinned – but he confessed his wrong and repented of it.
- H. Saul had sinned – but he never acknowledged it nor repented of it; thus, it had not been forgiven (cf. 1 John 1:9).

II. David's Response

(2 Samuel 21:2-9)

- A. David – a man after God's own heart and the loyal King of Israel – desired to do what was right for God and the nation.
- B. Thus, David went to the Gibeonites and asked them what would be a just action that would make atonement for the sin of Saul against them.
- C. Generally, there were two options available in a situation such as this – (1) monetary payment or (2) blood-vengeance.
 1. The Gibeonites were in essence "resident aliens" in the nation of Israel.
 2. Thus, they did not have the right to execute citizens of Israel.
 3. They acknowledged this and stated that they did not seek silver or gold from the house of Saul.

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- D. The Gibeonites asked that seven of Saul's descendants would be executed in Gibeah (Saul's hometown and capitol city).
 - 1. In truth, this was a gracious demand of the Gibeonites – they could have demanded much more.
 - 2. Sin carries terrible consequences.
 - 3. There are no easy answers to such a situation.
 - E. David granted their request and delivered two sons of Rizpah (Saul's concubine) and five sons of Merab (Saul's daughter) to the Gibeonites.
 - 1. The name Michal should read Merab (cf. 1 Sam. 18:19).
 - 2. Note that David spared Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan.
 - F. Thus, these men were executed and hanged before Jehovah.
- III. Rizpah's Devotion (2 Samuel 21:10-14)
- A. A body that was left as carrion to the birds and wild beasts was viewed as dishonored (1 Sam. 17:44; Psa. 79:1-2; Jer. 16:4; etc.).
 - B. Thus, Rizpah – mother of two of the executed men – guarded the corpses to protect them from predation (possibly for a period of 5 – 6 months!).
 - C. David heard of her devotion and sought an honorable end to this difficult situation.
 - D. Thus, he arranged an honorable burial for these men and for the remains of Saul and Jonathan that had been kept by the men of Jabesh-Gilead.
 - E. As a result of all these actions, God's justice was satisfied, and rain returned to the land of Israel.
- IV. Goliath's Brothers (2 Samuel 21:15-22)
- A. We are reminded that David is human and was often in danger when he went into battle.
 - 1. This allows us to see the divine protection of God in the life of David.
 - 2. It also allows us to see the loyalty, devotion, and courage of David's soldiers and friends.
 - B. We learn of four battles in which four men who were giants and descended from "the giant" were defeated by David's loyal soldiers.
 - C. In fact, we are told that these men were brothers of Goliath, whom David had slain (1 Sam. 17).
 - D. Thus, the threat of vengeance from Goliath's family was ended and the defeat begun by David was accomplished.
 - E. David's men fought valiantly for him because they saw him as "the light of Israel." (Cf. Matthew 5:14-16; Philippians 2:15-17)