

## 2 Samuel 21 – 24: An Appendix Ending 2 Samuel

The last 4 chapters of 2 Samuel form an appendix to the book. They record additional information and events in the life of David, but not in any chronological order. For instance, the events in chapter 21 concerning the Gibeonites most likely occurred well into the reign of David. Chapter 22 is David's masterful psalm that summarizes God's faithful and mighty deliverance of him "*from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul*" (v.1). Likely, therefore, this psalm comes on the heels of David's victories in chapter 8, and toward the middle of his reign. That is, at a time when David's royal power had solidified, and the nation's territory was greatly expanded. Chapter 23 then, the 3<sup>rd</sup> chapter in the Appendix, begins with David's "final words" (vv.1-7), followed by a catalog of His "mighty men." The chapter details the names and exploits of those whose loyalty and military prowess where the means God used to establish, undergird, and preserve David's kingly rule – right to the very end (cf. 20:7). Chapter 24, the last chapter of the Appendix, closes 2 Samuel on a most appropriate note: man's failure, used by God, to wonderfully advance God's own work, and for His own glory! This episode must have come late in David's life. His sin again resulted in bitter consequences; but it also prepared the way for Solomon's greatest achievement: the building the temple of God.

### 2 Samuel 21 Introduction: *For a Gibeonite Injustice, David Atones*

Joshua 9, "The Gibeonite Deception." Joshua was God's chosen leader to bring Israel into the promised land and to drive-out its vile inhabitants. The LORD warned Israel, "*Do not make yourselves unclean by any of these things ... for the people of the land, who were before you, did all of these abominations ... lest the land vomit you out*" as I will vomit out the nations before you (Lev. 18:24-28). Through Joshua, God drove out the nations in the land: first Jericho, then Ai, and now Gibeon lay not far away. As great fear fell on the Gibeonites, they devised a plan to preserve themselves alive. They disguised themselves in tattered old garments, worn-out sandals, and with provisions of food that were moldy and dry. They deceptively told Joshua they came from a distant land, and they desired to live peaceably with the Israelites. "*We are your servants*," they said, "*Come now, make a covenant with us*" (9:11). Without inquiring of God, Joshua made a covenant of peace with them, and "*the leaders of the congregation swore to them*" an oath. (9:15). As 2 Samuel 21 reminds us, God takes oaths seriously. And time does not erase or change an oath once made.

**2 Samuel 21:1-2.** God sent a three-year famine on the land to alert the nation and David the king of the LORD's displeasure with them. David wisely inquired of the LORD who said, "*There is bloodguilt on Saul and on his house, because he put the Gibeonites to death*" (v.1). The famine was God's punishment for Saul's violation of the covenant Israel had made with the Gibeonites nearly 400 years before.

**2 Samuel 21:3-6.** On hearing this, David appealed to the Gibeonites for a just solution to satisfy the offense. The Gibeonites responded, "*The man who consumed us and*

*planned to destroy us, ... let seven of his sons be given ... that we may hang them before the LORD at Gibeah of Saul" (v.6). David said, "I will give them." (cf. Exodus 21:23-25).*

**2 Samuel 21:7-14.** The LORD's justice was satisfied, and the drought lifted. King David spared Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, Saul's son, because of his oath with Jonathan. Then, on the first days of the barley harvest (cf. Lev. 23:9-14, March-April; Abib or Nisan), the Gibeonites hanged seven sons of Saul "*on the mountain before the LORD, and the seven of them perished together*" (v.9; cf. Deut. 21:22-23 and Gal. 3:13, "*a hanged man is cursed by God*"). Then David also sent to Jabesh-gilead for the bones of Saul and Jonathan who had been buried there; and the king brought them up to the land of Benjamin, to rebury them in the tomb of Kish, the father of Saul. "*And after that God responded to the plea for the land*" (v.14), and rain once again fell.

**2 Samuel 21:15-22.** The giants of Philistia are destroyed off the land. David began their extermination with the defeat of Goliath; then, during his reign the extermination was complete. With the fourth giant's death in verses 20 – 22, "the terror caused by the Philistine giants came to an end." (BKC, p. 477)