

## Challenges of the King – 2 Samuel 21:1-22

### Introduction:

Being the king means you may have to clean up the messes of your predecessors. Politicians love to blame their predecessors for all the wrongs they are facing at the present time, though seldom is the story correct. However, David is facing a drought, and when he asks the Lord why, the answer comes back that a wrong committed by Saul must be addressed.

When the Philistines see the turmoil in Israel they decide to attack once again. David goes to battle but he is not the warrior he was when he was younger. The giants still fall, but not like they did in the past. God is still watching over him, but now he must lean on others for victory, teaching the king humility and grace.

As we walk with God we will find he has lessons that we must learn as well, lessons that will help us grow stronger, but will also draw us closer to God.

### The Gibeonites Avenged – 2 Samuel 21:1-9

1. Political unrest was not the only enemy David had to face. What was threatening the kingdom according to verse 1?
2. How did David address this challenge (v. 1)?
3. What does the Lord tell David is the cause of the crisis (v. 1)? What is the story behind this (cf. Joshua 9)?
4. What does verse 2 make sure we remember? Why?
5. In verse 2 we hear of “Saul’s zeal”. What was Saul trying to do?
6. How does David respond to the injustice that was done to the Gibeonites (v. 3)?

7. In verse 4 the Gibeonites describe the things that will not atone for the death of their people. What were these things? Why would the second not be sufficient, comparing that to what does happen?
8. So the king asks what he can do for the Gibeonites (v. 4). What is their response (vss. 5-6)? Is this fair? Does David feel it is fair?
9. What was David's first priority in carrying out this request (v. 7)? Why?
10. Rizpah was Saul's concubine, but that made her sons Saul's children. (Interesting that Mephibosheth was such a common name!) Merab was Saul's oldest daughter. How many sons would she lose (v. 8)?
11. When did this execution take place (v. 9)?

#### **Rizpah's Devotion – 2 Samuel 21:10-14**

12. What did Rizpah do after the execution of her sons (v. 10)? How long did she keep her vigil?
13. In verse 11 we read that David heard of Rizpah's devotion, and chose to do something in response. What does he do, according to verses 12-14? Why was this significant?
14. Did God put his blessing on these actions (v. 14)? How do we know?

#### **Wars With the Philistines – 2 Samuel 21:15-22**

15. The Philistines attack Israel and this time David does go with his men into battle. Unfortunately, what happens to David in the midst of the battle (v. 15)?
16. Who sets his sights on killing King David (v. 16)? Describe him?
17. Who comes to the aid of David and kills the attacker (v. 17)?
18. What do David's men say to David (v. 17)? Why?

19. What significant event is recorded in verse 18?
20. What was the significant event of verse 19?
21. What was unique about the giant in verse 20? What was his fate (v. 21)?
22. Verse 22 is summary verse for what was happening, and it notes the four giants that fell at the “hand of David and his servants.” Why would it be important to record the conquest of these giants (cf. Numbers 13:28)?

### **Conclusion:**

Chapter 21 is the beginning of the epilogue to David’s life. We are not as concerned about the timing of the events as we are about the significance of the events. In fact, it is likely that the first event took place before Absalom’s rebellion, as Shimei refers to David as a man of blood for what he did to the Benjamite clan.

Nonetheless, the event is significant. Covenants were meant to be kept, not just for a short time, but for perpetuity. The Gibeonites rightfully expected that the promise made at the conquest would last forever. Why this is significant is that God established His relationship with Israel as a covenant, and for God’s people to understand its meaning, the human covenants must mean something.

The second recorded event has to do with battles, and the conclusion is that God continues to grant success and victory. David’s career starts with the slaying of a giant, and now as he grows older the kingdom finds peace as the last of the giants are killed in battle. When the twelve spies checked out the land, ten were dismayed by the giants. Two knew that even giants fall if God goes before his army. This closing account verifies that fact. The land was theirs to take because God had made the way for them.

What has changed is that David no longer needs to stand alone. God has now surrounded him with an army who will protect him. Together, under God, they will claim the victory. This will be the pattern for the new people of God – his church. It’s strength will be in working together to protect each other.