



Cover to Cover: (2 Sam 21:1–14—The Gibeonites)

July 8

2 Samuel Overview

Context: David faced many trials in the latter years of his reign, including the civil wars and rebellions and now this drought. Many of these were of his own making. The story of the Gibeonites goes back to Josh 9 when they obtained an oath falsely from the Israelites to secure their protection. Saul, however, had attacked the Gibeonites, breaking this vow (not recorded elsewhere, but this was in keeping with his ruthlessness, see 1 Sam 21). Vv. 2b provides some of this backstory. This is the context for a difficult passage.

First, think about Pastor's sermon from this past Lord's Day A.M.:

- Who was Absalom?
- Why did Absalom rebel against his father? What part had David contributed to these troubles?
- Was Absalom's end justified?
- Why did David weep for his son? What effect did it have on his troops (next chapter)?

Read: 2 Sam 21:1–14

Questions:

1. What is your gut reaction to this passage? Why do you think many people might find it difficult?
2. V. 1a- Natural disasters are a general result of sin, however, in this instance what does God reveal as the cause of the drought? How did David discover the cause?
 - i. How ought we to view disasters in this world?
 - ii. If something is besetting us, is it valid to ask God why?
3. What are your thoughts on the initial oath made to the Gibeonites in the time of Joshua?
4. Should our zeal ever cause us to break faith? (think back to Ps 15:4b).

5. It is clear that the drought was because of Saul's breach of faith and that the Lord instructed David to do something about it. What specifically did He instruct?
6. In light of this silence, along with the command in Dt 24:16 that children ought not to pay for the sins of their parents, how ought we to view what happens in this passage?
7. *3 possibilities have been suggested:*
 - i. *The sons were accomplices with Saul in the act.*
 - i. *However, many would have been too young.*
 - ii. *Saul's house was punished because it was a severe crime (Ex 20:5; 1 Sam 2:33–4, 3:13–14; 1 Ki 14:10–11; 2 Ki 9:7–9).*
 - iii. *It was an excessive and unjust punishment.*
8. This last point is very possible. In v. 4 what seems to be the interest of the Gibeonites? Who makes the suggestion? Who approves of it? Is there evidence the Lord told David how to atone? Did David use discretion?
9. *In vv. 7–9 we have the names of the 7 sons. Note: Mephibosheth was spared, though there was another Mephibosheth who wasn't.*
10. *The act was enough but maybe too much. Note in v. 10 that after the killing Rizpah, the grieving mother, promised to mourn until it rained and to protect the bodies (i.e. until God accepted the atonement and stopped the drought).* How were they killed? What did the Law say about this form of punishment? (Dt 21:22–3).
11. Why might not God have accepted the killing as atonement?
12. What did David do when he heard about the bodies?
13. When did the drought actually stop? What might this tell us about this gruesome act?
14. What can we learn from this story? Here are some possibilities:
 - i. Keeping faith; doing something good that is actually bad; discernment; knowing God's word; listening to the world; peer pressure; perfection; obeying even if not at first (Mt 21).
15. Regardless of what we have done, who alone can be a propitiation (atoning sacrifice to turn wrath into favour) for our sins (Ro 3:25)?