

The Gibeonites Avenged

Notes for 29 Mar

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Read: [2 Samuel 21](#)

In today's study we shall interrogate three issues:

Issue #1

You need to read the first 14 verses to appreciate the details of the story concerning the Gibeonites, the injustice done to them by Saul, and their demand for appropriate reparations.

Can we identify a biblical record which records the occasion when this partial genocide of the Gibeonites occurred?

David feels honour bound to offer some form of financial reparation, which they refused. The Gibeonites made it clear that they didn't want to inflict collective punishment on the Israelites, which results in David asking them what would be appropriate. Here's the deal:

"As for the man who destroyed us and plotted against us so that we have been decimated and have no place anywhere in Israel, let seven of his male descendants be given to us to be killed and exposed before the Lord at Gibeah of Saul — the Lord's chosen one."

They clearly wanted retribution, not reparation.

1. Was this proportionate and fair?
2. David's reaction was basically, "we have a deal!"
 - What is your reaction to David's response?
 - Are you disappointed because his response doesn't accord with our image of "a man after God's own heart"?
3. The agreement which David is making with the Gibeonites, is it consistent with [Exodus 34:7](#)?
4. Can you reconcile the difference between what is stated in [Exodus 34:7](#) and [Ezekiel 18:20](#)?

Issue #2

On reading 2 Samuel 21, again it may be difficult to reconcile David's action with the view that he was classed as "a man after God's own heart". During our past discussions the inconsistency between what we understand this statement to mean, and a number of David's actions has unsettled some of us.

The statement was first made in [1 Samuel 13:14](#).

- Why did the Lord make this statement?

It is important to read the preceding verses which I think give us a clue.

- A crucial question: Was it Saul's sin or his reaction to it that doomed his kingship?

Contrast David's reaction when he sinned!

- Is this verse specifically about David or was Samuel pronouncing a principle for the appointment of a king?

It is reckoned that this event occurred early in Saul's kingship, possibly the second year. Saul reigned for 42 years. David took over when he was 30. David wasn't born when this statement was made.

- Was Saul mainly the appointment of the Israelites or the Lord?
- If so was Samuel making the statement that in any future event the Lord was having the majority stake in the appointment of the king?

I am sure some members will have different perspectives on this question, but we are close to the death of David, so a better understanding of this statement may help us to understand why David was appointed king.

Issue #3

The wars recorded in 2 Samuel 21:15-22 are somewhat confusing in terms of chronology. It is suggested by commentators, because of the nature of the wars recorded, that they may be an insert concerning events earlier in David's kingship.

- Is this a more likely explanation for these events being placed in chapter 21?