**God Answers Prayer in Behalf of the Land**

2 Samuel 21:1-22

Key Verse 14 “They buried the bones of Saul and his son Jonathan in the tomb of Saul’s father Kish, at Zela in Benjamin and did everything the king commanded. After that, God answered prayer in behalf of the land.”

This passage deals with Gibeonites’ aevenge against Saul’s house due to Saul’s violation of Israel’s oath to Gibeonites. With this event, we can see how important we should keep an oath to God and learn about sins and atonement. Violation of oath to God is sin and sin is a serious matter, and it requires life for its atonement. Jesus is the atoning sacrifice for our sins (the lamb of God, John 1:35). Other part includes heroism of David’s warriors.

1. Read 21:1-6. During the reign of David, when the famine is struck for three consecutive years, what does David do?(1a) What does The Lord say to David? (1b) Who are the Gibeonites? (2, Jos 9:7, 15, 18-26, 11:19) What do the Gibeonites ask David for? (3-6)
2. Read 21:1-6.

*During the reign of David, there was a famine for three successive years; so David sought the face of the Lord. The Lord said, “It is on account of Saul and his blood-stained house; it is because he put the Gibeonites to death.”*

*2 The king summoned the Gibeonites and spoke to them. (Now the Gibeonites were not a part of Israel but were survivors of the Amorites; the Israelites had sworn to spare them, but Saul in his zeal for Israel and Judah had tried to annihilate them.) 3 David asked the Gibeonites, “What shall I do for you? How shall I make atonement so that you will bless the Lord’s inheritance?”*

*4 The Gibeonites answered him, “We have no right to demand silver or gold from Saul or his family, nor do we have the right to put anyone in Israel to death.”*

*“What do you want me to do for you?” David asked.*

*5 They answered the king, “As for the man who destroyed us and plotted against us so that we have been decimated and have no place anywhere in Israel, 6 let seven of his male descendants be given to us to be killed and their bodies exposed before the Lord at Gibeah of Saul—the Lord’s chosen one.”*

*So the king said, “I will give them to you.”*

1. During the reign of David, when the famine is struck for three consecutive years, what does David do?(1a)

*“During the reign of David, there was a famine for three successive years; so David sought the face of the Lord (1a).*

When national disaster was struck down, David sought of answer and solution from God.

1. What does The Lord say to David? (1b)

*The Lord said, “It is on account of Saul and his blood-stained house; it is because he put the Gibeonites to death.”*

The Israelites at the time of Joshua made an oath not to kill Gibeonites when they conquered Canaan, but Saul tried to annihilate them in his zeal when he defeated Amorites, who included Gibeonites without considering of Israel’s peace treaty with them (Jos 9:15). Amorites was sometime designated to all the pre-Israel inhabitants of Canaan.

1. Who are the Gibeonites? (2, Jos 9:7, 11:19)

Aka, Hivites who had lived in Gibeon, Philistine before the Israelites came to the promised land. They tricked Joshua and Israelites so they made an oath not to kill them.

*“7 The Israelites said to the Hivites, “But perhaps you live near us, so how can we make a treaty with you?” (Jos 9:7)*

*15 Then Joshua made a treaty of peace with them to let them live, and the leaders of the assembly ratified it by oath (Jos 9:15)*

*18 But the Israelites did not attack them, because the leaders of the assembly had sworn an oath to them by the Lord, the God of Israel.*

*The whole assembly grumbled against the leaders, 19 but all the leaders answered, “We have given them our oath by the Lord, the God of Israel, and we cannot touch them now. 20 This is what we will do to them: We will let them live, so that God’s wrath will not fall on us for breaking the oath we swore to them.” 21 They continued, “Let them live, but let them be woodcutters and water carriers in the service of the whole assembly.” So the leaders’ promise to them was kept.*

*22 Then Joshua summoned the Gibeonites and said, “Why did you deceive us by saying, ‘We live a long way from you,’ while actually you live near us? 23 You are now under a curse: You will never be released from service as woodcutters and water carriers for the house of my God.”*

*24 They answered Joshua, “Your servants were clearly told how the Lord your God had commanded his servant Moses to give you the whole land and to wipe out all its inhabitants from before you. So we feared for our lives because of you, and that is why we did this. 25 We are now in your hands. Do to us whatever seems good and right to you.”*

*26 So Joshua saved them from the Israelites, and they did not kill them. (Jos 9:18-26)*

*19 Except for the Hivites living in Gibeon, not one city made a treaty of peace with the Israelites, who took them all in battle (Jos 11:19)*

1. What do the Gibeonites ask David for? (3-6)

*5 They answered the king, “As for the man who destroyed us and plotted against us so that we have been decimated and have no place anywhere in Israel, 6 let seven of his male descendants be given to us to be killed and their bodies exposed before the Lord at Gibeah of Saul—the Lord’s chosen one.”*

*So the king said, “I will give them to you.”*

The Gibeonites asked bloody sacrifice from seven Saul’s male descendants. Here we can see that sin demands atonement of blood. Although a priest uses animal sacrifice for sin and its atonement (Lev 4:1-4); in this case, human sacrifice. Jesus is the atoning sacrifice for our sins (Heb 2:17b-18).

2. Read 21:7-14. Why is Mephibosheth spared? (7) Who are given over to the Gibeonites? (8) What happens to them? (9) What does Rizpah do? (10) What does David do when he hears about what Rizpah had done? (11-14) What do you think of Rizpah’s actions? What effect do you think they had on David?

1. Read 21:7-14.

*7 The king spared Mephibosheth son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, because of the oath before the Lord between David and Jonathan son of Saul. 8 But the king took Armoni and Mephibosheth, the two sons of Aiah’s daughter Rizpah, whom she had borne to Saul, together with the five sons of Saul’s daughter Merab,[[a](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2%20samuel%2021&version=NIV" \l "fen-NIV-8589a" \o "See footnote a)] whom she had borne to Adriel son of Barzillai the Meholathite. 9 He handed them over to the Gibeonites, who killed them and exposed their bodies on a hill before the Lord. All seven of them fell together; they were put to death during the first days of the harvest, just as the barley harvest was beginning.*

*10 Rizpah daughter of Aiah took sackcloth and spread it out for herself on a rock. From the beginning of the harvest till the rain poured down from the heavens on the bodies, she did not let the birds touch them by day or the wild animals by night. 11 When David was told what Aiah’s daughter Rizpah, Saul’s concubine, had done, 12 he went and took the bones of Saul and his son Jonathan from the citizens of Jabesh Gilead. (They had stolen their bodies from the public square at Beth Shan, where the Philistines had hung them after they struck Saul down on Gilboa.) 13 David brought the bones of Saul and his son Jonathan from there, and the bones of those who had been killed and exposed were gathered up.*

*14 They buried the bones of Saul and his son Jonathan in the tomb of Saul’s father Kish, at Zela in Benjamin, and did everything the king commanded. After that, God answered prayer in behalf of the land.*

1. Why is Mephibosheth spared? (7)

7 The king spared Mephibosheth son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, because of the oath before the Lord between David and Jonathan son of Saul (1 Sam 20:14-15, 2 Sam 9:7).

1. Who are given over to the Gibeonites? (8)

*8 But the king took Armoni and Mephibosheth, the two sons of Aiah’s daughter Rizpah, whom she had borne to Saul, together with the five sons of Saul’s daughter Merab,[[a](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2%20samuel%2021&version=NIV" \l "fen-NIV-8589a" \o "See footnote a)] whom she had borne to Adriel son of Barzillai the Meholathite.*

Here, Barzillai the Meholathite is not the same Barzillai Gileadite who helped David and provided for him and his companions in his adversity (2 Sam 17:27, 19:31).

1. What happens to them? (9)

 *9 He handed them over to the Gibeonites, who killed them and exposed their bodies on a hill before the Lord. All seven of them fell together; they were put to death during the first days of the harvest, just as the barley harvest was beginning.*

1. What does Rizpah do? (10)

*10 Rizpah daughter of Aiah took sackcloth and spread it out for herself on a rock. From the beginning of the harvest till the rain poured down from the heavens on the bodies, she did not let the birds touch them by day or the wild animals by night.*

Sackcloth: Wearing coarse and uncomfortable sackcloth instead of ordinary cloths was a sign of mourning. She mourned her sons’ death without fear.

1. What does David do when he hears about what Rizpah had done? (11-14)

*11 When David was told what Aiah’s daughter Rizpah, Saul’s concubine, had done, 12 he went and took the bones of Saul and his son Jonathan from the citizens of Jabesh Gilead. (They had stolen their bodies from the public square at Beth Shan, where the Philistines had hung them after they struck Saul down on Gilboa.) 13 David brought the bones of Saul and his son Jonathan from there, and the bones of those who had been killed and exposed were gathered up.*

*14 They buried the bones of Saul and his son Jonathan in the tomb of Saul’s father Kish, at Zela in Benjamin, and did everything the king commanded.*

1. What do you think of Rizpah’s actions?

Rizpah expressed her sorrow and grievance without fear and showed her respect toward the dead.

1. What effect do you think they had on David?

David gathered Saul’s bones and his son Jonathan’s bones and buried them with respect. This is David’s final act toward Saul and Jonathan.

1. Read 21:15-17. During a battle between Israel and the Philistines, what happens to David? (15) Who says he will kill David? (16) What do David's men say after the battle? (17) What do you think David’s men mean when they say that “David is the lamp of God”?

1) Read 21:15-17.

*15 Once again there was a battle between the Philistines and Israel. David went down with his men to fight against the Philistines, and he became exhausted. 16 And Ishbi-Benob, one of the descendants of Rapha, whose bronze spearhead weighed three hundred shekels[*[*b*](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2%20samuel%2021&version=NIV#fen-NIV-8597b)*] and who was armed with a new sword, said he would kill David. 17 But Abishai son of Zeruiah came to David’s rescue; he struck the Philistine down and killed him. Then David’s men swore to him, saying, “Never again will you go out with us to battle, so that the lamp of Israel will not be extinguished.”*

2) During a battle between Israel and the Philistines, what happens to David? (15)

*During battle, David became exhausted. 16 And Ishbi-Benob, one of the*

*descendants of Rapha, whose bronze spearhead weighed three hundred shekels[*[*b*](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2%20samuel%2021&version=NIV#fen-NIV-8597b)*] and who was armed with a new sword, said he would kill David. 17*

3)Who says he will kill David? (16)

*Ishbi-Benob, one of the descendants of Rapha, whose bronze spearhead*

*weighed three hundred shekels.*

4) What do David's men say after the battle? (17)

*17 But Abishai son of Zeruiah came to David’s rescue; he struck the Philistine down and killed him. Then David’s men swore to him, saying, “Never again will you go out with us to battle, so that the lamp of Israel will not be extinguished.”*

1. What do you think David’s men mean when they say that “David is the lamp of God”?

David is the lamp of God, who reveals God’s own heart among many people and as a shadow of the coming Jesus, he shines the darkness until Jesus the true light comes (John 1:5, 8, 9).

4. Read 21:18-22. In 21:18-20, what happen in the battles between Israel and the Philistines? (18-21) How does God protect ‘David the lamp of God’? (22)

1. Read 21:18-22.

*18 In the course of time, there was another battle with the Philistines, at Gob. At that time Sibbekai the Hushathite killed Saph, one of the descendants of Rapha.*

*19 In another battle with the Philistines at Gob, Elhanan son of Jair[*[*c*](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2%20samuel%2021&version=NIV#fen-NIV-8600c)*] the Bethlehemite killed the brother of[*[*d*](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2%20samuel%2021&version=NIV#fen-NIV-8600d)*] Goliath the Gittite, who had a spear with a shaft like a weaver’s rod.*

*20 In still another battle, which took place at Gath, there was a huge man with six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot—twenty-four in all. He also was descended from Rapha. 21 When he taunted Israel, Jonathan son of Shimeah, David’s brother, killed him.*

*22 These four were descendants of Rapha in Gath, and they fell at the hands of David and his men.*

1. In 21:18-20, what happen in the battles between Israel and the Philistines? (18-21)

Israel warriors killed Philistine warriors.

1. How does God protect ‘David the lamp of God’? (22)

God protected David and his kingdom as a lamp of God.

In conclusion, sin is a serious matter and demands life for atonement. In this case, Saul’s sins cost his seven male descendants. Jesus’ death on the cross is the atoning sacrifice for all our sins. David was the lamp of God, who had shone the darkness until Jesus the true light in the world came and gave light to every man. God protected David the lamp of God in the battle using his warriors.