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The Remaining Years of David's Rule
 2 Samuel 21:1-1 Kings 2:11

- Justice for the Gibeonites 2 Samuel 21:1-14
 - A famine is characterized by a widespread, persistent lack of sufficient food supply.
 - Most commonly famines in those days were caused by a lack of rain.
 - In the book of Deuteronomy, God promised regular rainfall as a blessing for obedience and absence of rain as a curse for disobedience.

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 - David sought the LORD for a reason, for a famine that had persisted for three years.
 - God's answer was that there was "bloodguilt" on Saul and his house due to his attacks on the Gibeonites.

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- Justice for the Gibeonites 2 Samuel 21:1-14
 - The Gibeonites were Amorites who had deceived Joshua and the leaders of Israel to make a covenant not to destroy them. (Joshua 9)
 - Saul's efforts to strike them down was considered the shedding of innocent blood because of this covenant thus bringing bloodguilt on his house. (see Deuteronomy 19:10)

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 - There was no provision in the Law for the atonement of a death after the death of the perpetrator.
 - There was a prohibition against a father being put to death for the sins of his children or his children being put to death for the sins of the father. Deuteronomy 24:16

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 - This situation, however, was not a personal matter and emphasizes the scope and responsibilities of one in this position of leadership over the nation of God's people.
 - Note that the message from God is that there is bloodguilt on Saul **and on his house**.

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 - Absent a precedent from the Law, David inquired of the Gibeonites to the nature of atonement they required.
 - They responded by requesting the lives of seven of Saul's descendants.

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- Justice for the Gibeonites 2 Samuel 21:1-14
 - David agreed and provided two of the sons of Saul's concubine, Rizpah, and five of the sons of Saul's daughter, Merab. These were probably the closest 7 male relatives of Saul except for Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, spared because of David's vow to Jonathan.

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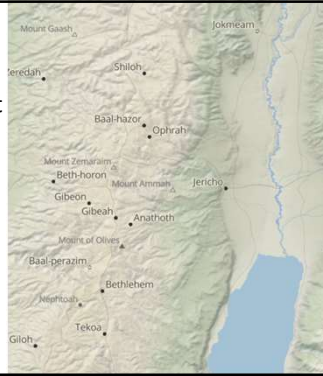
- Justice for the Gibeonites 2 Samuel 21:1-14
 - The first mention of a concubine of Saul is when Ishbosheth accused Abner of intimate relations with Rizpah, Saul's concubine after Saul's death. (2 Samuel 2:7)
 - Merab was the older daughter of Saul. She was originally promised to David as a wife but given to Adriel instead. Michal, Saul's younger daughter was later given to David as a wife. (1 Samuel 18)

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• Justice for the Gibeonites 2 Samuel 21:1-14

• Death by hanging and then left to rot was the most shameful death imaginable for an Israelite. Jewish law required that one hanged be taken down the same day (Deuteronomy 21:22-23), however, the Gibeonites were in charge of this execution.

• The executions were carried out in Saul's hometown of Gibeah.



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• Justice for the Gibeonites 2 Samuel 21:1-14

- Rizpah, powerless to prevent the death of her sons, determined that she would not allow their corpses to be desecrated by being consumed by birds or animals.
- Rizpah's vigil lasted for several months as the barley harvest is in March and the return of the rains is in the latter part of September.

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• Justice for the Gibeonites 2 Samuel 21:1-14

- When David heard of Rizpah's actions he took that opportunity to provide a permanent burial for not only these men but the bones of Saul and Jonathan which had been buried by the men of Jabesh-gilead. (see 1 Samuel 31:8-13)
- God then responded to the pleas for relief from the famine.

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Lessons

- Persistent absence of God's blessings should at least elicit serious inquiry of the Lord.
- One way the people of the world initially learn of the character of God is by observing the actions of the children of God.
- We should be encouraged that God takes covenants so seriously.
- When you cannot do what you want, do what you can.
- Put the things to rest that need to be put to rest.
